

ANA  
Aly Keita

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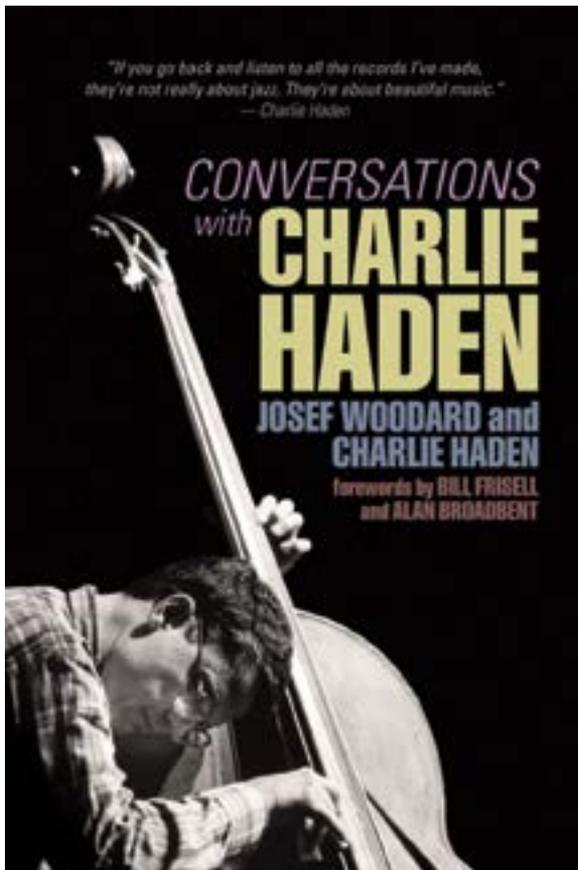
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# New book about **Charlie Haden**



*“Charlie Haden’s story is a classic American saga, and Josef Woodard allows him to tell it eloquently and in moving detail,”*  
—Francis Davis

*“Woodard’s treasure trove of interviews with Charlie Haden gives us such an intimate feeling of the jazz giant that we feel like we’re sitting in the room with an old friend.... Haden opens up about his iconic musical associates over the years, allowing us rare access into the insular world of jazz itself.”*  
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***Conversations with Charlie Haden*** compiles 20 years of award-winning jazz critic and author Josef Woodard’s interviews with Haden, who candidly talks about his life, politics, music, aesthetics, and the great musicians with whom he worked, including Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Paul Bley, Carla Bley, Keith Jarrett, Billy Higgins, Paul Motion, Dewey Redman, Pat Metheny, Geri Allen, Brad Mehldau, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and many others.

Published by Silman-James Press ([www.silmanjamespress.com](http://www.silmanjamespress.com)).  
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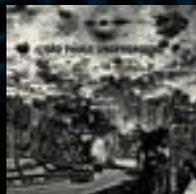
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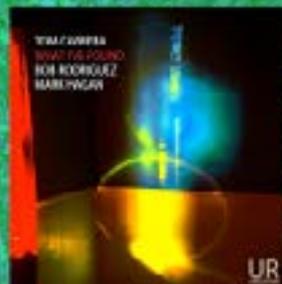
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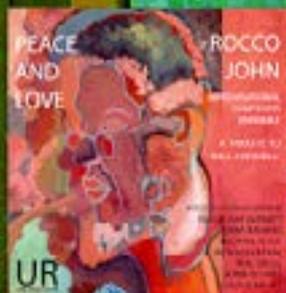
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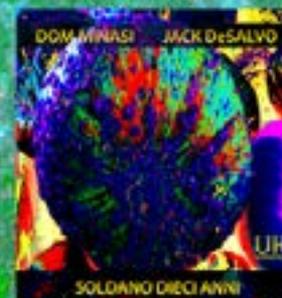
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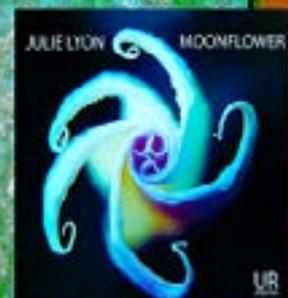
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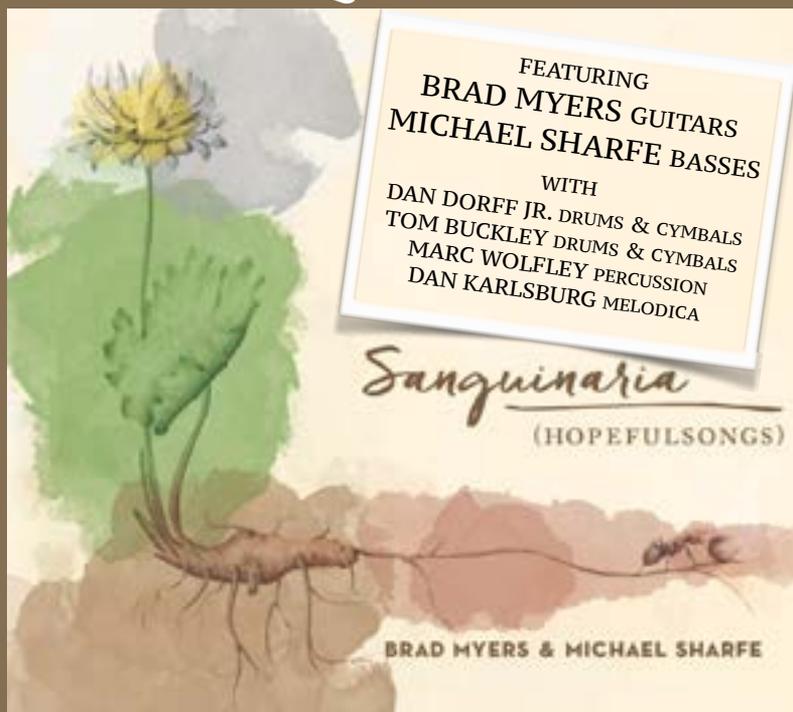


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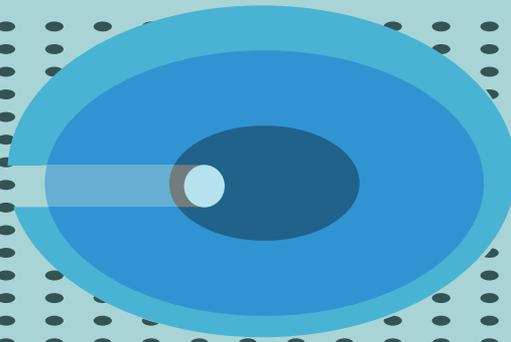
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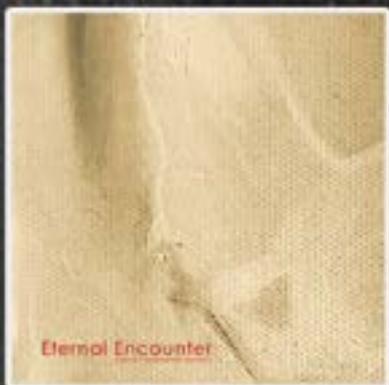




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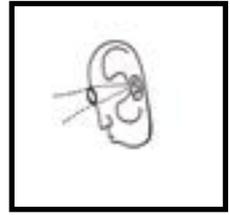
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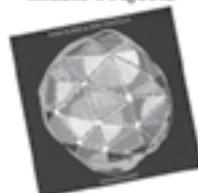
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Jazz Magazine  
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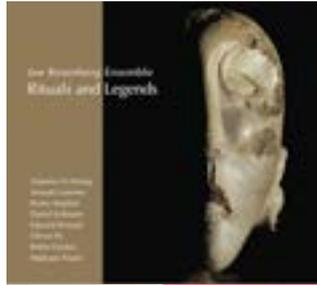
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All About Jazz Italia  
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Jazz Podium  
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## Creative Improvised Music Projects

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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DISK 4: Ken Fillano Quintet    DISK 5: Bill Gagliardi Sextet / Adam Lane's Villach Orchestra

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

#### **CIMPoL 5038:**

Trio-X - Live at the Sugar Maple

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

#### **CIMPoL 5039:**

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

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

#### **CIMPoL 5040:**

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### Earlier CIMPoL releases:

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5002	Odean Pope	Serenity
5003	Joe McPhee & Dominic Duval	The Open Door
5004	David Bond Quintet	The Early Show (live at Twin's Jazz)
5005	Salim Washington	Live at St. Nick's
5006-5012	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Live on Tour 2006
5013	Gebhard Ullmann + Steve Swell 4tet	Live in Montreal
5014	Ernie Krivda	Live Live at the Dirty Dog
5015-5019	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2008
5020-5024	CIMPfest 2009: Live in Villach, Austria	Live in Villach, Austria
5025	Seth Meicht and the Big Sound Ensemble	Live in Philadelphia
5026	Eric Plaks Quintet	Live at Bronx Community College
5027-5030	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2010
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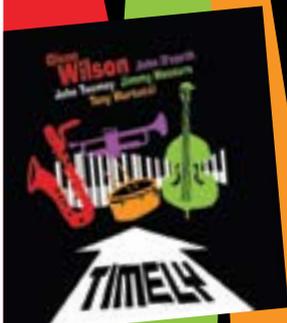
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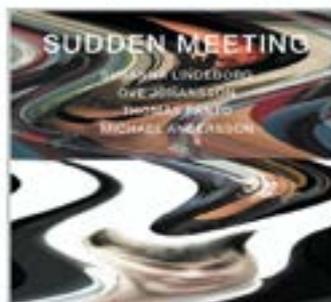
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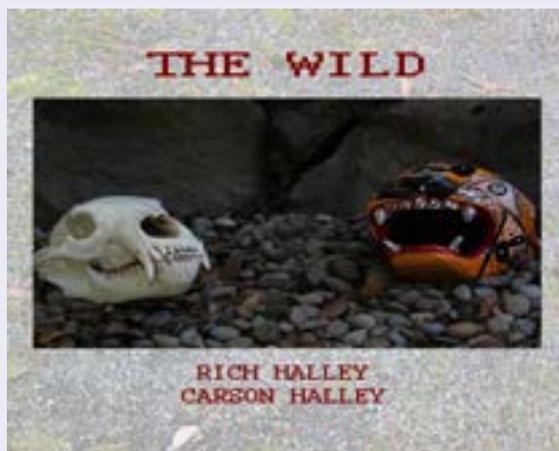
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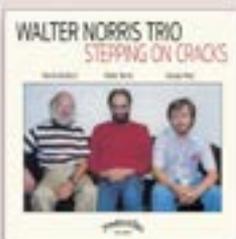
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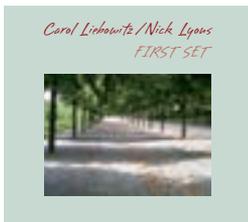
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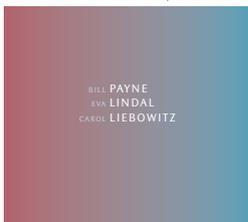
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Mel Minter, *melminter.com* (musically speaking: an avid listener's observations) NOV 2016

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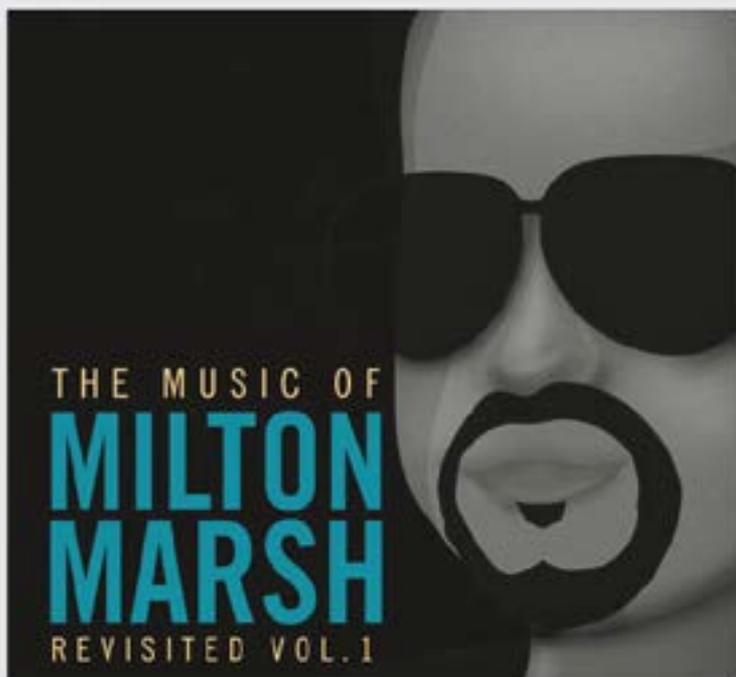
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b: bass  
b cl: bass clarinet  
bs: bass sax  
bsn: bassoon  
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org: organ  
perc: percussion  
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rds: reeds  
ss: soprano sax  
sop: sopranino sax  
synth: synthesizer  
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vib: vibraphone  
vla: viola  
vln: violin  
vcl: vocal  
xyl: xylophone



April, May, June, 2017

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# Inside This Issue

## CADENCE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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

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# Contributors

**J**AMES 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 Cadence Jazz Records/ CIMP/ CIMPoL, Unseen Rain, OA2, and his own ThatSwan! label. Once mentored by Elvin Jones, Bennington celebrated 25 years in the music field 2015 and was included in Down Beat Magazine's Best Albums of 2014 issue. He is based in Chicago.

**J**ASON BIVINS (CD Reviews) is involved with creative improvised music as a reviewer and a performer. His day job is teaching Religious Studies at North Carolina State University.

**R**ON HEARN (Short Takes Obituaries) is a 60-something technical writer from Vancouver, Canada. He has been a jazz lover since the mid-60s. As a teenager, he got bored with the pop music of the day, so he first started listening to some of his uncle's old jazz 78s and then started buying LPs determined find music that was more challenging and substantial. He achieved that goal with his 3rd LP - A Love Supreme.

**P**AT HINELY (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.

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

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

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

**S**TUART KREMSKY (CD Reviews) is the former tape archivist for the Concord Music Group. He contributes reviews to both Cadence and the Journal of the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors, and wrote Cadence's Short Takes from San Francisco column for over 20 years.

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

# Contributors

**R**YAN MEAGHER (Short takes) is a Jazz Guitarist/Composer, and Educator. He is Director of Operations, Portland Jazz Composers' Ensemble (<http://www.pjce.org>)

**M**ARC MEDWIN completed his B.A. in English at Ithaca College, studied musicology at Eastman School of Music, and received his Ph.D. in 2008 from the University of North Carolina, having completed his dissertation on the late works of John Coltrane. Marc now teaches full time at American University in Washington, D.C., where he is Assistant Professor in the Performing Arts / Music Division. Increasingly active in the fields of performance and journalism, he has written many CD reviews, liner notes and articles for print and online journals and periodicals, including "Jazz Perspectives," "Dusted," "Bagatellen," "Coda," "Cadence," "All About Jazz," and "One Final Note," and has presented scholarly papers at several international conferences. Marc also plays piano and keyboards and has recorded in trio with Henry Grimes and Tyshawn Sorey. Dr. Medwin's research and performance interests include contemporary classical, improvised, and electro-acoustic music.

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

**K**ARL STOBER, (CD, Book Reviews, Marketing) Writer, broadcaster and international music critic lives and writes in Palm Springs, California.

**S**HEILA 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.

**K**EN 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.

**T**. Watts, (Interviews) Music Journalist T. Watts has written features for Glide Magazine, Blues Blast Magazine and many others. He is a radio producer at KPfz 88.1 fm in Lakeport, CA as well as road manager for the legendary Sugar Pie DeSanto.

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

# Short Takes Philadelphia

Photos and  
text by Ken  
Weiss



Orrin Evans and  
Kevin Eubanks at Chris'  
Jazz Café 12/30/16



ELEW at South Jazz  
Parlor 1/4/17



12/17/16 - Daniel  
Carter, William Parker,  
Gary Joseph Hassay,  
Tatsuya Nakatani at  
Magik World in Easton,  
PA

Philadelphia, PA- Allentown-based alto saxophonist Gary Joseph Hassay and Easton-based percussionist Tatsuya Nakatani joined forces with NYC's bassist William Parker and multi-instrumentalist Daniel Carter on 12/17/16 at Easton's Magik World. Sadly, the occasion was to honor the memory of Hassay's late wife, Pamela, who passed away unexpectedly in April. Hassay recalled how she would always tell him how "real" the music was and how it would take her away to someplace special. Fortunately, music serves the role to uplift us and that's what this special quartet did in the compact space with a crackling fire in the rear fireplace and Xmas lights hanging above the stage. The music tended towards more of a contemplative side, with just a few areas of almost cathartic peaks, but that's not to say the music wasn't powerful and moving. Carter repeatedly blew percussive melodies that Hassay responded to, while Parker delivered his big, earthy bass sound and Nakatani worked like a man possessed, with bent cymbals, metal bowls and homemade bows that he used on his percussion station. Before a final, short but upbeat encore, the quartet ended with a beautiful short segment featuring Hassay's throat singing in unison with Parker gently blowing through muted trombone ... Orrin Evans (p) has made it a point to play with elders, a title that Kevin Eubanks (g) at age 59, doesn't really fit, but nonetheless, they filled 3 nights at Chris' Jazz Café (12/28-30), along with Luques Curtis (b) and Mark Whitfield, Jr. (d). It's been years since Eubanks was booked into an intimate area club setting so it was a new experience for all the spectators. He's still got immediate family just outside the city so he had plenty of hometown support. Eubanks took the opportunity to stretch out in sections and got near the envelope's edges in areas on 12/30. He remains a big local sport supporter and pulled an Eagles cap tightly over his head. Before the last set's end, bassist Charnett Moffett appeared, brought out his way cool black bass, with white edging, and did a tune replacing Curtis... One of the most intriguing figures in Jazz and the Jazz-Rock border over the years has been Camden, New Jersey's Eric Lewis – now self-named as ELEW. His latest work is back dealing in a Jazz context and his trio (Shin Sakaino (b); Kassa Overall (d)) played

## Short Takes Philadelphia

at South Jazz Parlor on 1/4, his first Philly hit since an appearance at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2005. A unique talent, ELEW's playing is best described as monstrous. At about 6 foot and solid build, he packs a wallop into his thrusts and has a distinctive lean towards the audience while performing, he looks into the listeners and not the keys, accenting the music with facial expressions. He covered Joe Henderson's "Inner Urge," a tune he's been rendering since high school because of the message it carries. ELEW explained that Henderson wrote it, "As a musical portrait of the type of drive you need to have to be an artist. Being an artist and trying to get your name in history is so hard. There are so many different levels ... The industry doesn't cut you any breaks." He also got into some Rock tunes – Nirvana and Michael Jackson and Chaka Kahn. At one point, while wanting to talk, his mic was off and the soundman apologized – "Sorry, I was lost in the moment!" To which ELEW replied, "I appreciate that." He announced – "I don't listen to Jazz that much but when I do, I listen to my music!" ... Fire Museum Presents opened their year with a triple feature of varied musical genres at the Da Vinci Art Alliance on 1/12. Unseen Rain, a quintet with strings, vibes and percussion, expanded the realm of string ensembles before guitarist Lucas Brode paired off with percussionist Julius Masri for an unofficial free Jazz Monk tribute. Brode referenced fragments of Monk tunes such as "Misterioso" and "Monk's Dream" which splintered into his exuberant, experimental rock stylings. It was interesting to hear him tell Masri right before the start that, "I don't like talking [to the audience]." The finale was Slush Fun with the "Johnny Appleseed" of free music, Jack Wright (sax) along with Zack Darrup (g) and Ron Stabinsky (keybds). Wright, who had some copies of his new book – *The Free Musics* – with him along with a shirt emblazoned with 1942 on the front, his birth year. He claimed the shirt showed up at his house mysteriously. Darrup was a blur of constant activity with a bevy of wood fragments, metal drum kit parts and other items that he stuck in his strings or slammed with his feet for loud effect. The trio was to have been a quartet but trombonist Patrick Crossland caught strep throat from his kindergarten-aged daughter. Wright announced that if Crossland wasn't better for their show the next night, the last of three gigs booked, "Then he's FIRED!" ... Chris' Jazz Café owner/chef Mark DeNinno couldn't wait to bring back Davina & the Vagabonds after they played the club last year. The ram-bunctious Jazz/Blues band led by the tatted wonder Davina Sowers, who plays piano, ukulele and sings/hams it up (in a good way), along with double bass, trumpet, trombone and "Chops" on drums/vocals. Highly entertaining with original music and some covers, such as a cool "St. James Infirmary," Sowers drew the audience into participation easily. Based out of the Twin Cities, Sowers said she listens to Jazz, Wilco, and loves cemeteries, especially hanging at Charlie Parker's plot in Kansas City. She can't fight off the Amy Winehouse comparisons but says she doesn't own any of the late singer's albums... Bobby Zankel (as) organized a memorable 65th birthday celebration for William Parker (b) at The Painted Bride Art Center (Ars Nova Workshop) on 1/21. The one-off thriller included Parker with Dave Burrell (p), Steve Swell (tbn), Diane Monroe (vin) and the elusive Muhammad Ali (d). The music was all Zankel's. The long pieces reached catharsis at times but

