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VOLUME 50 NUMBER 2

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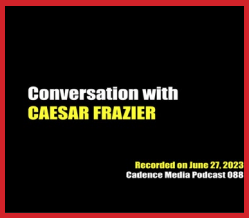

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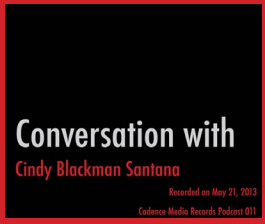

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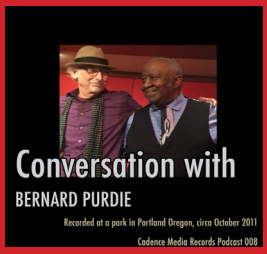

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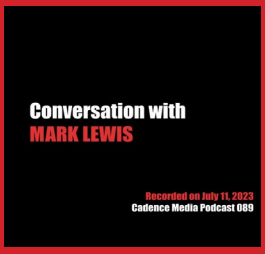

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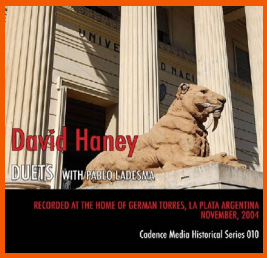
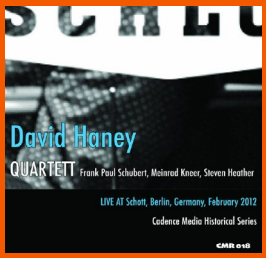
D. Haney, J. Priester, M. Bisio, A. Lane, Recorded in Kingston, NY

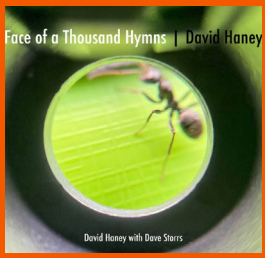
PHANTOM MELODIES
David Haney, Dave Storrs
Recorded in Corvallis, Oregon



DUETS
David Haney, Pablo Ladesma
Recorded in La Plata, Argentina



QUARTETT - Live at Schlot
F. Schubert, D. Haney, M. Kneer, S. Heather Recorded in Berlin.



FACE OF A THOUSAND HYMNS
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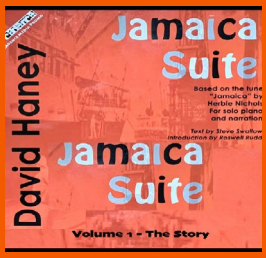

JAMAICA SUITE - HANEY TRIO
D. Haney, J. Hernaez, D. Chamy
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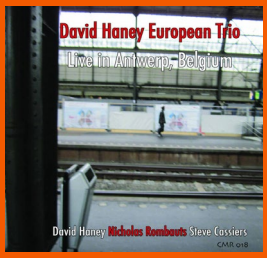
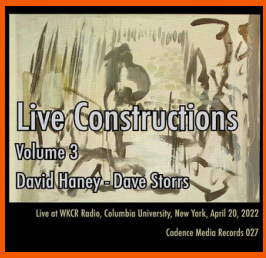


DAVID HANEY EUROPEAN TRIO
D. Haney, N.Rombauts, S. Cassiers
Recorded in Antwerp, Belgium



LIVE CONSTRUCTIONS VOL 3
David Haney, Dave Storrs
Recorded at WKCR, NYC

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Dave Storrs multiple instruments
Bernard Purdie drums
featuring THE CIRCADIAN CONSORT

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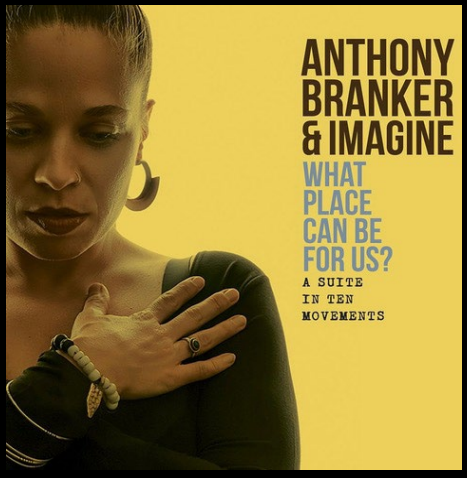
Critic's Pick Top Ten Jazz Albums Of The Year 2023



Anthony Branker & Imagine
What Place Can Be For Us? A Suite in Ten Movements
on Origin Records

Walter Smith III / tenor saxophone
Philip Dizack / trumpet
Remy Le Boeuf / alto & soprano saxophones
Pete McCann / guitar
Fabian Almazan / piano
Linda May Han Oh / double & electric bass
Donald Edwards / drums
Alison Crockett / vocals & spoken word
Anthony Branker / composer & director

Reviews

"a sweeping opus with sociopolitical and poetic content woven into a musical tapestry with his band Imagine which manages to be at once cerebral, emotive and viscerally exciting." – ***DownBeat***

"Musical beauty in the service of thought, or perhaps the reverse"– ***Paris-Move***

Guitarist Dave Askren and saxophonist Jeff Benedict have enjoyed a musical relationship stretching back three decades and spanning a dozen recording projects as well as countless performances throughout the Los Angeles area. For their fourth album as co-leaders, a collaboration with vibraphone virtuoso Ted Piltzecker, the duo embarked for the Mile High city. They teamed up with Paul Romaine and Patrick McDevitt, and Denver Sessions is the welcome result, a lively, eclectic collection that draws inspiration from throughout the jazz continuum while sounding utterly modern. Beyond being a virtuoso of the vibraphone, Piltzecker is also the ideal companion for such an excursion. Denver Sessions is a collection of original music by Askren, Benedict and Piltzecker in a range of styles ranging from the 1960s Blue Note sound to Rumba and Samba.

Jeff Benedict, Soprano and Alto Saxophones; Dave Askren, Guitar; Ted Piltzecker, Vibraphone; Patrick McDevitt, Bass; Paul Romaine, Drums.

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SAXOPHONIST RICH HALLEY RELEASES FIRE WITHIN

New release, available December 1, 2023 on Pine Eagle Records.

Fire Within is the new recording by Rich Halley, featuring a quartet with innovative pianist Matthew Shipp, standout bassist Michael Bisio and creative drummer Newman Taylor Baker. Halley's third recording with Shipp, Bisio and Baker sees the group building on their intuitive chemistry in a series of powerful improvisations, recorded in Brooklyn in July 2023.

Rich Halley has released 25 recordings as a leader. Fire Within follows Halley's critically acclaimed recordings The Shape of Things and Terra Incognita (with the same group), Boomslang, The Outlier, and Creating Structure.

"One of the major tenor saxophonists of our time."
Tom Hull, tomhull.com
"Heartland American jazz of the very highest order."
Brian Morton, Point of Departure
"Saxophonist Rich Halley has been turning out smart, brawny music for a couple of decades."
James Hale, DownBeat

BRILLIANT NEW WORK..

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

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WILL SLATER bass
FELIX LECAROS drums

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BRAD SHEPIK guitar
ARTHUR KELL bass
ALLAN MEDNARD drums

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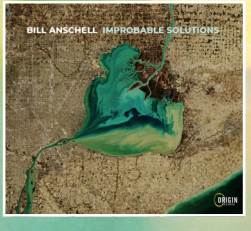
PIET VERBIST bass
JOHN BISHOP drums

PETER ERSKINE
BERNSTEIN IN VIENNA
PETER ERSKINE drums
DANNY GRISSETT piano
ROBERT UNTERKÖFLER sax
ANDREAS VARADY guitar
COZY FRIEDEL violin
BERTL MAYER harm.
DANNY ZIEMANN bass



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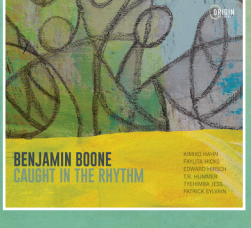
JEFF BUSCH perc
KJ SAWKA drums
BRIAN MONRONEY guitar
BILL ANSCHELL piano/electronics

JUN IIDA
EVERGREEN
JUN IIDA trumpet
AUBREY JOHNSON vocals
JOSH NELSON piano, rhodes
MASAMI KUROKI guitar
JONATHAN RICHARDS bass
XAVIER LECOUTURIER drums



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109 Billy Bang 4tet
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111 Vinny Golia & Ken Filiano
112 Luther Thomas 4tet
113 Sonny Simmons Trio
114 Paul Lytton 4tet
115 Joe McPhee 4tet
116 Steve Swell 4tet
117 David White 5tet
118 Sonny Simmons 4tet
119 Mark Whitecage 4tet
120 Joe McPhee & David Prentice
121 Kevin Norton Trio
122 Joseph Scianni - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
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125 Lee Shaw Trio
126 Ivo Perelman Trio
127 Mike Bisio & Joe McPhee
128 Marc Edwards Trio
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130 Joseph Scianni
131 Bobby Zankel 5
132 Joe McPhee 4tet
133 Roswell Rudd Trio
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139 Chris Kelsey Trio
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143 Khan Jamal
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147 Claude Lawrence Trio
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151 David Bindman Trio
152 Ahmed Abdullah's Diaspora
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157 Mark Whitecage's Other 4tet
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195 Sam Bardfeld's Cabal Fatale
196 Dom Minasi Trio
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215 Dominic Duval
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279 Dylan Taylor & Kelly Meashey
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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
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326 Stephen Gauci Trio
327 Jay Rosen
328 Trio-X: JoeMcPhee/ DominicDuval/ JayRosen
329 Chris Kelsey Trio
330 Prince Lasha & Odean Pope Trio
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382 Brian Landrus Group
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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

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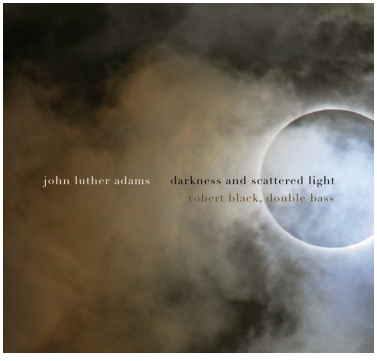

John Luther Adams
Darkness and Scattered Light

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"*Darkness and Scattered Light *mines the depths of five double basses, all played on this recording by Robert Black. Through its somber brilliance, this piece shows the expansive vision that informs Adams's music. . . . Robert Black is a palpable presence here."—Julian Cowley, *The Wire*

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—Steve Smith, *Night After Night*

"John Luther Adams . . . one of the most original thinkers of the new century."
—Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*

"His [Adams'] music has repeatedly conjured up visions of limitless expanse."
—Julian Cowley, *The Wire*

"His [Adams'] music becomes more than a metaphor for natural forces: it is an elemental experience in its own right.."—Tom Service, *The Guardian*

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5025	Seth Meicht and the Big Sound Ensemble	Live in Philadelphia
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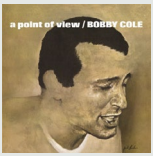

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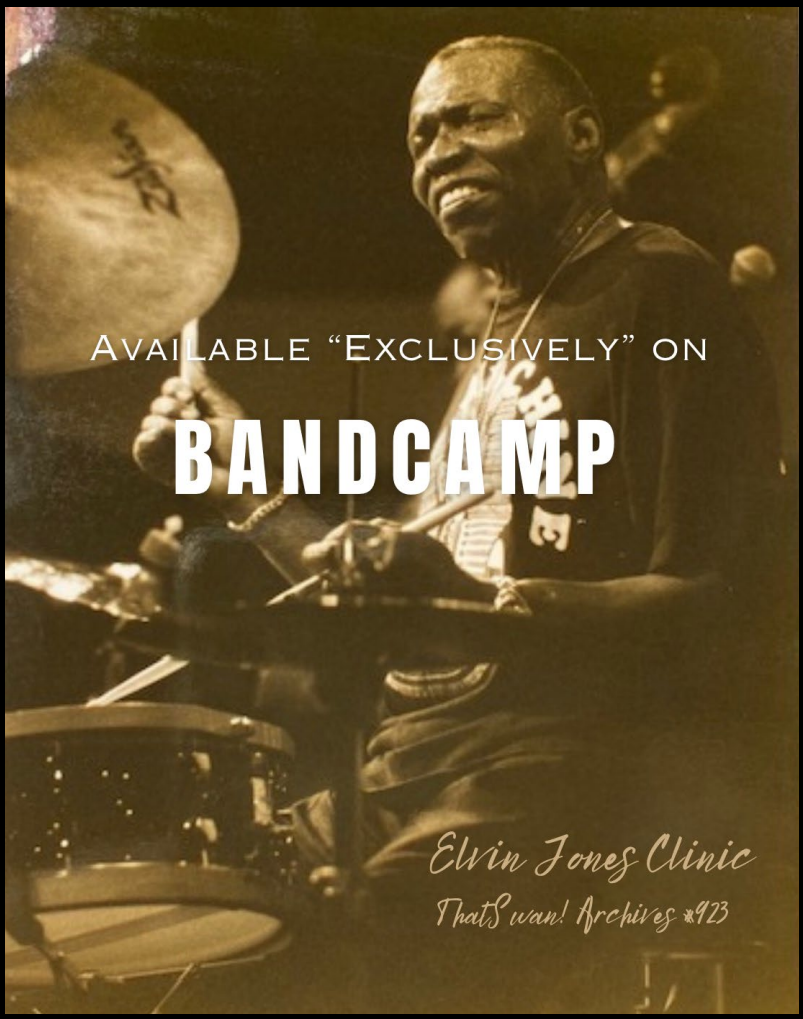
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Contributors

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.*

PATRICK HINELY (Features, Jazz Stories, a Photo History) *makes his living as a photographer and is based in Lexington, Virginia. He has been photographing and writing about musicians since 1971.*

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

ROBERT IANNAPOLLO (Album 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.*

BERNIE KOENIG (Album Reviews) *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.*

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

JEFFREY D. TODD *is Associate Professor of German and French at Texas Christian University. He plays saxophone locally in the Dallas / Fort Worth area, and is a lifelong jazz fanatic.*

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.*

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.*

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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David Haney, Colin Haney, Tana Keildh
Art Department: Alex Haney
Advisory Committee:
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FRONT COVER

Clockwise from upper left

Mark Dresser
Laurie Anderson
Shara Lunon
Charlie Apicella
Lafayette Gilchrist
Che Chien

Inside This Issue

CADENCE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL POLICY

Established in January 1976, Cadence Magazine was a monthly publication through its first 381 issues (until September 2007). Beginning with the October 2007 issue, Cadence increased in number of pages, changed to perfect binding, and became a quarterly publication. On January 1, 2012 Cadence Magazine was transferred to Cadence Media L.L.C. Cadence Magazine continues as an online publication and one print issue per year. Cadence Media, LLC, is proud to continue the policies that have distinguished Cadence as an important independent resource.

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

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

Short Takes - Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA, PA: William Parker, the iconic bassist/composer and major community leader of New York City's Avant-Garde Jazz music scene, had a two-night residency at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 1/5-6 with his longstanding In Order To Survive band. The quartet was formed in 1993 when Parker finally took on a leadership role that had long been urged by his fellow musicians. Original members Cooper-Moore (p) and Rob Brown (as) were in attendance but drummer Hamid Drake was replaced for these sets by Juan Pablo Carletti who was incredibly dapper in a hipster brown and black checkered suit and bold floral tie. The quartet was enlarged to include Philadelphia's own legendary Jazz scene builder -saxophonist Bobby Zankel – who has played with Parker numerous times in the past. The 1/6 performance began with Cooper-Moore bending over on the piano seat and commenting on the condition of the piano keys to the front of the audience prior to the start – "Most people think it's a nice patina – It's filth!," as he wiped off the keys. [In reality, musicians tend to rave about the venue's piano] Parker dedicated the set to saxophonist Carl Grubbs who had just passed. Parker announced that they would play "Oklahoma Sunset," to which the loquacious Cooper-Moore asked, "And why do we call it that?" Parker explained that, "Someone told me the sun never sets in Oklahoma. I've found out since then that the sun does set in Oklahoma." Playing straight through, the quintet played seamlessly. Zankel formed a frontline wall of massive unrestrained alto sax voicings with Brown, fitting into the group perfectly. Brown, a gentle soul off the stage, remains a force to be reckoned with and way under acknowledged as a major player. Cooper-Moore, the master of many instruments, most of which he's made himself, remains one of the strongest pianists around with his massive approach to working the instrument. He takes the concept of driving the band to heart and utilizes his whole body to deliver force including angling his head, spine, neck, feet and shoulders. He even inverted his hands to play with his knuckles to alter sound. When he rolled his left sleeve higher up, right before hitting on a late solo, it was obvious something special was in store. Parker, as always, was the driving force behind his group, leading from the back of the stage. His strong pizzicato work resonated boldly and at times he used double bows for a very resonating sound. The music was an incredible mix of genres and shifting sounds. A late bass-piano-drum section spiked in energy and once the whole band joined in, Parker laid down a Rock-ish/Curtis Mayfield sort of bassline that Cooper-Moore quickly picked up on and followed his lead. Soon, the others were in tow. Later, a very peaceful section emerged that sounded like an Abdullah Ibrahim cover and served to reset the senses from the earlier intense music. At the conclusion, Parker proclaimed that everyone was invited downstairs to the tiny green room – "You can barely fit 4 people in there," – for a free cookie. Sadly, that wasn't the case as the downstairs was blocked off by heavy security, no doubt leaving the band to polish off all the promised cookies by themselves. Zankel reported the music was all improvised – the only tune that was composed was the "Oklahoma Sunset" piece. He said, "I kept listening and waiting for that but it didn't come until about 20 minutes into the set!"…Robert Glasper's work bridges musical and artistic genres and it was on display during his four (pretty much sold out) sets across two nights (1/12-13) at City Winery. I caught the very last set filled with an adoring audience very familiar with his music. Glasper sat behind his keyboards and pumped up the crowd with loose banter that would be a trend all night. Someone yelled out to him, "What are you drinking?," to which he answered, no doubt disappointing the questioner, "This is cranberry juice." Soon

1/13 Robert Glasper - Bilal - Jahi Sundance at City Winery
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

1/27 Jonathan Michel - Shamie Royston - Jimmy Greene - Lenny White at Chris' Jazz Cafe
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

1/16 John Blum at The Perch (Fire Museum Presents)
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

2/19 Cornell Rochester - Jamaaladeen Tacuma at The CEC (Producers Guild)
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

2/9 Lafayette Gilchrist at Chris' Jazz Cafe
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

2/21 Mostly Other People Do The Killing -Moppa Elliott - Ron Stabinsky - Kevin Shea at Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Atonement (Fire Museum Presents)
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

2/24 Lux Quartet - Myra Melford - Allison Miller - Dayna Stephens - Scott Colley at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop)
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

3/7 Charlie Apicella at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop)
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

3/11 Shara Lunon (of Laugh Ash) at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop)
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

3/14 Cindy Blackman Santana (with Emilio Modeste) at South Kitchen & Jazz Parlor Photo credit © Ken Weiss

very funky, pulsating, heavy beats were going down with the help of (Oliver Lake's son) Jahi Sundance (turntables), Burniss Travis (el b) and Justin Tyson (d). There were often long pauses at breaks between the sections of songs. "I don't make setlists," Glasper explained, "because I don't want to give people the same shows so I got to figure this shit out!" He introduced a song written on tour the month before that he plans to call "It's Never Too Late." Glasper explained, "If that title makes you think of Luther it's because I just did the score for the new Luther Vandross movie and I've been in Luther mode since. I'm headed to Sundance [Film Festival] after this!" Glasper specified that his new song was not a Vandross cover but his own piece and then tore up the listeners by playing an exact rendition of the opening to Vandross' "Never Too Much." Glasper's new song, once he got around to playing it, was a real head-shaker of a groover with quick changes and his vocals. He soon got into a couple gorgeous piano solos sandwiched by "In Tune" from his Black Radio lll, a heavy song commenting on the Black experience and the struggles faced. The lyrics include, "Using horn and string to quarantine from a disease that sees us as less as humans/And more as things/So we don't play music/We pray music/Those same nooses hang useless." Neo Soul singer and Philly native Bilal made a surprise late appearance for one song that brought cheers from the audience, including P. J. Morton of Maroon 5 fame. After a cover of a Hiatus Kaiyote song (maybe "Little Church"), Glasper ended with a medley of pop – Nirvana and Tears For Fears…Pianist Orrin Evans continues to use his status as a world-class musician living in Philadelphia as kindling to build the local music scene. He has been fostering a series of performances at Chris' Jazz Café featuring artists from his Imani Record label. The Jonathan Michel and his All-Star Quartet played Chris' 1/26-27 and featured all-stars Michel on bass, Jimmy Greene on saxophones, Shamie Royston on piano and very special guest - Lenny White on drums. The last of the two sets on 1/27 included the young bassist announcing, "There are many different versions of myself that can't believe this is happening." He told me post-set when asked how the band came to be formed for this one-off weekend – "Everything comes back to Orrin. I knew I wanted to do something very special for this weekend opportunity and when Orrin made suggestions on who I could play with, my 17 year old self would never believe that I'd be playing with Lenny White. I never thought I'd be playing with my teacher, Jimmy Greene." An early rendition of Shamie Royston's "A Tangled Web We Weave" was beautiful and featured Greene on soprano and allowed for one of many attention-grabbing Michel bass solos. Royston, the sister of Tia Fuller and wife of drummer Rudy Royston, played elegant piano without trying to dominate the piece. Greene stole the show with the next tune, "Things Ain't What They Used To Be," with a gruff tone on his silver tenor sax while White got the chance to pull out his brushes and tastefully lay support. A tribute to the late Geri Allen followed with her tune "Feed the Fire" that ramped up the set with a fast tempo and finally a challenging tune ended the night with Greene's contrafact of Monk's "Evidence" announced as "True Life Stories." This included a very smoking White drum solo, regrettably his only one of the set [Michel said that's what White wanted]. At the conclusion of the drum battery, Greene grabbed a black napkin off a nearby table and fanned off White to the amusement of all… John Blum made a triumphant return to Philadelphia at the inviting atmosphere of The Perch Music & Arts Studio on 1/28 (Fire Museum Presents) for what was only his fourth Philly performance ever – he last played at

Sunny Murray's memorial with Jackson Krall (2018), with Daniel Carter's group in 2000 at Ortlieb's, and then with Marco Eneidi's Quartet (1997). Blum, the longtime NYC-based pianist steeped in Free Improvisation is described on his Wikipedia page as, "A Jazz hybrid of Cecil Taylor and McCoy Tyner, decidedly percussive but with relentlessly fast right-hand linear structure. Blum plays with such forcefulness and rapidity that he sounds like Conlon Nancarrow's player piano rolls, interpreted via human hands, freed up into a liquid state. He is an underground legend of the downtown music scene in New York, known for his explosive high-voltage pianism, and as a musician who aims for the very personal." An opening set by The Ghost (Michael Foster- ts, as; John Moran – b; Joey Sullivan – d) was highlighted by the always inventive Foster whose use of various items such as balloons, drum heads and vibrators to augment the amplification of his horns makes his performances unique. Blum followed with a captivating solo set where he thoroughly emptied himself into a "flow state" by way of a full arsenal of keyboard attacks - often utilizing his fingers as grouped downward daggers into the ivories or delivering slashes across the keys. Often a blur of activity, his pauses allowed us to intake what had just happened. His manipulation of the piano was downright jackhammerishly percussive at times but never chaotic. He played with a cinematic flare of flying joints while exhibiting a vast lexicon. At the end of his solo he stopped as if coming out of a trance and then was joined on stage by Michael Foster and bassist Brandon Lopez for a trio that helped climax the night. The three friends have been meeting at Blum's space to play over the past 8 years but surprisingly this was their first trio performance for an audience. Commencing with some skeletal piano and gentle pizzicato bass, the trio soon heated up to episodes of daring, blistering highs but also spent a lot of time exploring softer territories. Often Blum would then change the mood by leading the charge into further ferocity as Lopez fiercely plucked strings while staring straight ahead into the audience as if checking to see who was going to blink first. Hopefully, this trio will continue their conversation and start playing other gigs. Blum said post-performance – "I was inspired by the beautiful piano because of its age and condition. Reconditioned pianos that are over 100 years old have "wisdom" from many years of sound vibrating through the wood." [Note- the piano is an 1888 NY Steinway model A: 6'1" that is ornamented with Eastlake style carvings]… Leo Gadson of the Producers' Guild became emotional on 2/9 at the Community Education Center upon announcing the current presentation of his monthly second Friday events, no doubt rooted in some recent health scare matters and his love to help propagate the Jazz music that helped raise him to be the strong-willed man that he is. "It's not about me, it's about the music. We gotta keep it going. I don't do this well [speaking to the audience], I'm a background guy." Gadson was being too humble – he has been presenting high quality shows for many years and most importantly, he's brought in many people that would never have played the city without his help. He's been doing it without ever having grant money – he finances everything out of his own pocket. This night featured a one-off with drummer deluxe Cornell Rochester, who was born in Philadelphia but now lives in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., as well as electric bass titan Jamaaladeen Tacuma, young piano phenom Joe Block, saxophonist Dylan Band and guitarist Gene Terramani. Rochester and Tacuma have been friends since they were young bucks in separate groups in town centered one block from each other – Soul Experience for Tacuma and Cross Town Traffic for Rochester. Tacuma noted that Rochester was with him

for his very first tour of Europe in 1984 and, "He's still a hellacious drummer!" Rochester announced, "It's so expensive to get Jamaal to play, he's here because he's my friend otherwise we couldn't afford him!" The two sets were an ever changing mix of Jazz, Funk and Rock. Opening with a delicate piano solo on "Caribe," they soon got into Monk's "I Mean You," punctuated with a rambunctious piano and drum duet. Their rendering of the Brecker Brothers "Some Skunk Funk" brought Tacuma to center stage for a major stank-face producing solo. Standards "Love For Sale" and a touching piano – sax duet on "Every Time We Say Goodbye" were nice diversions. The absolute highlight came at the end when "time for one more" prompted the group to go off script for a tune that became Freddie Hubbard's "Red Clay." Not all the artists were ready for it at the start but it picked up in intensity and detonated near the end when Rochester took an explosive, lengthy drum solo that had Tacuma grinning as he looked on from behind. The word is Tacuma has been busy recording a lot of special projects that sound extremely exciting so be on the lookout for that. Rochester organized the event with the intent of featuring duos as a way to "showcase the musicians' full abilities." He also noted that there was no time for any rehearsal and that, "I am not interested in playing the same old songs most working musicians in Philadelphia [and beyond] play just to get by to get paid."…Baltimore-based pianist Lafayette Gilchrist brought his sextet of two years to Chris' Jazz Café on 2/16 in support of a new album. Trombonist Christian Hizon, tenor saxophonist Shaquim Muldrow, bassist Jeff Reed, drummer Eric Kennedy and percussionist Bashi Rose sounded like a much larger group at times in the hands of Gilchrist who maintains a close connection to lovely melodies, catchy hooks and masterful improvisation. Many Jazz elements come out in Gilchrist's music – from Barrelhouse through Ellington and a look into the Avant-Garde, although his playing doesn't tend to wander into the Free zone. What often oozes out is the Go-Go Funk roots of his formative years in Washington D.C. that helps uplift his music and its listeners. During the second set at Chris', he covered "Bamboozled," "Undaunted," and then "Southern Bell," which was a highlight with its infectious melody and Gilchrist's lengthiest solo of the set. The lovely "Purple Blues" spotlighted Hizon on trombone and later the climax came with the powerhouse finale of "Metropolitan Musings (Them Streets Again)" which the leader introduced as, "Close to our heart and reminiscent of Baltimore's House Music." Commencing with a very Bluesy piano solo, the sextet was soon off into a jumpy, pulse-laden piece with the help of the talented Rose on congas and Kennedy's percussion, as well as the frontline horns that did some dueling and coalescing that furthered the irresistible groovy jam. Post set, Gilchrist explained he wasn't looking to reproduce the recorded versions of his songs, he wanted to, "Maintain the chemistry, that's always the goal. As Sonny Rollins said, "The record is always the invitation to the gig,"" Gilchrist also spoke of enlarging the group to include guitar and trumpet… Bassist Matthew "Moppa" Elliott was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania (outside of Philadelphia) and has worked that aspect into his music for years – naming his compositions after the many unusual names of the state's cities and towns "as a way to obscure the link between title and content in instrumental music pieces." He's now using the numerous tragedies that have occurred in areas of the state as his muse (or at least his titles). Elliott's never been short on sense of humor/quirkiness and that comes out in all his work. He presented two of his groups on 2/21 at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Atonement (Fire Museum

Presents). He's led the different iterations of Mostly Other People Do the Killing (MOPDtK) since 2003 as an attempt to reconcile his love of the Jazz tradition and Avant-Garde experimentation. Working as a trio now with pianist Ron Stabinsky and drummer Kevin Shea, they mostly covered tunes from their new release of disasters including "Exeter," "Johnstown" and "Centralia," which featured a segment of "Phantom of the Opera." Their music remains a creative flux of Jazz motifs – mostly trad Jazz with moves into experimental as well as cocktail lounge and electronica. Stabinsky gets around very well on piano and keyboards (as well as working with the Meat Puppets) and Shea remains a manic player who knows when to change course. Both of them mix in strange electronics to simulate a (disastrous) alteration to the norm. Next up was his much newer group - Moppa Elliott's Advancing on a Wild Pitch with Sam Kulik (tb), Charles Evans (bs), Danny Fox (p), Moppa Elliott (b) and Christian Coleman (d). The pre-concert publicity noted that Elliott, "leads the quintet through tracks culled from the MOPDTK catalog, stripping away some of the originals' stridency to reveal the purity of their melodies." The addition of trombone and baritone sax harken back to the days of Soul Jazz and Kulik (who was about to go out on tour with Joe Jackson) and Evans are top performers on their axes. Evans, long high-up on the critics' list of bari players, really looks the part – tall with baggy jeans and a mountain man bushy beard. He makes the unwieldy instrument dance in his arms. The group covered all of their new release including "Powelton Village," which is near the venue and site of the infamous MOVE bombing, "Cobb's Creek," "Marcus Hook," the delicately, lovely "Van Meter," and "The Donora Fog," which Elliott explained to have occurred outside of Pittsburgh and caused the death of baseball legend Stan Musial's father right after Musial won the MVP award. That fact fit perfectly in line with the band's name, which points towards their collective love of baseball. Late set, Elliott admitted, "I don't know if any of these tunes are conveying the magnitude of the disasters." Both bands were plenty of fun and Elliott certainly has his own thing going on. The night opened with the inventive duo of Watson on bass clarinet and Julius Masri on drums/ effects. Watson cut his teeth as a member of the Sun Ra Arkestra and has been going by a single name for a few years now because, "I have three names and that is the one I like the best." The duo often kept the tension high and kept exploring even during the occasions when Watson's 5-year-old daughter made her way to his side on stage with her lollipop to tug on his shirt to get his attention or to place a paper of art she had just created into his pocket…Lux Quartet, the new group co-led by powerhouse players - pianist Myra Melford and drummer Allison Miller - joined by saxophonist Dayna Stephens and bassist Scott Colley, blew into town on 2/23 at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop). The band's name is a celebration of the life-giving power of light. The publicity info documents "The name Lux Quartet was inspired by the role of light in the panoply of life on Earth, from the vitality of the sun's ray to the bioluminescence of creatures in the deepest oceans – a suggestive indication of the heights and depths that the band endeavors to explore." Both leaders share an emotional attachment to nature and its preservation, proof of which is found in the titles of their previous individual bands and compositions. They've worked together for several years in Miller's ensemble Boom Tic Boom, a recent touring version of which also featured Stephens and Colley. Miller announced she hadn't played Philly since 2020 – "I haven't been here since the "thing"- and also that, "This is a newish band on our

way to Europe." Melford estimated this was their 6th or 7th gig over the last 3-4 years and now that they've got a recording out she was looking forward to playing more as a unit and developing their sound. Hopefully that will happen as this band offers a lot including a varied array of compositional elements since all members contribute pieces, exciting interplay, and a mix of occasional solos – especially a large number of bass spotlights which worked well as Colley is an underrecognized beast of a bassist. Stephens impressed on alto, tenor and soprano sax (I even caught him on stage early before the gig laying out some impressive romantic piano pieces), his command of his horns was stellar but what stood out was not only the beautiful tone he got on each of them but also that he had the confidence to play in a way that was not showy or overcrowded. He didn't feel the need to show all of what he could do and escape the pieces. Melford had a number of devastating solos that drew gasps as she worked the lower range of the keys and delivered lightning quick jabs to the upper keys with elbows and available digits and joints while retaining musicality. I recall Miller taking just one solo however she certainly forcefully soloed all night long, often drilling out ear-catching melodies…The Griots Speak featuring Juma Sultan (perc), Daniel Carter (multi-instruments), Charlie Apicella (g, bells, perc), and Alexis Marcelo (p) at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 3/7 was very aptly billed as a fusion of ancestral and modern sensibilities. Headed by Apicella, who grew up adoring Sultan and his connection to Jimi Hendrix, happened onto Sultan one night when Sultan was performing in Apicella's Brooklyn neighborhood. A connection was made and a band assembled. Carter, as always, worked through his arsenal of saxophones and trumpet, demonstrating impressive tone and command of each, along with a rawness that humanizes his work and makes for a perfect fit in this band that aims to heal lost souls. Apicella is a very passionate player on whatever instrument is in his hands. At times, while sitting with the guitar, playing separate chords, he'd open his mouth as if letting the music come out of his body. Marcelo was a new name for me and he impressed with his colorations and conversational playing… The esteemed Sun Ra Arkestra has played their hometown countless times but their 3/9 hit at City Winery was one of the best performances in recent memory. Maestro Marshall Allen, two and a half months shy of 100, is touring less and had put down his horn for a minute in the past but on this night he turned to the horn frequently, standing and blasting notes off with his signature right arm gunslinger moves to the delight of the roaring audience. Allen is still billed as the director but saxophonist Knoel Scott is now the affirmed conductor of the Arkestra. At age 70, Scott is no spring chicken but for any who have witnessed his utterly freakish displays of physical feats during Arkestra performances, his leaps from hands to feet, it's obvious he's a different kind of cat and on this night, he ruled the stage with animated directives that had the band sharp and focused. Unfortunately, the venue's stage was packed with musicians and instruments and did not allow for his feats of skill. Every Arkestra performance is different, there was a time period about 8-10 years ago where vocals were featured on the great majority of tunes but the instrumental displays of power and personality have always been their strength and that was well done this night. The "hit tunes" were played including "Angels and Demons at Play," which started with a duo of Scott on congas and Allen on sax and then devilish, pounding group percussion and piercing flute, as well as Tara Middleton's cutting vocals. "Rocket No. 9," always a fun and

entertaining tune that allows for group vocal participation - "Rocket number 9 take off for the planet-To the planet, Venus-Zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom up in the air-Up, zoom, up, zoom, up in the air" – was backed by a Rock groove and assorted blistering tenor solos. Also covered was the title song to their new Grammy nominated Swirling recording that commenced as an Ellington-ish piece and evolved into a powerful sound collage with a dominate solo by Farid Barron on keys. The set ended, as always, with the band strolling through the house playing "We Travel the Space Ways" with a tail of audience dancers moved by the music, and then Allen and Middleton stood at a mic to recite Sun Ra's poem "We'll Wait For You." Post-set, Scott acknowledged the night was special and that Allen was in peak form – "The music and the energy is coming off him!"…Drummer/vibist Ches Smith is best known for his many high profile collaborations with Tim Berne, John Zorn, Nels Cline and Marc Ribot, but he's also making unusual and striking art on his own, his recent Haitian Vodou project being just one example. His current project Laugh Ash at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 3/11 offered Smith with 9-strong formidable improvisors – Anna Webber (flt), Oscar Noriega (cl), Nate Wooley (tpt), Jennifer Choi (vln), Kyle Armbrust (vla), Michael Nicholas (cel), Shahzad Ismaily (el b/synth) and Shara Lunon (vcl). Smith made great use of the wide array of instruments at his disposal to create his favored brand of shapeshifting music. He's been enamored with "distinct clear arcs" in his music, as he described it. Influenced by Steve Reich and William Winant, as described in the project's CD liner notes, "I was drawn to the harmony, the repetition, the simultaneity of stasis and motion, and the innovative devices in the music, especially the process of "phasing" (where one musician slowly speeds up to land on an interlocking pattern a note ahead of the others). That approach is very apparent in Laugh Ash with its pockets of sound that pop up in the compositions and then resolve and spin and turn on a dime to something else. Spare instrumentation suddenly changes to effects-pulsed distortion and full ensemble play although elements of the repetitive, polyrhythmic notions from his vodou studies were still evident. Young vocalist Shara Lunon wrote lyrics for some of the pieces and performed them charismatically with passionate words and vocalizations and Smith busily worked his kit, vibes, electronics and programmed segments. I asked him about the unusual name for the band and he revealed it was based on how a friend explained to him what happens to a laugh as it disintegrates – it goes into a laugh ash…Cindy Blackman Santana was a Rock/Jazz star way before she married Carlos Santana. She's always had the out-of-this world drummer chops that are almost freakish considering her slight build. Her second set at South Kitchen & Jazz Parlor on 3/14 was Fusion at its best. Armed with support from acclaimed sideman – pianist Zaccai Curtis, saxophonist Emilio Modeste, guitarist Aurélien Budynek and electric bassist Felix Pastorius – she drew raves from the amped up viewers. Blackman got right down to business at the jump, battering her set and continuing to do so, except for a couple more tender tunes, and then came an end of night short solo. She shined as a timekeeper and band pusher. At the times when things went full throttle and the band got to their solos, Budynek and Pastorius got down to some serious shredding sessions. She didn't sing and there was no banter with the audience until the playing ended and she announced her bandmates and promised to return.

Ken Weiss

Laurie Anderson with Sex Mob: Let X=X Tour

Laurie Anderson performed on 3/29/24 to a packed house at Portland's Keller Auditorium as part of her Let X=X Tour.

Her back up group was Steve Bernstein and Sex Mob which is an amazing show in itself; providing a powerful rock group, chamber orchestra/art ensemble setting for Laurie to work with.

Sex Mob consists of Steven Bernstein, Briggan Krauss, Tony Scherr, Kenny Wollesen, and Doug Weiselman. That's the same lineup for over 24 years. The band was exceptional and really focused on Laurie's vision. The third aspect of the concert was a background film featuring Laurie's artwork - films including some beautiful images of snowflakes floating upwards through the forest then floating back down.

The music, the words were all working. There were a few pieces with pre-recorded music. The resulting effects were seamless blending live and pre recorded music. At one point Laurie talked about the idea that life is experiencing another mass extinction. There was a lot of compassion in what she had to say, coupled with an honesty of where we're at as a species.

Laurie Anderson is the real deal: an intelligent performer helping us to see reality. She is a uniquely creative artist/musician /composer capable of inspiring through her orignality. Laurie presented some of her older tunes that she's famous for and some new material including an audio piece that featured Lou Reed. A concert of a lifetime.

For the ovation, Laurie had the audience stand up, spread out and follow her in a few minutes of Tai Chi. It was a great ending to a great show.

Zim Tarro

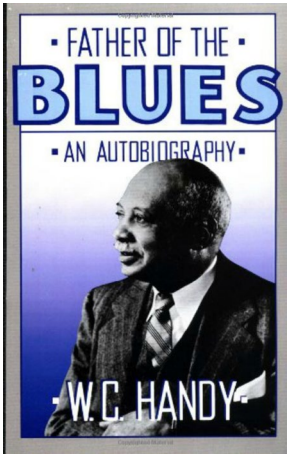
Short Takes - Portland OR

3/29 Laurie Anderson with Sreven Bernstein and Sex Mob Photo credit © Zim Tarro

3/29 Ovation - Tai Chi with Laurie Photo credit © Zim Tarro

Jazz Stories: Bob Rusch

BOB RUSCH, WRITER, PRODUCER, BORN IN BROOKLYN, NY IN 1948, TALKS ABOUT HIS FIRST INTERVIEW WITH W.C. HANDY. TRANSCRIBED FROM A VIDEO, RECORDED IN REDWOOD, NEW YORK, ON JULY 28,2011.



The first person I ever interviewed was W.C. Handy. I was probably about 12 years old and I trucked this very heavy dictaphone type thing that my friend's father had, who was a shrink, and I guess recorded his shrink sessions on it. We trucked it up to Tuckahoe NY, which is where W.C. Handy lived.I didn't know too much about W.C. handy but I was already a serious jazz fan and I knew that he had written St. Louis Blues, and played cornet or bugle or something. Anyway we got to his house and he came down these stairs in one of those elevator chairs, that...well it goes up and down stairs for you, you sit on it and it goes up. That was the first time I had seen one of those, this had to be the 1950's. I was wide-eyed, you know, these are heroes, musicians, W.C. Handy, he was an old guy and he was blind. We pushed the microphone up in front of his face because wedidn't want to miss any words, it was very important. And he started telling us about his life and he started crying. I thought, "this is remarkable, this must be important,"and everything else. We did the interview and years later it was transcribed and ran in a little underground magazine called Mumblings, which nobody had ever heard of, and nobody still has ever heard of, probably. And one day I came across part of the transcription of that, and I read it, and it was so basic, so simple, you know, one of those occasions, and I've had many of them, where I wish I could've done it again. I remember, though, going back and listening to these transcription discs, they were these green discs. You could hardly understand it at all because we'd put the mic so close to him, we didn't want to miss anything. We didn't realize we might be overloading it. The one thing I remember Handy said to me, because we asked him all the basic, cliched questions like "how did you write those tunes" and"how did you come up with those things." He said, "you know, the tunes: I lived in Memphis, it was an urban area, people had these backyards where they'd hang laundry and stuff like that." And I, having lived in New York City, knew exactly what that was, because lots of tenements had backyards where you played. Anyway, he said, "women would come out in the morning, they'd hang their laundry, and they'd talk back and forth, they'd say things like 'oh, didn't that moon look lonely last night,'and I just transcribed that and put it into tunes. It was really conservations that I kind of heard and I'd put it into music. "That's my main and favorite W.C. Handy story.

1. The Jazz Stories Project -
Please share a memory about a significant turning point in your life.

When I was 20 I played in the Eastman Rochester Philharmonic while I was in school. Many top-tier conductors visited as guests. One of those conductors was Leopold Stokowski, from the Houston Symphany. He pulled me aside one day and said. "Young man, you play wonderful bass," he said. "But I'm in Houston, and I know that the board of directors is not ready for a colored man to be in its orchestra."

I didn't know what to do. Here I had invested half my life to prepare myself for a career in classical music, but one of the world's top conductors tells me his orchestra wouldn't hire a 'colored' person. I was stunned—here I am a handsome African-American man who switched to bass because when I was a cellist, I couldn't get a job that a white cellist could. That no matter how good I play, I can't make it because I'm black? The only word I could think of was disillusioned. Are 10 of my 20 years shot? Is what happened to me in high school still the case? Well, I thanked Mr. Stokowski for his honesty, then walked away. I tried to live with that and not strangle myself. Despite any success I've had since then, the memory of it still stings.

Ron Carter

2. Where We Are Stories - June 2023
A short reflection on what life is like now, at this post pandemic point in history and a word of wisdom about what we can do to help unify our society.

The divisions in our society – everywhere in the world – are so overwhelming I am beside myself. I can't fix what's happening globally, but I'd like to think if I can continue to be a better person I might positively affect what's around me. The more people that do that, it gives me hope.

Ron Carter

A NEW YORK MINUTE BY FRANK KOHL

Nothing like a trip to NY's Greenwich Village to get an earful of some of the best or soon to be best Jazz players of the day. Staying at NY's Washington Square Hotel with all its cultural memories of the 60's adds another dimension of coolness. Access to several Jazz venues is within walking distance. Even the street musicians in the park are delivering some high quality music. I'm feeling nostalgic just being in this area as I spent much of my youth here. Remembering nights at The Village Vanguard listening to The Thad Jones, Mel Lewis big band or Bill Evans at Fat Tuesdays with Eddie Gomez or Marc Johnson on bass. Not to forget Bradleys, The Zinc Bar, Zinos with Gene Bertoncini and Michael Moore, Sweet Basils, The Blue Note or a short subway ride to Birdland, The Iridium or Dizzy's Club Coca Cola. The list is long!