## Short Takes Philadelphia

mostly let the music air out in such a way that there was opportunity to hear each performer's intertwined contributions. Solos were sparse, mainly saved for the last portion of the tune, and revealed each performer's personality. A highlight came with a Parker-Burrell duet segment. Their playing history goes way back and Burrell's single finger dives into the keys, along with Parker's plucked strings, made for a vibrant "popcorn" effect. The night's mood was a bit heavy, it was only a matter of days since the new president took office, and Zankel announced, "It's such a significant time, it's so important that we make strong art and fight the power." Parker got a birthday cake on stage as part of his tribute...Montgomery County Community College continued its presentation of bands that don't often get the opportunity to play in Philadelphia with 3 weekends of fine music. Commencing with the Aaron Diehl Quartet with Warren Wolf on 2/11, followed by Cyrille Aimee on 2/18, and finally on 2/25, James "Blood" Ulmer's Odyssey Trio, which last played the college 20 years prior. It was worth the wait, as Ulmer, a true original on both guitar and vocals, turned in an almost two hour set that stretched the horizons of the listeners. The harmolodic bluesman's trio hadn't hit anywhere for over half a year but Charles Burnham (vin) and Warren Benbow (d) navigated and pushed the complexly textured music through all its twists and shifts. Burnham made the most of his lengthy solo by reinterpreting "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." At first it was obscurely fragmented but once the melody came into focus, a collective "Aah" was heard from the audience. Burnham returned to the melody at times and also shocked the unsuspecting with a sudden but short piercing mess of sound mid-song...Australian legendary trio The Necks [Chris Abrahams (p), Lloyd Swanton (b), Tony Buck (d)] returned for the second year in a row to the Philadelphia Art Alliance (Ars Nova Workshop) on 2/26. Their goal is to create new music each night so it was interesting to hear them warm up at soundcheck with a Monk tune. Their sold out show featured two roughly 45-minute pieces. The first set was started by Abrahams with a simple repeating melody. After a bit, Buck began repeatedly hitting a held cymbal and then hovering it over a floor tom which picked up the calm vibrations. Swanton meanwhile, bowed gently. At the 30-minute mark, more aggressive pizzicato work appeared as he strummed the strings at times and eventually a semi-forceful ending congealed. After a short break a more "Jazzy" set took place as Swanton opened with pizzicato and in time, Buck brought out his "toys" – metal bowls and gears placed on top of his tom that he struck with a small Asian hand drum and with his right hand he continually forced a large cooking chopstick of untreated cane across the other tom's head. This set had much more diversity and more varied piano melodies. Both sets were mesmerizing and a good indication of what The Necks have been about since the mid-'80s...Incoming hits: Ars Nova Workshop ([arsnovaworkshop.org](http://arsnovaworkshop.org)) presents – 4/14 Dave Douglas's Dada People at Painted Bride Art Center; 5/15 Ken Vandermark/Nate Wooley Duo at The Rotunda; 5/16 John Hollenbeck's Claudia Quintet at FringeArts; 6/3 Brian Marsella Trio performs John Zorn's Masada at Philadelphia Art Alliance; 6/8 Peter Brotzmann & Heather Leigh at FringeArts...Chris' Jazz Café ([chrisjazzcafe.com](http://chrisjazzcafe.com)) presents – 4/1 Orrin Evans; 4/15 Pat Martino; 4/22 Ben Williams.

Ken Weiss

## Short Takes Vancouver, Canada

**A**pril starts off at Frankie's 4/2 with bassist Paul Rushka's 3 with Jon Bentley on sax and guitarist Triston Paxton paying tribute to the late Kenny Wheeler. On 4/3 it's the Mighty Fraser Big Band and Ryan Oliver's 4tet plays Dexter Gordon's "Go" 4/6/. On 4/7&8, Mike LeDonne visits from NYC to play B3 with Cory Weeds on alto sax. Vocalist Cari Burdett appears 4/9. The Van. Legacy Jazz Orch. presents a tribute to Oliver Nelson 4/10. 4/13 Miles Black 3 and harmonica wiz Keith Bennett salute Toots and Steve followed by vocalist Emily Chambers 4/14 and Dave Robbins 6tet 4/15. Saxophonist/vocalist Karen Graves 4/20 followed by altoist P.J. Perry plays 4/21&22 with pianist Tony Foster, bassist Jodi Proznick and Craig Scott drums. Vocalist Laura Crema appears 4/23 while trumpeter Eric Weiden plays Miles Davis' "Blue Haze" 4/27. James Danderfer's East-West 5tet with Oliver Gannon guitar, bassist Neil Swainson, Brad Turner piano and drummer Quincy Davis 4/28&29. April ends with Jen Hodge All Stars. May kicks off 5/5 with pianist Helen Sung's 4tet with John Ellis sax, bassist Boris Kozlov and drummer Terreon Gully. On 5/7 it's Retronutz with Miles Black piano/guitar, Patty V vocal, Cameron Wilson violin & Nick Apivor percussion. Cory Weeds presents the music of Harold Vick along with Nick Peck organ, Heather Andreson trumpet, guitarist Dave Sikula & Jesse Cahill drums. Coco Jafro is in 5/13 followed by Will Vinson/Bryn Roberts 5/18. 5/19 has vocalist Jennifer Hayes 4tet and Mazacote 5/26. May ends 5/27 with Bria Skonberg... Elsewhere, guitarist Bill Frisell plays solo 4/9 at Pyatt Hall. Capilano U.'s jazz series present Gord Grdina's NYC 4tet 4/8 at the Western Front with Grdina guitar/oud, Oscar Noriega sax, Russ Lossing piano & Satosh Takeishi drums. Pianist Bill Charlap's 3 (with Peter Washington & Kenny Washington) is at the Kay Meek Centre 5/4.

The Dave Stryker/Steve Slagle group with guitarist Stryker and altoist Slagle, organist Jared Gold and local drummer Jesse Cahill played 2/10. Their 2 sets included "Pusher Man" on which Stryker did some Wes-styled thumb work, Monk's "Ask Me Now" and "I Loves You Porgy" a feature for Slagle that was a work of shimmering beauty and the highlight of night for me. Other tunes included a tribute to Stanley Turrentine "Don't Mess With Mr. T." with more thumb action from Stryker, a variation on Just In Time titled "In Just Time" and the ballad "Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry".

A week later I heard pianist Emmet Cohen's 3 with bassist Russell Hall & drummer Kyle Poole and honestly I've never heard a trio like this one. 26-year-old Cohen is nothing short of amazing, playing everything from James P. Johnson and Fats Waller to Bud and Monk. The first set started with the standard "Billy Boy" followed by Willie "The Lion" Smith's "Echoes of Spring" and Monk "Off Minor" preceded by a lengthy introduction with tremendous virtuosity that was also present in Bud Powell's "Dance of the Infidels" and "Tempus Fugit", the latter played at express-train tempo. Another thing I enjoyed about this trio was the tremendous interaction between its members, both musically and visually, with Poole frequently making faces at Cohen. Another thing I liked was bassist Russell hanging his hat on the top of his bass, using it as a hat rack. If you get a chance to hear this trio live or even on CD, definitely do it! I can't wait to hear them again... The 2017 TD Van. International Jazz fest is June 22 -July 2. Go to [www.coastaljazz.ca](http://www.coastaljazz.ca) for complete info.

## Jazz Story: Steve Swell



Steve Swell Memory  
My Jazz Epiphany

Taken by Ken Weiss  
on 12/23/16  
Photo by Ken Weiss

In the early 1980's, in NYC, I was what was known as a "jobbing" musician. That meant, literally, I would take any job on the trombone I could find. I was making a decent living, getting to travel some as I had never been anywhere outside of the NYC metro area up to that point in my young life, and I was having fun. I had grown up listening to Jazz, big bands, R&B, Rock & Roll, the Blues. At 15 years old (1970) I had heard Roswell Rudd on the radio for the first time and was hooked on that area of the "new thing" as it was called. But by the time I graduated high school and started college in Jersey City, I was more interested in just making a living as a musician. And there were plenty of opportunities to do so in the 1970's. My first professional engagement was with a "top forty band," which was a band that played the music that was most popular at the moment. This led to other gigs in NY like Salsa gigs, big band gigs, weddings, bar mitzvahs, Klezmer gigs, Broadway show tours, even an occasional marching band. Like I said, it was fun, I was in my early 20s and I had the energy to get around to all parts of the city and the surrounding area, sometimes doing 3 gigs in a day. The \$25-\$100 gigs all went to support the life of a young musician that was pretty decent. In 1984 I was invited to play with Makanda Ken McIntyre who had regular Saturday/Sunday rehearsals and performances of his music at his loft on West Broadway in Lower Manhattan. I had just spent the previous 2 years in the Lionel Hampton and the Buddy Rich bands. In my mind, even though I did all those "non-Jazz" gigs, I figured the occasional Jazz gig, especially with those 2 bands under my belt, made me a "professional" musician and a Jazz professional at that. I was in for a huge awakening. Makanda was a great musician and a great teacher. I brought all my professional "chops" into his band, which meant I listened, followed instructions, and did my absolute best. As deep as I thought I was, I was painfully unaware of my shortcomings. Liquor did not help that condition, it only enhanced it. Around the third rehearsal,

## Jazz Story: Steve Swell

I played what I think of now as one of my "safe" solos: in the pocket, good tone, nice technique, etc. When I finished and the next soloist was already playing, Makanda came around behind me and whispered in my ear, "That wasn't shit." He said it very softly, in a matter of fact way. I was stunned to say the least. When the piece was over, Makanda asked me personally what I was doing, what and where I was playing. I explained my basic week with the gigs I was doing. He then said to the group that if you wanted to play creative music that is what you should do. Then he said, "If you want to make money, you can always clean toilets." Growing up in NJ, I worked in my father's Sunoco gas station doing exactly that, so the analogy hit home for me. While I would never trade those early experiences in, so many areas of music, what Makanda said to me that day started me on my way to a deeper self-awareness of what it is to be a creative musician and a human being. That was my jazz epiphany and I feel lucky and grateful for him having the courage to tell me that.

## Jazz Story: Nels Cline



Nels Cline  
A Memory of Charlie  
Haden  
Taken by Ken Weiss on  
12/23/16  
Photo by Ken Weiss

This is kind of an embarrassing, a kind of tormented memory, but it has its own kind of charm I think. This story goes back to around 1982. At this point in my life I was in my late 20s, and I met bassist Charlie Haden, who had come into the record store I worked at, called Rhino Records in West Los Angeles. And Charlie, being one of my absolute idols, I was extremely thrilled that he had come into the store, and my friend, Lee Kaplan, who worked at the store and with whom my brother and I sometimes played music with, had done what he quite often did and told Charlie Haden that he needed to play with his friend Nels because I adored his music and that I played nylon string guitar, which was true, but of course, I was terrified to meet and play with Charlie because I had such high esteem for him. There was a bit of that idol worship going on there. But anyway, Charlie was rather nice to me right away and I played a couple of gigs with him where I would just play "Song for Che" on the nylon string guitar with Bobby Bradford on cornet and Charlie on bass, and then Bobby and Charlie would play some Charlie Parker and Ornette stuff as a duo. This led to my friend Lee somehow finagling a gig, which he knew was kind of like a fantasy gig for me, in spite of my inherent lack of self-confidence, I was easily daunted, but he put on a duo concert of me and Charlie Haden. So I went to rehearse with Charlie at the little sort of pool house he was living in in Brentwood at the time, and he was pretty disappointed with the fact that I didn't know a lot of Charlie Parker tunes, so it was hard to pick tunes that he liked and that I knew because I don't know a million Jazz songs. For example, he kind of dutifully made his way through "Nardis," which I wanted to play, with some complaint. He didn't like to be accompanied during his bass solos, there was to be no comping, and while we were rehearsing "Nardis" in his room, at one point he started his bass solo and then went off into one of those sort of, I guess you could call it double-stop, freeform Charlie Haden bass solo moments, and I thought he had just started going free so I just sat there and waited for him to give me a cue to come in but he was keeping the form of the song in his head as he went

## Jazz Story: Nels Cline

and when he came back around to the one at the beginning of the A section, he stopped and said, "Where were you?" [Laughs] Which was pretty embarrassing. Another strange thing that came out of this rehearsal was that he had asked me if I had a lot of effects like Pat Metheny, meaning rack effects. He said, "You know all that stuff with the blinking lights," and I said, 'No, Charlie, I don't have that. I have some pedals but,' and at that point this would have been like a box overdrive and a Boss chorus, this was the early '80s, so he said, "Bring everything! Man, make some fuzzies!" [Laughs] And I wasn't hearing any effects on any of this stuff.

The day before the gig, which was at Miles Playhouse by the way, in Santa Monica, (my friends and I used to rent Miles Playhouse quite often for a very low price and put on shows ourselves,) while working at the record store, at one point I put a record onto one of the shelves in the back room and ran my finger into a piece of cardboard album cover flat and it sliced the middle finger of my left hand open pretty severely, right under the fingernail. I mean it was bad, it was really bad, and I went home that night to my then wife DD, and I basically had a complete panic attack. I got in the middle of my bed, I covered myself up after putting a bunch of vitamin E oil, or something, on my finger, bandaging it, and realizing that there was no way that I could use that finger to finger the guitar without extreme pain and without opening the cut up. So the next day, without telling Charlie any of this, we soundchecked and I was so nervous already, but I have to say that this wound had me in a state of complete agitation. Right before the gig, Charlie said, "Oh hey man, there's somebody I want you to meet. This is Jerry Hahn." And so the guitarist Jerry Hahn met me and looked at me somewhat askance, and by this time I was having a complete like, I don't know, I completely lost all confidence. I remember that Peter Kuhn's trio opened the night, playing free Jazz, and then our gig went on as planned. I couldn't use my middle finger, a couple of times I accidentally put my finger down on the guitar causing wincing facial expressions and pain. Charlie, I don't know if he sensed that I was having difficulty, because I had this Band-Aid on my finger, I don't remember that part, as I said he was always very generous with me, but there's no doubt in my mind that I played horribly that night, possibly acquitting myself somewhat admirably on "Song For Che," which Charlie and I had done before, and which we would do kind of an extended improvisation on which was a joyous thing to try to do with Charlie. I ended up playing for years after that with the Liberation Music Orchestra West Coast, playing nylon string guitar, the only non-union member, the youngest member, and certainly the most nervous member of that group, which turned out to be an incredible experience for me as a Charlie Haden fanatic. But I really have to say that I really dodged a bullet when he didn't fire me for life after that duo gig.

### THE LONG ROAD TO CARNIGE HALL Peter D. Cimini

To better understand the significance of the events presented in this article, it is important to go back to historical cultural events. Culture is constantly evolving, which is what makes new generations so independent and exciting. For a century and a half teenagers have expressed their need for independence by discarding the music of their parents, and embracing a new, different, and often radical form of music.

In 1884 teenagers had become excited by the tuneful melodies and rhyming everyday lyrics of Stephen Foster. Parents were disturbed that their children would cast aside the classical music of the great European composers.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, African slaves in America, re-interpreted their native music, and invented a sound they called jass, a derivative for the popular Jasmine perfume used in the brothels of New Orleans. Parents of the Stephen Foster generation, were deeply concerned about the negative moral implication this new jass music would have on their children. Today, jass is commonly referred to as jazz.

Twenty years later a new generation of youngsters, became fascinated with a dance, made popular by the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Parents of the Jazz age were appalled by the sexually expressive dance The Charleston, which they feared would encourage their children to engage in pre-marital sex.

Twenty years later, in 1940, Big Band Swing music suddenly became the rage of this new generation, as they went off to fight in World War II. Their parents could not understand how their children, could enjoy such cheerful musical, when surrounded by the uncertainty, violence and death of war.

Twenty years later in 1960, the Big Band/Swing music generation, became alarmed by the popularity of a young man named Elvis Presley, and the hypnotic effect his hip movement, and sensual singing voice, had on their children. During this time, and adding to the distress of parents, four young, long haired men, from England, calling themselves the Beatles; arrived in America, causing well-mannered young girls to publically display, screaming behavior, as the Beatles, sang their newly written songs.

## Feature: The Long Road to Carnegie Hall

Some twenty years later, when the hypnotized, screaming youngsters of the Elvis Presley and Beatles era became adults, they feared for the safety of their children, alarmed at the drug usage, that seemed to follow Hard/Acid Rock music.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, a century and a half after the Stephen Foster generation expressed their independence; parents seem deeply concerned about the influence that Rap music was having on the musical taste of their children. After all what ever happened to the Great American Song book of Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, and Tin Pan Alley.

With this brief historical look at how six generations of teens used different music forms to express their independence; I wish to step back in time and detail the interesting, unexpected, and coincidental events, that occurred over six years leading to the first ever Big Band/Swing era concert, held in 1938, at the famous classical music venue, Carnegie Hall, a New York City institution. This concert by the Benny Goodman Band is seen by Big Band Swing enthusiast, as the spark that ignited the Big Band Swing era of the 1940's.

Benny Goodman, a sixteen year old, Jewish clarinet player from Chicago, was playing dance music at the Mid Way Gardens in Chicago, in 1927. He was noticed by Gil Rodin, jazz historian and performer, who invited Goodman to join drummer and vocalist Benn Pollack, who was in the process of putting together a large white band to perform in California night clubs, and find work in short films. In 1931 the young clarinetist was fired by bandleader Ben Pollack's for interfering in the band's booking schedule.

Benny Goodman traveled to New York City where work opportunities for musicians was plentiful. Benny found work at studio jobs, and in speakeasies. Probation soon ended, and forced the closure of these illegal night clubs. Work for jazz musicians became hard to find. Benny, out of desperation, decided to form a band of his own hoping to find work. He asked three other musician friends, vocalist Helen Ward, a young teenage trumpeter named Harry James, and a young, energetic, drummer, Gene Krupa, to join him in his new venture. In 1934, six years before the band would make history in Carnegie Hall, Billy Rose, a prominent New York showman decided to open a night club; offering a lavish floor show with beautiful, scantily dressed women. Rose was looking for a band that played very tight, strict musical arrangements, to play background music for his twice nightly shows, and in between shows, play dance music for the patrons. The New Benny Goodman band was a perfect fit for Billy Rose and his new club.

In October 1934, an executive from the MCA advertisement agency was enjoying an evening with his wife at Billy Rose's nightclub. After listening to the Goodman band, he approached Benny, to see if he would be interested in auditioning for a new concept in radio programming at the NBC. The radio program was planning to broadcast a three hour, nationwide music show. The show would present three bands, one to play "sweet" music, another to play Latin rhythms, and a third to play the new

## Feature: The Long Road to Carnegie Hall

hot jazz swing music. The National Biscuit Company had already signed on to sponsor the three hour broadcast. Benny Goodman's band was chosen for the hot jazz category, and was hired to appear on the "Let's Dance" Radio Show.

Racism of the time even extended to radio. This meant that only white bands were given the opportunity to audition for the "Let's Dance" radio show. The magnificent African American bands of the time, Chick Webb, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, and others, were excluded from the audition process. Benny Goodman's band may never have won the audition if it had to compete against some of the top black bands of that period, but win it did.

The future of the young Goodman band, looked bright, now with steady employment playing their style of music. There was however, one very serious problem. The band did not have a large, or good enough "book" of arrangements needed to play a weekly national program. Goodman asked arranger and band leader Fletcher Henderson, if he would be willing to sell his "book" of Harlem arrangements. The Fletcher Henderson band was not doing well commercially, and he was pleased to earn some extra income for his band. Fletcher Henderson's band eventually broke up, and Benny immediately hired Fletcher as his arranger, he wanted the band to have a "Harlem Sound."