So for those of you who don't know me, I'm a guitarist and one of the reasons I'm here in NYC is to perform at Mezzrow's, the sister club of Smalls that opened in 1994. Both clubs are owned by Spike Wilner, an outstanding Pianist and big time supporter of Jazz in NY. During the pandemic Spike diligently kept his clubs open as much as possible and was able to provide work for NY musicians. This also helped develop a rich livestream platform for audiences all over the world to enjoy and helped prevent the club's financial catastrophe.

I'm looking forward to listening to as much music as possible while I'm here, starting with The Zinc Bars Guitar night. The Zinc Bar is a very special place with lots of history and a comfortable layout that allows for a very intimate listening experience. Formerly known as The Cinderella Club it once hosted legendary musicians like Thelonious Monk and Billy Holiday. On the bill tonight are two guitarists- Steve Cardenas and Brazilian guitarist Ricardo Silveira accompanied by bassist Eduardo Bello and drummer Rogerio Boccato. I'm not too familiar with either one of these guitarists except I once saw Steve Cardenas at Seattle's Jazz Alley with vocalist Karrin Allyson and was quite impressed. Much of the music tonight is Ricardo's original work. He uses lots of colorful harmony with the rhythms of Brazil and Bossa Nova then adds his own contemporary originality to the mix. These two guitarists are a perfect match as they listen carefully to each other, blending their lines together so creatively with sonic waves of expression. Ricardo's originals are quite captivating and his style demonstrates someone who has been influenced by many different guitarists before finding his own voice. His tunes "Jeri", "Beira Do Mar" and "Tango Carioca" are especially well written with lots of drama. His solos are graceful and spaced out nicely to present an ease and awareness of his surroundings. Steve Cardenas plays masterfully throughout, with complete command of his instrument, weaving an exceptional blend of pull offs, straight picking and chordal work. For standards they do amazing versions of Antonio Carlos Jobim's "How Insensitive" and Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is The Ocean". As a listener it's all up front and personal thanks to The Zinc Bars ambience.

Next up is my gig at Mezzrow's. I'll be performing with my brother and pianist Tom Kohl and bassist Steve LaSpina. Steve and I have played a lot together including 3 of my 7 CDs. Steve has played with the best of the best including 25 years with guitarist Jim Hall. When guitarist Pat Martino resumed performing after his brain aneurysm Steve was one of his bassist. Tom is an amazingly

accomplished pianist with 5 CDs to his credit and we have worked closely together since we were very young. So my Mezzrow's gig is with two musicians I feel very much at ease with. Playing at Mezzrow's or Smalls has always been a pleasure, the audience is quiet and respectful and includes many listeners from all over the world. We do two sets and it all feels and sounds even better than I expected. Many young inquisitive musicians are listening and I can say that in this environment one can rise to a meaningful level of proficiency.

The following night is one I will not soon forget. We walk to the Village Vanguard, arguably the greatest Jazz venue of all time. When I was a young aspiring musician I would come here often to see legends like Bill Evans and the many fine musicians that would be in his trio. If ever there were a club that might be haunted by the spirits of Jazz history, this would be the place. Not very comfortable, packed shoulder to shoulder, no food, only the most dedicated of jazz listeners are present. The event tonight is Kurt Rosenwinkel's "Chopin Project". I often hear talk, mostly from older musicians that jazz isn't what it use to be. I personally find that not to be true and Kurt's monumental "Chopin Project" is living proof of that. He is one of the many jazz musicians, young and old breaking through with new approaches to the music we love. For many it's not always perfect but it's the quest that's ever present and most important. You might even say it's the spirit of jazz. So The Vanguard is pack in anticipation of what's to come. I know very little about Chopin and would never imagine that it could be such an apt vehicle for modern jazz. Well let me say my mind was blown by what I witnessed. A large amount of this project is written out and arranged by pianist Jean-Paul Brodbeck and requires exceptional reading chops. But the reading and writing is only part of the story. Large sections are left open for improvisation and Kurt, pianist Jean-Paul, bassist- Lukas Traxel and drummer- Jorge Rossy do an exceptional job of navigating the form and bringing a bounty of rhythmic and harmonic energy to the mix. Everyone's solos and their contribution to the whole is simply outstanding.

The final night we head uptown to listen to guitarist George Nazos and vocalist Tamuz Nissim at a restaurant in midtown. I've written about George and Tamuz before, they are two exceptional musicians with a worldly approach that defies the barriers of culture and soars into a more universal oneness. They bring the voice of Greece and Israel to NY using the language of Jazz as their translator.

Growing up close to NYC and then transplanting myself to the west coast I've always been aware of how some people perceive New Yorker as rude. So this trip, having time to contemplate and observe if there's any truth to this rumor, I found it to be false. I discovered the people I met in the clubs and on the street to be friendly, helpful and engaging. On one occasion while having trouble operating the subway turnstile a complete stranger used their metro pass to let myself and two others enter the subway. Could it be that all the city has been through with 911, the pandemic and now the politically charged influx of immigrants has softened the hearts of New Yorkers. Maybe so, either way the vast cultural diversity of New York's inhabitants has laid the foundation for innovative thinking. I found the city a gold mind of creative energy and a place wear Jazz with all its eccentricities and logical obstacles can thrive. So as Jazz goes through its many different stages, as it should, NY provides the competitive and nurturing atmosphere it requires.

Interview with Chien Chien Lu - Vibraphonist by Ludwig Vantrikt

Cadence: There is such a dramatic difference between your first two recordings ("The Path" from 2020 self-produced and from earlier this year "Richie Goods and Chien Chien Lu - Connected Volume #1 on P-Vine Records * 2023) and the most recent recording "Built in System" on Giant Steps GSA010

Chien Chien Lu: I believe the producer played a significant role in the distinct sounds of the first two records. My debut album, "THE PATH," was produced by Richie Goods, as was my collaborative record with him, "CONNECTED." On the other hand, "Built-in System" was produced by Jimmy Katz, and the recording process differed as well. "Built-in System" involved a live recording compared to the other two, which were done in a studio with each musician in a separate room, isolated from each other. In terms of composition and the messages in the tunes, there is a big difference for me. I recorded "The Path" in 2020, starting the preparation in 2019 when I was 29 years old. It was the fifth year of my journey into jazz & improvisation, and I had no idea about what was going on, both in life and in music. It was a chaotic period, moving from Taiwan to America, adapting to a new language, a new musical language, and trying to survive in New York City by playing jazz—figuring out life. Richie Goods approached me around that time and encouraged me to record my first album, offering to produce it as well. I remember bringing my compositions to him for the first time. I couldn't believe it when he told me those tunes were good. I always thought I was lagging behind everyone else and had serious doubts about my compositions. Certain comments or incidents had occurred that made me lose confidence in myself. Richie gave me some suggestions on my tunes, but he didn't change much. The next thing I did was book Bunker Studio for two days, and we called some musicians to record. I started working on "Built-in System" in the summer of 2022. I remember it was right after I moved into my current one-bedroom (no roommates yay) apartment in The Bronx. When Jimmy called me for the first time, the call went to voicemail, and I couldn't fully understand it. However, I heard him mention Jeremy Pelt. So, I reached out to Pelt and asked him about it. He told me it was cool, and I should go for it. That's when I realized I needed to start writing tunes again!! Now, at 33 years old and having experienced the COVID pandemic, I've had much more thoughts on life and music and have been shaping them slowly. I realized that some of the ways I used to think weren't working well for me anymore, so I started paying attention to the differences in thinking between my culture and others. I began researching my family and ancestors, as well as the philosophies of the East and West. This is where the name "Built-in System" comes from—the things that shaped or inspired me from my own culture. I call them my built-in

Interview: Chien Chien Lu

Chien Chien Lu

system. The writing approach is classically influenced. Before coming to the States, I had 20 years of classical training, so those sounds are ingrained in my ears.

Cadence: As you alluded to in your previous answer establishing your ethnic identity is a central theme in your artistry. But what in your youth lead you to pursue studying percussion?

Chien Chien Lu: I began learning classical piano at the age of 6 and joined a music education program in the third grade. By the time I was 10 years old, I had to select a different instrument to focus on as my primary one. Initially, I was considering the cello. However, when I went to choose it, someone who scored higher than me had already taken that spot. My piano teacher always thought I had a good sense of rhythm, so she highly recommended that I choose percussion as my instrument. That's why it became the final decision.

Cadence: You mentioned your extensive classical studies; but ultimately your musical path led you to my city. What was Philadelphia like both musically and socially. Moreover how did your interest in jazz develop?

Chien Chien Lu: I arrived in Philadelphia in 2015 straight from Taiwan. I couldn't really speak English well at the time. The reason I came to Philly was because of vibraphonist Tony Miceli; I wanted to study with him. So, my life in Philly was mainly spent in the practice room and at home. I would stay in the practice room for 8-10 hours a day, trying to figure out chords, scales, and all the jazz knowledge that I didn't have. I was anxious every day, so not all of the 8-10 hours were efficiently spent on practice, but I felt like I needed to be in the room figuring out what was going on.

In the second year, Tony arranged a monthly residency for me at Chris' Jazz Cafe. I was incredibly nervous and didn't think I could kill it. I had to cancel my trip to visit my boyfriend during spring break. He was upset, but all I could see was ensuring that the show and music was good. I began the monthly residency at Chris', performing from 10 pm to 2 am and earning $8 per person. Despite the modest pay, I was incredibly satisfied; I had a stage where I could apply the things I had been working on.

I played a show with the local Philly band "Vertical Current." I was surprised by the way they treated me—they treated me like a professional musician even though I was still a student at the University of the Arts. J. Michael Harrison from WRTI was my radio class teacher, and he has always been so supportive, even to this day. He treated me like a professional musician as well. Perhaps, because I carry an Asian female body, I've had many experiences where people expect me to behave in a certain way. However, by encountering these great people, I saw different possibilities in myself.

When I was in Taiwan, I toured with a well-known percussion group, and it was an amazing experience. We had hundreds of shows every year, performing on big stages and at festivals. However, I couldn't feel the freedom in the music. We were required to use the same techniques(Sticking) on stage, wear identical outfits, and maintain the same smile and movements. After each performance,

we had to socialize with the team and sometimes with the organizers who had purchased a large number of tickets. The socializing often involved consuming a significant amount of alcohol, which became overwhelming. I understood that it was part of the business, but I needed to find a balance from music. Unfortunately, I couldn't achieve that balance.I felt like all my energy was going somewhere other than into music, so I decided to leave what I was doing. Jazz, to me, is a rescue. It's an incredibly liberating art form that allows for self-exploration and finding a unique direction because of its inherent freedom. As you embark on this journey, you start to question: What's going on? What's good for me? What do I want to do? What can I offer? What is my style of music? As an Asian female with a classical background, speaking different languages and growing up in a different culture, I find myself pondering what I can do and where I can stand. How can I make myself comfortable, and where is my circle? Extend to realize that I'm essentially just a container holding a mix of culture, the wisdom of mentors, my parents' personalities, life experiences, life events, the wisdom of ancestors, and more… This realization sparked my interest in jazz.

During a tour with trumpeter Jeremy Pelt in Europe, my eagerness led me to explore the apartments of Mozart, Beethoven (where he wrote Symphony No. 7), and Johann Strauss. This exploration helped me understand their personalities and the influences behind their distinctive musical styles. This experience marked a turning point for me. Unlike my past, where I viewed classical music as a series of exams and tests(my music education experience in Taiwan), now it transformed into lots of personal stories.

I also visited Chengdu, China, exploring places with a history spanning over 2000 years, many of which I had read about in history textbooks during my childhood. Witnessing the historical context firsthand deepened my understanding of how people navigated life under Totalitarianism thousand of years ago. I learned about the resilience of ancient Chinese artists and poets, examining how they shaped their mindsets to not only survive but thrive in challenging circumstances.

Now, I am so interested in jazz, and I would say it has become an integral part of my life, or rather, life with jazz.

Cadence: Do you have or have you thought of a dual career playing both Jazz & Classical. What brings more emotional satisfaction?

Chien Chien Lu: I have been contemplating pursuing a dual career, playing both Jazz and Classical music. I believe that both genres will never cease to inspire me. While I find more emotional satisfaction in listening to symphonic orchestration, I derive fulfillment from playing improvisational music. Ultimately, it depends on the artists I'm listening to rather than being dictated by the genre. I am focused on the personal and nuanced connection I have with the music.

Cadence: During this current era in jazz there are very few working bands, but

you performed with Jeremy Pelt in his band. Please give us some insights what that experience was like?

Chien Chien Lu: I attended Banff workshop led by Vijay Iyer in 2017. Jeremy Pelt was the faculty, and I was a student. He heard me playing at a lunch concert. After I got off the stage, he asked for my email and inquired if I lived in New York. A year later, we recorded his album 'Jeremy Pelt The Artist,' and soon after, I started touring with him in Europe. It was a challenging experience, and I was very lucky because 2017 was only my second year playing jazz. I had the opportunity to work with musicians who had excellent taste and skill. Including Allan Mednard, Victor Gould and Vincente Archer. Moreover, I learned so much about how to lead a band and what a professional musician needs to have.

Touring is very tiring; our schedule is always back-to-back, and there are lots of early flights. I needed to be very disciplined and sensitive about time to ensure that I am always on time or early. There is not much room for me to make mistakes as a sideman, so I usually memorize all the music before going on tour. Sometimes Pelt would call tunes that I don't know, but he would lean over to me and tell me the name of the song. Them he would just tell me to learn it NOW. If we played a ballad, he would tell me to check out the lyrics. It was a precious experience.

Cadence: Did you record with Jeremy Pelt?

Chien Chien Lu: I was on these 3 records

"Jeremy Pelt The Artist"

"GRIOT: THIS IS IMPORTANT!"

"Sound Check"

Cadence: Let's return to your formal jazz education and the subject of ethnic identity. When you were in Philly in school did you learn about the social dynamic that jazz came from in terms of it's origins in black culture?

Chien Chien Lu: Not really. When I was studying Jazz in Philadelphia, my school focused primarily on the technical aspects—learning standards, navigating chords, and mastering the time feel. During those years, there was minimal representation of black students, with just one bass player in school. It wasn't until a couple of years after graduating that I truly delved into the cultural nuances.

In 2019, when I started to tour with Jeremy Pelt, I started to experience the real cultural essence of Jazz. The pivotal moment, however, came with the onset of the pandemic. It was during this time that I began to actively observe and reflect on various aspects. I joined book clubs to delve into American contemporary history, expanding my understanding. Moreover, forming a band with Richie Goods provided a platform for in-depth discussions about culture, race, and human nature.

Cadence: We are doing this interview during a time that you have three recordings out; have you been able to tour behind your disc?

Chien Chien Lu: Yes, I had the opportunity to present all three of them after their releases. Unfortunately, I didn't get the chance to tour with my first record, "The Path," which was released in September 2020—right after the pandemic hit in March 2020. I only managed to have a couple of shows in Jersey and New York.

On a brighter note, my second release “Connected”, a collaborative project with Richie Goods, marked a turning point. We were touring intensively across Asia, Europe, and America in 2023, making it a truly remarkable year.

My third record “Built in System”, so far I've only hosted two CD release shows. However, the challenge of booking shows persists without additional support.

The good news is that Richie’s and my band, "Connected," recently signed with a booking agent, Maria Matias, and we've welcomed a new manager, Brian McKenna, to the team. This new development has injected fresh energy into our ongoing efforts with "Connected," and we're excited about the opportunities on the horizon.

Cadence: Give us a glimpse into the way you compose; do you use the latest computer software or just a keyboard?

Chien Chien Lu: When I'm composing, I like to keep it old school. Give me a real piano, a pencil, and some manuscript paper any day. Typing notes into a computer or using a keyboard just doesn't do it for me. I need that hands-on, traditional feel to really get into the creative flow.

Cadence: One of my last questions dealt with if you were able to tour behind your recording output; by that same token are you seeing a profit on the disc you sell?

Chien Chien Lu: Absolutely! My first album, "The Path," is almost sold out. I had 1000 copies in the states and 500 in Taiwan. It flew off the shelves, especially after scoring seven nominations from the Golden Melody Award and Golden Indie Melody Awards.

Now, onto the second one, "Connected." Thanks to all the touring, CDs are still a hit at live shows. We're selling about 10-15 CDs per club gig, sometimes even more. And at festivals, it's selling better, one time sold almost 50 CDs after just one show. So, yeah, those CDs are working for me!

The third one, "Built-in System," I'm keeping it lowkey. I'm not putting it online for sale. Anyone who really wants to get into my music can contact me directly to buy it.

Mark Dresser Interview
This Was Supposed to Happen

Interview and photos by Ken Weiss

Mark Stuart Dresser (b. September 26, 1952, Los Angeles, California) is a double bass virtuoso, composer, inventor and interdisciplinary collaborator with an unending passion to explore and expand the musical possibilities of his instrument. He's led a unique career, training with renowned bass maestros Bert Turetzky and Franco Petracchi, and performed with Stanley Crouch's Black Music Infinity [including Bobby Bradford, Arthur Blythe, James Newton, David Murray] in the early '70s, the San Diego Symphony, and with Anthony Braxton's fabled quartet along with Marilyn Crispell and Gerry Hemingway [1985 – 1994]. Dresser has gone on to perform and record as a leader and a collaborator with numerous bands. In 2004, He joined the faculty of the University of California, San Diego where he remains as an acclaimed educator and publisher of GUTS, a book that unselfishly shares his musical discoveries found from a career spent seeking innovation. Dresser has released a number of solo bass recordings which allow him to showcase his improvisational artistry and his innovative adaptations. With the help of luthier Kent McLagan, Dresser has come up with custom-designed 4-and 5-string basses with fingerboard-embedded pickups and a set of metal tines affixed to a secondary bridge that can be plucked or bowed. He's also been heavily involved in promoting and performing telematic music presentations which involves live performances between artists in different geographic locations using high speed internet. There's a lot more. This interview took place in Brooklyn on June 15, 2023, and was completed by Zoom on July 29, 2023.

Cadence: What are your family roots? Where does Dresser come from?

Mark Dresser: I'm of Eastern European Ashkenazic roots.

Cadence: Your website bio uses the word obsessed in describing your longtime commitment to expanding the sonic and musical possibilities of the bass through the use of unconventional amplifications and extended techniques. Would you talk about your music, its purpose, and why expanding the bass' sound arena has been so important to you?

Dresser: It's the sound of the bass, and I just love playing it. I heard all these things that it could do but some of which were only audible when I was practicing by myself. I thought they were really areas of richness and, although I didn't know it at the time, amplifying those sounds so that I could use them then became a long-term project. I've spent decades working on that. My two early musical influences were hearing what [Jimi] Hendrix could do vis-à-vis with feedback, which is basically playing the upper partials, and I heard the relationship to playing by the bridge, where you're getting the higher partials, and I heard that they were essentially parallel. So, expressionistically, it spoke to me. And then also [Charles] Mingus, too. He would play so-called extended techniques in service of an expressionistic music. Both those artists gave me

what I refer to as the "green light" to pursue. And then when I was 16, I met Bert Turetzky, the great contrabass soloist, and he had a very, very colorful sound, unlike anyone I had ever heard, and I ended up studying with him.

Cadence: Tines of Change (Pyroclastic), your solo bass recording was recently released and features custom-designed four-and five-string basses with fingerboard-embedded pickups and a set of metal tines affixed to a secondary bridge that can be plucked or bowed. Where did the idea for the tines come from?

Dresser: As a student, I had heard these wonderful stroked rods that were standing percussion instruments made by composer Robert Erickson, who taught at UC San Diego where I was a student. They had a very beautiful kind of disembodied timbre that just rang and were very beautiful sounding and unlike anything I had heard. I thought that was something that would be nice to add to the bass and that it would give me something that was a cross between an African mbira, a waterphone, and these stroked rods. So, I posed the idea to my friend and collaborator, Kent McLagan. I said, 'I'd really like to do this' and as always he would say, "Oh, that's interesting, let me give it a try." And these collaborations, especially with him, have been so invaluable. He spent an inordinate amount of time that was way beyond anything I could ever afford to pay him to, basically, expand my palette of music, and it's gratifying when the music gets these good reviews so that his efforts, and hopefully the music itself, validates his investment.

Cadence: How is it having the tines available to augment your music?

Dresser: It's another dimension of sound. It's not something I use all the time because the tines have all this great stuff but they also somewhat mute the natural sound of the bass because it attaches to the bridge. There's also extra resonance because you have this extra vibrating attachment to the instrument. As a universal instrument, that's a detriment because it makes the instrument less clear in a way, but for doing the stuff that it does, it opens up new, rich domains. I use it in specific pieces and when I record. I use it on solo [bass] concerts and I'll take them off at some point so that people can hear the difference and allow the instrument to be more resonant and clear, and I can play it differently. I also use different bows to give me different possibilities and spectrums. I look at all of this as having different paint brushes that I can access and do different kinds of sound painting.

Cadence: You performed at the Vision Festival last night in Brooklyn and didn't use the tines. Was that because you were performing with a large group?

Dresser: Yeah, because it doesn't add to that music. The music wasn't conceived for that. The music was written and conceived before I even had the tines so, for me to add that, it didn't make sense.

Cadence: What other novel enhancements have you come up with?

Dresser: This wonderful guitarist, Tom North, had a set of magnetic pickups that he had attached to the headstock of his guitar and then he panned it stereo for a very orchestral, sonic dispersion of the sound. It was very, very beautiful.