The national exposure of the "Let's Dance" radio program, allowed people all over the country to hear a white band, playing music that could only be heard regularly at the Savoy Ballroom, Harlem's most popular and famous dance emporium, and the Roseland Ballroom, located in the heart of Times Square, New York. In March 1936, *Metronome*, a magazine reporting on the popular music of the time said, "Benny Goodman and his Let's Dance band is great medicine for listeners and a great outfit; fine arrangements and musicians who are together all the time; they phrase together, they fight together and they swing together."

Then in July of 1935, the National Biscuit Company was involved in a prolonged labor dispute, causing the sponsor to drop the show. The Benny Goodman band was once again out of work, and with no prospects of work in the New York area, the band would be forced to dissolve.

The west coast office of the MCA Advertising agency that had hired Benny's band for the radio broadcast, happened to be looking for a band to open a new ballroom in Los Angeles in the fall of 1935. Expenses and the logistics of getting a band from New York to California would wind up costing more than the band could make, in their two week engagement in California. So the MCA advertising agency offered the band a two month, "one-nighter" road trip, starting in New Jersey and ending in Los Angeles. There would be no bus, the band members would have to car pool across country for their one night engagements. Benny was reluctant to accept the trip west, and the two week engagement. The western part of the country did not understand or like the kind of swing music his band played. Desperate to keep the band together, he agreed to the tour, and the two week engagement in Los Angeles. The income from the road trip plus the salary

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for two weeks at the ballroom in Los Angeles, would enable the musicians to travel back to their homes in New York, and continue looking for work. Benny was correct about the acceptance of his swing music by Westerners. The further West they traveled, the less enthusiastic the paying audience became. When they played the Trocadero Ballroom, at the Elitch Gardens in Colorado, many of the paying customers demanded refunds unless the band played waltzes. They were forced to discard their Fletcher Henderson's arrangements for slower more popular waltz type arrangements. In Denver, Colorado, after the first two songs the ballroom manager walked on stage, and confronted Benny, "I hired a dance band; what's the matter with your boys, didn't they ever learn to play waltzes," Twenty minutes later the musicians suffered the humiliation of being escorted off the band stand by the ballroom manager, refunding the customers entrance fee. In Grand Junction, Colorado the band had to play behind chicken wire protecting them from the empty whisky bottles, being hurled their way by disappointed dancers in cowboy boots and hats. Discouraged, tired, humiliated band members, longing for New York, finally arrived in Los Angeles for their September 13th engagement, opening the big lavish Palomar Ballroom. After such a disastrous road trip, the musicians expected the final two weeks to be the end of the band.

The Palomar ballroom was a huge complex on the corner of Vermont Avenue at Second and Third Street. Dinner tables encircled the huge 16,500 square foot dance floor; there were other dinner tables on a balcony overlooking the dance area. Weekday admission was thirty cents for ladies and forty cents for men. Weekends would cost women forty cents and men seventy five cents.

When the band arrived at the Palomar Ballroom, early on their first evening, they were surprised at the long line of people stretching for a block and a half apparently waiting for the doors to open. The long line suggested that the crowd for opening night was going to be large. At First, the musicians thought the ballroom was offering two separate shows in two different rooms of the ballroom. And most spectators were in line for the other show. When they found out the Benny Goodman band was the only show that evening, they remained anxious. A large crowd meant louder booing, and significantly more violent behavior directed at the musicians. After the musicians had taken their places on the bandstand, Goodman waited for the curtains to start their movement to open, at that point Benny counted off for the first number and the band's theme song, "Let's Dance," began. Reed player, George Koenig, recalls the feeling of that moment. "We began to play our theme song, 'Let's Dance,' as the curtains began to open. When the curtains were about half way open, I saw nothing but bodies pressed tightly up against the band stand, and extending over ninety percent of the dance floor. Why was the audience not dancing to the music? A number of us feared for our safety in that brief half-minute of the full curtain opening. We didn't know if they intended to storm the stage destroy our instruments, and beat us up, would this be a repeat of the bad experiences in Colorado. When the first song ended, the crammed bodies on the dance floor, erupted with applause, shouts and screams of joy. What a difference from Colorado."

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The band had no way of knowing, the huge crowd of youngsters pressed against the stage had been listening to the "Let's Dance" radio program, broadcast at 8:30 P.M., New York time, while in California the Let's Dance" program aired at 5:30 P.M., as the Camel Caravan. California teenagers of 1935 were no different than other generations that came before them. They were uninterested in their parent's music, and were looking for their own sound: music that would differentiate them from their parents, music that would identify their uniqueness and independence. The music they heard every Saturday at 5:30 P.M., was music their parents did not care for, and best of all, did not understand. They had not come to jeer, boo, or be violent. They came to dance, listen and feel alive. They came to see their new musical heroes, and initiate what was to become, the Big Band Swing Era.

Those parents, not especially pleased with their children's embrace of big band music, were not the only dissenters of this music. Dr. Arthur Cremin, Director of the New York School of Music proposed that legislation should be adopted to outlaw swing music. He wrote, "The pernicious behavior of many teenagers to Swing Music should be stopped before it corrupts the morals of modern youth beyond redemption."

Dr. A.A. Brill, a noted Psychiatrist of the mid twentieth century said, "Swing music is a rhythmic sound that pleases children and savages alike. It acts as a narcotic and makes those who listen forget reality." It's interesting to note that the negative reaction to Swing music, was not without its critics, among fellow musicians. Blue Barron, a successful white band leader known for his "sweet" musical style said, "Music today is nothing but orchestrated sex, nothing but a phallus symbol set to sound."

The Goodman band, now back in New York City, was a hot ticket everywhere. A month after the Palomar engagement, the twenty-seven year old clarinet player from the slums of Chicago, was now being billed as the "King of Swing," a name given to him by his drummer, Gene Krupa. The Benny Goodman band was immediately booked for a two week engagement at the Paramount Theatre in the heart of Times Square. The noon show started with a full length feature film. At the end of the film, the stage lights were lit, and a slow moving red curtain began to cover the movie screen. Suddenly, the theme song "Let's Dance" could be heard coming from underground, almost as though it was an echo. Even though the rising band could not yet be seen, there was a burst of thunderous applause and screaming young girls at the sound of the music. When the rising platform exposed the head of drummer, Gene Krupa, slowly rising in front of the thick, elaborate red curtain. The music became increasingly louder as the platform rose to the level of the audience. As the full band came into sight the screaming, applause and stamping feet also became louder. The rising bandstand smoothly stopped at the level of the stage, in front of a frantic audience, as the final notes of "Let's Dance" was being played. The applause and shouting continued. As the applause started to wane, and without a word Benny Goodman gave the downbeat for the second song and pandemonium once again broke out in the Times Square theatre. By the fourth song, much to the displeasure of the theatre

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management, the kids in the audience could no longer control themselves. They jumped out of their seats and were dancing in the aisles. The musicians now realized that California was not an aberration; if they were accepted like this in New York, they had made it.

The band had now been accepted on both coasts, yet Benny was still unsatisfied with the music, or even what it was that would satisfy him. In the summer of 1936 Benny and some of his musicians were at a party at Mildred Bailey's apartment, a popular singer of that period. Also at the party was a free lance piano player, Teddy Wilson, who, in 1935, had recorded with Mildred. She asked the boys for some entertainment to get the evening going. Goodman and Wilson began to jam. Carl Bellinger, Mildred's cousin and an amateur drummer, joined Benny and Teddy by using whisk brooms on a suitcase, which was common for small gatherings, when drums could not be made were not available in apartment buildings. Wilson, an African American, had an unassuming personality; a sensitive touch on the ivories and a fluid rhythm. The three men were playing for the first time, just "jamming," no preparation, yet the interplay between Goodman and Wilson was magical. Teddy was able to play chords under Benny's melody so perfectly one would have thought they had been playing together for years. Benny invited Wilson to attend a rehearsal and play a few tunes with Benny and Gene Krupa. Along with Wilson's ability to play chords under the melody set by Goodman, he seemed to have a calming effect on Krupa. Benny realized he had not only found a piano player but also a trio that would diversify his music. The sometimes rude and perfectionist band leader was satisfied, at least for the moment.

In December, 1936, the band returned triumphantly to Los Angeles. Benny had heard about an African American drummer that was playing a new instrument, called a vibraphone (sometimes referred to as a vibraharp). A vibraphone was a xylophone that had each metal bar fitted with a metal tube, in which was placed a small disk that rotated by power from a small electric motor, and attached to the instrument. It was the spinning of each dish which gave the vibraphone its distinctive mellow tone along. Goodman entered a rundown bar to find this obscure musician, playing the most wonderful jazz music on this strange instrument. Benny immediately envisioned his trio becoming a quartet. He hired the young African American, Lionel Hampton, on the spot and began to feel that with the addition of Hampton perhaps his band was now complete.

Besides a few bigoted white patrons the integration of Wilson and Hampton into the all white Benny Goodman band went smoothly. It would be dramatic to write of Benny Goodman as a courageous trail blazer for integration and justice. However, the reality was that with Wilson and Hampton Goodman simply saw an opportunity to make his music better and his band more competitive.

Swing music had reached its peak in the winter of 1938. In that year Ten million seventy-eight rpm jazz records were sold in 1932. In 1938, fifty million jazz records were sold and swing was one of the main reasons

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for such a significant increase in sales. Tommy Dorsey was playing the Palm Room at the Commodore Hotel on 42nd Street. His brother Jimmy replaced the Casa Loma band at the New Yorker night club. Cab Calloway was at the Cotton Club in Harlem. Chick Webb was in his usual seat at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. Count Basie went into the Loews State Theatre on Broadway, and both Art Tatum on piano, and Louie Prima's small group was at the Famous Door on 52nd Street. Even with this line up of big and small bands playing hot jazz unfriendly journalists and some "sweet" band leaders were predicting that the hot jazz craze would soon disappear from the scene. They were right, perhaps due to the end of World War II, or a generation of soldiers returning home, married and took advantage of the G.I. Bill to advance their education, but whatever the reason, the Swing era was beginning to fade quickly after World War II; and would not follow in the steps of its predecessors, who had lasted twenty years. Big Band/swing music was the rage for only ten years, perhaps shortened by the end of World War II and the return of a generation of soldiers.

It was in this atmosphere of the decline of Swing music, that a publicist named Wynn Nathanson at the Thomas Fitzdall agency, which had been handling the Camel Caravan account, suggested that Benny Goodman's band be booked to play a one night concert at the most important house of classical old world traditional music, Carnegie Hall, located in New York City. Nathanson's idea was both a publicity opportunity, and an opportunity for Swing music to regain the respect it once had. When Benny was approached with the idea he initially was not interested. It was reported he told Nathanson, "You must be out of your mind." His concern was that the music of "sporting houses," night clubs and dance halls, would never be accepted coming from the stage where Stokowski and Toscanini held forth. "If the band was not well received by the audience it could further damage bookings already decreasing." Nathanson, trying to reassure Goodman, mentioned that he had already spoken to Sol Hurok, the most prestigious impresario in America who was willing to book all the arrangements for the concert.

As Nathanson continued to press Goodman with the idea, Benny found more reasons not to like the idea, "I kind of like the audience close to us, and more or less let them choose if they want to listen or dance. In Carnegie Hall this option would be taken away from them."

In the book, *Benny Goodman and the Swing Era*, by James Lincoln Collier, the author explains how Wynn Nathanson's eventually convinced Benny Goodman to do the concert in Carnegie Hall. Nathanson told Benny it was time for swing music to claim its legitimacy, and who better than Benny Goodman, the "King of Swing," to make this happen. He was able to convince Benny that the publicity from such an event would be incalculable. Furthermore, he explained, he planned to sell the concert to the public as the first concert of jazz music, and that Benny would go down in history as the man behind America first jazz concert.

It's not clear if Goodman believed this pitch, but the truth was Paul Whiteman had performed at Carnegie Hall in 1925, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong had also performed in concert halls in Europe. Duke

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Ellington's manager, Irving Mills, rejected an offer for Duke to appear in concert at Carnegie Hall a full year before Goodman's engagement, because the money was not sufficient. Ironically, Ellington was in the audience that evening and one has to wonder what he may have been thinking as the program progressed. It may not have been the first jazz concert, but it was the first jazz concert to capture the imagination of the public in a way that few other concerts had. Although ego no doubt played a role, Benny also reasoned that swing bands, originally designed for dancing, had proven this music was also popular for listening. Goodman was eventually convinced; he told Nathanson, "Contact Hurok and get the booking done."

According to Ross Firestone, in his book *Swing Swing Swing, The Life and Times of Benny Goodman*, Irving Kolodin the Classical music reviewer for the New York Sun happened to be sitting in the office of Sol Hurok's press chief, Gerald Goode, on the afternoon that Wynn Nathanson called. Goode put Nathanson on hold and asked Kolodin, "What do you think of a concert by Benny Goodman's band in Carnegie Hall?" Kolodin immediately answered, "A terrific idea." It was after that phone conversation that Goode passed the proposal on to Sol Hurok. Hurok, initially not very enthusiastic about the idea, went to the Manhattan Room to hear Benny Goodman's band play. According to Kolodin, "Hurok was impressed by the number of people at the Manhattan Room, and was quite taken back by the uproar of the audience after each number." In Hurok's mind, so many well dressed people spending money on this attraction was a good omen.

Hurok booked Carnegie Hall for Sunday evening, January 16, 1938, which was the night after Benny Goodman finished his three month engagement at the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York. The advertisement of the concert and the handbill read, "Sol Hurok presents Benny Goodman and his Swing Orchestra in the first swing concert in history." Hurok felt a large percentage of the people that would come out on a Sunday night to Carnegie Hall would not be familiar with Benny Goodman's music. So he hired Irving Kolodin, who had recently published a history of the Metropolitan Opera, to write an elaborate set of program notes directed towards the expected people attending with a limited knowledge of swing music.

Benny still worried about the reception his band would receive in the great hall. He decided to play it safe, and enhanced the size of his band using other musicians. Bobby Hackett, trumpet player, later recalled, "I took on the assignment, but was sorry that I had agreed to do a solo, I was very frightening to be playing jazz before the Carnegie Hall patrons in their monkey suits, formal dresses, with all that jewelry." Goodman also hired three members of the Duke Ellington band, Johnny Hodges, soprano saxophone, "Cootie" Williams, trumpet, and Harry Carney baritone saxophone.

He also hired Count Basie, and two members of the bands great rhythm section. This addition was for a planned purpose. Goodman decided that he would not have an intermission. His fear, completely unfounded, was an intermission would give many in the audience a convenient way to leave the concert early. After hiring Basie, Goodman instructed his arranger, Fletcher Henderson to compose fat's Waller's song "Honey Suckle Rose"

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to replace an intermission. The arrangement would have to be written to be approximately eighteen minutes in length. Count Basie and his rhythm section, along with Krupa, the band's regular drummer would play two rhythm interpretations one in the first half of the arrangement lasting six minutes, and a second rhythm interpretation towards the end of the arrangement lasting eight minutes. During these fourteen minutes of rhythm interpretations by Basie and his men, the band members in the various sections, with the exception of drummer Krupa, would be able to rest their lips, hands and refresh.

Ticket prices were scaled; prices ranged from a low of 85 cents for the upper balcony to \$2.75 cents for boxes, somewhat less than what was charged for the New York Philharmonic Symphony. Advertisements were placed in various newspapers, magazines, and handbills.

As January 16th approached Goodman recalled, "I got cold feet, and asked Beatrice Lilly, who had appeared with me on the Camel Caravan show, to warm up the audience with a few jokes." Sol Hurok was firmly against the idea, "It will bring a certain amount of ridicule from music critics." Hurok was also opposed to the idea of band members in theatrical costumes. Dress became an easy decision, band members would use their black tuxedos for this historic appearance. Hurok believed these and a number of other ideas about stage management would detract from the musical tradition of swing. Fortunately, Beatrice Lilly thought much the same and as Benny said, "She was smart enough to say no to my proposal." A great deal of tension and anxiety among Goodman and the musicians was building as January 16th approached. Douglas Gilbert of the World Telegram newspaper interviewed Benny a few days before the concert. He recalled, "He was wound so tight he practically snapped my head off, interrupting my first question, by saying, "Why, if some of the classical concert stars had Lionel's rhythm, they would be even better artists."

The movie "Hollywood Hotel," which featured the Benny Goodman band, opened at the Strand Theatre in Times Square on January 12th. The New York Times reported that the crowds were so large for the opening of the movie that the police had to bring in reserves to handle the crowds. This must have helped to ease some of the doubts Goodman still had regarding the welcoming his band would receive in Carnegie Hall. He had a nagging feeling that his band could wind up playing before a half empty hall, and the majority of the audience would be older men in tuxedos and women in evening gowns, not understand swing music. But there was no turning back now.

Sunday, January 16, 1938, was a slow news day according to The New York Times. F.D.R nominated Stanley Reed, for a seat on the Supreme Court. The Palestinian Arab High Committee was angry with the British for proposing a partition of Jerusalem. Japan was looking to borrow fifty million dollars from American banks, to purchase needed machinery. Carl Hubble signed a new contract with the New York Giants baseball team for \$20,000. The advertisements were more interesting than the news. The Ford Motor Company was asking \$689.00 for its fully equipped 1938 "De Luxe" Ford V-8.

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Best and Company advertised their new “stay-up-top,” Le Grant Girdle, latex net and rayon satin in peach color, \$7.50. The advertisement explained, “At last — a girdle with a “stay-up-top!” Walt Disney’s new movie, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was playing at Radio City Music Hall. The New York Times Magazine section included an article titled, “Benny Goodman and His Orchestra appearing at Carnegie Hall,

The following statement appeared in the entertainment section. “It is hardly an exaggeration to say that swing is today the most widespread artistic medium of popular emotional expression. Benny Goodman is not only the ‘King of Swing’ he is also the Pied Piper of Swing, the man who is leading the children in this new dance craze. The stage was now set for one of the historic moments in the history of Jazz in America.

The commentary was accurate in two respects. First, the 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert was — and still is — widely thought of as the first real jazz concert. Second Benny Goodman had become the Pied Piper for a generation of youngsters determined to define their independence from a past generation, through the use of swing as “their” music. In the 1930s, the need for a new generation to show its independence through swing music and dance was to become the catalyst that would crown Benny Goodman, as the “King of Swing,”

By the morning of the 16th all 2,760 seats had been sold. After the New York Philharmonic gave its regular Sunday afternoon concert, and the sun began to set early on this January evening in New York, the line in front of the box office had begun, by seven P.M. the line stretched passed the adjoining buildings on the left side of the Carnegie Hall building. A quick decision was made at seven-fifteen to set up folding chairs on either side and behind the band on stage to accommodate as many people as possible waiting on line to attend the concert. The size of the Carnegie Hall stage is very large, able to seat a full classical orchestra, and space for some instruments that are too large to be held by a musician. There was a good deal of unused space on the Carnegie Hall stage after Benny Goodman’s band was seated. The Goodman musicians and guest artists had already began arriving, and started assembling backstage in their black tuxedos. It was unusually quiet as the band members set up, a sure sign that the musicians were nervous. Harry James, (Trumpet player) told a reporter from Down Beat magazine, “Sure I’m nervous, you know — Carnegie Hall — after all...” “Babe” Russin said, “I fortified myself with a half gallon of blackberry wine.” Duke Ellington’s singer Ivie Anderson, dropped back stage to say hello: “I guess this is the top,” she told the nervous musicians. In the dressing room, normally reserved for the Philharmonic conductor, Jess Stacy was fooling around on the piano to settle his nerves. Martha Tilton arrived in an expensive pink tulle party dress she had bought at Lord and Taylor’s just for the event. Lionel Hampton, as usual, was the last to arrive, with his big smile and as relaxed as always. It was almost time to start; the crowd was getting settled in their seats. Many members of the band, were anxious as they watched the seats fill up with spectators on either side, and behind them. Benny no longer had to worry about playing before a half empty hall. A

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squad of three police was quickly arranged to keep order around the picket line outside the Carnegie Hall entrance, protesting Benny's earlier support for the Loyalists, in the Spanish Civil War.

Throughout the audience was a scattering of older gentleman in tuxedos, with their wives, but much to Benny's delight the vast majority of the audience was the youthful Goodman fan base: high school students, college age men and women, and the adolescent children who cheered on the Benny Goodman orchestra and danced in the isles of the Paramount Theatre. Also in the audience were Joseph Szigeti Conductor, Opera singer Rose Bampton and the Viennese harpsichordist, Yella Pessl. Just before curtain time Harry James opened the curtains slightly, to look at the crowd. It was reported by more than one source that when he closed the curtains, he said, "I feel like a whore in church."