Mark Dresser
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Mark Dresser
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

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Photo credit © Ken Weiss

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Photo credit © Ken Weiss

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Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Mark Dresser
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Mark Dresser
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

I met him when he was a graduate student and I was an undergraduate. I'd been playing like that but recording with microphones and I said, 'That's incredible, I wish I could do that,' and he said, "Well, steal the idea." I'm not a maker so I found someone to build me something. They basically took bass guitar pickups and mounted them so I could hang them onto the scroll of the neck and suspend them over the nut of the bass so it didn't block any notes I could play. I did about three variations on that idea. Guitarist Fred Frith used a similar kind of neck suspended pick-up and kindly connected me with Bill Bartolini, the great pickup maker, and Bill sent me some pickups after about a year. He just gifted them to me, he liked the idea of what I was trying to do, so that was very affirming. When someone invests in me, I feel a responsibility to do it. I used Bartolini's pick-ups for nearly twenty years installed onto a custom copper housing that was held by a capo, built for me by a wonderful sculptor named Don Jacobson. After 20 years of regular use it started to become unstable from taking it on and off basses.. Around that time, I was playing a concert in Boulder and I borrowed a bass from Kent McLagan, who's also a fine bassist and he was starting to teach himself lutherie by copying a bass that he liked of his own. He's also a trained engineer and has an amazing ear. He started making these basses and I asked him if he would be interested in making me a set of pickups built into the fingerboard. He said, "Oh, that's an interesting idea, let me see what I can do." So, for nine months, using a spare fingerboard, he started making hand wound pickups embedded into the back of the fingerboard. He would temporarily attach the fingerboard onto the neck and experiment with how it sounded. We decided to place two different sets of 4 individual pickups – one set at the nut and one further up the neck initially at the minor 6th from the open string. Kent would send me cassettes of the pickups of him playing and we went back and forth tweaking the tone. Finally he got to a place where we thought we were ready to try it, I had David Gage in New York remove my fingerboard and I mailed it to Kent, and Kent just nailed it. The very first version was perfect. That was in 2001, and then I subsequently asked him to install them on all of my basses.

Cadence: Have you trademarked or marketed these innovations?

Dresser: No, we thought about that and I was told [by others] that we should patent it. I discussed it with Ned Steinberger, of the Steinberger basses, and he explained to me – "What do you want? All a patent is is a license to sue. That's all it is really and this is clearly not a commercially viable thing. What do you really want out of this?" And I said, 'I just want to be able to get concerts and continue to perform.' I didn't make this thing. Kent has made these pickups for three or four other bass players and I don't care. It's like, 'Okay, here's a tool. If you like it, if it serves you and your music, great.' It's just like in the Age of Information, it's not the information that changes the world, it's the choices you make with information you have. So, I'm very unpossessive about the tools, and besides I didn't make the tools, I only had the idea for them.

Cadence: Are other bassists using the tines?
Dresser: Not yet, and since 2015, we've tried eleven different iterations of the tines – different tunings, different metals, different numbers of tines, different mounting systems. In that sense, it's one continuing science project and I consider myself a lucky guy to work with someone who's willing to do that work because there's no profit in it at all. Zero. It's about something to increase sound potentials, and fortunately for me, he likes the result of it. He likes the new record a lot and keeps hearing new things in it. Kent put in the time [to build it] and I put in the time learning how to play it and trying to find musical context for it all.
Cadence: How did your new Tines of Change recording come into existence?
Dresser: I worked with engineer Alexandria Smith and I basically improvised. I did a day's worth of improvisations. We had about forty minutes of music which we edited down because, as often happens, not every moment is golden. I put it into Logic and made a dummy mockup edit, making it more concise and basically composed with those materials, like making musique concrète. And then I gave it to her and she did a really finesse edit of it. The first session was done in 2019 and I sent it around to a couple labels who, to my surprise, immediately responded positively. One label offered to release it quickly while Pyroclastic Records, Kris Davis' label, couldn't release it until 2023 but they could offer a publicist, and that was worth more to me than money because then it would get reviewed and get some attention. That would be more valuable to me, especially in the age where the CD itself is almost valueless because most people don't even have CD players. So I chose that. And then the five-string [bass] was completed for me last August 2022. I knew I wanted to add some more music so I had a few months to develop that and we did a second recording session.
Cadence: The track "Gregoratyne" is especially interesting as you bow the tines, suggesting the chanting of Gregorian monks.
Dresser: That's what the title suggests because the tines were tuned in an array from low to high and that sort of lends itself to kind of melismatic, kind of melodic ornaments. The titles came after the fact. I'd start improvising and think, 'Oh, this title will go with this.'
Cadence: The liner notes for Tines of Change quote you to say, "I think of the bass as an orchestra." Would you expand on that?
Dresser: I hear all these different voices in the instrument - harmonics, bitones, subharmonics, and then, of course, there's the inherent fundamental sound of the bass. And if you start parsing them out, they're different voices – radically different registers, radically different timbres. So, that's what I mean, and the idea is how to orchestrate them to make a personally compelling music.
Cadence: This is your sixth solo bass recording. What attracts you to keep recording in that format and is it financially feasible to keep producing solo bass projects?

Dresser: This is not about money, playing solo is kind of my laboratory. That's where really specific ideas I've brought to the ensemble music, especially about sound, get developed and worked out. Especially with groups like my trio with Denman Maroney and Matthias Ziegler, both those guys have similar sonic vocabularies. I also did some of that in my first quintet with Theo Bleckmann, Dave Douglas and Phil Haynes, where I really wrote specifically for certain sonic vocabularies.

Cadence: What should the listener draw from this new music?

Dresser: Whatever they feel. I always hope that the music speaks for itself. I hope people enjoy it, there's certainly no pandering. Some people are really touched by it. I played it for my mom and she said, "It's really interesting. I'll listen to it again." [Laughs]

Cadence: Another passion of yours since 2007 is telematic music which involves musicians in different geographical locations performing live together via high-speed internet. Why has this been so important to you?

Dresser: In 2004, I left New York, so I left my community of collaborators, and when I got to UC San Diego, I learned that they were very much supporting the cutting edge of interfacing art science and technology. I met my former teacher and friend Pauline Oliveros over dinner in 2006 at the Guelph Jazz Festival and she told me about the telematic music and broke down what the fundamentals were. Literally over dinner, I wrote down notes and then I put together a group of three professors from UCSD – one in visual art and two from theatre and dance. We had a residency and created a research group centered on telematics at a center for computer music research at UCSD formerly called CRCA. We invited a bunch of graduate students to take this course and then we did our first experiments. Then [trombonist] Michael Dessen, who I had known for years before that class, got a job at UC Irvine and we started collaborating together telematically, beginning with a concert in 2008. So, it was a way to collaborate and do projects with those musicians that I had musical affinities with irrespective of whether they were local or not. Pauline's assistant at the time was Sarah Weaver, a composer with a background in sound painting who was often responsible for teaching Pauline's class when Pauline was out of town. We started collaborating and it continued on with many projects. Sarah lives in New York so we started doing projects in classes between NYU and Stony Brook , where she was a student. We did projects from five different locations, as far away as Korea, Banff, Belfast, Homburg and San Diego. Just wildly different places, and the potential for failure was really high but we never failed, we always got it going on. So, it became very interesting, not because of the technology, it was really more interesting because of the human level of [what can happen] if people put their minds [together] to make something happen, and if they were willing to do the work, you could collaborate and make something happen just based on effort and good will and problem solving. That became very, very meaningful. When we started, high

speed ethernet, not Wi-Fi, was only available to research universities. However by the time of the pandemic, access to high speed ethernet connection was more available because the network infrastructure had evolved. There was a motivation for developers to create new software that was more versatile, that individuals could mix, record and could work on Wi-Fi as well. The need for music schools, students and professional musicians, to be able play together was real. After the shutdown was lifted we missed out on the potential of that medium had to offer as everyone was anxious to return to life before the pandemic. It can be a beautiful thing to perform with people at distance if we use these telematic platforms . Considering the amount of travel that we do to play for so few people, the carbon footprint of traditional touring is just ridiculous. Don't get me wrong, I love playing for a live audience, but there's no doubt that when I talk to someone on the telephone or by Zoom that we are communicating. What I can't do is go out afterwards and have a meal with the other person, the social dimension after the concert is missing, but in terms of the pure musical information, sometimes I think we can get better sound because it's more like recording in a recording studio. It's another skill set to play telematically but you're still putting your feelings through your instrument to do what's necessary to make music.

Cadence: You were born and raised in L.A. Your dad was in the family's plumbing business and your mom was an amateur musician who played folk guitar, so you grew up in a musical home. Was there a very early experience that led you to a career in music?

Dresser: She was also a folklorist. She went back to school and got a degree in anthropology and then a master's in folklore and taught ESL. One of my mom's best friends, Jan Steward, was a wonderful visual artist, a student of Corita Kent, who was also involved with the Indian music world.. It was a real cultural environment. We would have these hootenannies at our house and Jan's house every Friday for years. And so I got a chance to meet a lot of musicians. I heard a lot of Indian music that happened at Jan's home as she was deeply connected to the Indian music scene in LA. This was the period when Ravi Shankar was collaborating with the Beatles.

Cadence: Piano lessons started at age 5 for you with your eccentric next-door neighbor. What were her eccentricities and did you like studying piano?

Dresser: Her name was Hansi Alt and she was from Austria. She had an eccentric habit of walking down the middle of our street. Yeah, I don't know why. She was a wonderful teacher. I loved her and she was literally next door until she moved away.

Cadence: How did you end up on bass?

Dresser: After Hansi Alt left I had a terrible piano teacher and my interests started to change. At age 10, they offered free instrumental lessons at Ivanhoe Elementary School in LA. and a friend of my mom, who played guitar with her, said, "Well, he's a big kid, he might be good on the bass," and it was a good

choice, it stuck.

Cadence: You've had a good deal of serendipity throughout your career. After attending a Paul Horn concert at age 12, you developed a relationship with Horn's bass player, Bill Plummer, who ended up trading guitar lessons from your mom for bass lessons for you.

Dresser: Once again through my mother's friend Jan Steward, who was friends with Paul Horn, I met Bill after hearing a concert of theirs at the Pilgrimage Bowl Theatre. We started doing this exchange, my mom gave him guitar lessons and he'd give me bass lessons. He was a wonderful bass player and inspiring musician.. He just passed away last year. He had a fantastic sound and beat. He was also an amateur sitar player.

Cadence: Red Mitchell also helped you when you were a teen.

Dresser: Yes!!! Between ages 14-15 in Los Angeles, I had been playing in a Rock band with drummer John Friesen and also in a different band with Rick Mitchell, the stepson of Red Mitchell. Red was kind and generous, as well as being a brilliant musician. Red gave us young bass players free group lessons at Grants Music in LA including Roberto Miranda and J.J. Wiggins, the gifted son of Gerald Wiggins. Red only played piano, never bass for us. Also important was that Red introduced me to Craig Hundley who was both a child actor and a child prodigy piano player. He had showbiz parents that pushed their kids into acting opportunities as well as lessons with the top level musicians around LA. John Friesen and I rehearsed with Craig for several months. I remember that Craig's mom told us that her astrologist said Craig was going to have all kinds of professional opportunities open up. Within a month, John and I were fired and he formed a band with Jay Jay Wiggins and a drummer and they soon appeared on TV on the Johnny Carson show. As an adult, he changed his name to Craig Huxley. Craig's parents had paid for three lessons for his younger brother to study with the fine Classical bass teacher, Nat Gangursky. As his brother didn't want to continue playing bass they gifted me his two prepaid lessons with Nat. I spent my last two years of high school studying with Nat. Nat was from Chicago and went through the Chicago Symphony Orchestra scene and moved to LA to be part of the studio scene and was the teacher of both the principal and co-principal of the LA Philharmonic. Nat had also studied with Herman Reinshagen, who was the former principal of the New York Philharmonic, so I was [very impressed and a bit anxious] to study with him. Reinshagen was also the teacher of Mingus and Al McKibbon. You know, I just got tapped into a lineage of bass playing. Also, Bill Plummer had studied with Reinshagen. So, it was a lineage to the Simandl School – German bow playing through this Czech-Germanic approach to playing the bass which was how I was studied. It's still a dominant school in classical bass but definitely not at the level it was when I was a student.

Cadence: At age 16, you took a master class with famed bassist Ray Brown at UCLA that you've described as "lifechanging." How so?

Dresser: I got a glimpse of the work ethic of Ray Brown. He put the fear of God in you – like if you don't practice eight hours a day and haven't made it by the time you were twenty, forget about it. He was so serious about what he did and inspiring. The authority of his sound, his virtuosity, absolute musicality and the seriousness of his person, and how he expressed himself was just – "No bullshit. Leave the bullshit at the door. No excuses. Deal." So, that was very inspiring.

Cadence: How did you come to start playing freely improvised music as a teenager?

Dresser: I always had an affinity towards improvising. It started as me goofing off from practicing my "lessons" and I started playing what sounded interesting to me. I saved up some money and bought an inexpensive multitrack reel to reel recorder and started doing experiments after hearing some John Cage and Henri Pousseur electronic music. I was fascinated with it. I had a friend named Michael Harrington who was a flute player and guitarist. With Michael on guitar we would play classics including Billie Holiday repertoire and "I Cover the Waterfront" and play the folk music/coffeehouse scene. He also had a radio show on KPFK, which is the Pacifica station of Los Angeles. His show was from midnight to 3 and we would start improvising at one in the morning. We'd free improvise on the radio. I was also playing in Rock bands that were on the expansive side. That's where I found my voice. I just had an affinity towards improvising and playing the instrument itself, much more than being a functional bassist. I worked hard to get good at that, but the expansiveness, I just sort of had a feel for it, a love for it.

Cadence: You've named bassist Bertram Turetzky to be the most influential person in your musical life.

Dresser: Yes! In 1970, there was an L.A. bass club that was the precursor to the International Society of Bassists, founded by Gary Karr. At the time, my former teacher Bill Plummer was the president. I had been studying with Nat Gangursky and I had heard about Turetsky. I remember asking Nat, 'Well, what about this Bert Turetsky?' and he kind of warned me/dissuaded me from checking him out. He said he was weird. I ended up seeing Bert at a solo show that was really compelling. I was blown away, I had never heard anyone play with such a rich robust sound, overflowing musicality, and confidence. He was doing these solo performance pieces where he talked and played. He spoke to me [through his music] and I met him after the concert and he asked where I was going to college and I said, 'I'm going to IU [Indiana University]' After speaking for a few minutes, he said, "You're not gonna last there. When you're ready, give me a call." He gave me his card and literally, three weeks after arriving at IU, where I studied with a great teacher named Murray Grodner, I gave Bert a call and he sent me an application and I transferred there the next year. IU was really training people to be orchestral bass players in the Classical world or you could study Jazz with the noted jazz educator, David Baker,

which I did, but Bert's approach was there's no such thing as New music, it's all music. You have to know how to sing, you have to know how to dance. It was fine to play in an orchestra but one needed to be able to play Chamber music. He had me playing the traditional solo bass repertoire as well as 20th Century repertoire. He had had more pieces written for him than any person in history at that point. I auditioned for him and I apparently had a great intensity to the way I played because he said, "Oh, I can see that you're a lifer," and no one had ever affirmed my potential [before]. And I didn't know what it meant, and still to this day, I was never impressed with what I could do but I believed in my potential. And I could go with that, I could bank on it. I was rarely happy with today's level but I believed that I could get better, and that's propelled me, even to this day. He's the one who introduced me to Stanley Crouch, who he brought down [to the school], and he had all these records [I listened to].

Cadence: What did Turetzky mean when he stressed, "Basically, as a bass player, there are two major things you need to learn how to do. You need to know when the music dances and when the music sings."

Dresser: Yeah, that's an oversimplification. He would identify the singing qualities of the music as well as rhythmic qualities. He studied with a great musician, lutenist and former bassist, named Joseph Iodoni, who studied with Paul Hindemith, as well as the great oboist and musicologist, Josef Marx. Bert emphasized that one needed to understand early music and their performance practices to fully understand and approach contemporary music. Paul Hindemith wrote that book Elementary Training for Musicians and Bert had me going through that – sight singing, ear training, and rhythmic training.. So, my lessons were not just bass playing, but musicianship. Bert's background was in musicology, as well as being a singular performer. He trained me in musicianship. His thing was, "You're not an instrumentalist, you're an artist." Again, those were really empowering words to me. To even have the idea of being an artist when you're just learning to play, a time when you're very unsure of yourself, but I was given a vision of what it could be. So, to that, I'm forever grateful. And also, the way he taught the bass was very, very non-dogmatic. He had a very holistic approach that was oriented towards musicianship, blending international schools of bass playing and chamber music including, "early music," Jazz and 20th Century Chamber music, rather than a single school of bass playing, more often than not, oriented towards orchestral playing. You would filter everything through your ear and understanding of the music as opposed to having an empirical, technical approach, which was very different from anyone I had ever studied with before.

Cadence: In 1972, you accompanied Turetzky to the Claremont College Chamber Music Festival in Pomona where he had a summer residency and you met drummer Stanley Crouch who invited you into his group, Black Music Infinity, the early West Coast Free Jazz unit.

Dresser: After the festival, I was not even 20-years-old, I stayed in Pomona at Stanley's house and the first time we played, we played trio with Bobby Bradford. Now, I didn't know what I was doing, I was studying and playing out of the Real Book and playing tunes but here, with Stanley, I was playing New music. We were trying to figure out what the New music was. I was playing Bobby Bradford, who had played with Ornette [Coleman] and I didn't really know Ornette's music. Stanley, not unlike Bert, was important in conceiving of the tradition as a continuum. One of Stanley's teaching methods was to play an excerpt of Louis Armstrong's and say, "Now listen to this," and he'd play something that was motivically related to Charlie Parker. Then he would play me something that was motivically related to Ornette, and so the idea that you could enter the music from where you were by educating yourself in the whole history of the music was liberating. It was sort of like you could enter the music from wherever you were and you didn't have to learn linearly, which meant that I didn't have to master Bebop to play so-called Avant-Garde. I could just keep listening and keep improving my musicianship, playing abilities, and fill in the holes as I invested in my strengths, which was improvising. So, that was completely liberating, not to mention the sometimes challenging social and cultural dimensions of being in an all-Black band -the Black Music Infinity, during a particular period of identity and consciousness. I know Stanley appreciated what I would do and he would say nice things. Bobby would never say a word, he'd just continue to play. [Laughs] I did a project with him years later, a trio with Glenn Ferris, and he said, "Dresser, I remember when you couldn't play dead!" [Laughs] I thought that was so funny. Yeah, those were really heady times. I felt like I was at the edge of something really exciting – musically and culturally. Musically I was at the edge of all my capabilities, and I was so grateful for it. Meanwhile, there was no money in it. Maybe we'd do two or three concerts a year! Yet I'd drive to Pomona from San Diego nearly weekly to rehearse. Up to that point, it was the most exciting musical period of my musical life.

Cadence: How was it to play in Stanley Crouch's Black Music Infinity, a group that at times included future stars – David Murray, Arthur Blythe, James Newton and Bobby Bradford?

Dresser: As I said, I first played with Stanley and Bobby, at Stanley's home and then soon Arthur Blythe joined the group. We rehearsed weekly. People would drive one hour out of L.A. to Pomona and it was two hours for me from San Diego. Then soon, James Newton, who was a year younger than me, joined, and then about a year later, David Murray joined on the recommendation of Ray Anderson. David came to study at Pomona College and I remember the first time he played with us, David was an immensely talented and confident young tenor player.

Cadence: Was it awkward being the only white member of Black Music Infinity during the height of the Black Power Movement?

Dresser: It was many things, yes, awkward is just one of them. I was culturally out of my comfort zone but it was exciting. I was embraced as a musician. I loved the community and everyone treated me with respect. Bobby may have never said anything about my playing but he was always helpful and generous with musical information. He was an important mentor. He never participated in any of the rhetoric of racial politics that were part of the time. I was blessed and fortunate to be part of the Black Music Infinity, and through that I met Horace Tapscott, Butch Morris, Wilber Morris and the great John Carter. It was just an amazing experience that was empowering, exciting and dynamic. And it wasn't like I came in with expertise, I was just game, working hard and showing up.

Cadence: You dropped out of UCSD after a year and a half because the music you were making with Black Music Infinity was so exciting and you lived in a flower truck for 3 months on the property of German artist Claus von Wendel, living a very alternative lifestyle. What were you thinking and what was going on there on his property and in the flower truck?

Dresser: That's true, we're talking about the early '70s. Claus also was an artist and builder of cool stuff, he made stained glass windows and all kinds of macro level environments. He encouraged all of us to create our lives. He had created this space and said, "You can come here and play 24 hours a day. Just come, show up with your instrument and play." He was facilitating all kinds of stuff and we would do that. We would show up and it was also a time we were experimenting with marijuana and psychedelics. It was all part of this milieu. I didn't really want to be a student, I just wanted to play. So, I dropped out and I was there. It was just really six months or less that I was doing this.

Cadence: After realizing you needed to earn a living, you moved back home with your parents, brushed up on your Classical bass skills, and impressively landed a job with the San Diego Symphony. How did that come about?

Dresser: I don't remember how I heard about the audition but I learned about it and said, 'Okay, I've had enough of this experiment, I'm gonna go back home to my folks if they'll take me,' which fortunately they did, 'and I'll work and get this going.' And it worked out, I was very fortunate. Yeah, things have worked out for me in ways that I couldn't have planned. I left San Diego and moved back to my parent's house and started taking lessons again with Nat Gangursky. I practiced my ass off for three months and was able to pass the audition and got a contracted job with the San Diego Symphony. I remember at the time that it was a dramatic decision. 'Am I gonna sell out and play with symphony or am I gonna dedicate my life to 'the music?,"' which was playing with the Black Music Infinity? I remember Bradford wisely saying, "Listen Dresser, as long as you keep a bass in your hand, and you're able to make a living doing that, that's what you should be doing." And that was a really wise decision because I wasn't working in a record store or doing a day gig, I was able to make a living playing the bass. The orchestra [gig] went on for a couple

years and then they went on strike. By that time, I was getting fed up with the politics of the orchestra. I learned a lot and had a great time working with my peer musicians, especially bassist Peter Rofé, but I wasn't really cut out to do that kind of music, as great as it was, I loved the variation of improvising.

Cadence: After the symphony went on strike, you went to New York with your then girlfriend for what was to be a short visit that ended up becoming a two-year stay on the East Coast.

Dresser: It was a three week vacation with no intention of staying but things were happening there. David [Murray] was out of town and said I could stay at this loft. His roommate was Ray Anderson. I arrived at 6th Street and Avenue B, no doorbell, and finally someone came, it was Ray. I didn't know what he looked like, but I saw this guy, about my age, with marks around his chops. I said, 'Are you Ray?' He said, "Yeah, come on in," and we played and it was like instant fire. I mean, I broke a string, I was playing so hard. What we were doing was so exciting and affirming, it felt like I had found musically what I was supposed to be doing. And then David, Stanley and I started playing concerts together and things just started happening. With David's trio with Stanley Crouch we started getting great press. It was sort of, 'Why am I going to return to San Diego to play?' I didn't want to do the symphony and I really didn't want to go to school. I was exactly where I wanted to be.

Cadence: You had a rough introduction to New York City life that first day.

Dresser: Right, on day one, someone threw a brick through the back window of my VW van and stole a Mexican blanket, recorder and my African hat.

Cadence: What did you do when you saw your African hat on someone walking down the street two days later?

Dresser: I did nothing. I laughed it off and had my first "welcome to New York story." My girlfriend at the time had friends in New Haven (Connecticut) and we ended up parking the van there. In New Haven I met Anthony Davis, Mark Helias, Robert Dick, Pheeroan akLaff, all these people who would become lifelong friends. Again, I was just at the right place, at the right time, and it wasn't like I was going to school at Yale. We ended up moving because I wasn't ready to live in New York, it was just too intense. I was able to work in New Haven doing casuals. Mark Helias hooked me up with a couple contractors in town and I was able to work immediately because I had musicianship and I could play. I started working with some of the people who were part of the community of Bert Turetzky, because he was from Connecticut. Things just worked out for me, and that lasted for two years until the relationship [with the girlfriend went bad]. It was time to leave after two years so I had to do all kinds of crazy gigs to afford being able to leave and go back to California. I didn't know how things were gonna go but I knew I desperately wanted to be a musician. I had no other skills, I just wanted to play and I didn't know how to do it. I got back to San Diego and I was living in a gazebo, sleeping in a sleeping bag, outside the home of the girlfriend's brother, doing gigs. I finally

had enough and got into the CETA program [a federal jobs program] and was able to earn enough money to get unemployment and help arrange a music festival. At that point, Bert said, "You know, if you went back to school and finished your degree, it could serve you. You could maybe teach at one point. I really recommend you do it." And for me, there were two choices – either do that and buy time to get better, or move back to New York, understanding that at the end, while I was living in New York, in order to do the music [I wanted to play] it meant having to play shows in the Catskills to pay for my rent. So, if I'm in the Catskills doing shows to live in New York, and not playing the music, it seemed better to me at the time to go invest in my education and see how that worked out. I could always move back to New York, I proved it once, and that turned out to be a wise move and I'm forever grateful to Bert for encouraging me to do that.

Cadence: As you mentioned, you returned to New York City from New Haven to play with people including David Murray, who was gaining a lot of publicity, yet you still couldn't afford living there. You've said in the past that you didn't have the skill set at age 24 to support yourself in New York?

Dresser: I was playing the loft scene, I could do shows but I wasn't at the level to play New York level Post-Bop gigs. The loft scene had no real work and I needed more musicianship. I needed more training to be able to be competitive and also my relationship was dying so I went back to California. I went back to school and got that degree. I took Bert's sage advice and went to the woodshed and worked my ass off. I did my first solo recording and improved my musicianship skills and sat around and then went on the Fulbright and was able to get more information, and then when I finally went back to New York in '86, I was a much more evolved player. I was able to immediately plug into things that were happening. You have to be ready at the right time. If it's not the right time, it can't work. At least that's been my experience. It was people like Ray, Tim and Zorn, people who had stayed in New York the whole time, I was able to profit from their perseverance and hard work. I came in and I was the guy who was able to do things. Not everyone had serious arco chops at the time. I could do that and read complicated music so I was busy immediately.

Cadence: As you said, eventually, things turned around and you found plenty of work through the CETA program and the musician's union, met your future wife, and Ray Anderson hired you in 1980 for your first European tour.

Dresser: I met Carol Del Signore in 1979 and I was still trying to figure out how to do my career. The first family affair I brought her to, I was playing my sister's wedding. I had been practicing thumb position like crazy, trying to get it together. I was over practicing. I remember playing at the wedding, throwing my thumb onto the string, hammering, and all of a sudden, I got an electric shock up my arm and damaged a nerve. And for six months, I couldn't bend my thumb. That's about the time I got a call from Ray asking if I could do a tour of Europe. It was his first tour as a leader and my first European tour. I

told him, 'Yeah, I'll be there,' but for months I couldn't play. I was seeing every quack doctor and finally met someone [who helped me] and it was literally like a week before the tour that I finally healed, thanks to a bunch of things. So, a week before I left for the tour, I could bend my thumb for the first time. It was like my career was never to happen or it was going to begin because I could play. Fortunately, it worked out and that was really exciting. I have all these crazy stories from that first tour, as every musician has. The first paying gig on the tour was the Moers Festival. They had bought a seat for me and the bass on Capital Airlines, a fleabag, cheap flight, and [when I showed up] they wouldn't take the bass because of the small size of their seats. By chance, I had sat next to a German woman on the subway from Manhattan to JFK [Airport] who was also flying to Frankfurt, Germany, leaving at the same hour on Sabena [Airlines]. When I couldn't get on the plane, the promoter for the Moers Festival was ready to replace me but I said, 'No, man, you're gonna pay for this flight.' I researched it and I found out Sabena could accommodate me so I got on their flight with the bass. The promoter agreed to reimburse me so I fronted the cost. I've had challenges along the way but everything worked out. That's been a theme for me. There's no guarantees in this business. It's an act of will, faith and luck, and it's been my good fortune that things have worked out. The hard work, I'll take credit for that, but the good fortune, that's something else. I've met people who have been kind and empowering – people such as my wife, of course, to other musicians, and since 2000, luthier Kent McLagan has invested his time in making instruments for me. There's no financial profit in realizing these sonic ideas. This is about curiosity, the ability to manifest tools for someone else's creativity, this is about the intangibles of life. That's just amazing.

Cadence: Upon your return to UCSD at age 27 to finish your studies, you found an important mentor in trombonist Jimmy Cheatham. How did Cheatham help you?

Dresser: He was a person who could see, he could look into someone. One day he could tell that I was feeling upset and down and he basically said, "Man, don't invest any energy in self-pity, just work and make it happen." It was instilling belief in oneself. I wanted to play piano again and compose and he gave me some basic fundamental stuff and told me to just do it. He was one of those people who believed in my potential and he would tell me, "You're gonna do some stuff." That's so invaluable for a young musician, it's worth more than anything specific that someone could teach you. It's about work ethic and attitude – "You can do it, man, but you've got to do it." He had an incredible spirit with an infectious laugh and suffered no fools. He was really important to me. Jimmy had played with Ellington and Ellington was a hero. Going back to my time with Stanley, who adored Ellington, we would listen to Ellington from a modern perspective. How he wrote for individuals, the power of individual voice, and to meet someone who had played with Ellington,

even if it was as a sub, was just touching part of that legacy which I wanted to be part of. Jimmy also set up jam sessions. His wife, Jeannie Cheatham, was a piano and Blues player, and they were people who would call you up and pull your coat if you were doing something that seemed right but was musically wrong. They were generous enough to call you up and say, "Hey, man, that's not really happening, you should do this."

Cadence: A Fulbright Scholarship allowed you to study with famed Classical bassist Franco Petracchi in Italy in 1983. Talk about that experience.

Dresser: Petracchi was amazing. Turetzky had talked to me about Petracchi. Italy was one of the countries that you had to have a year of studying the language before you could apply for the Fulbright, whereas for France, you had to have studied two years and passed a proficiency test to be able to apply. So France was out of the question but Italy was within reach. I sent him an audition tape and I was accepted into the Fulbright and he accepted me as a student. He was great, he could see that I was not really trying to be a Classical virtuoso, that I had my own music. I had already done my first solo cassette. He dug me and he was kind and generous. He was very much a technical teacher, but out of the Italian School, which was intensely musical, coming out of an operatic tradition. He was very empowering and a great bassist.

Cadence: Your interest lay in Avant-Garde Jazz, why did you decide to train with Petracchi?

Dresser: I had a friend who said, "You're already the best guy in town, why are you sticking around San Diego? You should really go to Europe," and that really pissed me off. So I applied because deep down I knew he was right. I ended up getting the Fulbright and it was a ticket out. And then I asked Carol to marry me and I realized whether I got the Fulbright or not, we were to get married, because when I met her, my life started to work. I can't explain it more than that. And then I got the Fulbright and we moved. She's of Italian origin and she had relatives there so we stayed an extra year past the Fulbright. I kept studying with Petracchi and I met lifelong friends there including the great pianist/accordion player Antonello Salis, alto saxophonist Sandro Satta, the wonderful pianist Riccardo Fassi and saxophonist Maurizio Giammarco. I also became friends with American dancer Roberta Garrison and her son Matthew Garrison, the great electric bass player. I gave him bass lessons when he was a teenager, before he moved to the US to live with Jack DeJohnette. Yeah, those were great times. We loved Italy but it became clear [that I had to come home]. At first, as an American in Italy, there was a lot of interest – "Look who's in town, let's see what he can do." But after spending more time there, it was like, "Well, why are they staying here if they're so good?" I couldn't get to the next step in Italy because I really couldn't speak Italian well and wasn't able to maneuver all the nuanced cultural issues, as much as I loved living there.

Cadence: It was a fateful call in 1985 from your former New York City neighbor, drummer Gerry Hemingway, that got you out of Italy. He

recommended you to Anthony Braxton, who needed a bass player to complete a European tour.

Dresser: Again, I was fortunate enough, with the good serendipity that runs through my life, to get the call from Gerry, who said, "Listen, man, Braxton just fired his bass player. We need a bass player, can you join us in Ljubljana in a couple days?" I said sure but there wasn't money for me to bring my bass. Him inviting me was the sign it was time to return to America. Braxton invited me to join the quartet after the tour and I clearly had to be in the US. I had an unfinished master's degree, so I went back to San Diego and finished the last nine months of my masters and then we moved to New York. That's when things started to pop. I started working with Ray again, I met Tim Berne and started playing with him regularly. I met Zorn and started participating in the scene there.

Cadence: You had played with Braxton once before at a 1978 festival so he was aware of you. What were your thoughts when you got that call?

Dresser: The one concert I had done with Braxton was with Sonny Simmons, Barbara Donald and Eddie Marshall, the great drummer. Man, at the end, Braxton said, "I'd love to play with you if you're on the East Coast." I thanked him but I was still in school.

Cadence: As you said, you joined Braxton's quartet a couple days later in what was then Yugoslavia with little time to prepare. His band arrived 15 minutes before the first gig so there was no rehearsal, you didn't have your own bass and to top it off, Braxton pulled out the hardest charts in his book including "Composition 121," a fifty-page, fully notated piece, all on separate pages.

Dresser: Right, zero time to prepare and I was sure at the end of the gig I had been fired. [Laughs] I remember yelling to Hemingway during the gig – 'What page are we on?!' literally, a page would last ten seconds. There were fifty pages but they were scored and handwritten. [Laughs] It was just crazy. Every ten to fifteen seconds it was another page, and I'm sight reading. I wasn't bad but I was sure I was fired, but the gig continued. Waiting for the band to arrive that first time? I was there, it was gonna happen. People are delayed, there's nothing to think, just wait. Okay, no rehearsal time? I gotta make this work. You do the best you can, as always. There's no rehearsal for life, you jump in and do the best you can.

Cadence: You were part of Anthony Braxton's historic quartet from 1985-1994 along with Marilyn Crispell and Gerry Hemingway. Talk about playing Braxton's "trans-idiomatic" music and what changed as time went on.

Dresser: I played with Braxton for nine years and it was incredible. There was just kind of a magic chemistry. Hemingway and I had done a lot of playing together and we had been talking about what we loved to do. We were woodshedding so we could try out a lot of things that we had been interested in within the context of Braxton's group and Braxton was very empowering

too. He said, "You take care of the music," and gave me a book of over 300 pieces of music. He was very empowering-at the end of every concert he would thank us for "our" music. Playing the music was fascinating. It was a beautiful combination of the maximal amount of responsibility and freedom to make creative choices, whether improvising or making choices about the music once the primary level of the set list was decided. His ideal was the music was to be 50% the scores, and 50% improvised. What changed in the quartet from the day I began to when we left was that the music became less about soloing, the power of the soloist, to became a collective music. And that just evolved. I remember doing a concert in Munich on that first tour and I was given a bass that had no endpin. I literally had my Swiss Army knife out and I had to whittle an endpin out of a broom handle. I stuck it in the bass and played. At that same performance, we were playing the charts and he thought that we were playing it too safe so he came over to us, and this was the only time he ever said anything critical, and he said, "Listen, uhm, Mark, Gerry and Marilyn, I want you to go out there and KILL!" With Braxton, it was always trial by fire, he believed in that. You'd never pander to what the easiest, expedient thing was. It was whatever the most ambitious idea was, that's what was gonna win. First of all, the music was often orchestrated in tandem. Often, Marilyn and Anthony were playing one chart that was in rhythmic unison, and then Gerry and I were in another part that was independent, and then after so many beats, we would go into rhythmic synchrony. That's with these pulse tracks. I suggested a strategy that involved metric modulation, to play a parametric 4/4, which was something that Gerry and I had been experimenting with based on our love of Mingus' music. I think this one strategy was something that I brought to the mix, with the cooperation and collaboration of Gerry. This became a strategy that I continued to explore in my own music. At one recording session, we had one of those pieces that I just described, and I was counting beats to make sure parts aligned and I realized that there was one part of the music where there were three extra beats in the horn and piano score than what the bass and drums had. I said, 'Hey, Anthony, the beats don't align. What do you want us to do?' And he just looked at me and said, "Make it work!" I said, 'Okay.' [Laughs] That is the only rule in improvisation - just make it work. With that band, I felt that what we had figured out, meaning, especially me, was how to recover from mistakes. How to make mistakes work. It wasn't about being perfect, it was how to land on your feet. It was how to flow, essentially.

Cadence: He didn't give you a lot of direction or feedback?

Dresser: It was always positive feedback. As I said he was an empowering bandleader – "You're the best people that I could ever hope for my music. We're doing important things." That kind of feedback. He was the kind of guy that when we went to play Victoriaville, and he forgot his own music, instead of photocopying Marilyn's part, which was identical to his own, he was so

angry with himself that he copied the music by hand. I don't know what that was, but it was just sort of like his commitment to being excellent, to being completely committed. He was not going to be massaged by simply copying something. He had to put that maximum effort into it. It was very impressive, and his commitment to us as people was unshakable. During the days of the quartet, it felt very much like a family. Braxton is a very, very beautiful person. I can't express my feelings about him, he has a very special power and a vibration that is very positive. There's nothing egalitarian about the music, it's his music and you're working for him. You do that job and within that, you can do no wrong as long as you give it everything, and he gives you that permission to always go for it, to give it everything. So, again, he's giving you the permission to be the best version of yourself, whether you are every night or not. Of course, you're not, you fail, but failing in the Braxton school is not giving your all. It's not, not trying. Trying's fine but give blood. That stuck – trying always to work your hardest, giving your best. That's what stuck for me, not anything specifically musical, it's just that commitment, I hope. That's what it was to me. Braxton continues to be totally committed and completely never to be dissuaded from anything he loved, even if it was unpopular. I mean, what musician is going to, in the height of Black Power, say he loves Paul Desmond and Warne Marsh? That was musically blasphemous, and he got crucified in the press, but he didn't give a shit. That's what he believed and no one was going to dissuade him from that. And having an all-white band in that period? He just thought we were the best thing for his music. And me to be in that position, just like to be in the Black Music Infinity, how could I feel anything but completely grateful and completely fortunate to be embraced by that, and because of that, people in the critical press, for the first time, took me seriously. Dave Holland played with Braxton, a lot of great players played with Braxton, and it gave me credibility that helped my career.

Cadence: Would you share some memories or travel stories of Braxton?

Dresser: Much of it is documented in the Graham Lock book [Forces in Motion]. This is just a personal story. I had left something at a hotel and we were with our luggage somewhere. I was standing with the bass and Braxton said, "I'll go get it." He saw that I was with the bass and he literally got up and ran to try to find this thing for me. It just showed that he fuckin cared. If you were in with him, he was in with you. That showed a level of care and love. Meaning, it's not by what you say, it's what you do, and he showed that it wasn't just talk. I was 27 and he was 38. You know, he had no business doing that, running to get my stuff. That's just the kind of person he was.

Cadence: What would we be surprised to hear about Braxton?

Dresser: For people that don't know him and think that he's this very serious guy, which he is, he's a guy of TREMENDOUS humor and ebullient spirit. He can be hilarious and joyous, he can just light up the thing.

Cadence: When I interviewed Braxton a number of years ago, what surprised

me was his love of McDonalds. He told me that when he arrives in a new city, he will study the location of each McDonalds.

Dresser: Yeah, yeah, [Laughs] his culinary bandwidth is very narrow. Yeah, we used to joke that he should get a grant from the Ray Kroc Foundation.

Cadence: Why did the quartet end?

Dresser: It was sad and disappointing. When he disbanded the quartet, he didn't call us up and say it's over. We heard secondhand that it was over, we never heard a word. I was like, 'Okay, whatever,' but it was hard. It was really hard for us because we had grown to love that thing and knew it was magic. It was time for him to move to the next stage in his music and he always did what was best for his music. When he hired us, he felt it was best for his music, and when he changed directions, he felt it was best. You've got to respect it, whether or not he's sugarcoating it or not, and he certainly didn't. But we remain dear friends, although we rarely see him, and he continues to do great things and to evolve his music.

Cadence: Were there problems inside the quartet?

Dresser: Not really, there weren't any problems that I was aware of, he just wanted to do something else. He changed the direction of his music - he went to Ghost Trance music and was teaching at Wesleyan and he could work out his ideas with his students.. I remember him talking about it, that he wanted us to come up and participate in it, but it never happened. He started to work with his students and they were accessible to him and he could work with that music. Why would he do what was easy to do? And he did, and it was the completely right thing for him to do. It didn't mean that it didn't sting, but I got it. And I was gonna be fine because I was living in New York, I was playing with good people. Again, it was an affirmation to continue doing my thing and everything worked out for all of us.

Cadence: The quartet did play one more time at New York City's Le Poisson Rouge in June 2010 to celebrate Braxton's 65th birthday. How was it to play as a unit again and how was it decided what to play?

Dresser: We were asked to play trio and that Braxton might join us for a tune. It wasn't that we were playing quartet. We all still had his music and Gerry, Marilyn and I chose some tunes to play as a trio. Braxton got up there, and I guess he didn't have his music, and he said, "Let's play "Impressions."" So we played "Impressions," the Coltrane tune. We played the set and after it, people responded really powerfully to it. [John] Zorn, the next day, asked us to record as a trio, playing that music. Steve Coleman also came up and was effusive, and that's that.

Cadence: The trio just completed a four gig tour which was the first time you had played together in years. How was it to play in that setting again?

Dresser: This was our first time playing together after making the recording for Zorn [2011] and we played one other time at the Knitting Factory. This was the first time in 12 years that we had played together. I just had a residency at

The Stone [late June 2023] and the final night featured the trio. At one point, before Gerry moved away to Lucerne, I had done more gigs with him than any other drummer, but that was a long time ago. And literally, I hadn't played with Marilyn, I don't believe, since we recorded that record for Zorn. You know what's really uncanny is that there's just an inherent chemistry with these personalities that's just there and, speaking for myself, I play differently with them than I do with anyone else, and I would think that's probably true for them as well. It's just a particular kind of chemistry that we've had from the beginning a certain kind of empathy. I really don't understand it, it always tends to be greater than the sum of its parts, and the response that we always get from the audience always shocks me. I'm always aware of every deficit, [Laughs] everything that I was trying to do, but there's something that happens that is beyond analysis. It's just a synergy. I don't have the vocabulary for it. There's a real familial feeling between us that still exists, even with everyone's idiosyncrasies. You know, the way we've gotten weirder as we've gotten older. [Laughs] I've got their backs and I have a special feeling for them as people and as musicians, both are intertwined. It was a joy to play with them again, and I realized how much I missed that particular configuration. And I had something to compare it with because I'd just done that residency at The Stone, playing with four different groups, all of whom I've had long histories with. In each group I find myself playing somewhat differently. Of course, that would be expected, in a sense, but the chemistry with Gerry and Marilyn is really particular because of both the specificities of Braxton's music as well as the amount of freedom it gives us, and that's something Braxton's music has always had – maximum responsibility and maximum freedom. It's sort of an equal measure. Of course, I was thinking about Braxton and wished he had been there, but that's another story.

Cadence: There was a tragic event that happened during your recent trio tour in Hartford.

Dresser: Oh, God, I'll talk about it briefly. Our soundman for the gig at Real Art Ways, after the set, he expired in the parking lot as he was loading the heavy gear into his vehicle. We were called out and told that he was on the ground and did anyone know CPR. I jumped in and tried my best until the paramedics arrived. They had oxygen and used a defibrillator but to no avail. He hadn't been out there long when I got to him but I was told he was probably gone by then. It's thought that he had a heart attack. It was quite tragic, I'll never forget it, of course. It was so dramatic, and with us being on the road, we just had to get up early the next morning and continue driving down to Philly, do two concerts, and drive back up. There was no time to fully process it. It's very sad, I'm glad I had a chance to try but it was to no avail. That will remain a question mark. Believe me, I've sent all the links to CPR to both of them. I had never done CPR myself but I had seen it on YouTube and I just went, 'Okay, here we go.'