It was 8:45p.m, and time for the band members to take their places, everyone was anxious; nobody wanted to be first to walk out on stage. The musicians clustered together in a four foot area off stage, pushing each other, trying not to be first. James Lincoln Collier reported, "Benny, pale as a ghost, ordered his musicians to go out together as a group. Eventually band members took their places on the band stand, with the overflow spectators sitting in chairs on either side of them, arms length away, which served only to reinforce the anxiety of the musicians, if in fact that was possible."

Usually a dance band leader introduces himself, and the band to the crowd before they begin; but classical music conductors walk out on stage, takes his place at the podium, and the concert begins without any introduction. Benny was on the stage with the musicians as they prepared for their opening number. When the curtain opened there was a generous amount of applause. Much to the musicians' surprise and without a single word spoken, Benny set the tempo, then gave the downbeat, and the first song "Don't Be That Way," began the historic concert.

The entire band showed their tense state. They started the song softly, the music seemed unsettled. Drummer, Gene Krupa, after hearing the first bar of "Don't Be That Way" knew the guys were jittery, they sounded terrible. The band was in trouble. He had been around tight scared musicians before and immediately recognized the symptoms; he thought, this night is going to be a disaster if I don't do something to wake these guys up. At the first drum break in the arrangement Krupa immediately began to hit his drums with unusual speed, not caring how or what he hit with all the energy he could muster. The symbol were smashed hard and often, the cow bell was struck with his left hand as his right stick pounded his snare drum, his foot peddle fiercely pounding away on his bass drum. During this short drum break, he hit anything in front of him as hard and as fast as he was physically able. He was so loud, and moving so fast, that his platform seemed to be shaking. The audience immediately responded, and erupted with applause and screaming, and the band responded. Trumpet player Gordon Griffin remembers, "Gene woke us up, and we were back home."

The next song, "Some Times I'm Happy," an Irving Caesar and Vincent

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Youmans song from the Broadway musical, "Hit the Deck," went off well as everyone seemed to be much more relaxed. They certainly needed to be, because the third number, "One O'Clock Jump," a Count Basie song, improvised years ago in Kansas City, started out with a wonderful four chorus solo by piano player Jess Stacy. This solo got lost in the reviews, perhaps due to the impromptu, unrehearsed last solo he performed. After the fine piano solo, the band moved firmly through a few choruses. The ensemble ride-out drew the second burst of applause and shouts from an audience that was now at home in the revered hall. The song ended as a young twenty-one year old Harry James used his trumpet to lead the band toward a rousing end with Goodman's clarinet finishing the piece. The next group of numbers would become controversial, critics felt they were too "corny" and did not belong in such a concert. Irvin Kolodin, music critic and writer, suggested that the concert include a tribute to the musical history of jazz with a select number of players giving examples of: Early Dixieland, and recreations of famous solos by Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke and Ted Lewis. After the concert Irvin Kolodin tended to agree with the critics. The songs played in the history of jazz segment included, "Sensation Rag", for the Dixieland example, "I'm Coming Virginia," with Bobby Hackett doing Bix Beiberbecke's solo, "Shine," with Harry James doing the Louie Armstrong solo, and "When My Baby Smiles at Me," with Benny Goodman doing a Ted Lewis imitation. "Blue Reverie," written for Duke Ellington was up next. Ellington's band members, Johnny Hodges, "Cootie" Williams and Harry Carney were the main forces in this song. Benny felt only Ellington men could do justice to Ellington music.

The next song, an up-tempo high spirited rendition of, "Life Goes to a Party," with a saxophone solo by "Babe" Russin, followed by a Goodman solo, a brass section lead into a brief piano solo, and then a trumpet solo by Harry James to end the piece. As the applause continued for "Life Goes to a Party," set up for the first appearance of the trio. The first song performed by the trio was, "Body and Soul." Teddy Wilson earned a smattering of applause when he took his place at the piano. Teddy was at his lyrical best on this song. Now the quartet was ready to perform their magic on the audience with "Avalon," by Al Jolson and Vincent Rose. Next for the quartet were two George and Ira Gershwin songs, "The Man I Love" and "I Got Rhythm," from the Broadway musical, "Girl Crazy." A number of critics singled out the small group performance, as exceptional.

The next number was Fletcher Henderson's familiar classic arrangement, "Blue Skies," by Irving Berlin.

Then Marta Tilton came out in her new beautiful pink dress to do, "Loch Lomond", the swing treatment of a traditional Scottish song. As soon as the band imitated the sound of bag pipes the audience responded with applause knowing what was coming. At the end of the song the audience called for an encore. Goodman held off the audience by telling them, "We're not prepared for an encore, but Martha will be back."

The bands next performance was to replace the intermission. It was a bit chaotic, taking some forty seconds simply getting all the musicians in

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place. The song, fat's Waller's "Honey Suckle Rose," was structured as a "jam session," but with a structured arrangement. The arrangement would allow Goodman's musicians, to catch their wind, and rest their lips and hands, Goodman's drummer, Gene Krupa, would be the only exception, he played with the band and would also be responsible for supporting the Count Basie contingent, when they took over.

"Honey Suckle Rose" would include guest players, Count Basie, piano, Lester Young, saxophone, "Buck" Clayton, trumpet, Johnny Hodges, Alto Saxophone, and three quarters of Count Basie's rhythm section, Basie on piano, Freddie Green guitar, and Walter Paige, bass fiddle. Benny Goodman's band, including Count Basie's men, opened the number, which was scheduled to last approximately eighteen minutes.

Lester Young, one of Basie's musicians, was first up, he performed a steady solo, in spite of the setting up chaos coming to an end. After Lester Young's solo James contributed a short trumpet solo. There was some stirring in the audience during his solo, but Basie's strong rhythm section played over the momentary audience noise. At this juncture most of the Goodman musicians took a well-deserved break as Basie's rhythm section took control for the first time. Walter Paige began riding the scales up and down on his bass fiddle. Then it was back to the saxophones for a second time. The Basie rhythm section refused to give ground, continuing to drive the arrangement. Benny Goodman took his solo. When Benny's solo finished, Basie's rhythm section, still full of energy, backed Freddie Green's forceful guitar solo. Benny Goodman's band moved the song towards to sixteen minutes and twenty seconds. Basie's men continued their strong support. Harry James stood to take a final solo, after which Basie's rhythm section, once again took control. Walter Paige took a second solo riding the scales on his bass fiddle. The audience gave Paige, a subdued applause, as he was ending of his final scale. During a momentary pause, Krupa tapped his cow bells three times, which was the signal for every musician on stage to drive "Honey Suckle Rose" to its fierce ending. When "Honey Suckle Rose" ended the applause in Carnegie Hall was thunderous and long, the audience understood something special had just happened, they had experienced a truly unique, eighteen plus minutes of music.

The next song presented was "Blue Moon" by Richard Rogers. The arrangement was played flawlessly, with the bands usual orderly tight knit interplay. The musicians were feeling more and more relaxed playing in their austere surrounding.

Then came "Swing time in the Rockies," by Jimmy Mundy, and the band once again was on fire. "Ziggy" Elman stood to take his planned trumpet solo, and gave the performance of his life; the crowd went wild, and the band responded with furious ensemble playing to end the song. Everyone was now sure that all the built-up tension leading up to the concert was gone, and the band was now at its peak.

Martha Tilton came back on stage to more applause and the band played a Yiddish song popularized by the Goodman band, "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön". This song was done in a big band setting featuring Martha on vocals and "Ziggy" Elman on trumpet. The audience loved the song; it even seemed

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to please the older men in their tuxedos and the women in their evening gowns.

When the program notes were printed it was planned to use the small groups once, but at the last minute Benny decided to bring them back in the second half of the program. For this reason they were never listed a second time in the program. It took about thirty seconds for the boys to once again set up for the small groups. After the response of their performance in the first half of the program, this last minute decision looked like a wise move on Benny's part. The trio turned it on one more time with their up-tempo version of "China-Boy." The audience responded enthusiastically, and the three men used each other, in chorus after chorus. "Take one more," Benny shouts to drummer Gene Krupa. When Benny finishes a brief ending solo, he shouts, "Take one more Gene," of course that's all that Krupa had to hear as he proceeds to thrill everyone in the audience with his energy and skill. Some critics believed this was the trio's "finest hour."

Then Lionel Hampton joined the trio for "Stomping at the Savoy" by Edgar Sampson, and a new version of "Dizzy Spells." Each song lasted for approximately five minutes, and the four men were now sizzling through their songs, which once again broke up the house with wild applause and screaming.

The concert was now set for its finale, which was the popular rendition of Louie Prima's "Sing, Sing, Sing." What was about to begin would be the band's greatest performance. There was a hush over the audience as Goodman waited a few moments for silence. He then looked in the direction of a hunched over Krupa, sticks held high over his tom tom drum, Krupa looked like a race horse, waiting to get out of the starting gate. Benny points in the drummer's direction. Krupa immediately began hitting his tom tom drum with a steady, deliberate action. The audience gives him a short burst of applause, because they knew what was coming. What the musicians and audience did not know, was how fiercely Krupa was planning to drive this number. The band played the familiar opening theme of "Sing, Sing, Sing," followed by a soulful solo by Benny. Krupa Still hunched over his tom tom drum, continuing his forceful, low tone drumming, seemingly in his own world during the band's opening theme and Benny's solo. Immediately after Benny's solo, the full ensemble now went to work, moved along nicely by the trumpet section's vibrant drive. The arrangement moved variation upon variation that had evolved from those long, lonely nights on the road going west, when each man became one with the player next to him, and Benny continuing to push his men closer and closer to perfection. What better place to reach their pinnacle than Carnegie Hall.

The kids in the audience were unable to remain still in their seats; some were "jitterbugging" in the aisles. Even some of the people in the boxes and dress circle were now on their feet; the enthusiasm of the teenagers was infectious. Krupa's solo and a final ensemble ride-out were identical to Louie Prima's original score, which was intended to bring the song to an end. However, at this spot, rather than an end, Benny gave the signal to begin the heart and soul of the arrangement. There was some brief applause as

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though the song was over, but this died rapidly, when the audience saw the men getting ready for the second half, which would become unforgettable. After "Babe" Russin starts things off with his solo on tenor saxophone the band begins once again to build a second head of steam. It was now clear to all; Gene Krupa had taken over and was the force moving the entire band; he remained hunched over his drums, completely engrossed in what he was doing, refusing to slow down. A drum break by Krupa leads Harry James into a solo that features triple tonguing and a series of beautiful high notes. Then the arrangement moves back, once again to the ensemble. When they finish, Benny enters quietly and cautiously; Krupa moves him along with fierce pounding now using the tom tom drum, while Jess Stacy assists with gentle chords and fills. Benny is led very easily into a wonderful blues-tinged solo on his clarinet. At this point Goodman begins to slowly work his way up the scale, culminating in a dramatic high C note. When Benny successfully finished his solo, applause reaches the bandstand and during that brief hesitation, and completely unplanned, as though in appreciation for the piano work Jess Stacy did behind him during his solo, Goodman turns and motions to Jess Stacy to take one himself.

How was Goodman to know that this impromptu decision would become so memorable. As Stacy accepts Benny's invitation, and hits his first note, Benny can be heard yelling out "yeah Jess" — which gets a laugh from the crowd. The next few minutes were to become the highlight of Jess Stacy's career. Jess's solo started out quite simply, he seems to be just tickling the ivories and then he put together a couple of tight choruses, with his solid left hand and a ranging right hand. The audience now gets very quiet, as Jess's playing becomes graceful and artistic. It became part blues and part classical and completely different than anything anyone had ever heard him play. Stacy later commented, when asked about his solo, "If I'd have known it was coming I would have probably screwed it up. Everybody had been knocking their brains out all night, so when Benny pointed, I went the other way, soft and smooth, and it magically fell into place."

As Jess completed his solo, Gene Krupa picked things up, by tapping his cow bells, which was the signal for the band to come in with its final ride-out chorus, becoming the most furious moments of the entire concert. Krupa, who had been blasting for twelve minutes, continued driving up to the final note. The cheers, applause, yelling and screaming went on for a minute and three seconds. The man who perhaps made this one of the more memorable nights of music ever heard, sat exhausted over his drums, his shirt and jacket stained wet with perspiration, and a look of contentment on his face.

In response to the audience reaction, Benny decided to give them two more songs as an encore. "Some Times I'm Happy" and Big John's Special. One song lasted a little over two minutes, the other a little over three minutes. It was obvious the last scheduled song of the concert "Sing, Sing, Sing," had taken its toll on all the musicians.

The following day the newspaper critics were mixed. However, it is important to note that not all New York newspapers covered the event; newspapers in 1938 did not carry popular music critics and this chore was usually left to the gossip columnists. Most newspapers covering the concert

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used their classical music reviewers and it is fair to assume that many of them did not understand jazz/swing.

The New York Tribune, "The concert was, warmly and vociferously acclaimed."

The New York World Telegram, "Swing as is swing was purveyed to the frenetic-faced throng by a frenetic-faced crew of rhythm maniacs."

The New York Sun, "Whether the local seismographs recorded it or not an earthquake of violent intensity racked a small corner of Manhattan last night as swing took Carnegie Hall in its stride."

The Herald Tribune concluded its review with the following sentence. "As for the value of the music itself — but that, after all, was not the point."

The New York Times classical music critic said, "I had gone to the concert to hear this new music with much curiosity; but finally concluded that swing is a bore."

Down Beat Magazine reported, "But nobody is trying to insist that we make an honest woman of swing. It's enough for the moment that 2,860 people were made ostensibly joyous while a swing band made music in the nation's number one concert hall.

Throughout Benny Goodman's career there were often important, ironic and unexpected events, that seemed to propel him further as a musician and then band leader: Starting with his father's decision to spend seventy five cents a week on music lessons, thinking it would be a good investment, and led to a lucrative career for his son.

Benny would have to turn down his first job opportunity, but Benny's sister, who

worked at a clothing manufacturer, convinced her boss to give Benny a needed tuxedo for his first job.

Benny being fired from the Ben Pollock's band in California; forcing him to travel to New York for studio work, and instead finding Krupa, James and Helen Ward.

The advertising executive, who happened to be taking in the show at Billy Rose's nightspot on Benny's last night at the club.

The time slot of the N.B.C. radio show, allowing California teenagers hear their first jazz/swing music prior to their dinner time.

Perhaps the most important event, being booked into the Palomar Ballroom in California, saving the band from dissolving.

And finally how the historic Carnegie Hall concert came to be recorded.

Radio in its infancy in the 1930's was used mainly as a talking medium, music played on the radio was rare, and usually in fifteen minute segments. If a person was serious about listening to music, they had to purchase a Victrola and visit record shops, to purchase a seventy-eight rpm, two sided record that allowed the listener to hear one song at a time. The "78's" did not have the capacity to record a concert or club performance. So it is not at all surprising that the advertising agencies, promoters, as well as bands, gave no thought to recording their performance dates.

The Benny Goodman concert in 1938 would have been lost forever, and most likely, this article would never have been written, if one man had not decided to give his new wife a present.

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In the book, *Benny Goodman and the Swing Era*, by James Lincoln Collier writes, "...Almost as an afterthought, the concert was recorded. Albert Marx, who had recently married Helen Ward, decided on his own initiative to have the concert piped from a single overhead microphone to a nearby studio, and then fed to CBS, where it was recorded on two sets of twelve inch acetates. Albert Marx sent one set to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, and gave the second set to Benny." The other major book about Benny Goodman, *Swing Swing Swing, The Life and Times of Benny Goodman*, by Ross Firestone, also indicates that Marx had only two seventy-eight acetates made, and concurs with James Lincoln Collier that he gave one set of acetates to the Smithsonian and one to Benny. However, in material at the Benny Goodman Archives, at Yale University's, Music Library, there is a reference to the fact that the reason Albert Marx recorded the concert was as a surprise gift for his new bride, Helen Ward. It's safe to assume that Albert Marx did have only two acetates made and gave one to the Smithsonian and one to Benny. If the library archive notes are correct, one has to wonder why Helen Ward never got her gift. One guess might be that after attending the concert, Helen Ward and Albert Marx, both realized the significance of the evening, and decided to give the second copy, Helen Ward's gift, to the Smithsonian.

Benny later recalls, "I kept the acetate recordings of the concert as an heirloom, often forgetting where I had placed it. Twelve years later (1950), I moved from my place on Ninety-Second Street and my sister-in-law, Mrs. Rachel Speiden was going to take over the apartment. She called me a few days later and told me about the acetate recordings. She wanted to know if I wanted them or should she throw the recordings away. I told her to hold on to them, I would come by in few days a pick them up." When the acetate taps were released on long playing records, Benny's musical career was reborn.

However, by 1950, technology was now able to produce long playing (L.P.) record albums. Goodman took the twelve inch seven-eight rpm acetate recordings to Columbia Records. Looking for material for their new long playing records Columbia was interested in producing the acetate recordings into a long playing record album. According to author, Ross Firestone the box set of two long playing records was issued for sale on November 13, 1950. Due to the poor quality of the acetates, Columbia issued "The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert," with the Honey Suckle Rose "Jam Session" reduced in time; and due to poor sound quality, omitted two tunes entirely, "Sometimes I'm Happy" and "If Dreams Come True." Both Columbia and Benny had a great deal riding on the release of this album. In the early 1950s the swing era looked as though it had run its course. Benny Goodman's popularity had fallen. His career was floundering. It had been years since he had a hit on the charts. He was full of self doubt; his early poverty in Chicago remaining ever present in his mind. Who could have imagined that a casual independent decision by Albert Marx, to record the concert, would now resurrect the career of the "King of Swing."

The timing was ideal for the Christmas season, and important in two other

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respects. First, Columbia had introduced the thirty-three and a third rpm long playing micro grooved record in 1948 and had bested R.C.A.'s competing seven inch forty-five rpm alternative and soon became the L.P. of choice for the general public. The thirty-three and a third L.P. was able to produce twenty plus minutes on a single twelve inch side and was the perfect medium for presenting the Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall concert. Second, R.C.A. was not completely left out of the profits, remarkably, the sale of the "victrola" record players for playing L.P. records shy rocketed during that Christmas season and seemed to keep pace with the brisk sales of the Columbia Box set recordings of the Carnegie Hall Concert. By 1953 the sales of the box set of "The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert" reached 220,000 copies more than any other jazz album of that time, and by the end of the decade total sales rose to more than one million.

Bruce Elder, a writer for All Music Guide, gave an analysis of a new editing process completed on the original acetates in 1999. "By this time recording technology had greatly advanced. Producer Phil Schaap re-sourced the concert from the original rpm transcription discs; he was able to rescue the two songs lost in 1950 and much of the "Honey Suckle Rose" jam session that had been left out of the first recording, some fifty years earlier. In the year 2000 a new CD was produced including the two songs omitted in 1950, which included a beautiful two chorus Baritone Saxophone solo by Harry Carney. The real prize of the 1999 technology was what had been left out of Fat's Waller's "Honey Suckle Rose" "jam session." On the minutes that were rescued, you can hear a three chorus solo by Buck Clayton, a sixty-four bar solo by Count Basie's guitar player Freddie Green, the audience reaction during the "jam session," and a new richness to Gene Krupa's drums. The rhythm section, so dominant during the "jam session," could now be fully appreciated.

Benny Goodman died many years prior to Phil Schapp's re-release on two CD's of the Carnegie Hall Swing Concert. Seventy years later, in 2008, this concert, not the first, was then, and still is considered the single most important jazz concert in history. This special event had the effect of making jazz and swing music respectable, because of where it was held, the most respected concert hall in America. As much as the social impact of the concert, primarily due to its setting, the more significant impact of the concert, was as it should have been, the music.

I am deeply indebted to the Yale University Music Library, where the Benny Goodman Papers are stored. The majority of the information in this article, and the photos, came from newspaper clippings, papers, notes by Benny Goodman, correspondence, biographies etc. I am also indebted to Ms. Suzanne Eggleston-Lovejoy, Public Services Librarian at Yale University, Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University, for her valuable assistance in helping me to locate this valuable information.

Thoughts on  
South Africa and  
the Birth of Jazz  
by Zim Tarro



We don't think of the psalms, which are the treasury of Jewish hymns, to be the crowning achievement of the Babylonian culture. They were written by a population in exile, influenced by life in Babylon, but steadfastly Jewish in nature. We should think of the history of blues and jazz in the same light. Jazz was created by Africans in exile. Jazz is an African art form developed in exile. Who knows if and where jazz could have developed or sprung up. The displacement to Africans was overwhelmingly to the US so we call the USA a birthplace. But the roots of jazz and blues come from African suffering which dates way back. Africans have been enslaved for thousands of years dating back to when the Phoenicians sailed their ships up the Zambezi river and created the first plantations and gold mines run by black slaves. Africa is our musical home, but more importantly it is a home alive and vibrant and worth seeing, and the sounds of this musical home will sweep you away.

My trip to South Africa in September, 2016.

I arrived in Johannesburg early in the evening on September 14, 2016 with a group of about 30 visitors as part of it a social justice/jazz festival tour package. Our first stop was Johannesburg, a city of about 11 million people. It's the second largest city in Africa, Cairo being the largest. I had been to South Africa once before in April, 2016 and spent all my time in Cape Town. I found that it was a quite a learning curve to get up to speed with the politics of South Africa. In a nutshell they still have apartheid here but it's what we would call an economic apartheid. People can go wherever they want but they can't afford to. A land of inequalities and injustices, this is also a land of hope, of nation building and optimism, all jumbled together. And here we were in a posh hotel connected to a very expensive shopping mall next to Nelson Mandela Square. I'm curious how people feel about

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the Square. There's quite a striking statue of Nelson Mandela in the Square. I couldn't help wondering what Mandela would have thought of this square.

The next morning we went over to a another hotel and interviewed several of the South African artists who were playing at the festival. Having written about Jazz in Cape Town, this was an opportunity to see how it varied from Jazz development in Johannesburg. See the article about music and jazz in Johannesburg by Don Albert. (see January 2017 issue of Cadence). Don was one of the first white artists to play jazz in Cape Town, and one of the only white musicians to have a radio and television show in Johannesburg about jazz.

There's quite a great love between South Africans and people from the United States. The struggles of the civil rights in the US follow parallel path with the struggles of apartheid in South Africa. South Africans like to say they've learned a lot from the United States and I think it's time that we started learning from them. The South African Constitution allows for everyone to have a place to live and opportunity to succeed. Musician seem very connected with each other and work together. South Africans have a much wider pallet of rhythms and sounds to draw from so it's possible that when you hear jazz music from Johannesburg it's unique. Some of the exciting musicians I saw at the Joy of Jazz Festival included the following artists:



WOUTER KELLERMAN



SIBONGILE KHUMALO



MCCOY MRUBATA



SIPHO HOTSTIX MABUSE

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On day three we drove up to the Lesedi Cultural Village which is located in the heart of the African Bush veld and near the rocky hills within the Cradle of Humankind (world heritage site). We visited five traditional homesteads inhabited by Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, Basotho, and Ndebele tribes. We were greeted by members of Zulu tribe in costumes chanting and singing, and troves of gift shops, and pushy tourists. While places like this preserve some of the cultural heritage of the people represented, it came across like I was at a zoo with humans on display.

On day four we went to the area in Johannesburg where Nelson Mandela had a small law office where he represented many abused and oppressed people. Next we traveled 15 miles from Johannesburg to the township of SOWETO, which stands for South West Township. With a population over three million, Soweto is a combination of slums, affluent neighborhoods and everything in between. Soweto was at the heart of the resistance movement during apartheid and this is where Nelson Mandela lived, near the house of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

While the house of Nelson Mandela is quite austere and simple there are holes in the walls from the police who would use the house for target practice. The house was also firebombed. At one point an extra wall was put up so the children could lay down and be safe from the bullets. It was a lot to take in; it is hard to say how one should feel about moments in history turned into tourist attractions.

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It was after lunch that I got my first chance to see a performance of gumboot dancing. The performers dance in minors boots representing the only possession left after being stripped of their belongings and their livelihoods. This expression of synchronized boot slapping, reminded me a little bit of the art of Ham bone that I witnessed in the southern United States. Ham bone, and it's cousin, Juba Dance are forms of body percussion and story telling created by slapping your chest and your legs to create rhythmic sounds to go along with stories or songs. On the American Plantation slaves were not allowed to have instruments. Owners were afraid that secret codes were hidden in the drumming. Ham bone, Juba and gumboot dancing were all forms of communication between oppressed peoples. These expressions were contained secret messages of hope and ancient knowledge. The rhythms and protest of these musics can be found in the roots of American Rap and Hip Hop.

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Days five and six we drove up to the Pilanesberg National Park and stayed for two nights at the Ivory Tree Lodge, a game reserve within the park. Game drives took place at sunrise when most of the animals were active and at sunset, when the humans were most active. But we also got to see truckloads of anti-poachers in their army fatigues and rifles on patrol.



View from Landsat 8  
Pilanesberg Alkaline Ring Complex

The landscape is really interesting. The hills seem to sweep around you in an eerie post volcanic landscape featuring the Alkaline Ring Dike Complex. One of only three sites in the world, this is one of the best preserved Alkaline Rings with "a rare circular feature that emerged from the subterranean plumbing of an ancient volcano."

## Thoughts on South Africa and the Birth of Jazz



On day seven, we flew to Cape Town, a beautiful city on an expansive bay on the edge of the world. I can't think of any place else where you'll see baboons and penguins within miles of each other. One wouldn't think an oasis such as this holds such a powerful legacy of oppression. On our last day in Cape Town we took an emotional journey out to Robin Island by ferry. This former prison island was the home of Nelson Mandela for 18 of the 27 years he spent incarcerated. This was a place where hard labor was served but also is a place where the prisoners discussed strategies and plans for freedom and hopes for the future. This is the place where Nelson Mandela entered prison as a violent, political revolutionary and came out a spiritual leader believing in non violent, peaceful protest. It's important to note that apartheid ended without civil war.

I was brought to South Africa as a journalist to write about music, but music in South Africa goes hand and hand with the history of this diverse nation. Music is deeply embedded in the culture and expresses both their experience of oppression with the joy of having a voice. It is the story of Apartheid and political strife. They have worked so hard for that joy and we can learn so much from their beautiful struggle.

# Interview: Aly Keita

## Aly Keita interview Balafon Ambassador By Ken Weiss



*Aly Keita was born June 17, 1969 in Abidjan, the Ivory Coast's largest city, but also spent time in Mali and learned to play the traditional pentatonic balafon, a marimba-like instrument native to West Africa. The balafon is traditionally the instrument of the griot (oral historians and songsmiths of West Africa) but it's not as a griot that Keita made his name. Exposed at a young age to Afro-Pop, Rock, and Funk, which expanded his musical horizons, Keita has been playing Jazz since 1986. He's even transformed the ancient instrument into a modern device by developing a chromatic balafon. Keita has performed with Pharoah Sanders, Jan Garbarek, Trilok Gurtu, Rhoda Scott, Lukas Ligeti, Etienne M'Bape, Michel Doneda, Talib Kibwe, Omar Sosa, Jean-Paul Bourelly, Lucas Niggli and Steve Arguelles. This interview took place in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania on April 21, 2016 while Keita was making a very rare U.S.A. appearance as a member of Hans Ludemann's TRIO IVOIRE. Many thanks to pianist Hans Ludemann who served as interpreter for the interview, transferring Keita's French into English, except for the humorous times when he delivered it back in French or German.*

**Cadence:** *You grew up in the Ivory Coast and also spent time in Mali. Why are you now living in Germany?*

Keita: [Laughs] Good question. I live in Germany because I had a good connection with the Goethe Institute when I lived in Abidjan in the Ivory Coast. One of my first concerts was in the Goethe Institute there. After that, whenever a visiting German musician would come through Abidjan on tour, the Goethe Institute would call me to make a collaboration. I worked with a number of musicians including Lucas Ligeti. I met Hans Ludemann when he came to Abidjan in 1999 and he soon formed TRIO IVOIRE with me on balafon. In the meantime, I had met a German lady at the German Consulate in Abidjan, so when I moved to Berlin two years later, once TRIO IVOIRE was touring, I moved in with her in Berlin. So I moved to Germany for musical reasons, because the trio was playing in Germany from 1999 and on, and the woman was also important in the decision at the time.

*Cadence: You've lived in Europe for many years now and have brought much of the music and*

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*spirit of West Africa to Europe. How has Europe influenced your music?*

Keita: While in Africa we were African musicians but we were influenced by European music. We wanted to be modern and modernize our music. We wanted to have drums and electric guitar and saxophone. We wanted to have non-African instruments to modernize our African music. Also, there are many very well organized festivals in Europe to present our music and opportunities to perform. So there's a big motivation for African musicians to go to Europe to get exposure and to find work there. In Africa, there aren't so many possibilities to find work. It's very hard to tour in a professional context.

*Cadence: You're currently on a short American tour with Hans Ludemann's TRIO IVOIRE, a Jazz trio. How much of your work is done in a Jazz setting?*

Keita: I'm an African balafon player but the people in Africa tell me that I am a Jazz man. They think of me as a Jazz man. I have been with the TRIO IVOIRE for 17 years now. It's a well-established group and one of my fundamental projects. We are not only performing in Jazz festivals but also in world music contexts and in different kinds of venues. It's not strictly Jazz. I also have my Berlin band and many different projects including a solo project. Also, sometimes other musicians call me to be a guest musician. My latest recording [Kalo Yele, Intakt Records] came after a couple concerts with my trio [with Jan Galega Bronnimann and Lucas Niggli] in Switzerland and the promoter saw the project. Soon I'll have many projects with other people.

*Cadence: What advancements have you created on the balafon?*

Keita: The balafon is the instrument that's very close to the piano. The Africans have the saying that the piano is the balafon of the white man. When I play I want to play like the piano player. I know my tradition. I can play my tradition's standard songs by heart and I don't find it so interesting. Now when I play my balafon I want to play some harmony and phrases and some spontaneous things like what's done on the piano. It's not normal for a balafon player to play with this kind of touch and sound. My approach to the balafon is very different from traditional players. So I transferred the balafon on a different level that didn't exist before. This approach didn't exist before.

*Cadence: You also created the chromatic balafon by combining two balafons together, correct?*

Keita: Yes, I started with the pentatonic balafon, which is our traditional tuning, but it is very limited. When I played with a piano player, it was really quick. There weren't really many potentials to make harmony. I knew I had to change, I had to make a diatonic balafon which didn't exist in my tradition. I also worked with a diatonic balafon for over 10 years but it's also limited. You can't play all tonalities, you're limited to the white keys of the piano, so that is why I decided to expand to the chromatic balafon which basically combines two balafons – a pentatonic and diatonic.

*Cadence: Are other people now using a chromatic balafon?*

Keita: Yes, many young musicians.

*Cadence: How much exposure to Jazz did you get while living in West*

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## *Africa?*

Keita: Already when I was growing up, I listened to Jazz a lot on the radio and on cassettes. I was interested in Jazz from an early age. Then I had the chance to meet Pharoah Sanders and play with him in 1993. We played three concerts. Two years later, American organist Rhoda Scott came and I played with her. In Abidjan, at that time, every Friday there was a Jazz program on the radio that we would listen to. We listened to Weather Report, Jaco, and Billy Cobham.

*Cadence: Have you investigated Jazz' master vibraphonists such as Lionel Hampton and Milt Jackson, or perhaps Khan Jamal, who also played balafon?*

Keita: I listened a lot to Lionel Hampton and I know his work and it has influenced me a lot. I also listened to Gary Burton and I had a cassette from Double Image, the group with Dave Samuels and David Friedman. I listened to that cassette so much that after a while, it was worn out.

*Cadence: Have you tried vibraphone and marimba?*

Keita: I've never really played them but I always try them when I see them at the festivals I am in love with the instruments. I try them every time when I see them at concerts but I've never perform on them.

*Cadence: Do you read and write music?*

Keita: No. For the moment not, but that's something I want to learn.

*Cadence: You've got a number of compositions under your name. So are you having to demonstrate what's to be done by your band rather than hand them music?*

Keita: When I compose, at first I have usually a bass figure and off that I build a melody and then I develop the composition out of that and then an arrangement and then I bring it to the musicians and we work it out together. I prepare it at home, record it, and then I play each musician his phrase. I show the bassist his bass figure on the balafon. I show the guitarist the motif for the guitar and so on. I have it already arranged but it's just not written. [Interpreter Hans Ludemann adds, "It's a Mingus approach."]

*Cadence: Improvisation is such an integral part of Jazz but perhaps not a valued skill in West African traditional music. How comfortable are you with improvising and is there an element of improvisation in West African music?*

Keita: I wanted to expand my musical background and knowledge. In West African music there's not really free improvisation, there is improvisation but it's always based on something very concrete. You would never improvise on something from scratch. That doesn't exist. There is improvisation in West African music but it's always within a set frame and context but within that frame, you can really go far.

*Cadence: Jazz has its roots in Africa. When listening to Jazz in general, do you hear specific components of African music?*

Keita: When I listen to African ceremonial music, where they have an ensemble performance with a singer and all the musicians playing together, this is where I hear a strong relation to Jazz. I don't hear an association with every kind of Jazz, not always. It depends, for instance, when you listen to

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Sonny Rollins' "St. Thomas," it's something that really feels rhythmically from Ghana. When I hear the music from Miles Davis from the late '60s – early '70s, very experimental and electric, that's like white music. It's not really African. It doesn't connect with Africa. We don't have a lot of free Jazz in Africa. When I was coming up, the West African bass players wanted to copy Jaco, the pianists copied Abdullah Ibrahim, and the drummers copied Billy Cobham or Lenny White. There are no drummers who can swing like Elvin Jones in West Africa. Even when they try, they end up playing more groove oriented which is closer to the African percussive feeling. It's not as loose and swinging.

**Cadence:** *Due to the work of Abdullah Ibrahim, we're well aware of South African inspired Jazz that draws from the local townships there. Is there much of a musical connection between South and West Africa?*

Keita: No, there's no real connection. There's a big difference in the musical material also because in West Africa we have the pentatonic and diatonic music and when you listen to four bars of South African music you know right away this is South African. There is no mistake.

**Cadence:** *You've said before that you want your "music to be alive and energetic, full of hope and love." Does that mean you only have interest in music that is uplifting? Do you ever deal musically with sadness and loss?*

Keita: When I'm on stage, I don't think about business or the contract or anything like that. When I play, I want my audience to be happy. That's the goal. It's like overcoming all the negative and business side. It's a pure, positive feeling.

**Cadence:** *In the North America, we rarely have contact with the balafon. Would you talk about the importance of the balafon in West Africa and its role in society there?*

Keita: I can explain what I know. The balafon is primarily a ritual instrument. In my family, after my father and uncles, I am actually the first who used the balafon for performance and to travel with it. In the society where balafon exists, it has a very important role. That's in Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ivory Coast and Ghana. The djembe is the percussion instrument that is much more well-known than the balafon. The balafon has the same kind of role as the kora harp.

**Cadence:** *You build your own balafons. Is that something that most balafonists do or is that unusual?*

Keita: For me it's normal because I was a balafon builder even before I was a balafon player. I never buy my balafons. I can buy a marimba but never a balafon. It is unusual that I build my own instruments. There are not so many very good balafonists who also build their own instruments.

**Cadence:** *Does it make a difference to the music if you've built the instrument you're playing on?*

Keita: It's very different and it's very beautiful to play on an instrument that you've made with your own hands. It's very spiritual because you know everything about the instrument because you made every individual note yourself. You know its life and story and how it's been repaired and what work needs to be done on it. It's a very close relationship to each note on the instrument.

# Interview: Aly Keita

***Cadence: The balafons with the hanging, graduated-size calabash gourd resonators is very striking in appearance. How long does it take you to build one?***

Keita: To build a balafon, if you have all the material assembled, it takes one month to build it. I do it together with my brothers so it is faster. We can do it in two weeks.

***Cadence: Is it hard to find the right calabash gourds?***

Keita: Yes, you could fill this whole room with calabash and you want to build a small balafon with eight tones and you might not find the right size. So you have to know exactly which calabash will fit to a specific note because it has to be exactly the same pitch and it has to match exactly. It's very hard to find the ones that actually match so usually we have to buy a whole truckload of calabash and you can only use a small percentage of them.

***Cadence: Do you have to clean the gourds out in order to use them?***

Keita: Yes, but they are not eatable so that's why they are cheap. You find them naturally growing and for the small gourds you just tell the children to go get some calabash because you find them everywhere. The big calabash you have to buy because they are also used for making lamps and for bowls and other things.

***Cadence: Are you selling balafons?***

Keita: Yes, but I'm not commercially doing it. Before I started becoming a touring musician, in my village we would build small balafons for the tourists.

***Cadence: What do you sell the larger balafons for? How much for something like what you play on?***

Keita: The ones that I make I sell for one thousand Euros. It's not very often that I sell something because it's not such a popular instrument. It's more often that I sell a smaller one for the children.

***Cadence: Are you really using spider web silk to cover the holes on the gourds?***

Keita: Not anymore although it still existed in the '80s and '90s, and it still does exist in some villages, but because now you spray the insects, you also kill the spiders so you don't find those webs much anymore. So now they use plastic to work as a membrane which gives the same kind of sound. It's even a bit more durable.

***Cadence: How much does the performance space, temperature and humidity effect the sound quality of the balafon?***

Keita: At festivals the balafon sound can change because there are the stage lights which are very hot and the climate in Europe is more dry which can actually change the tuning.

***Cadence: You've had the opportunity to play with a number of prominent Jazz artists. Would you talk about your time with Joe Zawinul?***

Keita: I got to know Joe Zawinul through a drummer friend, Paco Sery, who was the drummer with Joe Zawinul. Every time I saw Paco he would tell me, "Oh, you have to play with 'The Old Guy,' as they called him. And when they came to Berlin to play, they invited me to play at the

# Interview: Aly Keita

Quasimodo club. I was very nervous to play with Joe Zawinul for my first time but I was extremely happy. Joe Zawinul was our idol for fusion music along with Jaco and Wayne Shorter. Many Africans knew of Zawinul so it was a big thing for me to play with him. We had a rehearsal at the club and Joe said, "Yeah, it's going to be fine." Quasimodo doesn't have a very big stage and they had already set up all the equipment and all the keyboards so there wasn't a lot of space and they called out, "Aly, come and bring your balafon!" I had to squeeze in. I was so nervous that at first I said, 'No, there's not enough space. I can just listen you know.' [Laughs] But then they made a little space for me and I played the end of the first set and then the second set. It went really well and Joe was very happy and after the show he gave me a paper with all the contacts for tour manager to be part of the next tour with the band. That was in 2002 and afterwards I went back home to the Ivory Coast. They sent me the program for the tour by fax and I took it to the Austrian Embassy in Abidjan to get a visa but then a political revolt broke out in the Ivory Coast and all the flights got cancelled so I could not leave Abidjan. By time I got back to Berlin, they had already left and gone on tour. So I was in Berlin then with my German girlfriend who I lived with and she didn't realize that I was to leave for the tour the day after I had come back from Abidjan. I had been gone for weeks and I had just gotten back to her but I had to leave because I was going to a studio in another part of Germany to make a recording with Joe Zawinul. I didn't have the money to buy a train ticket to travel to the studio which was 500 kilometers away. I asked my girlfriend if she could give me money so I could make the recording and she said, "If you go there, I'm gonna leave you." I didn't have the money and the whole time, my telephone was ringing from the other musicians who wanted to know if I was on my way. I didn't want to lose my girlfriend so I stayed home! My girlfriend ended up moving and I cried. After that, every time Joe Zawinul's band went on tour, I would go see them and we stayed in touch. There was always talk about inviting me on another tour but it never happened.

**Cadence: Do you have a story to tell about Jan Garbarek?**

Keita: Trilok Gurtu had a "wild card" at a festival in Spain, which meant he could present anything he wanted, and so he invited me and Jan Garbarek to play. I already knew the music of Jan Garbarek from spending time with Hans Ludemann who had played with Jan. What I really love about Jan Garbarek is first of all, his sound. I discovered the soprano saxophone through him. We spent four days together rehearsing and when we performed together it was magnificent. We played for three hours, eighteen tunes! We were the last group of the festival. I never imagined before that a balafon player could play with these great, famous musicians. It was pretty amazing.

**Cadence: How have the people back home in the Ivory Coast reacted to your success?**

Keita: They have been very proud that a balafon player has made it to the stage with these performers.

**Cadence: I want to mention one of your songs, "Makuku," which appears on your new 2016 Intakt Records release Kalo-Yele and also on**

# Interview: Aly Keita

**TRIO IVOIRE's latest recording *Timbuktu* [Intuition, 2014]. That song is intensely addictive. How did you come up with that composition?**

Keita: When I write something, it's like the melody is coming to me and it has to do very much of in the moment that I'm in and that will also sometimes give the name for the song and in this case, this was when my daughter was pregnant with her first child. For me this was something that I thought was almost impossible. So I was thinking about that and I named the song after my first granddaughter, Makuku, after she was born. I was kind of mad at my daughter at first. How could she become pregnant, she was very young, but my mother calmed me down a bit with one sentence. She said, "Aly, you had your daughter when you were nineteen and your daughter also has her baby now when she is nineteen-years-old!" So it was possible to forgive her.