Cadence: Are you saying you never trained in CPR?
Dresser: No, I wasn't trained but I had seen it. It's not that complicated. I'm a big, strong guy, I can do chest compressions at a fast tempo. I even did mouth-to-mouth, which I learned after the fact, they don't even do that anymore. That sort of gave me the post-COVID willies, to be frank. In the heat of the moment, I reacted, I did my best.
Cadence: Well, you certainly earned your wings.
Dresser: Yeah, for what? [Laughs]
Cadence: A great effort. It would seem natural for the trio to continue on as a working unit. Why has that not happened?
Dresser: We've all been doing different things. I live on the West Coast, Gerry lives in Lucerne and Marilyn in Woodstock. Braxton is the glue in our musical history together. Though it made sense for one or two concerts, it frankly would feel a bit strange to be performing his early music regularly, without him, especially when he isn't interested in performing it himself. Since the pandemic I've been investing in my solo bass investigations in relation to recording and working on a book. In 2019 I got a grant to compose this septet music which I performed at the Vision Festival. I feel grateful that at age seventy and a half, I'm still excited about performing and developing new music. Frankly, I've never been more excited about playing the bass as I am now.. Having a teaching job has given me the financial foundation to be able to continue. I'll retire in the near future and I'll be able to continue playing. It's like what is success? To be able to continue to develop my music and hopefully share it with an audience. it's just being able to play and develop and spend your time doing what's most meaningful.
Cadence: After Braxton hired you, you relocated back to New York City in 1986 to live for the next 18 years. Would you talk about some of the groups you worked with during that time?
Dresser: Early on, Tim [Berne] hired me to work [in his Caos Totale group] and I worked with both Tambastics and Arcado String Trio which were collaborative works. Tambastics with Robert Dick and Gerry Hemingway, it started out as a trio, and then I met Denman Maroney, who is a very important person in my music, because once I met Denman, I realized he played the piano like I was playing bass - playing the overtones and bitones - so I started making him central to all of my musical relationships. I brought him into the Tambastics and into my trio and into my quintet. He became the person that I built all my groups with. Arcado, that came out of Hank Roberts. We both played with Tim and I wanted to do something without drums, because once you added drums, so much of what I could do got acoustically obliterated, even though I love playing with drums. So, we formed Arcado String Trio with Mark Feldman. Eventually, Hank moved out of town to Ithaca to stay home for family reasons and Ernst Reijseger joined us. We had a good little run there for a few years.

Cadence: What was your experience recording John Zorn's classic 1988 Spy vs Spy: The Music of Ornette Coleman, a work that combined Free Jazz with hardcore Punk?

Dresser: John Zorn always has really clear ideas of what he wants and that was different from anything that I had done. I just did my best to be able to deal, which required playing super loud and super-fast. There were two drummers, two saxophonists and me. Just to be able to sonically penetrate was really something. I remember that infamous Philly gig at the Painted Bride where the curator, before we went on, apologized to the audience that this was going to be very, very loud concert, and Zorn came out and said, "Fuck you, man, what were you expecting? Kenny G?" [Laughs] And then we played this set. I had never played anything so loud in my life. I think [drummers] Michael Vatcher and Ted Epstein, from Blonde Idiot God, were on that gig and the drums were amplified. I used two stacks of speaker boxes. It was over the top but it was great fun. Once again, I didn't know what I was doing. I was just doing the best that I could do and I've been friends with Zorn ever since.

Cadence: What other happenings stand out from your time in New York including horror stories?

Dresser: Horror stories I don't want to revisit, what's important is the relationships formed, the things that lasted, lasted. Myra [Melford] and I had done things and we met up again at a recording session by Andrew Drury and we clicked in a way that we hadn't before but then 9/11 happened. Something that came out of 9/11 was that Myra and I played a memorial concert for Gillian Levine, a beloved concert promoter in Cambridge and the founding director of the Boston Creative Music Alliance. That Boston concert came ten days after 9/11, a time when people were still skittish about flying, and there had even been rumors that there was going to be an attack on Boston. There was a lot of nonsense. I remember speaking to my wife and mother – 'Should I go?' "Yeah, go," so I flew up there with Myra. Marty Ehrlich and Leroy Jenkins were also on the flight and William Parker drove up there. Those folks that did that, we kind of bonded on a special level based on overcoming fear to do something right. And I don't know if it was really right or not, but we became really close. That was 2001, in 2004, both Myra and I got teaching jobs in the UC system and we started to want to play together because of our relationship and because the hard thing about leaving New York was my natural ecosystem of collaborators was removed and the people living in San Diego were not those folks at all. And that's what brought me to the telematic thing. Also, before I left New York, I became really close friends with Roswell Rudd and we started doing things together – duo concerts. And he really kind of helped prepare me to think about teaching.

Cadence: Why did you decide to exit New York?

Dresser: After 9/11, I said, 'Well, fuck it. If I never play a note again, it doesn't matter. My daughter is the future.' So I started looking at how to get out of there. A friend gave me a contact about a job in Auckland but my wife

said, "No, no, if you can't be near the people you love, what's life worth living?" And I'm thinking, 'Well, being alive is worth something,' but I said, 'I'm sticking with you.' And then I spoke with an old friend who taught at Hampshire College, she offered me a concert there. I played the concert and then she said in passing that Yusef Lateef was retiring from teaching there and they were looking for someone. I said I was interested but she said it was hardly worth my time, but someone had advised me that if I was interested in getting teaching work, to leave town. I needed experience because on paper, having recorded a 100 records didn't look significantly different than someone who had a Ph.D., which I didn't have, I had a masters. So, I took the job not knowing what it was gonna do [for me] but to get teaching experience. And then on the advice of Jane Ira Bloom, I submitted a course description to the New School and I was able to start teaching there simultaneously. A year later, I auditioned for a teaching position for a composer/performer at Princeton. I was a finalist and then they gave me a fellowship. Then UCSD called me up and asked if I would be interested in interviewing and we went.

Cadence: How did it feel taking over the position held by Bertram Turetzky, your mentor, who had retired two years previously.

Dresser: Yeah, I had the same office number, it felt surreal. Things fell in place in a way that I couldn't explain. I even had the same phone number as him, and the last 4 digits of his phone were the same 4 numbers of my home phone. The last person I recorded and performed with in New York, was the first person I performed with in San Diego. The first gig I did outside of California was playing with Pauline [Oliveros], playing a piece of hers for Bert. There were all these serendipitous kinds of coincidences that made me feel like this was supposed to happen in some kind of inexplicable way. I grew up in LA, I was able to be around my family during the last three years of my father's life. If I had lived in New York, I couldn't have been as present. That was a good thing and I was able to afford paying for my daughter's education. It just facilitated a new chapter in my life and facilitated me to grow in unanticipated ways – like telematic music making. I learned a whole new dimension about performing, composing, about teaching, it just intellectually fired me up. San Diego was very nourishing. Basically, in that environment, your biggest enemy is not anyone trying to hold you back, but inertia, your ability to just not push through. The big lesson is just work your ass off and nothing but your best will get the job done. That proved to be true, if you work hard enough, and you've got the goods, and the time can facilitate it, extraordinary things can happen. Nothing is guaranteed but if something has the potential to happen, only maximal effort will facilitate it, anything less won't get it done. That's been my experience.

Cadence: Talk about serving as a full professor at UCSD since 2004. How prepared were you for that role?

Dresser: I had been teaching private bass lessons for close to two decades

and I had been teaching adjunct at both Hampshire College, teaching Yusef Lateef's class, and I also taught a course I designed at the New School called Sound and Time. I also had a fellowship to teach a semester at Princeton on improvisational driven composition. Then I got the invitation to interview for the UCSD job, and got it, but I had never taught on that level before. So, I wasn't totally unprepared, I had had some classroom preparation for a couple years, but the demands of a full time gig in an ongoing bass studio where you meet with folks weekly, I had not done. After starting at UCSD, I soon started a bass ensemble where I invited members of the graduate community to compose for the ensemble and I also required my bass players to either compose or arrange something for the ensemble. Typically, the way traditional music schools are structured is that the disciplines before composition and performance and computer music and scholarship, they're usually pretty segregated, but I knew when I was that age, I wanted to compose but it was frowned upon institutionally and I wanted to open that up and give permission and encourage people to dig into it. I had a lot of instrumental information that I wanted to share, especially with the composers. In 2010 I did this CD/DVD called GUTS where I sort of broke down all the extended techniques that I'd been working with for my career. I formalized that information so I could share that with everyone and they were free to use whatever seemed of value to them. I've enjoyed that, and we even did it during the pandemic, which was really wild because we weren't allowed to meet in person. Because of my telematic experience since 2007, I'd had experience learning how to play remotely, so I created a research group with the bass players. Each one of them were in their practice rooms with their laptops, audio interfaces and microphones, and we would connect within the building, and then we would meet with our composers using a special software. We learned and performed 14 different pieces during the pandemic. It was really remarkable. The necessity to perform gave us the impetus to really get it done. It was an imperfect way to learn but it was perfectly doable and successful. On a musical and personal level, that was really affirming.

Cadence: Do you use any unusual or unique teaching methods?

Dresser: I share the stuff I've researched as well as encourage them to mine what interests them.. With the graduate students, they typically have a point of view on what they want to accomplish and I try to support them trying to be who they want to be and what they want to do. I'm not trying to make people play like I do, on any level, other than that they can play the instrument. The undergraduates are usually on a more basic technical level, so I'm sharing my background, and some of that's quite traditional, but it's often holistic, like how I was taught by Bert, to bring in a lot of different methods, not just one.

Cadence: You've played with a number of cooperative groups that I'd like to ask about. How about Trio M with Myra Melford and Matt Wilson?

Dresser: Trio M has been playing together since 2006. Myra and I had been playing together and we started to think who to add on drums. We thought

of Matt and once we started playing with Matt, there was such a synergy that, because we all have slightly different backgrounds, I've always felt the result was greater than the sum of its parts. Matt is such a musical guy. It's always easy to play with them and it's always fun. It's open playing but everyone brings in compositions.

Cadence: Talk about Jones Jones which includes Larry Oches and Vladimir Tarasov.

Dresser: That's a different situation, it's completely open and, again, that's a chemistry that works. We've done a fair number of tours since 2006. That's been a joyful thing.

Cadence: Why form a trio with Tarasov who lives in Lithuania?

Dresser: It's because of human chemistry and at the time, he was coming regularly to Sacramento, he had a girlfriend there. The fact that he was going to be on the West Coast, and is a phenomenal musician, was an opportunity to do something together. Larry would set up something in the Bay Area and I'd try to make something happen in San Diego or LA. Larry, more often than not, does the lion share of the organizing our tours.

Cadence: Why the name Jones Jones?

Dresser: Oh, it was kind of a joke. I don't remember the exact conversation but there's a parlance when you don't remember someone's name, people refer to them as Jones. "Hey Jones, what's happening?" And Jones is also a euphemism for an addiction. So it was Jones Jones, and of course, English not being Vladimir's native language, it took a while for him to get it. He was calling it Johnson and Johnson. [Laughs] We just had a lot of fun with the title because it was really a joke and humor's as good a motivator as anything. We would make titles with Jones intrinsic in every title.

Cadence: Jones Jones has toured Russia a few times. What's been your experience there?

Dresser: Vladimir, though he's been living in Lithuania for over 30 years, he was born in Arkhangelsk, Russia. He had been part of the Ganelin Trio which during the Soviet era, they were the premier improvising trio. I had met him in 1983 or '84, when they played in Rome and I was living there on my Fulbright. We ended up on the same bill. I was brought in by Mario Schiano, who is sort of the father of Free Jazz in Rome. I ended up sitting in with the Ganelin Trio and we had really good chemistry and liked each other. I also joined them for a radio broadcast in Rome. Over the years, Vladimir and I stayed in touch. He's a great musician and a great person.

Cadence: How about Mauger with Rudresh Mahanthappa and Gerry Hemingway?

Dresser: That had its time too, I can't remember the last time we played. At a certain point, Rudresh started getting really busy with his own projects and Gerry moved to Switzerland. That [group] clearly stopped. It's interesting what continues and what stops, but everything has a cycle of existing. With that trio,

each one of us would bring in our own tunes. Gerry and I would share a lot of things together based on our long history together. Gerry's quite a composer, as well as being a virtuoso, unique drummer. And Rudresh is like another generation. He was interested in playing so we did it. We were able to do a tour and make a record. There was a point where there was interest in that project and we checked it out. After I moved to California, it became harder to do stuff together

Cadence: Why the name Mauger?

Dresser: I don't even remember. There was a story behind it, I think it was Gerry's idea. There's often humor intertwined with these collective bands and how they define themselves.

Cadence: You also have played in C/D/E with Andrew Cyrille and Marty Ehrlich.

Dresser: Marty and I are clearly a generation younger than Andrew but he was interested in giving it a go and we did a few tours. He had done a couple hits with me when I had residencies at The Stone. It was beautiful, what a great honor to play with Maestro Cyrille. He's a great man and a great drummer with a very special feeling in the music and a way of orchestrating the drums that is really singular. It was fun, I loved it.

Cadence: What attracts you to cooperative groups?

Dresser: To be a band leader, especially if you're bicoastal, you're going against the grain. [A cooperative group] is a way you can do something and everyone has some input. I can't think of many musicians who don't do some kind of cooperative activity. In an era when there's very little business in our business, it's quite an investment in time, rehearsal, money and effort to do something as a leader. If everything is improvised. That's one thing, but if I'm trying to realize compositions, which is something that I've spent a lot of time doing, I want to rehearse it.

Cadence: One of the bands you have led is the Mark Dresser Trio.

Dresser: Yes, my trio with Matthias Ziegler and Denman Maroney. I had met Matthias in the early '90s while playing in Switzerland with Ray Anderson. He invited us over to his house for pasta and he had this giant flute hanging on a wire and I could just tell he was sonically obsessed. Eventually, he commissioned me to compose a piece for him, his flutes and string quartet, and I added myself into the project. It was a piece that Tzadik recorded called Banquet. Matthias had heard Denman and actually he's the one who suggested we do something with Denman. Denman was in New York and we did our first gig at the original Knitting Factory. Denman is someone who I had instant sonic chemistry with. The way he plays the piano, especially inside the piano, has so many parallels to how I play the bass. It just made complete sense to join forces with him and during my last decade in New York, most every band that I was a part of, cooperative or not, I made sure Denman was at the center of that because he was such a good springboard for the kinds of things I wanted to hear. I invited him to be part of the Tambastics, and when I put together my

first quintet with Dave Douglas, Theo Bleckmann and Phil Haynes, Denman was there. Matthias lived in Zurich and then my interests had changed a little bit so Denman and I started rehearsing in duo to see where it was going and then we did a duo concert at Victoriaville that was recorded. We eventually co-led a trio and did a record together called Time Changes with Michael Sarin, a wonderful drummer, and singer Alexandra Montano. Those connections with Denman and Michael continue to this day.

Cadence: Let's talk about some of your recorded work as a leader. As you mentioned earlier, the exploration of solo bass has been very important to you and that culminated with your 2010 DVD/CD/booklet triptych, GUTS: Bass Explorations, Investigations, and Explanations where you document your techniques. Talk about that special work.

Dresser: I've always been doing this solo exploratory work and I'm of a generation of musicians who were working on so-called extended techniques. That process for me was sort of articulated by a friend and wonderful composer and saxophonist Earl Howard who was very adamant that you need to document your vocabulary. He was using electronic music and had to find a vocabulary that wasn't just about notes and rhythms, but about wave structure and thinking about textures in terms of layering and interaction and literal vocabulary. I started thinking about how to compose, thinking about the Tambastics, that had very little to do with traditional notation but had more about defining texture and order and general durations rather than every pitch being written out and the specificities of equally subdivided pitch and rhythm. In 2000, I had been working with Zorn and he invited me to contribute an article on my techniques, A Personal Pedagogy for the first edition of [his book series] Arcana. I probably would not have done that had he not asked me. It was about three years before coming to San Diego and it set me up for learning how to speak and articulate what it was I thought I was doing. Because it's one thing to do something that you work up intuitively, it's another thing to start to try to actually analyze what it is. That usually requires another level of figuring out what it is, not just those areas that I find myself stumbling upon. So, that was very useful. In 2009, we had done this project Deep Tones for Peace, a telematic performance between Jerusalem and New York, and the instigator of the project, bassist Jean Claude Jones who runs the Kadima Collective label from Jerusalem, he asked me if I would do a DVD for his label about my stuff and that became the crux of what I was doing for about a year. I took that article I had written for Zorn and articles I had been invited to write for Strad Magazine on specific areas of extended techniques. So, one thing led to another and then I came up with GUTS in 2010. My pandemic project has been to update that project which is a book I've been working on as well as the Tines of Change CD I just released. I'm trying to share this information.

Cadence: You've released 2 recordings of music composed for silent films – The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, which augments the 1920 German horror film and your Eye'll Be Seeing You, which includes music for the 1929 French film Un Chien

Andalou. What attracts you to silent film scoring?
Dresser: To be frank, when I was getting to the point where I wanted to tour, I was working with an agent who said, "Listen, you're playing six times a year in Europe as a sideman, unless you do a project, I can't get a promoter interested." He had actually tried to get the collective Arcado String Trio to do the silent film project for The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari but we weren't interested in it. He presented it to me as a potential bandleading project. Realizing that this may be my only potential to tour as a bandleader, I looked at it again on video, which exaggerated the speed faster than the film itself. I realized the film's sound had this kind of stilted look to it and I thought I could do something with it and started improvising with the film and then transcribing. I gave it to Denman to do the same and we shared stuff. I wrote some themes and invited Dave Douglas to perform on it. The thing was, I got into silent film for very pragmatic reasons. It was not artistically motivated, but to my surprise, to do something that was narratively driven was surprisingly powerful and engaging. I found I liked it and it took me musically to a different space. That was fruitful for a few years.

Cadence: You've made a number of albums based around food – Banquet (1997), Marinade (2000) and Nourishments (2013). There's obviously a close sensory connection to food for you. Talk about your artistic connection to food.
Dresser: [Laughs] Well, each one of those has different meanings. Banquet was a piece I had written for Matthias Ziegler and the genesis of our hanging out was that he first invited the Ray Anderson Quartet after a gig to his place and he made pasta for us, so this idea of breaking bread became part of our friendship. You know, breaking bread is one of life's simple but profound pleasures. He asked me to write a piece for him for contrabass flute, bass flute, alto, soprano and piccolo, so it was like each movement was a course. The last movement, which was on piccolo, was a tune that I called the "Digestivo," and then I wrote another one called "Aperitivo." So it just became sort of a vamp. It's more playful than anything although there is a connection with metric modulating forms. There's a wonderful chef who's a big music fan in the Bay Area named Paul Canales. He's a very generous, brilliant, and inventive guy, I had done a performance in the Bay area and we ended up in his restaurant Oliveto and he hosted us to a wonderful meal. When I got back home, I made a tone row and I emailed it to him and I said, 'This is the Canales Row." So, we started playing with that and we ended up doing something of a food idea jam session. He would make a dish, take a picture, and send it to us. Trio M ended up doing a performance that went with a meal that was a fundraiser for Myra's program at UC Berkeley. And we continued to have these pictures of food sent to us and each one of us composed pieces. It was basically friendship caught on fire based on enthusiasm for music and food. It was a playful cross disciplinary creative think tank.

Cadence: Are you a gourmand?
Dresser: I enjoy food, my wife's a wonderful cook. I'm a great audience but I

don't really care about it. What I care about is the company I'm with, it's the human thing. If food's made with love, that's it. I tend to enjoy things that are more rustica than high-end cuisine.

Cadence: Duo trombone/bass recordings are uncommon in Jazz yet you've released work with both Ray Anderson and Roswell Rudd, as well as often featured trombone in your music – often with Michael Dessen. What attracts you to trombone, an instrument that is often overlooked?

Dresser: The parallels are pretty common – they have a slide and we have this gradient pitch that's common to both instruments. My fascination with trombone really came out of the first time I played with Ray Anderson we had such instant chemistry. And then once I became friends with Roswell, he was such a deep dude and a wonderful musician and generous soul. We had an opportunity to do something and we did it. And then Michael [Dessen] has been my most frequent collaborator in California. He's a virtuoso trombonist and a wonderful person with the highest musicianship and ethics. We rehearsed yesterday telematically. We've been talking about doing a duo record for a couple years but what is a record now in the 21st century? None of my students even have a CD player or CD drives. I don't know, the business of our business continues to be dwindling and I can't say for better. However the need for musicians to continue to document their work, to continue to create, will never change, however the medium and how it's shared in the world will change.

Cadence: The title for your 2016 recording Sedimental You is a play on words taken from the standard "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You." Your intent was to play "with the idea of 'layering' musical qualities." Would you explain that further?

Dresser: I don't know, I'd just be making something up for you. It was a play on words. It was a wonderful band, anyone of those people could do a solo concert. I just tried to use people's strengths within the framework of my music and I tried to let them be them. I don't feel like going further with the layering metaphor but I think the music's clearly polyphonic.

Cadence: Sedimental You features a cover image taken from the National Geographic archives. It's a photo of a man lying on his back in the dirt, supporting a boulder with his hands and legs. How did that come to be your cover work?

Dresser: I love the cover. The artistic director at Clean Feed Records came up with that one after we had rejected [Laughs] a couple earlier titles. I thought that was really playful and it seemed to work mysteriously well with the title. The boulder's on top of him and I thought it was a beautifully provocative image.

Cadence: You obviously value striking album artwork. Your covers are consistently creative and thoughtful as opposed to many other artists who spend years working on a release only to issue it with cover work that distracts from the quality of the project.

Dresser: Thank you, I often work with wonderful artists who are friends.
Cadence: You touched on the fact earlier that you put a lot of thought into choosing musicians for your pieces. You compose for specific artists in mind.
Dresser: That is the Ellington model and that always made sense to me. My peers have been unique players – whether it be Gerry Hemingway or Robert Dick or Matthias Ziegler. Yeah, I tend to gravitate towards musicians who have their own voice. I want to feature people like Joshua White or Denman Maroney, those folks whose sound I really have in my ear. I want to set up a situation that facilitates my players to be themselves..
Cadence: Ain't Nothing But A Cyber Coup (2019) features your politically charged compositions, poking fun at what many perceived to be toxic leadership during the Trump administration. Talk about your role as a musician who isn't shy to offer political commentary.
Dresser: Outside of our titles, what have we got? For me, Mingus was a lightning rod for band leader activism and being a social commentator. He was a model for me. We're playing very abstract music and here's an opportunity to do something and say something. Again, what is the impact of what we do? God only knows, but if you have an idea and it's fun and it stimulates a musical idea, great. All's fair, and we're living in a politically and environmentally horrific time. It's not just about the notes – there's more to react to and I want to be a thoughtful citizen. And, of course, as musicians we all do it in our different ways. Some people don't want to deal with it directly and I respect that, other people approach it in a very different way. Someone who I respect very greatly is William Parker, who has a very different way of dealing with it but it is very direct as well. I think that is one of the things that one can do as a musician, if one chooses.
Cadence: What's a typical practice session like for you?
Dresser: There isn't a certain pattern. Since the pandemic, I've been working on a bass book so I'm trying to generate material for the book and understand what it is that I'm trying to articulate. Often I'm just preparing music that I'm getting ready to play or I'm having to practice the music that my students are playing so I can share an insight, hopefully, on learning to play it, get a sound, get in synchrony and pitch and rhythm. I do like it when things are being compositionally driven from a creative point of view but sometimes it's not. Like during the pandemic, I was just trying to keep my abilities together because there was no performing, and out of that vacuum I decided to update GUTS. Let me do this definitive new document over ten years later. What have I learned? What can I bring new to the table?
Cadence: You're recognized as a bass virtuoso, is there anything that you feel needs strengthening in your ability as a bass player?
Dresser: Yeah, everything, it never stops, yeah, EVERYTHING. Yeah, there's not a dimension that I don't want to get better at. I want to hear more, I want to feel more, I want to be able to translate those things. I want to play the instrument better, hear better, and be a more conscious human.