**Cadence: It was very surprising to learn that your 2016 performance in Rwanda marked the first time that balafon was officially played in that country.**

Keita: Yes, that's true. I didn't even know that myself until the newspapers wrote about me. It was not my own group that was presented, I was part of a project with musicians from Uganda, but in the article they only wrote about me [Laughs] because they had never seen a balafon. It was a discovery for them and for me.

**Cadence: Has playing balafon outside West Africa made for a good living for you?**

Keita: I was put in mostly this Jazz path and the life of a Jazz man is very hard. I'm not surprised about that, I'm not a singer. If you are a popular musician in pop music you can make a lot of money and be famous. I'm more a part of the Jazz scene so I have to accept the conditions that we face.

**Cadence: The last questions have been given to me by other musicians to ask you. You've played with most of them.**

Hans Ludemann (piano) - How difficult do you find it to live so far from your African family?

Keita: Very often I miss that, I am very family oriented and I grew up in a large family and I'm used to that.

**Cadence: You don't go back to West Africa to perform?**

Keita: Yes, I do but not very much. It's maybe one festival per year per country so the opportunities are very sparse.

**Cadence: When you play in West Africa are you playing Jazz or more world music?**

Keita: It depends on the project I'm performing with. I often go with Majid Bekkas, who is a musician from North Africa, from Morocco, and we play his music which is not Jazz. Last year in Nigeria and Cameroon, I played with TRIO IVOIRE.

Mamady Kouyate (West African guitarist) asked "If you are a Keita, how is it that you play music? Keitas are descendants of Soundjata and therefore noble, by tradition they should not play music which is a function of another class: the griots."

Keita: I understand because normally the Keita's are not griots. The Keita's are members of the noble class. Normally [griot culture is a

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hereditary caste] from the Diabate or Kouyate families who perform for the noble families and the Keita are the king's family. Even Mali people say, "The Keita are never a griot." But my family, my parents and grandparents moved from the Mandinka territories of Mali to a different part of Mali and when they arrived they were strangers in that region. They arrived and they told the chief of the village that they would like to settle down there and asked how they could be accepted into their community. Because they were from the noble background, they had a lot of knowledge about the other important families, historical knowledge that was valuable to the people there. My parents started making instruments and singing and playing music and in a way, they almost became griots in that different region. It was very rare, very exceptional, that a musician who was not from an original tradition family would go into this field. It compares with Salif Keita, who also has the same last name and he also wasn't supposed to become a musician. He was a very strong personal motivation for me to become a musician because his background was similar to mine. We are not related excepted that we are both Keitas, it's very distant.

**Cadence:** *Since the balafon is used for sacred ceremonies in West Africa have you angered West African traditionalists over the use of the instrument for modern music?*

Keita: In older times that could have been a problem but not anymore. For the younger generation it is very accepted that you can do all kinds of different things on the balafon. You are not limited to traditional use.

**Cadence:** *When you were a youngster, were there any problems with what you were playing?*

Keita: No, because after my first concert, I had big money to give to my father [Laughs] so he was really happy about it. The problem was afterwards when I built my first diatonic balafon and my father came and he wanted to try the balafon. He played on it and he said, "Hey, what's that supposed to be? It's well done but it doesn't speak our language!" So he was really kind of mad. He didn't like it. "You young people, you want to change everything, all our traditions," he said. Now there are many recordings of balafon playing but when I started, they didn't exist so balafon has become more accepted as a serious instrument.

**Cadence:** *Are there known American Jazz musicians who have sought you out for lessons or advice?*

Keita: No, but when I meet American drummers they say, "Oh, you could be a great drummer with your technique."

**Cadence:** *Do you ever still perform traditional sacred balafon music?*

Keita: Very often the songs come in my head, I know them very well but I don't really get a chance to play them. I know the music of the blacksmith, the music they sing when they work on metal. I know the songs for funerals, I'd like to play them but I wouldn't dare play that because it is kind of against the rules. I've been educated that you only play that on that occasion and never outside of that.

Jean-Paul Bourelly (guitar) asked – "Can you give any advice or anecdotes about strategies or challenges you have faced in integrating your Mali and Ivorian roots and musical experience in expressing your vision

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on the European / German music scene?"

Keita: We say that music has no borders so my goal was to make the balafon known to the world and I wanted to be one of the number five guys from my generation who would spread the message. That's been my goal, to be sort of an ambassador.

*Cadence: You didn't want to be number one?*

Keita: One of my students yesterday looked up famous balafon players on Wikipedia [which has Aly Keita at the top of the list] and said, "Oh, Aly Keita is number one!" [Laughs]

Lukas Ligeti (drum) has a number of questions. He asked – "My old friend Aly, you are one of my favorite musicians. Have you been, or are you interested in, interfacing with the Berlin electronic scene and electrifying your balafon?"

Keita: Yes, I'm interested because I've always wanted to put the balafon more upfront. My dream is to have the balafon and the traditional marimba on stage along with Lukas Ligeti's electronic marimba. I want the original roots for African music and then the modern from marimba and the electric new music from the electric marimba. My dream is to one day use them together. Lukas has an electric marimba. It's an instrument with pads and he actually recorded my balafon so he can reproduce my sound electronically and do all kinds of stuff with it.

Lukas Ligeti also asked - "The type of balafon you play is from the southeast of Mali and southwest of Burkina Faso - a Bobo tradition. How do you relate to other styles of balafon playing from neighboring areas, such as the Sembla, Lobi/Dagari, Bambara, or Malinke? Are these influential for you - including modernizations, such as Keletigui's chromaticism with 2 balafons? Have you adapted some of their attributes into your playing?"

Keita: Yes, I can say partly that it's true. Keletigui [Diabaté] was the first that I saw playing two chromatic balafons. He was playing with that with Toumani Diabaté. That gave me the idea to do that myself but at that time I didn't really have a project yet where I could really use that. Each of the balafons [from the areas he's asking about] have a different kind of tonality and when I improvise I will sometimes draw from these different kinds of scales and intervals that they use from different traditions and try to draw inspiration from that. I was very open and interested to learn and listen to all these different kind of styles and I can, when I hear balafon music, I can tell you right away which country it is from. But in terms of changing the instrument, there was no influence. My instrument is not influenced by the other styles of balafon.

*Cadence: So Keletigui Diabaté was very influential for you.*

Keita: Yes, this was the music that I grew up with. You could hear on the radio Toumani Diabaté with Keletigui on balafon and Bassekou Kouyate. They made some records that became very widely distributed so every morning on the radio you could hear them. Every morning the radio would play this their song "Djelika" and it was like an alarm clock song [because it was so lively.]

*Cadence: Is the balafon scene in West Africa very competitive for which*

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## *country has the best balafon players?*

Keita: Yes, there is a lot of competition. Many others want the kind of balafon that I play. They like the form of it, they like that it's concave. Mamadou Diabaté is an excellent balafonist who lives in Austria but he's more folkloric player and he's starting to do some fusion stuff but it's still really traditional.

Lukas Ligeti also asked - "You were working on an extremely large balafon, maybe the largest in the world. How is this project coming long, is it still in the works?"

Keita: Yes, we actually finished building this balafon. It's three meters long and it has four octaves and it goes very low. It's like a bass, like big church bells. It has the big calabash and the sticks are very big. It stays in a Berlin art gallery of African art because I don't have any other place to put it because it is so large.

Lucas Niggli (drums) has a number of questions. He asked - "What was one of your best music lessons?"

Keita: That's a very big field. I can say that I learned intensity when I was playing in Africa and we would play from 8 PM to 5 AM nonstop every week for the village party on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. This was the best school for me. After that I also learned other important elements. With Hans [Ludemann] I learned how to use forms and play on forms in music.

Lucas Niggli also asked - "Which CD would you take to the lonely Island?"

Keita: That's very difficult. There's a proverb that says if you have four children, you can't love one more than the other. You love them all equally.

**Cadence: OK, how about recommending one CD to those readers who want to check out other balafon players?**

Keita: I recommend Keletigui Diabaté, he played on many different albums, and after that, [Laughs] it's me! There's also a duet of the two of us from the past. At was at one of his recordings and the sound engineer said he had to leave in five minutes and asked what we could do in five minutes so we just jammed and that's what's on the CD.! Unfortunately, Keletigui died four years ago.

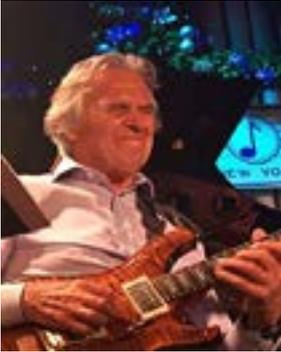
Lucas Niggli also asked - This is a very important question, America must know this answer. "Would you play at a Donald Trump election party for a fee of 10,000 American dollars?"

Keita: [Laughs] There is such a thing as money that is sour and this kind of offer is like sour money and I would say no. I could take the money and go, but...

**Cadence: Is there a question I should have asked?**

Keita: Thanks for your interest. I'm not the only balafon player out there and I can't say that I'm the best. I always learn. This music is not written and it's a very exotic instrument. Even around me in Germany, still a lot of people don't know [about the instrument]. It's important that journalists write about the balafon to get it more well-known. I am a musician and I will end as a musician. I am not a politician or a diplomat but I can travel worldwide with my instrument and that's a real gift.

## Interview: John McLaughlin



Interview with  
John McLaughlin  
Taken and  
transcriber by  
Ryan Meagher  
08/26/2015

John McLaughlin: So what can I tell you?  
*Ryan Meagher: When I was doing my homework for the interview, here, I came across this interview that I saw on YouTube. It was State of the Musical Arts. That was some of the most open and emotional speaking I have seen from you. So I kind of wanted to touch on that.*

JM: Really? I don't remember the interview.

*RM: You may remember after I jump into it.*

JM: Ok! Well, shoot... I'm happy to speak about anything, Ryan. I really am.

*RM: Great. So, in that interview the question that they threw at you was, "How would you describe the recording industry today?" And I wanted to explore that a little bit more because you're releasing a new album, Blacklight. So, why record and release a new album in the modern era?*

JM: Uhh... I'm an old hippie! That's the way I always do things. (Inaudible for a few seconds). But you know, habits die hard. I grew up like that. My entire life was spent either performing or making albums. And to me it's like. They're like paintings. Albums are like paintings. Not live albums. Live albums are kind of like a snapshot of a band. I don't know if you know the one we did last year that came out called, The Boston Record. It's a live one. You've got a nice band and if you're lucky to get a good recording. It's nice because it's a real snapshot of what's going in the band. Studio albums are different. From an economic point of view I am under no illusions about making money from recordings. Because this is just very difficult to do.

I've been with all of the major labels... We have a little label because it just became untenable. They're not able to do promotion. It's like, me, I'm calling you from Europe to Portland because I truly appreciate the opportunity to speak about what I'm doing. So that's why I am very happy to talk to you, Ryan, and any other journalist. Because promo which used to be in the domain of the record company doesn't exist anymore. I do it and I welcome the opportunity.

So we finance the recordings. And I try to bring the recording under \$50,000. Which in this day and age... because I used to get \$50,000 to make a record in the seventies! \$50,000 1970's dollars

## Interview: John McLaughlin

was worth a whole lot more than \$50,000 today. Of course this includes the fabrication, the cover, paying the musicians, flights, hotels, the whole nine yards. I don't get paid! I haven't been paid for a record in years. But I don't do it to make money. Actually I never did it to make money. You hope that what you do is, what you love to do, people will enjoy. This is the only hope that you can have. And so I continue to this day to do it for love.

I have painter friends. You know, really good painters. For example, last year I was talking to one of my painter friends and he was having a really rough year. I had bought a painting from him. We were having lunch together and I said, "How are you doing this year? Are you selling paintings?" He says, "Well, I sold one. Yours!" But he says, "How am I going to stop? I have to paint." And I'm the same way. Because a studio album is like a big painting to me. It's like eighteen months of work... before I even go into the studio! It's a big work! But I get to do what I love to do. Because I love music. I love to play music. And I love to record music. That's really the end of it.

So you make a record. And people will enjoy it. Or some people will and some people won't. I mean, you can't please everybody all the time. But I do it simply because I don't actually try to sit down and write music. That doesn't work for me. If I try to sit down and say, "Ok. I'm going to write something," nothing's there! So I have to wait until music hits me. When I start I getting ideas... musical ideas I write them down. Or I'll play it. And I'll say, "Ok, I'll have to look at this later." When I have enough music then I'll make a record. It's really as simple as that.

And I know in this day and age it's kind of anachronistic, isn't it? People make less and less records. But fortunately there are still people around who want to buy records. And people now download of course. This is going to go out the window, too, because now people use Spotify. And now Apple is going to get into streaming. And the royalties that people get from streaming is pitiful. It's lamentable. But, what are you going to do?

I think the governments are at fault. Not only did they let the cat out of the bag, but their missing out on millions on tax revenue. But that's my opinion. The big other hassle is the pirates. Many people will get a record and they'll want to be the first to put it on a website free. Because they think it's a musical service without realizing that they're kind of destroying musicians lives. But we live that because there's nothing to do. There actually is something to do! Go after the telecom companies.

Because without the telecom companies you've got no pirates. The telecom companies know who the pirates are! If the governments said to the telecom companies, "If you've got a pirate on your servers and we find out then you'll be fined a million dollars a day." Do you know how quickly the pirates would get shut off? They'd be shut down overnight! But at the same time it's not all bad, because I get mail from people in Iran, Iraq, Burkina Faso, Nigeria... and these people who were able to get records. They're able to download music. They're able to see things on the internet that they normally would never have. Great things have happened on the internet. But it's been kind of abused.

## Interview: John McLaughlin

And the overall attitude... There's a question of education. This is what I really feel. If the younger generation felt deeply... Like if you go into a shop and steal something, they know it's really wrong! If they knew it was really wrong to download for free... even if they just pay a nickel or a dime, then those nickels and dimes add up to the musicians or the artists... whatever! But the attitude is like, "Hey, it's on the net and it's free! Let me grab it. Click." And it's theirs! This is the prevailing attitude. And it's not going to change overnight.

The record industry is what it is. I feel sad for a lot of studios that have gone bust. Even record companies have gone belly up, too. It's a rough world out there. A lot of my younger musician friends. People I try to help... I mean, I get some mail from some young guys. I mean, GOOD players. It's so rough for them because there's no record deal. Without a record deal, how do you get known? It's hard. What are you going to do? Make a video and put it on YouTube? Who's going to watch it? I'm in a special position because people like me who were around in the '60's, played with Miles and all the great players, you know? We're very fortunate, but it's not easy for the younger musicians. You know the great young musicians! You must see them. You must know them. So what path to a good career do they have as an instrumentalist?

**RM:** *That's kind of why I started off [the interview] the way I did. It's almost unheard of. I feel like they're kind of the one-percenters. You know that whole thing that was going around. The people that only make a living playing. That's becoming fewer and fewer between. We usually have to find a way to do something else. Whether it's teaching.. Whether it's...*

**JM:** Teaching. Yeah. Internet teaching has become bigger and bigger. They need to make a living. It's tough! Yea, Ok, it's good. You're living, and you're playing music, and you make your living. But it's hard because you should be out performing, too. Musicians are made to perform, and that's the whole thing.

When I go see a live band... I love to see a live band! There's no substitute, is there? You see a live band play, and the guy's are hot, and they're on? I mean, that's great. You get swept away in the moment. It's not like listening to a great recording. It's wonderful to be a witness. And less and less musicians are playing live. It's changed.

And sure, at some point, things have to change. I don't think we've even hit bottom yet, frankly Ryan. I think that the error of allowing music to be distributed free, and taken free, will at some point reach rock bottom. And there will be a turnaround. I don't know when that will be and I don't know how it will be. But it has to happen at some point because there are a lot of people hurting out there. A lot of musicians anyway.

**RM:** *One of the things that I did for this interview is I asked some of my friends and colleagues if they might have questions for you. One of my friends, a good bass player, named Sam Hallam, he wanted to know a little bit about your label. So he asks, "Does your label, Abstract Logix, help your career in a way that a larger, more well-known label might not?"*

**JM:** Well, actually Abstract Logix is the distributor for North America.

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But they are friends of ours. We have known them for years. The label we have is called Media Starz. So they don't finance us in anyway. We do the financing and recording. What record company is going to finance a jazz or fusion/jazz record these days? They want singers. They want somebody to make a hit record. We do it. But Abstract Logix is our principle distributor for North America. We do separate contracts for Japan, for example. For the UK. For the European countries. We're basically functioning as a little label with distribution deals. That's it.

But Abstract Logix itself... they're great people. I think they do a really fine job in the technical world of distribution. They're really good. If anybody could get themselves distributed by Abstract Logix I think they're lucky. I consider myself fortunate to be working with these people.

**RM:** *I wanted to talk about the Blacklight record a little bit. On the website it seems like you are making a concerted effort in the language that you put out there. You say, "It's neither jazz, nor rock, nor Indian, nor blues. Yet it's all of these." And it clearly has elements of all of those musics. And there are probably even some that are left out like flamenco and electronica.*

**JM:** The flamenco is in the Paco tune. It's definitely got that element that I love dearly. Flamenco music and me go back to my age of fourteen when I wanted to actually be a flamenco guitar player. But in a little town... I was living in the north of England. No one had ever heard of flamenco. So forget about finding a teacher. Anyway...

I think it's because, over the years, I've collaborated with so many different players in different forms. But essentially these forms were already impacted on me by the time I was sixteen years old. Because I grew up with classical music. There were two pieces I had for guitar and orchestra that were part of my own classical upbringing. And then the guitar came at eleven (years old). And then the first thing that I heard was the Mississippi blues. That just blew me away. It blew me away. I had never heard this kind of music before. It was a revelation for me.

And then in the next four or five years, so when I was sixteen, I discovered Miles and Coltrane and that whole new jazz school gang. I was influenced by Indian music. By flamenco music. And of course, the blues was before everything.

But even by the late fifties, you hear Miles Ahead (Do you know this recording by Miles?), 1958. Miles never played anything but the blues. He was a jazz player. Brilliant musician. So much of what he did in new concepts and new forms. And here he was with this very strong Hispanic influence. Mixing with jazz. Mixing with blues. I mean, he was the definitive fusion musician before all of us were. He really showed the way. And the only reason he brought that in was because he loved flamenco music. I'll never forget when I did the first piece for guitar and orchestra. The middle movement is the same I wrote for Miles. Miles came to see the premiere with the LA Philharmonic. We're going back to the early eighties here. In any event, we got it recorded. And I ran into Miles in Scotland somewhere. I think it was a couple of years later. And I knew I was going to see him. And I had a cassette of the recording. So after the gig we were back at his hotel. And I told him I had the recording. So he ate something and listened to the whole recording through. He got to the end and says, (in

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mimicked Miles voice "John, now you can die." (laughter).

**RM: Now that's a compliment!**

JM: Yea! It was beautiful. It was more than a compliment. He knew. He wanted the music for that. For that opening theme to play it on flugelhorn. Because he did a lot of flugelhorn playing in the fifties. Anyway... He was part of that whole movement. Look at Bitches Brew. Talk about jazz fusion. He showed all of us the way. Herbie, Chick, me... everybody! Wayne, Joe. I mean what an impact on all of us.

**RM: I guess my question was... it seems like the language is careful to not call it a fusion record. Is that intentional? Or do you have a problem calling *Blacklight* a fusion record?**

JM: Not at all! You can call it anything you like. (Laughter) Some people call it rubbish! (Laughter) Do you think I really care? I'm not making money out of this. This is love, Ryan. Of course, I'd love to make a million. But, at my age I'm a realistic guy. I know what's out there. I don't care. The thing is, I love it. And in the end that's all that counts. Even if one person likes it I'm a happy guy. I love it. And if it pleases one person then that's cool with me. And if it pleases more then it's more butter on your bread.

**RM: That's awesome. Well, that answers my question on that really well! I didn't see any tour dates for North America in the promo stuff that I got. Do you have plans to come?**

JM: Man, that is such a bummer. I mean I did a tour of America in the spring last year. It ended up being more of a charity tour for poor Americans. It's so, so bad. To just get out there. I have to get a work visa, Ok? I have a British passport. Just to get the visa I'm down \$5,000 before we even book the plane tickets. And then you got your air tickets for everybody, your musicians' fees, taxes, and hotels, overweight and stuff. I did it intentionally, Ryan. But I had to stay on the East Coast. We went from Tennessee to Toronto. And we were there for about two and a half weeks. And it was a great tour. But an agent said, "You know, I can get you some gigs in Chicago, and one in Colorado." And I said, "Work out the logistics." California, too. And he came back with some of the fees that people proposed. And I would have just taken a bath, frankly.

I got an offer for 5 nights in a New York club, 2 sets a night, \$12,500. For five nights, two sets a night! There's no way I can even pay my musicians out of that. Let alone airfares and hotels. I mean... Where are we at?! It's such a shame.

Listen, I spent fourteen in the U.S. touring everywhere. I think I played every university in America. But of course, it was a different world in the seventies, Ryan. People have less money. And they're particular to the kind of music. You've got like this funk jazz or smooth jazz. I mean, look at what's his name, and it's not a criticism, who's the guy that plays... Kenny G, who professes to play jazz. And good luck to him. This is not jazz to me. I grew up with Coltrane. This is smooth jazz that you can talk over. You want to try to talk over Coltrane? (Laughter) It's not going to happen? You talk over Jimi Hendrix? It's not going to happen. That kind of music, you gotta listen to it!

But society has changed. And the moods and modes have changed. I just cannot afford to come to America at the moment. It's just not where I am.

## Interview: John McLaughlin

Hopefully it will get better. BEFORE I DIE, RYAN! Before I die. I'd like to come back and play in America. In Portland! I really would. I've played up and down the places so many times I've lost count. And the American audiences are fantastic. I know! I love America! I'm not even American!

**RM:** *You're being very generous with your time today. I do have a bunch more questions, but I don't know how much more time you have.*

JM: No, go! Shoot!

**RM:** *Ok. As I mentioned, there were a couple people that I reached out to get some questions and I don't want to rehash that everything that you have done in your entire life!*

JM: Thank you! (Laughter)

**RM:** *One question that I was kind of curious about... There's a new biopic coming out about Miles Davis. Do you have any thoughts about that?*

JM: Well, it's Don Cheadle, whom I know. And Don is a real jazz fan. He loves Miles. I'm just really anxious to see the movie. But I think if anybody could do Miles, Don could do it. Did you see the movie Ray with Jamie Foxx. It was a great movie! Even the movie with who's-his-name, about the country-western singer that used to wear black? That was a great movie too! These days there're actors who are really capable. Jamie Foxx blew me away. I thought he was amazing in that movie. And I think someone like Don Cheadle... he can do it! I'm really anxious to see the film. I think it's great! Because it's Miles, you know?

God, I have a debt to Miles that I will never-ever be able to play. And I'm one of many. I know Don loves Miles. So I'm sure that he's going to do the right thing. I'm really anxious to see it. More power to him.

**RM:** *I had another question from a great guitar player in Brooklyn, named Andy Barbera, who has been influenced by your music a lot. His exact question was, "On Visions of the Emerald Beyond, the tune 'Lila's Dance,' can you share any insight into why that guitar solo is so unique?" He feels that there's something singularly free about it. Like you were letting go and playing from a more emotional place. He says, "You play with total abandon and rock out unusually, hard even for you!"*

JM: Gee, I wish I could remember that album. That was a long time ago. The album is one of my personal, perennial favorites. Something happened on that album. Narada Michael Walden, the drummer that replaced Billy. Ralph Armstrong on bass. I mean that band... that album was marvelous. I am going to have to listen to it one day. It's one of the most outstanding records I've ever made.

I don't remember this particular solo we're speaking about. I remember putting a solo with a ring modulator. That was the first time I discovered the ring modulator. We really went out. I really took it out with Narada Michael Walden. And that I have a very particular memory about. But the album itself. Something happened. It became cohesive and rich inside.

There was a great vibe in the studio during that recording. I'll never forget because we had string players. We had a string quartet. We had horns in that band. I mean, it just... it all gelled. You know what I'm going to do? What was the track again? That your friend asked about?

**RM:** *"Lila's Dance."*

## Interview: John McLaughlin

JM: Yeeees! "Lila's Dance." That's another tune in twenty, isn't it? If I recall... yes it is! Now I do remember! Yea, he's right! We were cutting loose! But there was all of this wonderful kind of organization around it. I guess it's just a combination of order and chaos. Well, not chaos... but spontaneity. Because it was just all done together. We were all in the studio together. It was like old-school. Like in the sixties. Yea!

I'm in constant touch with Narada. He became a really big time producer. You know who he's produced? Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey. Big BIG stars. What a beautiful guy. He toured with Jeff Beck. I think it was last year or the year before? Did you see that show at all?

Jeff is one of my all-time favorite guitar players. We did a charity show near here about three years ago. And we go back to the early seventies when we were touring together. By this time the eleven piece band had been reduced to four. Logistically it was much easier to get around. And Jeff had a quartet. We were doing big tours in America at that time. And at the end of every show both bands were on stage. Two drummers, two bass players, three keyboard players, and Jeff and me. And we had a ball! It's funny. Nothing was ever recorded with those tours. I'll never forget that at the end of the tour... that was the tour where my double-neck guitar fell and split. It was a wreck! I had to borrow a guitar from Jeff for the show and he was playing Les Pauls at that time. I continued to play the Les Paul until the end of the tour. At the end of the tour I went and bought him a 1968 Stratocaster, a white one. And he went home with that guitar. And his roadie picked up the guitar and didn't realize that the guitar had been taken out. Stolen. Far out. But since then, I believe since then he only plays white Stratocasters. Very sweet. Maybe some connection there. But he's just... what a guitar player. And what do you call him? Because he improvises. And as Miles used to say, "Jazz is a white man's word." (Laughter).

**RM: He did not like that word. I do remember that from...**

JM: Who cares what you want to call it. Because I've seen countless shows with Jeff. And you know, he's just a great player. Who cares? One of the greatest concerts I ever saw was in 1969, Ryan. You know who it was? It wasn't Miles or anybody. It was Sly and the Family Stone in Monterey. They were killing! It was so good. And what's jazz got to do with that? Who cares? When it's it's on, and they were so on... I mean it was like 5,000 people just like losing it. Including me! And Larry Young, the organ player. Because I was Tony in that period. So, who cares what word you want to call it? As long as the music is on, and it's beautiful, and fine, and full or heart and soul, and joy. You know... we don't even care. We don't even care.

**RM: Speaking of Tony... One of my other good friends. A great drummer in Brooklyn, Vinnie Sperrazza, he kinda knows everything about Tony Williams for anyone that could know anything about Tony Williams that never met him. He wanted to know a specific thing about the volume of what it was like to deal with the volume when you were replaying with Lifetime or Trio of Doom?**

JM: Tony was not as loud as Billy. But, depending, he could be louder than

## Interview: John McLaughlin

Billy. Tony was the most dynamic drummer I've ever witnessed. He could go from pianissimo to fortissimo inside of a second.

You know, that volume thing, you're going to have to play with a solid body guitar. With an acoustic guitar you're going to get a lot of feedback. It's a relative thing because the Mahavishnu orchestra was, as a band, was a little louder than Lifetime. But the thing is, volume is just relative. If you're playing with a drummer... and to play with a drummer like Tony... First of all, you have to know rhythms so you can stay with the drummer. So you don't get lost with the drummer. The drummer might be doing some very sophisticated mathematics in his playing. As long as you're with the drummer, and you're locked into the drummer then that's it. You're basically free. Because once you're both in the same groove then the sky's the limit, really.

And Tony was just exceptional. But I've been very lucky. I've played with some of the greatest. I wasn't able to do any concerts in America but I did a tour with Elvin Jones in the nineties. And great drummers like Vinnie Colaiuta, Brian Blade... Zakir Hussain, he's the greatest in the world. I've really been very fortunate.

I should point out that I did an educational DVD where people can study konnakol. Konnakol is an Indian system of mastering rhythm and singing it. If you can sing it then it's just a question of application to your instrument. And I recommend, whether you use that system or any other system... as a jazz musician... discipline. Let's call it a jazz discipline. Your rhythm has to be worked on as strong as your melody, as strong as your harmony. It's critical!

If you're playing with Indian musicians, it's the same. Rhythm is critical. And to be able to understand what the drummers are doing. So you can even stimulate them, too. Because they stimulate them, too. Because they stimulate you. They certainly stimulate me. But they want stimulation too, so what are you going to do?

For example, in the nineteen seventies I was very fortunate to study with the Pandit Ravi Shankar. And I don't play sitar. And after a while, when he got to know me a little more, every time he came to New York he'd call me. And he taught me South Indian rhythmic theory. He's not even a South Indian player. He's a North Indian player. But he knows all the schools. And he taught me the theory of South Indian rhythm. And God bless him for that because it helped me so much in understanding, not just Indian rhythm, but every rhythm. Whether it's Indian, African, Brazilian, Cuban... Rhythm is rhythm, where it comes from. And it's a very important element that has to be really worked with for musicians. To be able to articulate rhythm.

And the great thing about Konnakol, just to come back to that system that I taught. For example, when I'm rehearsing I can sing a particular rhythm to a drummer so he will understand how it feels, as opposed to writing it out. If I can sing it to him I can sing with the inflection, I can sing with the accents, and the drummer can grab it right away. This really is useful. Anyway, I am sorry. I am going to have to leave you now. It was good talking with you, Ryan. I hope it's useful... what I said. And that you can use it.

# Book Review

AUTHOR: BOB PORTER

TITLE: SOUL JAZZ

PUBLISHER: XLIBRIS

As I perused the review copy of *Soul Jazz: Jazz In The Black Community, 1945-1975* (Xlibris, 281 pages, paperback, \$19.99) by Bob Porter the first word that entered my mind was “finally”. As a retired musician who was weaned on this form it has always puzzled me at the recognition it has not garnered.

Back in the day in my hometown many of the combos sported a Hammond B-3 and a couple of horns. The great Chester Thompson was a local hero to us all. All of the major organists came through town along with lesser-known groups like John Bartel & the Soul Masters or Andre Lewis and his Spiritualistic Convoy.

Thus it was with much anticipation that I dove into the pages of this very belated tome. Porter is a well-respected veteran of the music business and he knows his onions when it comes to this specific genre having had a hand in the production of many of the albums mentioned. His many credits and awards are listed on the back of this book. Covering a time span from post-WWII to the middle seventies entails a wide spectrum of idioms that run through this sub-division including Swing to Hard Bop (jazzwise), Jump Blues to early Rhythm & Blues (before it became super slick and almost indistinguishable from mainstream Pop) and even the elements of Black Gospel. Rather than chapters there are segments broken down into eleven sections sandwiched between the Preface and Introduction at the outset and an Epilogue followed by Acknowledgments and a helpful Index. All of the usual suspects are here with expanded personalities Illinois Jacquet, Gene Ammons, Hank Crawford, Grant Green and Grover Washington. Other sections cover Race Music, Rhythm & Blues, The Big Beat, Soul Jazz and Funk & Fusion plus a short overview on Producers mentioned in the text. Most hard core followers will already be aware of most covered here but there are random snippets (like a 16-year-old Wynton Kelly making his recording debut on Hal Singer's “Cornbread”) scattered about that will hold the readers interest. My only reservation is with the selection of certain Recommended Records at the end of some segments. But it's all a matter of individual taste and, in summation, this highly readable work (also available in hard cover) makes for captive must-have.

Larry Hollis

# New Issues

MARY FOSTER  
CONKLIN  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
MOCKTURTLE  
MUSIC MT00221

NIGHT IN THE CITY /  
KEY LARGO / AUTUMN  
SERENADE / SPRING CAN  
REALLY HANG YOU UP  
THE MOST / CINNAMON  
AND CLOVE / SMALL DAY  
TOMORROW / FOR NO ONE /  
PHOTOGRAPHS / THE WINDS  
OF HEAVEN / MOONGLOW  
/ NIGHT SONG / NOTHING  
LIKE YOU / LONG AS YOU'RE  
LIVING. 54:27.

Conklin, vcl; Warren  
Vaché, cnt; Joel Frahm, ss,  
ts; Houston Person, ts; John  
diMartino, p; Paul Meyers, g;  
Ed Howard, b; Shinnosuke  
Takahashi, dr; Nanny Assis,  
perc. 11/14, Paramus, NJ.

Mary Foster Conklin records infrequently, for after 32 years in New York Photographs is but her fourth album. With its release, she has brought to fruition her appreciation of lyricist Fran Landesman. "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most" may be Landesman's most popular song, but Conklin has included four others that reveal Landesman's wit and concision and wisdom. To accomplish the quality she desired for Photographs, a joint project of hers and pianist John diMartino's, Conklin brought in top-shelf musicians like bassist Ed Howard and drummer Shinnosuke Takahashi, as well as guest musicians like Houston Person, John Frahm, Warren Vaché, Paul Meyers and Nanny Assis. As someone who values freshness over music that appears regularly in everyone else's repertoire, Conklin brings to life seldom heard or forgotten songs with meaningful lyrics. She seems to enjoy sharing her discoveries with audiences. In the case of Landesman, Conklin sings "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most" (inspired by T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land") at her own pace, and diMartino follows. She wrings meaning out of each word, upon which she lavishes concentrated attention: "My heart tries to sing / So they won't hear it breaking... / All alone. The party's over / And Old Man Winter was a gracious host." But then there's the equally engaging song, Landesman's "Small Day Tomorrow," which starts with a melancholy phrase reminiscent of "Cry Me a River." Foster delivers its sentiment with a similarly downcast, resigned and ironic attitude: "I don't have to use my head / I got a small day tomorrow / I can sleep the day away / And it won't cause too much sorrow." Like Sheila Jordan and Peggy Lee, Conklin realized the freedom and drama of bringing to life a song solely with bass accompaniment, as she does on "Small Day Tomorrow." But speaking of Jordan, Conklin's vocal similarity to, if not influence by, Jordan becomes clear on the lightly swinging version of Lennon/McCartney's "For No One." Backed by the consummate musical partner/soloist for vocalists, Houston Person, Conklin sings it entirely in her lower range with the authority, compassion, narrative style and swelling of a single note's volume suggestive of Jordan. But Conklin's versatility, not to mention her

# New Issues

eclectic choices, proves that she's her own person, her possible influences being but a component of her totality. Another Conklin appreciation of the insufficiently appreciated (as are all the other songs on *Photographs*), Johnny Mandel's "Cinnamon and Clove," involves percussionist Nanny Assis to heighten the effectiveness of the samba arrangement that concludes with remainders of the Latin rhythm and a whisper. In addition, Conklin slips in the standard from the 1930's, "Moonglow," to Vaché's accompaniment and harmonizing, and Conklin sings it in her higher range—a hint that Conklin chooses a key to maximize a song's effect. Joni Mitchell's "Night in the City," allows Conklin to sing effortlessly an octave's descent within the single phrase of: "places to come from...." With a distinctive seasoned voice of her own, Mary Foster Conklin needn't worry about being categorized, although categorization is the up-front subject of her liner notes. Conklin has pursued her personal interests, and in the process she has defied category, as she brings under-recorded music with intelligently written lyrics to the attention of her listeners.

Bill Donaldson



## DAVE ANDERSON BLUE INNUENDO LABEL 1 L1-2003-2

URBAN DILEMMA / 22 DOORS  
/ 12-STEP BLUES / PARALLEL  
PRESENT / GENEALOGY /  
STUCK / THE PHANTOM /  
TWO-TONE TUNE / BLUE  
INNUENDO / REDEYE. 57:49.

Anderson, ss, ts; Tom Guarna,  
g; Pat Bianchi, org; Matt  
Wilson, d. 2016, Brooklyn, NY.

Inverting the usual leadership role for jazz organ groups, Dave Anderson leads his Blue Innuendo Quartet as a saxophonist. Five years after returning to New York from Seattle, Anderson is releasing his first album, one that combines his original compositions with the soulfulness associated with the B-3. Even though it depends upon the chord changes of "I've Got Rhythm," he transforms his composition, "Genealogy," into his own piece on soprano sax as he accelerates the tempo, lengthens the melody's notes, and transfers the accents for unexpected pounce and scamper. But eventually, the piece becomes a reason to improvise over the changes and spread the joy characteristic of jazz organ groups. Anderson chose members of his quartet from previous performance experiences, no doubt with thoughts at the time of their potential contributions to the yet-unformed Blue Innuendo Quartet. It wasn't hard

# New Issues

to imagine how essential organist Pat Bianchi—the basis for the group’s sound with Jack McDuff style—would be due to his previous work with Pat Martino. The result is a quartet with its own signature composed of seasoned professionals adding to the jazz tradition. As for Anderson, he virtually reveals the essence of each piece, rather than forcing it, as if it unrolls it until the entire fabric is apparent. The other musicians follow the same approach, avoiding grandstanding for musical attention as they explore each piece’s possibilities for mood, colors and improvisation. Anderson appears to have gotten the inspiration for the group from Joey DeFrancesco, for he dedicates to him the balladic title track which also happens to be the name of the group. Similarly, Anderson dedicates “The Phantom” to his stylistic influence, Joe Henderson, which the quartet performs with its characteristic restraint, groove and grace. Long-time professionals all four, they seamlessly glide in and out of solos, the trading of solos an honored jazz tradition, but a tradition they exchange without abrupt pause but with casual lead-in and take-up as if in conversation. Drummer Matt Wilson quietly and without drama sets the samba pattern for “Parallel Present,” which the remaining three assume with ease. Brushing the rhythm, Wilson continues as an invaluable presence for the mood of the piece, even as he becomes unobtrusive while sax, organ and guitar solo. Wilson similarly creates the rhythmic basis for “Two-Tone Tune” as he drives the group through its energetic presentation. While one may be uplifted by a Tom Guarna guitar solo on the faster-tempo pieces, his ability to develop a jewel-like solo of beauty, the fulcrum of “Stuck,” makes apparent his craftsmanship in utilizing all of his resources—mood, volume, harmony, alternative melodies, softness of attack, range, attention to Anderson’s soprano sax sound—to elevate the result of “Stuck” to a higher level than it would have been without his solo. Bianchi, on the instrument that defines the group’s sound, utilizes its groove and warmth to create his own statement on, say, “Urban Dilemma.” Instead of being an exercise in overwrought showboating, as can happen with the B-3, the track involves a still-melodic alternating of the piece’s oblique, scampering written theme consistent with, and in the range of, Anderson’s soprano sax. The jazz organ quartet yet retains not only validity, but also strength, as Anderson’s devotion to the sound entertains listeners as like-minded musicians help him apply his own talents for distinctive results.

Bill Donaldson

# New Issues

## 1) NIKOLAJ NIKITIN NEW WINTER STORIES

REALMUSICHOUSE  
1674-006-2

ON THE SNOW BOUND  
PATH / DREAMIN' / LATE  
TOOTH / DECEMBER STEP  
/ BEHIND THE WINDOW  
/ DREAMIN' (ALTERNATE  
TAKE) / DECEMBER STEP  
(ALTERNATE TAKE). 41:14.

Nikitin, ss, ts; Michael  
"Patches" Stewart, tpt; Gabriel  
Jonáš, Fender Rhodes, org;  
Juraj Griglák, b; Jozef Dóme, d.  
2012, Bratislava, Slovakia.

## 2) NIKOLAJ NIKITIN PERSONAL SUITE

REALMUSICHOUSE  
1647-003-2

BLUE KATKA / PETER PAN  
/ GENERATIONS / PARKSIDE /  
PICTURES FROM YESTERDAY  
/ COOKIN' / ARAM'S CORNER  
/ AT HOME / UNDER  
RECONSTRUCTION / BOLERO.  
58:40.

Nikitin, ss, ts; Gabriel  
Jonáš, p; Juraj Griglák, b; Jozef  
Dóme, d. 2012, Bratislava,  
Slovakia.