Cadence: What's the history behind your favorite bass and how many do you own?

Dresser: The main bass that I made my career on, I found in 1979. I had played a gig in La Jolla and a stranger said to me, "There's a guitar store in Tijuana that has basses in it." I said, 'Oh, really?' A couple months later, I found myself in Tijuana and I saw this guitar store open at 11:30 at night and I ran towards it and I found this bass that was on the ground that looked very much like an instrument called a Panormo that my former roommate Peter Rofé had. It was covered with dust and had blue mariachi nylon strings on it, the bridge was off centered, and inside it had, besides having a label that it was a Hawkes Professor 1901, a dead cockroach inside. [Laughs] They were asking $250. So I went back there with my friend Peter, who was playing principle bass in the San Diego Symphony, I had already resigned from the orchestra, and I offered them $200 for it and I left with the instrument, without a case. I did work on it but that became my most important bass up to a certain point. And then around 2001, I was doing a double bass duo tour with Mark Helias and after flying to Brussels to start the tour, there was a delay in getting my Hawkes bass off the plane, when I got to my hotel I heard all this rattling inside the case. They had broken the instrument, they penetrated the Kevlar flight case. Helias found a bass for me that I ended up buying and I flew home with two basses. The new one had a fake label, it was a Hungarian bass, and I did a lot of recording and touring with that one. And then Kent McLagan made me my first bass in 2015 and then another bass, a 5-string, last August. I have enough instruments. They're all fun, they all give me different things and I use them.

Cadence: What are your future artistic plans and goals?

Dresser: I want to finish this book. I'm wondering what will be my scene once I stop teaching at UCSD and I return to being a fulltime performer/composer, which is part of the reason I'm trying to set myself up to have my abilities be as sharp as they can be. My goal is to continue to evolve – to keep growing, keep collaborating, looking for new stuff. I want to keep it going.

Cadence: What are your interests outside of music?

Dresser: I've been studying Tai Chi for over 40 years. Other than that, I'm filled with goals within my career. I don't like sports, I don't have a sports' gene at all. Zero. [Laughs] I have zero sports' gene, I don't get it, sports to me is like ritualized warfare. I watch films on TV and I like humor. Comedy has sort of helped get me through the Trump era.

Cadence: The following questions have been given to me to ask you from other artists:

Marilyn Crispell (piano) asked: "How have your years with the Braxton Quartet influenced the trajectory of your career and what thoughts do you have on the Quartet years?"

Dresser: To play with a bona fide master like Braxton gave me credibility in my profession, certainly with the critics. I was perceived differently after playing with that quartet so that changed everything for me. Working with

Braxton, again, was the greatest, musically, for the reasons I've spoken about earlier. The synergy and chemistry with that group was really, really unique and mysterious to me. It always worked, it wasn't about being correct, it was being adaptive, of making mistakes work. At its best, it was like playing in the perfect world where there was no such thing as a mistake, as long as you could hear yourself and feel what was going on you could do no wrong. It was a perfect world of communal musical activity and I've experienced that rarely in any other situation. Anthony Braxton is a great bandleader too. When someone after every concert thanks you for your music, that's very empowering. I can't explain it, it was just a wonderful experience.

Marilyn Crispell also asked: "Talk about your Tai Chi practice and if and how it's influenced you musically and personally?"

Dresser: It's helped me energetically, physically, it's changed the way I play. It's been a very beautiful complimentary discipline, like music, has levels upon levels of depth..

Cadence: How did you get exposed to Tai Chi?

Dresser: It's funny, there was a bass repairman in New York named Paul Biase and he'd been talking about it to me and there was a workshop at NYU with a Tai Chi teacher named Al Huang, who was an author, skilled and good humored though it did seem a bit New Agey. I bought another book on the topic around 1975 in NY, that grabbed me. It mentioned that one of the driving principles was the idea of being able to hold your root and when a force came at you, to yield it, to deflect it, and not be blown over, not to fight it, but to yield, and that seemed to me to be a metaphor to how to be a musician because there's no way to fight the forces out here. There is no business in our business, but if you can hold onto your convictions and stay rooted in what it is that's important, that just seemed to be a perfect metaphor to be a musician. Philosophically, I related to it. It just rang to me as something true and I was fortunate to have a really good teacher in California – Abraham Liu. He was very unfussy, completely unpretentious and highly skilled. I resonated with it physically, intellectually and energetically, it really helped me. I've been studying with another wonderful teacher for the last 18 years, Jesse Tsao, who has very similar qualities. He breaks things down in really pragmatic, practical ways, but talks on a very detailed level. Often, people who have abilities are not always forthright about showing what they know – they're "secret sauce," and then you have people who are very generous and really want to make things clear, and he's one of those people. That's inspiring as a teacher. I want to share what I know, there are no secrets, and so I relate to that on a bunch of levels.

Ray Anderson (trombone) asked: "What did we learn from Hassan Hakim, the little known alto sax player that we met and played some gigs with way back in '75?"

Dresser: [Laughs loudly] That's like an inside joke. David Murray, who I knew from the Black Music Infinity, let me stay at his New York apartment that he shared with Ray while he was gone. When I first got there, Hassan was hanging

out there. He was a homeless alto saxophone player. He was crashing with various people. He was part philosopher and very funny. He actually gave me my very first gig and he had all these hilarious maxims that we still pass around between the musicians that knew him. One Hassan maxim was like, "New York ain't nothin' but a meatball without no spaghetti." He also said, "When they walk fast, I walk slow. If they walk slow, I walk fast. Keep your mind on the music and carry yourself like a man and no one will mess with you." He was a self-taught alto player with a very lyrical style about him and a sound that you could Identify immediately. I'd lost touch with him and I remember being in San Francisco walking with my wife near the Golden Gate Bridge and I heard this alto sound and said, 'That's gotta be Hassan,' and sure enough it was. He was on the street playing. I don't know what happened to him but he was hilarious. He was a bit mad, a nonstop talker. He would not stop talking – "How ya doing garbage?" [Laughs] We had a gig at a Cuban restaurant during lunchtime and he walks off the bandstand while we're playing duo. He's playing his horn and walks into the bathroom [Laughs] and keeps playing. He was wild but a good soul.

Joëlle Léandre (bass) asked: "How and why did you meet [Giacinto] Scelsi in Italy? Did you learn something? Did you find different sounds, different techniques? For sure it was different from the USA."

Dresser: Wow, she's one of the greats. I was in Italy on the Fulbright and my friend Roberto Laneri, who is a composer/performer and played for a minute with Mingus, he lived in Rome and knew Scelsi. He suggested I go see Scelsi so I went with him but he said, "You need to bring with you a beautiful woman." I had a friend who was a very gifted composer named Tomae Okatsu so I invited her to join and we went to visit him as I knew she would appreciate meeting Maestro Scelsi. I brought him a cassette of my first solo recording called Bass Excursions and there was one composition called "Subtonium," which was the one piece that he seemed to like. He said, "This reminds me of Ligeti" and I was very flattered. What I remember most about him was that he was an aristocrat, a count and he had an amazing apartment overlooking the Roman Forum and he said, "Look at that. It's very hard to compose music that will stand up to [and he pointed to the Forum] antiquity." I knew exactly what he meant – "what have I got to say that's gonna be able to stand up?" My first year in Italy, I was living by the Vatican and there were countless artisans doing their finest work dedicated to the glory of God. I thought, 'What do I have to offer?' It was very intimidating and challenging and wonderful. At a concert, Scelsi introduced me to [bassist] Stefano Scodanibbio and told him, "He plays my music." I wasn't trying to play his music, I just wanted to meet him. He was nice, he was cordial. I didn't play his music until a few years later when I performed "Dharana" for cello and bass with Frances-Marie Uitti at a festival of Scelsi's music that she curated at the Guggenheim and other New York City venues. Scelsi wrote a lot for Uitti, who is a brilliant and innovative cellist, he also wrote the beautiful Mantram for Joëlle, who he loved. He had a clear

aesthetic but as a musician, he didn't have a typical composer's background. He would improvise in a microtonal keyboard and hired a someone to transcribe and orchestrate his pieces. Though he wasn't highly regarded in his own country, his music has been celebrated all over the globe because he had a very clear aesthetic, and sound. It was a pleasure to meet him.

Cadence: You trained with both Bertram Turetzky and Franco Petracchi, two of the greatest living bass players. Putting them aside, who would you name as the greatest living bass player?

Dresser: I hate that kind of question. In our field, of people who cross improvised music and Jazz, to me, Barry Guy is a grand master. There's plenty of great bass players and he stands out in a field of his own. I wish we heard more from him. There are many superb musicians that I love.

Cadence: I was hoping you were going to say Gary Karr because I have questions from him for you.

Dresser: Wow, Gary Karr has a question for me, that's really flattering. I love Gary Karr, he changed the expectation of what the bass could do when I was coming up. I'm born in 1952, he was born in 1941. Growing up as a kid, he was the one that everyone said you had to hear. He's also from LA, which is also my hometown, and he was the gold standard contrabass soloist. Wow, I'm just shocked that you got to Gary, that's just amazing. He's been such an advocate for the instrument and diversity of all kinds. The International Society of Bassists was his brainchild. He's a wonderful player and person.

Gary Karr (Classical bassist) asked: "Thanks to Francois Rabbath and Bert Turetzky, the standard for solo Classical bass playing has risen enormously in the past few decades; would you also say that the standard for Jazz bass playing, too, has risen or did that happen long before with Scott LaFaro, Ray Brown, Charlie Mingus, Paul Chambers, etc.? If so, who in your opinion was the most influential in raising the standards?"

Dresser: All those people you mentioned changed the game. Francois Rabbath was seriously a major pedagogue, probably the most influential teacher of the last 50 years. He introduced a new technique. And then you have people who've had a huge impact on all bass players, pan idiomatically, people like Edgar Meyer, who's an extraordinary musician who plays really uniquely. Stefano Scodanibbio was really influential in changing the vocabulary of the bass and writing music that lots of people played. I still think about William Parker, Joëlle Leandre, Barre Phillips, and once again Barry Guy whose abilities with the bow have open the field.

Gary Karr also asked: "Have you applied Bert Turetzky's avant-garde techniques to Jazz playing?"

Dresser: Bert never really taught technique per se, more he taught musicality, musicianship, and demonstrated an attitude towards performance. Though I saw his techniques many times, that by in large he developed improvisationally, he dissuaded his students to copy him, but rather find our own stuff. It really makes sense, as we all have an artistic identity that is

intrinsic, that is as unique and personal as one's DNA. Bert encouraged me to be myself.

Gary Karr also asked: "What do you think of the use of the bow in Jazz?"

Dresser: The best is yet to come. The richness of the bow to me is in its polyphonic potential, its sonic multiplicity and harmonic potential. There are fine improvisers in Jazz who use the bow more traditionally to play in a more melodic fashion like John Clayton, Christian McBride, Larry Grenadier and others. Arco playing in Jazz traditionally has a dynamic challenge that to my mind is impacted by amplification, the relative high volumes of playing in an electro-acoustic environment often with drums. The irony of amplification is that though it allows the pitch of the bass player to be heard by amplifying the sound of the attack, the vibration of a piezo pick-up isn't flattering for the bow, nor is the volume profile for arco and pizzicato the same. Ironically, piezo electret pickups tend to compress the dynamics of the bass, not broaden them. Many fine players play solely with microphones or combinations of pickups and microphones. I was so taken by hearing and watching Barry Guy who uses a volume pedal masterfully, allowing him to mitigate the volume differences with his hyper articulate playing. I immediately added a volume pedal to my gear for that reason. For me, arco playing is the most expressive aspect of the instrument and with a volume pedal I can play with the shape of the envelope of sound. For decades, I've been amplifying regions of the string that are normally too soft to project acoustically. Kent McLagan developed for me pickups embedded into the fingerboard just below the nut and at the octave facilitating multiple levels of pitch on one string. Irrespective of my own interests, the level of arco playing in Jazz and improvised music will continue to evolve.

Bobby Bradford (trumpet) asked: "Going to New York City, not as a tourist but as a challenger, is a big move for most. If you could do it all over would you make different choices?

Dresser: That's a really good question. As I mentioned before, the first time I moved to New York I was just taking a vacation and didn't come home for two years and I got my ass whupped! [Laughs] I wasn't prepared to participate at that professional level but I didn't think I was ready, I just ended up there, gave it a go, and it worked until it didn't but I felt compelled to come back. When I returned to NYC nine years later in '86, I knew why I was coming and had another level of preparation after having made a solo recording, worked with Franco Petracchi for two years, a more in depth new music background having worked with Braxton and my experiences at UC San Diego . I felt ready to come back and I wouldn't change that decision at all. But most importantly, I have a great life partner in my wife, Carol, and together we were able to make it work. I wouldn't change any of that. I feel really blessed and fortunate that things worked out.

Bertram Turetzky (bass) didn't have a question but he gave a memory: "When I came to California in '67 there was a bass club in L.A. and two people would

share an afternoon. I was asked to play and Mark was there. I talked about some of the pieces [and played] and it was the 'old Turetzky show'. A lot of people liked it but the [talent booker] wasn't sure that people were going to like it so Ray Brown was [brought in as] the second act. They had set it up that way in case I didn't go well and Ray would need to save the show, or if I did very well, Ray would balance it. I met Ray and we remained friends ever since until his death. I also met Mark Dresser, this young bass player. He said he'd like to study with me and I said, "That's cool." So he came down and played for me in this little office I had at that time. Mark played some things. He played with a lot of fire, even simple things he played with a lot of fire, and I was taken with the way he played. I told him, "You're a lifer," and he understood what that meant. He was a gifted guy and I was so impressed, and he came [to the school] and I had the pleasure of teaching him for some time and we've remained friends for all these years. He usually calls at least once a week. I'm very proud of him. He feels that some of his stuff sounds like me. Quite a few people say that, but I don't hear my work in him. I still like his fire and when I go to hear him, that's what I expect, and it hasn't changed all these years. He's got his own thing and there's no one who plays like him. He's a friend and a member of my family."

Dresser: That's beautiful and I feel that way towards Bert. My memory is a little different, we met at the LA bass club in either 1970 or '69. He played a concert and I was blown away by his concert, I had never heard anyone play with so much color and dynamism and confidence. I was really taken with it, especially the sound. His sound was so rich and rich arco/pizzicato, every aspect was just vivid. He asked me where I was going to school and then sized me up and said, "You're not gonna last there, when you're ready give me a call" and he was right. I think what I got from Bert was kind of an attitude towards playing. I hear more attitude – it's just you enter the 'zone' and he's got that. I think that people who study with Bert share something but I can't put my finger on what it is besides having a broad background. Yes to all those things he said. I talk to him every week, he's family, there's no doubt about it. When I lived in New York there was a letter coming back and forth. I love the dude, he was my most important teacher without a doubt.

Cadence: Any final comments? You may be fed up with all this questioning at this point.

Dresser: First of all, thank you. I'm flattered to be indulged with all this interest in my work and I'm really flattered by these questions from people I have such high regard for. These relationships, these friendships that continue, they're the next best thing to the music itself. The camaraderie that persists, it's such a beautiful thing and the common bond is dedication to sound and music making. That's a great thing.

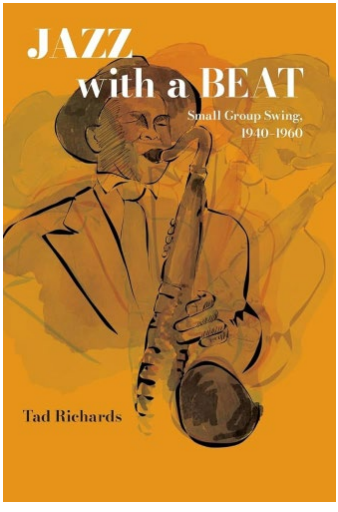
Book Look

JAZZ WITH A BEAT,
SMALL GROUP SWING 1940-1960.
TAD RICHARDS,
EXCELSIOR EDITIONS 2024.
PAPERBACK 175 PAGES.

It only happens a few times (if any) in one's lifetime but it isn't impossible to come across a book that hits you where you live. That can happen with novels like A Catcher In The Rye, Sometimes A Great Notion, On The Road, The Bear Comes Home, etc. and a few others but seldom if ever concerning a reference/history book. Being a child of the Atomic Age reading this work was like stepping into a time machine to be transported back to adolescence and first discovering the joys of music especially early rhythm and blues and jazz. In eight main chapters (Jacquet & Jordan/ The War Years"Los Angeles Central Avenue/ A New Sound/ Popular Explosion/Open The Door/Down In New Orleans/Rock & Roll/Jazz With A Beat) the author outlines an often ignored form that I always called Jump Jazz. After a rather lengthy introduction the first chapter focus is on two key figures of the forties both of which played the saxophone. The third waxing of "Flying Home" with the fiery tenoring of Louisiana-born Illinois Jacquet ushered in the era and was even mentioned in the Kerouac novel above. He went on to become a sensation in Norman Granz's Jazz At The Philharmonic and a long and fruitful career. Yet Jacquet's popularity was eclipsed by the singing altoist Louis Jordan whose perfectionist tendencies were manifested later in James Brown and Ray Charles. After big band stints with Chick Webb then Cab Calloway he cherry-picked from both ranks and formed his own combo the Tympany Five and slowly amassed a huge audience among the black population. The one thing this reader learned from this chapter was his affair with Ella while both were in the Chick Webb organization. I had the good fortune to meet him in Lake Tahoe in the sixties while we were gigging in Harvey's casino. Richard's comparisons between the two artist is quite illuminating at times. Chapter Two dwells more on the overall influence of LA's Central Avenue which like the Big Apples clubs was the breeding ground for this distinctive type of music during WWII. It introduces two major string players, Charlie Christian & T-Bone Walker and a pair of vocalists Roy Milton and Charles Brown. Moving to the Third chapter, there's a neat label shot of "The Honeydripper" by Joe Liggins on the Exclusive label. Like Walker Liggins was originally from the southwest and his rise coincided with the eruption on many small, independent labels that promoted singers like Wynonie Harris, Texas trumpeter Oran "Hot Lips" Page and others. Entitled the Postwar Explosion, Chapter Four chronicles the aftermath of the global conflict when "Drifting Blues" scored for Charles Brown, Nellie Lutcher cut for Capitol and Ruth Brown appeared on the Atlantic roster while instrumentalist such as Tiny Grimes.Red Prysock & Brown's spouse Willis "GatorTail" Jackson made some minor noise. Things really get rolling in Chapter 5 with even more instrumental numbers from Jack McVea, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson,Bullmoose Jackson, Hal Singer, Big Jay McNeely and Tulsa-born

Earl Bostic who was a sax mentor to John Coltrane early on. The chapter ends with Sil Austin and organist Bill Doggett whose huge hit "Honky Tonk" featuring Clifford Scott and Billy Butler blew up the charts. We take a side trip to the Big Easy on Chapter Six with kind words for Cosimo Matassa and Dave Bartholomew heading up a slew of talent in Paul Gayten, Alvin "Red" Tyler, Earl Palmer,Herb Hardesty,Lee Allen and, of course, Fats Domino. Chapter Seven deals with the advent of Rock and Roll with both Doggett and Sil Austin cited again this time with the latter's recording of "Slow Walk" a sort of answer to the aforementioned Doggett blockbuster. An offshoot of Ellington's "Happy-Go-Lucky Local" sax ace Jimmy Forrest hit the jackpot with "Night Train" which was no-where near deriviteas Paul William's "The Hucklebuck" was of Bird's"Now's The Time" or Chubby Checker 's note-for-note cover of the original version of "The Twist" by Hank Ballard & The Midnighters. Other notables include Ray Charles in his early work under the Atlantic logo, the now-forgotten Doc Bagby and likewise Noble "Thin Man" Watts, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and the immortal King Curtis. Both of these last two artists are carried over into the final chapter which along with the initial work of organist Jimmy Smith hints at the coming of the Soul Jazz birth. Aside from a few occasional omissions and slight coverage of the importance of the shuffle rhythm this is a book that will take some readers (such as myself) back to fond memories of their teenage years. It will also show newcomers what they missed. Highly recommended.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

EIGHT HANDS ONE MIND
DOM MINASI

UNSEEN RAIN 9899

TITLE ONE/ SUCKER'S PARADISE/ OOH TASTE SO GOOD/ MISGUIDED HEART/ EIGHT HANDS/ DANCING ROSETTA 32:33

Dom Minasi, g; Hans Tammen, g; Harvey Valdes, g; Briggan Krauss, g - 2021

I was not sure what to expect here. A guitar quartet where the composer talks about each piece being a movement of one large work. He also talks about finding the right people who could read and improvise. One mind is composer and leader Minasi, and, of course, the eight hands are the hands of the quartet.

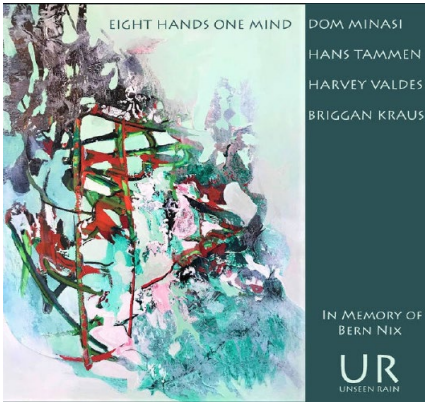
The opening piece is a nice complex piece moving back and forth between obviously composed sections and improvisation. There is some very nice interplay between all the guitars and some really nice groove sections. But I decided to take Minasi's advice and listen to the whole record as one long piece.

In doing so I let each piece flow into the next and waited for highlights. The best way to describe the record is to think of the whole record as one long piece that has various sections. The composed sections are interesting and often intricate and the improvisations fit well with the compositions. Over all there is great interplay between all four players. "Taste Good' has some really great sections with all four players working hard.

The title tune has some very interesting composed moments. But there are times when it is not clear what is composed and what is improvised. Which is a great compliment to both the composer and all the performers. And the dancing of Dancing Rosetta is not Rosetta but the guitarists fingers.

A must for guitarists.

Bernie Koenig



New Issues

MANUEL ENGEL
META MARIE LOUISE
PHONOMETRICIAN
METRONIC RECORDS
CEMETERY LAWN/ JOSEPHINE/ DEATH SUCKER/THE ANARCHIST/ CYBERPUNK FICTION/ LOGICAL DELIRIUM/ THE AWAKENING/ SEVEN/ GLOOM/ PUSH/ GRATITUDE/ GAMBIT 62:00 AND 23:46
Manuel Engel, Fender Rhodes, synths; Kevin Chesham, d with guests Max Usata and Sirup Gagavil, and Dominik Baumgartner - France

I am working with downloads from a double LP set and a 10" Lp. I only have the front covers so I have limited information about the records. But it is the music that is important, so here we go. The group is described as a fusion of Snoop Dogg and John Cage. And Engel's playing is influenced by Eric Satie and Cage The opening sounds like a guitar, but I suppose it can be a synthesizer, along with drums, and a voice starts. The piece is very moody. The melodic lines are blues influenced and the drums offer a combination of keeping time and nice interplay. Josephine sounds more like a synthesizer though guitar like sounds are also present. The mid section has an interesting interplay between drums and synth. As this piece progresses one hears the guitar and synth together, so I am assuming that the guest Max Usata is the guitarist. And Death Sucker is all instrumental featuring the guitar and drums, with piano comping. The Anarchist aptly describes the guitar playing which is all over the place in terms of technique and sound, but it works. Good drum accompaniment and what sounds like piano accompaniment. The rest if what I assume is record one is a continuation of this style. The guitarist has great technique and loves uses various effects and Chesham on drums provides excellent support. Phonometrician is a 10" LP and has shorter tracks and appears to be the basic duo. Gloom works well by using a repetitive two-note pattern with solo passages. And the last two tunes are quite melodic and create very nice moods. Engel's keyboard playing is very interesting. To my ears it exhibits both classical and jazz influences. So the above description of his influences is accurate.And Chesham is a very sensitive accompanist. Two very interesting projects. Engel is certainly a very creative composer and performer while Chesham provides excellent accompaniment. My preferences lean toward Phonometricain but both records are very interesting.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

ROSS BANDT
MEDUSA DREAMING
NEUMA
THE TEARS OF YEREBATAN PALACE/ FROZEN LOCKS, ATHENA'S CURSE/ FISH DREAMING/ ODE TO THE EMPEROR JUSTINIANUS/ WATER THROUGH GLASS/ CORINTHIAN SONG/ WATER DREAMING/ MEDUSA DREAMING/ FROM BELGRAT FOREST/ 52 STEPS TO THE FUTURE OF WATER 56:36
Natalia Mann, harp; Rpss Bandt, tarhu, flt, whistles; Erdem Helvacioglu, elec gviol, live processing; Izzet Kizil, perc.

The notes describe the music here as the perfect ambient music to listen to at a cistern. But as I listen this is more than just ambient music for the background, but demands serious listening as well. The use of voice on Frozen Locks in interesting. But throughout the interplay between the harp or flute and electronics is always interesting. I must admit the combination of flute and harp is one I love. I wish there was more of that here. But the harp creates these wonderful waves, which can create the feel of water flowing. The sounds of the electric guitar viol are also interesting, especially in contrast with the harp. Bandt gets some lovey, almost haunting sounds from the flute, and they get beautifully contrasted by electronic sounds and subtle percussion, especially on Corinthian Song. The electronics on Belgrat Forest demand serious listening and the final track emulates water again both with electronics and harp, along with voice. A very interesting record

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

JAZZ CLUB GAJO TRIO
SAX SUMMIT

KOLODVORSKA 2,1550

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE / FUNKY BLUES / MAMACITA / SOUL EYES & I REMEMBER CLIFFORD / BLUES UP AND DOWN. 36:00.

Sasa Nestorovic, Lenart Krecic, ts; Jani Moder, g; Ales Avbelj, b; Drago Gajo, d. Ljubljana, Slovenia. 12/2023.

Welcome mystery players and sign in please. Well, it's not quite that bad but there's far from a wealth of information on this slim volume. Devoid of liner notes there is a line stating "Recorded at Radio Slovenija, Studio 26" but that's about it. Billing itself as a Jazz Paradise and located in the Capital city the Jazz Club Gajo has apparently been around since 1994 with a degree of success. Named after the bistro's owner and drummer on this date, Drago Gajo is a veteran musician with a solid time feel. One would suspect he's the nominal leader of the trio backing both the horns. The skimpy playing time holds a half dozen numbers. The only one not penned by a reed player is Mal Waldron's "Soul Eyes" taken as a ballad and paired with the classic "I Remember Clifford" from living legend Benny Golson. The other tunes "Blues Up And Down" & "The Eternal Triangle" associated with Sonny Stitt & Joe Henderson's catchy "Mamacita" and Bird's blues line are sandwiched in-between. Instead of the customary keyboard is Moder's guitar which is used mostly in a chordal capacity. Both tenor men are well-versed players that lock horn sympathetically. Although no sax solo work is identified they are pictured on the booklet cover; Krecic seems to be the younger of the two while the bald Nestorovic has an extensive resume on line. He is a Croatian originally with Krecic and Moder both being native Slovenians. All recordings by these players are imports so I cannot recommend any specifically. This is just a fun album, no frills or fancy touches but for a short listen this one fits the bill.

Larry Hollis

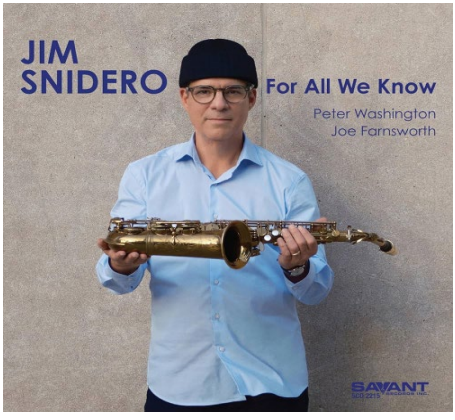
New Issues

JIM SNIDERO
FOR ALL WE KNOW
SAVANT 2215

FOR ALL WE KNOW / NAIMA / LOVE FOR SALE /BLACKBERRY WINTER / PARKER'S MOOD / WILLOW WEEP FOR ME /MY FUNNY VALENTINE / YOU GO TO MY HEAD. 53:29.
Snidero, as; Peter Washington, b; Joe Farnsworth, d. 10/24/2023. Saylorsburg, PA.

Before anyone starts complaining about "another standards trio date" one needs to give this disc a spin. It is quite possibly the alto star's first trio outing but it is definitely not his first standards-laden release. Way back in 1997 there was a quartet cd recorded at RVG.s studio for the Double Time label and most of his vast slew of Savant titles have contained well-recognized compositions . Even his much-lauded Live At The Deer Head Inn of 2021 held some evergreens. His last two Savant releases sported the inimitable talents of upright bassist Peter Washington and drumming prowess of Joe Farnsworth. These men are not only strong when it comes to soloing but are acute listeners who Snidero felt would be perfect for such a setting. And he was right, both acquit themselves admirably. The leader's silken alto tone glides atop their rhythmic bed like an eagle swooping in the sky. This is a fairly laid-back affair with a few swingers dropped in to keep all awake. There are too many highlights to mentioned but a couple of this listener's faves are the unique treatment of Coltrane's best ballad, the Charlie Parker classic and the alto/bass duet work on "Blackberry Winter" written in 1976. The space afforded by this stripped-down unit makes this recital another winner in the discography of one, Jim Snidero.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

BLACK ART JAZZ COLLECTIVE
TRUTH TO POWER

HIGHNOTE 7353

BLACK HEART / THE FABRICATOR / TRUTH TO POWER / IT'S ALRIGHT / COMING OF AGE / DSUS / CODE SWITCHING / SOLILOQUY / LOOKIN' FOR LEROY / BLUES ON STRATFORD ROAD. 62:41. Collective personnel: Wayue Escoffery, ts; Jeremy Pelt,Josh Evans,Wallace Roney Jr.,tpt; James Burton III, tbn; Xavier Davis, Victor Gould,p; Vincente Archer, Rashaan Carter, b; Johnathan Blake, Mark Whitfield Jr., d. 5/9&10/2023. Paramus, NJ.

The first question that comes to mind when looking at the cover of this release is "Didn;t They Used To Be A Quintet?". With nine musicians pictured on the front photograph and six in the rhythm section listed on the back one has to wonder what's going on as Marvin Gaye used to say. Never fear, all is explained Willard Jenkins' inside booklet annotation. When it comes down to band formations my personal favorite has always been the quintet grouping but there has always been a place in my heart for sextets From the Jazztet to One For All come to mind with the blending of trumpet, tenor sax and trombone producing a soothing sonority. Maybe that's why Blue Train is still my favorite Coltrane album. For their third issue under the Highnote logo they run pretty much true to form which is fine by me. The operative word here is BLAKEY especially the excellent sextet he had with Freddie Hubbard, Wayne Shorter and Curtis Fuller. All ten selections spring from the pens of band members Davusm each. While the majority are steamers there are a couple of spots where they catch their breaths on two Pelt numbers "It's Alright" & "Soliloquy" a nice dedication to the late Sidney Portier. Throughout their ten year existence there have been fluctuating personnel changes and that is true here but the flow remains steady. If contemporary hard bop is your forte look no further.

Larry Hollis

I first called Cadence Magazine after buying, listening to, and reading the interview of Beaver Harris' Cadence Record, Live in Nyon. It was in a little apartment in Houston, TX. I remember immediately not only loving the music, but the cover, interview, layout, logo, the whole thing. This was the mid 1990's and the record was from the late 70's. At the end of the interview, a part 2 was mentioned with their contact info: a phone number. As the phone rang I thought, 'Of course this thing is long gone' and I waited for an automated message telling me the number was no longer in service. Instead, Robert D. Rusch himself answered the phone in a brusk, energetic manner. He was intrigued by my call and asked me my age, status as a musician, my interest in the rather obscure Beaver Harris, etc. The 2nd part of the interview he said he would gladly send and he ended our talk with, 'Well, keep playing and, who know's, maybe you'll send me one of your records for consideration.' A few days later came the rest of the interview and a short note from Bob in a letter with the Cadence logo on it.

Today, when I think about it, it's rather remarkable. I did eventually begin sending Mr. Rusch, 'Bob', recodings I made I thought were of value and for ten years he rejected them one after the other, but always offered insight into why as well as encouragement to keep trying…'You never know' he would intone.

One day years later, after I had moved to Chicago, I got a voice message one day from Bob and he said one word, 'Bingo'. Cadence released the first of several recordings I was to make for them. I was overwhelmed and thanked Bob profusely, telling him he had made my dream come true. He said simply, 'Well that may be, but maybe its time for some new dreams'

Who answers the phone at their own label? Who takes the time out to guide and encourage the artist on his often lonely path? Who takes a chance on unknown talent? Who PAYS money to the artist to make a record? What labels are still out there that allow everyone an opporunity to become a part of something greater than themselves? I know of none. These things seem just about gone from the world. When Bob told you he would do something you knew it would be done. He himself was timely, and as I write 20 to 30+ emails to booking agents trying to get a gig, I marvel at someone like Bob Rusch. Who called or wrote you right back.

The friendship, mentorship, and comraderie we shared is something totally unique, rare, and special in my life. His beloved partner and satellite, Susan Rusch welcomed me into the fold as warmly as Bob did, in fact all of their children and extended family treated all the musicians with warmth and respect. Oh yeah, where's an artist going to find respect now? At those fine meals at their home, you were treated as a royal guest, every need attended to. Few times in my career has this happened, when it does, you notice it immediately.

The man did so much for this music. Those who would disparage and complain know in their hearts that there are few angels on this earth that care enough to make such an investment as Bob Rusch made. Economically, it was probably financial suicide. But Posterity? For posterity and the history of this music it is a priceless body of work…capturing an array of talent, some know, some unknown through the decades. And we have Robert D. Rusch, Bob, to thank for it.

Rest in Peace and Music dear man. Heartfelt condolences to the Rusch Family and Staff.

Jimmy Bennington
Cadence Jazz Records, C.I.M.P., and C.I.M.P.ol recording artist.

Bob Rusch loved jazz. He loved, and collected, the best music from every era since recordings began, but he didn't stop there. He was also a historian, documentarian, journalist, publisher, producer and distributer of America's original art form and devoted most of his life's work to seeing that the newest and most cutting edge music was documented and that the creators got to tell their personal stories at length through the many interviews he conducted personally and the countless others he published. Future students, scholars, historians, and fans will benefit from his work for generations to come. Many thanks Bob. A job well done. Rest in Peace.

Lou Grassi

Yes, my friend Bob Rusch was like one of us musicians, not a businessman first. It felt more like a musician… that kind of vibe. And he took that stance with all of us players and recorded us on records and cd's. He also published Cadence Magazine which was very important… every month to receive that copy, it was full of great information that you couldn't find elsewhere. Bob Rusch was a real brother, we will miss him, yet he will always be close to us. One of the real people in our lives.

Ron Enyard, Legendary Drummer, Bandleader, Cadence Jazz Records Artist

Bob Rusch will be missed. He was so very passionate about improvised music, regardless of whether it was over standards or intuitive abstract playing without a form. I first spoke with Bob in the early 1990s when he distributed the albums of Zinnia Records that was I on. Since then I collaborated with Bob on many albums: Ted Brown 4tet; two trio recordings with Jimmy Halperin and Bill Chattin; pianist Jon Easton Trio; a Kazzrie Jaxen Quartet; even a solo double bass album (where he insisted that I write extensive notes - as much space as I needed.) We also co/produced a five-CD set of Sal Mosca solo piano concerts from the Netherlands: and again he insisted that I take as much space as I needed for photos and liner notes. Where else can you find that? I imagine the old time A&R guys were much like Bob. He questioned tracks or entire albums. He was quality control. He had no illusions about the ability to make money with this art form. Yet he continued to release hundred of recordings and gave the musicians control of their recordings. It always felt like a partnership to me. He was a good friend, and rumor has it a wonderful painter. We had an on-going joke that he could paint but he couldn't figure out how to send me pics of his work. I've been told he was very good. He was supportive of my daughter's art, and he loved to talk and hear stories about the musicians who make this music. We would talk (either by phone or email) about Prez, Bird, Tristano, Powell, Lee Konitz, Warne Marsh, Billie Holiday, Jimmy Halperin, Mosca, Oscar Pettiford, Sonny Dallas, so many more. We had fun. He was intense yet level headed. Jazz music and jazz musicians have lost a great advocate for their cause. His booming voice required you to listen to him. He provided a strong foundation so that Cadence magazine, his two labels, and North Country Distributors will survive in the hands of those who are also passionate like him regarding this music (David, Slim, Mark and Susan). Thanks Bob for all the years you gave to this music. Much appreciated.

Don Messina

Eulogy and Remembrance for Robert D. "Bob" Rusch

My name is Ed Schuller and I'm an acoustic bassist and composer. I first met Robert D. Rusch in August of 2005, recording two CDs with pianist Burton Greene (a trio with my brother George on drums) and a quintet (adding Paul Smoker on trumpet, and a saxophonist named Russ Nolan). Over the course of the next 10 years I recorded six more CDs for CIMP (Creative Improvised Music Productions) involving such players as Perry Robinson (cl), Jimmy Bennington (dr), Daniel Carter (reeds), Federico Ughi (dr), Demian Richardson (tp), Jerome Croswell (tp), and Fred Jackson (as).

If I was to use two words to describe Bob Rusch, it would be "uniquely enigmatic". Most of his productions involve the artists traveling to Rossie, NY, which is located abour 350 miles north of NYC (near Canada). The Rusch family live in what can only be described as a compound with living quarters, offices, storage sheds, a barn, a kind of bio lab, and the "Spirit Room" where the recordings usually take place. Room and board are provided along with excellent healthy meals provided by Bob's wonderful wife, Susan Rusch. It reminded me of being at some kind of retreat or camp.

The thing about Mr. Rusch was always his somewhat imposing presence. He could be quite prickly and snarky in a somewhat comical kind of way. It was a bit of a test to see if you could hang, but I can imagine that some folks found it a bit offputting. There were also rules and regulations you would be strongly suggested to follow, i.e. no alcohol, drugs or smoking. Most artists were paid a standard flat fee of $500 each. However, if after a session he deemed the music or the performance not up to his standards or not interesting enough, he could refuse to pay you, which fortunately never happened in anything I was involved with. However, I was told that such awkward occurrences, though rare, had transpired.

In addition to "CIMP", Bob also founded "Cadence Jazz" and "Cadence Magazine". He'd also written numerous music articles, record reviews and a book called "Jazz Talk". His dedication to promoting avant-garde creative improvised music is without precedent. He was also quite the purist when it came to recording music, especially for the CIMP label. All CIMP productions were recorded live to a very high-end two-track digital system manned usually by his son Marc D. Rusch. To quote from CIMP's statement of purpose "there is no compression, homogenation, EQ-ing, post-recording splicing, mixing or electronic fiddling with the preformance."

In closing, my personal and working relationship with him was for the most part a good one despite our indulgence in some occasionally raucous verbal banter. I know deep inside he respected me as I did him. Robert D. "Bob" Rusch passed on January 14th, 2024. Rest in Peace, Music, Love, and Grace.

P.S. Unfortunately, in recent years I became aware that certain troubling allegations of sexual impropriety had been brought against Bob Rusch concerning his time as a schoolteacher in Brooklyn back in the 60s. I don't feel the need to comment on any of that but I would hope that we musicians remember him as a stalwart champion and promoter of a mostly overlooked but vibrant creative musical genre.

Ed Schuller
January 23rd, 2024

I first came to New York in 1982. You heard a lot about Cadence Jazz Records and of course, I studied the names of the musicians that were being released. After recording together with Reggie Workman and Chuck Fertal, I presented the recording to Bob. At first he said "No". Then I called him back and said. "Why not"? And then he said "Yes". The result was "Shapes Sounds Theories" catalogue #1020

I love the fact that Bob had such an acute sensibility about upcoming artists that were doing unique music. I think there was a number of artists during that time that took great advantage of being on the Cadence Jazz Records label and had wonderful careers started because of it. Also, David Haney reminded me, when I spoke to him recently, how available Bob was to pick up the phone and talk to you at any point in time. Even though you may not have liked his opinion or he may not have even really liked yours he was always available for a conversation.

As the year's past by I noticed, the focus for Bob was more on certain artists that he liked working with in different collaborations that they put together. This took place at the time when CD's were coming out.

I never released any more recordings with Bob, although he did say to me that the style of my work was not necessarily the type of music he was into, but he did respect the quality of the music and that was a pleasure for me.

Bob's catalog is a wonderful selection of the events taking place in the years that these musicians were highly active and many are still very active today. Great kudos to Bob Rusch. Thank you, may you rest in peace.

Over the years I have been featured in the Cadence Magazine in different interviews and reviews. This magazine which was Bob's Baby, has been another fabulous contribution to the history.

Steve Cohn

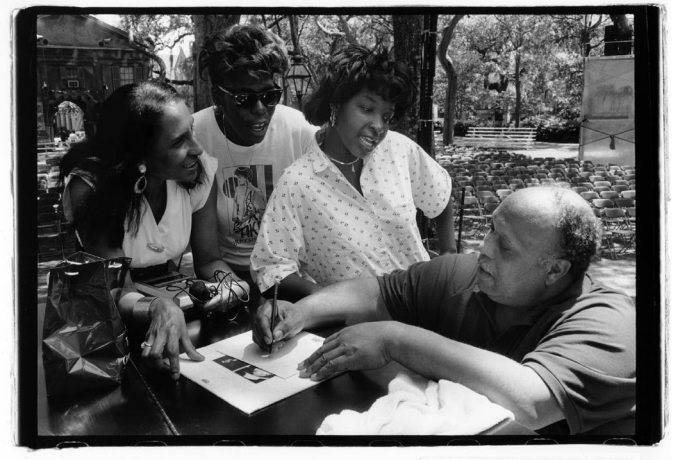
Les McCann – September 23, 1935 – December 30, 2023

McCann now rides the groove eternal, re-united with his bandmate Harris, who died in 1996, and their special guest at Montreux in 1969 on "Compared to What", trumpeter Benny Bailey, who passed in 2005. That performance, besides being available on Swiss Movement, can also be found on YouTube. It's still smokin' after five and a half decades, enough to keep my foot tapping as I write this. ***Andrey Henkin wrote a comprehensive obituary of McCann for the New York Times: https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/01/arts/music/les-mccann-dead.html***

Jazz at Spoleto soundchecks for the Cistern site were scheduled for as early in the morning on the day of the gig as the artists would agree to, since both the temperature and humidity routinely hit 90 by late morning, and afternoons were even less hospitable.

While I can't recall what time this soundcheck began, I do recall how everyone in the house, at that point comprising crew, festival staff, media folks (myself included), and also a few truly faithful fans, instantly locked in on the groove when McCann and Harris broke into a snippet of "Compared to What," the Eugene McDaniels tune from their mesmerizing set at Montreux in 1969 which opens their live recording of that gig, Swiss Movement, a bestseller in both of their catalogues. We didn't know it at the time, but they would take their reunion tour – and, of course, that tune - back to Montreux that same year as well.

The three ladies seen on the left had been among those who enjoyed the all-too-brief excursion into the tune, and patiently waited until the soundcheck was concluded, hoping for a momentary audience with someone they might never have met before, but considered, through his art, a good friend, and McCann graciously signed and signed and signed, including the cover of that copy of Swiss Movement we can see atop the piano. If he wasn't happy to be among the faithful, he sure fooled me.



Les McCann signing autographs after soundcheck with Eddie Harris, Spoleto Festival USA, Cistern of the College of Charleston, George Street at St. Philip, Charleston SC, May 24, 1988. Photograph ©1988, Patrick Hinely, Work/Play®