Jazz musician Peter Lipa and other local jazz enthusiasts started the annual Bratislava Jazz Days festival in 1975. The event continued in what was then an Eastern Bloc city for almost 15 years until in 1989 the Gentle Revolution abolished Czechoslovakia's one-party Communist rule. At first, Bratislava Jazz Days consisted of amateur jazz musicians from other socialist states performing at the PKO venue on the Danube. But within ten years, the jazz festival started, and now continues, to book top talent like "Toots" Thielemans, Joao Gilberto, Dianne Reeves, John Abercrombie, James Carter, Tiempo Libre, Kurt Elling, Larry Coryell, Philip Catherine and Jack DeJohnette. Jazz being just one part of Bratislava's cultural renaissance, the city's sponsorship of various art forms has grown with presentations in several theaters throughout the city, just 60 kilometers from Vienna, and Bratislava now is a reminder of the flourishing 18th-century arts scene that included Mozart, Liszt, Haydn and Beethoven. Still, as an integral component of Bratislava's cultural mix, jazz initiatives receive governmental and private funding, as well as in-kind support. Such support helped 33-year-old Nikolaj Nikitin co-produce three of his recordings, *New Winter Stories*, *Personal Suite* and *Slovak Sounds*. Nikitin starts (1) on soprano sax with his leisurely, peaceful composition reminiscent of some of Branford Marsalis's recordings, particularly the *Eternal* album. Gabriel Jonáš accompanies Nikitin on Fender Rhodes (instead of on acoustic piano, as Joey Calderazzo accompanied Marsalis), thereby complementing Nikitin's careful attention to tone, especially when stretched over whole notes. After Nikitin plays the first chorus, trumpeter Michael "Patches" Stewart unexpectedly comes in with his straight-muted, equally calm improvisation. New Orleans native Stewart had been living in Poland and performing throughout Eastern Europe and so was available to participate in Nikitin's album. "Dreamin'" similarly features the same horns performing a melody of long tones, though over but two chords, while bassist Juraj Griglák and drummer Jozef Dóme provide the undercurrent of rhythmic propulsion. During "December Step," whose harmonic structure is similar to "Milestones's," it becomes apparent that the common denominator for much of the music is Miles Davis's groups, particularly considering Stewart's work with Marcus Miller. And while "December Step" has some similarities to Davis's second quintet, despite Jonáš's use of Fender Rhodes instead of acoustic piano, "Behind the

# New Issues

## 3) NIKOLAJ NIKITIN WITH THE MUCHA QUARTET & EXXPPNNSS ENSEMBLE NO. 2-LABYRINTH & SLOVAK SOUNDS

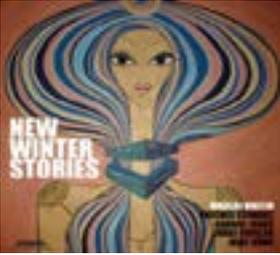
REALMUSICHOUSE  
2393-005-2

I WILL GO TO SLEEP ON  
MY BACK AND ROLL MYSELF  
IN YOUR CURTAINS, OH  
REFRESHING SHADOWS!  
/ PANOPTIKUM/I KDYBY  
NEBYLO BOHA, I KDYBY  
NEBYLO LIDSKÉ DUŠE...  
/ NEJLEPŠÍ HLAVY SVÉ  
GENERACE... / DÁŽD  
VYTRVALO BRÁNÍ SVITANIU...  
/ DUST / TOHLE JE STROJÍRNA  
CHLADU... / V CUDZOM  
MESTE NOC PUCHNE... /  
EMPIRE OF DIRT / DAMPNESS  
/ SOLITUDE (THE END OF  
CHILDHOOD) / WAKENING  
BODY / NOW! 79:47.

Nikitin, ss, ts, theremin,  
synth, voices; Juraj Tomka,  
Jozef Ostrolúcky, vln; Veronika  
Prokešová, vla; Pavol Mucha,  
cel; Branislav Dugovič, b cl;  
Robert Kolář, tpt, flgh; Martin  
Sillay, g; Róbert Pospíš, synth,  
voices; Juraj Šušanič, d;  
Martin Gerboc, voices. 2015,  
Bratislava, Slovakia

Window" has a freer rhythm as a showcase for Dóme. Nikitin and Stewart finish the track by trading licks and then fading out over Jonáš's jabbing chords and Dóme's and Griglák's continuing force. Still, all of the musicians on *New Winter Stories* suggest artistic maturity that provides technical accomplishment unified in bringing to life with cool restraint Nikitin's compositions intended to depict winter in Bratislava. (2) is Nikitin's tribute album consisting of dedications to his family, friends and influences. Perhaps the most interesting track is "Peter Pan," dedicated to Wayne Shorter and confirming Nikitin's affinity for Shorter's style. Performed on soprano sax, "Peter Pan" starts slowly with a rubato melodic introduction before it takes off in hard-bop flight, Jonáš sounding at times as much like Horace Silver as Herbie Hancock. Compositionally, "Peter Pan" follows Nikitin's apparent preference for modal forms as he improvises with technical precision and artistic fervor. Nikitin's "Generations," on the other hand, takes the forcefulness—and the volume—down a notch, as his tenor sax quartet performs this medium-tempo jazz waltz with harmonic subtlety and apparently heartfelt appreciation. *Personal Suite's* second suite in five parts contains an appreciation of someone named Aram. Even though the first track of the suite contains a possible reference of the classic Miles Davis album with John Coltrane, "Cookin'" is animated by a rumba-like percussiveness, with apparent allusions to "Tequila" before its four-bar bridge glides into a walking-bass rhythm. "Aram's Corner," a waltz similar to "Generations" but sprightlier, frees Jonáš to inject his personality into his solo, rather than being relegated to the supporting role within "Generations." As a result, "Aram's Corner" demonstrates the ability of a like-minded piano player to elevate a performance to a higher level than it would have attained without him, as Jonáš, with confidence and maturity, provides an alternative perspective with clipped phrases, tremolos, moving block chords, and the implications of and the anticipation from a single well-chosen sustained note. "Under Reconstruction" showcases the cohesion of the group as well with its relaxed swing, while "Bolero" swirls trance-like in a six-eight meter over a single chord. Nikitin's volume and intensity gradually increase throughout, Jonáš's chords jabbing with rhythmic intensity. Griglák furiously bows his own solo, while Dóme deepens the atmosphere with

# New Issues



sticks clicking on the rims and cymbals crashing and tom-toms rumbling. A departure from the hard-bop and modal jazz associated with Miles Davis's famous groups, (3) expands Nikitin's recorded interests to include string quartet compositions, spoken word and experimental music. Written in Slovak for most of the tracks, the poetry emerges whispered, or muttered, in the background of the Mucha Quartet's performance. One assumes that Nikitin wrote the arrangements, though he doesn't perform with the quartet, and no compositional credits are given in the liner notes. The first track builds upon a sixteenth-note minor-key motive performed repeatedly by violinist Juraj Tomka, to the contrapuntal lines of violinist Jozef Ostrolúcky, viola player Veronika Prokešová and cellist Pavol Mucha. Cinematic in effect, the track, upon further investigation, does appear to include some Latin lines describing exorcism as well. Similarly, the Mucha Quartet sets the mood with an off-kilter waltz akin to a Kurt Weill song, as the voices converse above it in Slavic (providing "Slavic Sounds" in words). With lyrics translated from an Allen Ginsburg work, "Nejlepší hlavy své generace..." consists of melodic lines over a tripleted viola figure as the poetry readers trade verses. The EXXPPNNSSE Ensemble fills out the album with experimental selections creating outlandish sonic atmospheres. "Dust," rhythmless, is evocative of American Western landscapes with the combination of the synthesizer's drone-like expansions and the twang of Martin Sillay's guitar. In titular contrast to "Dust," "Dampness" provides for a signature two-note saxophone figure anchoring Branislav Dugovič's bass clarinet improvisation over Juraj Šušanič's percussive textures. Even more interesting is Nikitin's use of the proximity-sensing Theremin, in combination with the other instruments, to create otherworldly atmospheres, following innovations by Dmitri Shostakovich, Miklós Rózsa and others. Two of the compositions of the ensemble include the recitations of poems by Martin and Joseph Gerboca over shifting, complementary tones as they expand upon their Slovak sounds. Fortunately, the three albums provide a broad range not only of Nikitin's musical skills, but also of the styles being explored in Bratislava for the advancement of jazz, indeed a universal language.

Bill Donaldson

# New Issues

## RHYTHM FUTURE QUARTET TRAVELS SELF PRODUCED

IBERIAN SUNRISE / COME  
TOGETHER / FOR PAULUS /  
TRAVELS / VESSELA / DON'T  
TELL ME / STILL WINTER / THE  
KEEPER / BUSHWICK STOMP  
/ JE SUIS SEUL CE SOIR /  
ROUND HILL / AMSTERDAM /  
MADE IN FRANCE. 59:58.

Jason Anick, v; Olli Soikkeli,  
Max O'Rourke, g; Greg  
Loughman, b. No date or  
place given.

If Django Reinhardt were alive today.... Hm. Would he recognize Paris, where he and then the Quintette du Hot Club de France achieved worldwide fame from his early recordings? Would he release his performances on YouTube and his recordings on Apple Music, or would he remain a local musician internationally unrecognized? How acceptable would be his ethnically blended, acoustically played music, "gypsy jazz," when electronically produced effects today are common? Might his parents and he, migrating from Belgium without a permanent address, be subject to surveillance or be put on a watch list? Would Reinhardt continue to understand the frustrations of international travel, including a pat-down or extended security interviews at ports of departure, particularly when some of his attempts to escape war-time Paris as a Romani were thwarted? Would he, having lived through the tensions of the Porajimos, be comforted by, or be uncomfortable with, the appearance of readiness by the military and

police on the streets of Paris? Would he feel compelled to study jazz at a university or at a summer camp to gain public and commercial acceptance? Would instructors try to alter his unorthodox style, and would they turn their attentions toward students without handicaps to performance? Would instructors learn from or "correct" Reinhardt's fingering? What would he think of "gypsy jazz" festivals in his name? At least he would still recognize the Eiffel Tower, the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Seine walkways and the sidewalk cafés in their enhanced (i.e., lighted, fireworks, congested, selfied, Twittered, etc.) forms.

Django Reinhardt was one of those unapologetic individuals whose authenticity, spark and incredible talent changed and/or advanced an art form. The wonder is that the spirit of his music and the inventions of his technique have survived over sixty years, for its beauty continues to inspire successive generations. We benefit from the freshness of younger musicians who revel in Reinhardt's spirit and from improved recording technology, rather than being restricted to re-listening to the same astounding Reinhardt 78-RPM recordings digitally restored. The continuing possibilities for inventiveness in Reinhardt's music inspire younger musicians—such as the Rhythm Future Quartet—to stretch the possibilities of the music while respecting its origins. And the members of this quartet, thoroughly inspired by Reinhardt's spirit, have found excitement in his recordings, which have challenged them to achievement that are impressive in their own right. Yet, the members of the Rhythm Future Quartet have had an opportunity that Reinhardt enjoyed in a more limited form: travel. These four musicians have journeyed to a total of fifty countries, and they have incorporated their observations into their music. Ergo: Travels. And at such relatively young ages! Guitarist Max O'Rourke is but twenty years of age, and Olli Soikkeli is 26. Their incredible technical abilities, and the heart that they

# New Issues

invest in their music, suggests not only their natural talent for Reinhardt's style. They also suggest that, combined with violinist Jason Anick and bassist Greg Loughman, we can look forward to a long future for their music. Talent of their caliber deserves the reward of listenership and concert attendance.

The Rhythm Future Quartet's rich global influences are described in the plaintive title track, which also provides a showcase for its musicianship. Anick's beautiful statement of melody stretches notes over several six-eight measures, his technique rich and affecting with dynamic swells. Eventually, a guitar creates four-against-three tension for its conclusion. "Vessela," possibly written in honor of Berklee assistant professor and marimba player Vessela Stoyanova, consists of Balkan rhythms and melodies that flow seamlessly over bar lines, which suggest one of the styles incorporated by her band, Bury Me Standing. Bookending a calmer three-four section, the beginning and end of "Vessela" consist of occasional percussiveness from the backs of instruments as well as the unpredictable acceleration/deceleration of tempos. A final speed-up leads to its abrupt conclusion, exciting not only for its technical challenge, but also for the group's cohesion. Kicked off by a contrasting initial theme that combines a brief mixture of Sephardic, flamenco and sardana styles, among others, "Iberian Sunrise" includes a Reinhardt-influenced swinging middle section featuring individual virtuosity,

But as always, the Django Reinhardt spirit infuses all of the music of the Rhythm Future Quartet, which even named itself after a modernist Reinhardt composition, "Rhythm Futur." Written during World War II possibly as a means of acceptance by the Nazi occupiers who considered jazz to be an inferior form of music, "Rhythm Futur" resulted from Reinhardt's use of his inimitable technique to explore other musical directions, thereby allowing him to influence a broader circle of unlikely admirers like Carl Stalling and Spike Jones, not to mention Les Paul. The more obvious tributes to Reinhardt occur on songs like French bassist Jean-Marc Jafet's propulsive "Don't Tell Me," based on blues changes, which allows vamps behind the melody before the quartet takes off in joyous swing. Biréli Lagrène's rousing "Made in France" is a whirling, fairly straightforward, unabashed homage to the Quintette du Hot Club de France. It allows the Rhythm Future Quartet not only to feature each member's improvisational ease and intensity, but also to conclude the album. Rose Noel, Jean Casanova and Paul Durand's "Je Suis Seul Ce Soir" was included in Woody Allen's fanciful 2011 movie, *Midnight in Paris* (similar in the breakdown of temporal barriers to *The Purple Rose of Cairo*). Allen's film allows a present-day screenwriter to meet legendary artistic French residents he admires like Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, Cole Porter, Gertrude Stein, Josephine Baker and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The Rhythm Future Quartet presents its own interpretation of "Je Suis Seul Ce Soir" with a more leisurely and more romantic style than *Swing 41's* in the movie. Similarly, with dedication and affection, the Rhythm Future Quartet recalls the streets of Paris as they honor the spirit of another influential artist living in Paris, Django Reinhardt. But oh for the reverse of Allen's concept: Django stepping out of a car in 1917 in Paris—or New York, or Istanbul, or Orlando, or Nice or Brussels. What would he think?

Bill Donaldson

# New Issues

## PASSAGES AARDVARK JAZZ ORCHESTRA

LEO RECORDS LR 741

SPACEWAYS /

SAXOPHRENIA / TWILIGHT /

MAELSTROM / AFTERMATH /

ELEGY. 64:13.

Mark Harvey, conductor

tpt, p; Arni Cheatham, as, ts,

flt; Peter Bloom, as, flt, b flt,

pic; Michael Heller, as; Phil

Scarff, ts, ss, sop s, cl; Chris

Rakowski, ts, cl; Dan Zupan,

bari s, cl, b cl; K.C. Dunbar,

Jeanne Snodgrass, Taylor Ho

Bynum, tpt; Bob Pilkington,

Jay Keyser, Jeff Marsanskis,

Randy Pingrey, Tom Plsek, tbn;

Bill Lowe, b tbn, tba; Richard

Nelson, g; John Funkhouser,

b; Jerry Edwards, el b; Harry

Wellott, d; Craig Ellis, perc.

3/8/03, 4/26/14, 4/11/15.

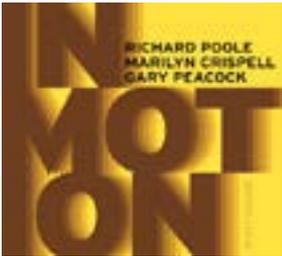
Cambridge, MA.

How to notate? Such is one challenge, successfully overcome, by Mark S. Harvey, composer of the music on Passages and director of the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra. The first track, "Spaceways," written in celebration of Sun Ra's one hundredth birthday in 2014, respectfully honors that jazz icon with a difficult and freely performed composition that defies conventional harmonies and orchestral expectations. Its structure frames the work while allowing the individual musicians to express themselves with insistent individuality. How would Harvey notate baritone sax blares within Dan Zupan's untethered, unpausing swirl, not to mention his concluding growls in the midst of the orchestra's thick sonic mesh? Harvey's "Twilight," rather than utilizing traditional notation, consists of a graphic score indicating relative pitch and time, an encouragement to establish scenic textures through imprecise sound. John Funkhouser's initial extended bass solo alternates high and low notes that gather into volume contrasts. Then soprano saxophonist Phil Scarff creates treble impressions with darting, warbling and loosened-embouchure jabs as Harvey moves to middle-register colloquy with denser chords. "Saxophrenia" started as a commission for a saxophone sextet, but notations for the full Aardvark Jazz Orchestra followed, though saxophones remain in the improvisational and melodic lead. As a complex piece of several

sections, "Saxophrenia" allows the saxophones to establish their own voices through unconventional improvisation such as not-quite-tonal sounds of breathing through the mouthpiece. This is an orchestra that understands the artistic intentions of its leader. Its members sense the impulses of the other musicians for elaboration or embellishment. The Aardvark Jazz Orchestra is one that requires of its members a unique understanding of Harvey's aesthetic, and no doubt he conducts extensive searches for musicians to fill in when some of the orchestra's regulars aren't available for performances. Not only is technical mastery required to bring to life Harvey's compositional ideas, but so is a comprehension of the end result he envisions for each piece. That connection between performers and vision joins for an affecting performance of Harvey's remembrance of the Boston Marathon bombing. "Commemoration (Boston 2013)" recalls the progression of intense emotions generated by the bombing at the marathon. The first movement, "Maelstrom," commences with drummer Harry Wellott's agitation, creating chaotic urgency. Zupan's baritone sax evolves dissonant long tones into growing alarm in astounded dialog with Bill Lowe's exclamations on tuba. Reconciliation as the city comes to terms with the panic and loss happens in "Aftermath." Harvey's piano solo and Arni Cheatham's alto sax reverie provide expression for the contemplation of senselessness and community strength. And finally "Elegy," with its initial slow meditation on piano, pays tribute to the victims and to the responders' bravery. Eventually, "Elegy" progresses toward healing. Bells and spontaneous solo tributes on flute and bass lead into a fully voiced, still rhythmless, expansion of sound as tragedy and civic communion are emotionally noted.

Bill Donaldson

# New Issues



## POOLE-CRISPELL- PEACOCK IN MOTION INTAKT CD264

AHZÂN / BACKSEAT OF  
THE GALAXY / DICHOTOMY  
/ AND YET / SERAKUNDA / IN  
MOTION / ISLE OF NOWHERE  
/ GARY'S THEME / BLUE  
STREETS UP AND DOWN /  
LUCID AIR. 58:34.

Marilyn Crispell, p; Gary  
Peacock, b; Richard Poole, d.  
11/6/14, Saugerties, NY.

Intakt's In Motion session documents the first performance of the trio consisting of Richard Poole, Marilyn Crispell and Gary Peacock. The fact that the three of them seek new means of interaction suggests their continuing restlessness for new improvisational opportunities. The three play with absolute authority and intuitive responsiveness, as if they have been performing for decades. No so, though. And thus, there's an edge of charmed discovery and edgy expectancy as they perform nine tracks of anything-can-happen free improvisation. The sole exception is the inclusion of Peacock's scampering "Gary's Theme," which Crispell fractures into oblique bi-tonal offshoots of the percussive main theme, she veering in other harmonic directions to contrast with Peacock's restatement of the theme. When all three musicians engage, Crispell sweeps to the upper extreme of the keyboard and provides its contrast with its lowest notes before breaking into clusters as Peacock develops his own rippling thematic expansion. Peacock complements Crispell's thunderous force with longer tones, melodic segments and sometimes quarter notes. In return, Crispell provides intermittent single-note treble interjections during the bassist's masterful solo of occasional thematic allusions developing into quickly conceived and technically virtuosic free improvisation. An album of contrasts, In Motion begins, as if awakening, with Crispell's quiet expression of "Ahzân's" minor modal theme, grounded by Peacock's sustained notes, before Poole enters almost unobtrusively with occasional atmospheric colors of malleted rumbling and light cymbal crashes. Poole announces his presence with undeniable force on the second track, "Backseat of the Galaxy," one of two pieces from Frank Parker's book of poems, Heart Shaped Blossoms. Crispell takes up the spirit of "Backseat of the Galaxy" with notes, associated with disjointed cohesion, that contrast in extremes of pitch and harmonic logic. Those contrasts create tension as she chooses notes not expected, thereby reinforcing individuality. On the next track, "Dichotomy," the name itself becomes a reference to the trio's style throughout In Motion. The singing vibrancy of Peacock's melodic solo introducing "Dichotomy" couldn't be more disarm-

# New Issues

ing before Crispell and Poole come crashing in with the fierceness of thunderous smashing chords and of rattling and rolling intensity. And then it stops. Peacock attains serenity again, as if he heard no dramatic interruption, and begins where he stopped. And so it goes, back and forth, free frenzy and structured song, one before and after another. The surprise. The control. The mutual understanding of concept. All is calm during "Blue Streets Up and Down," another line found in Parker's book. On that track, Peacock creates his own repeated bass line that suggests samba. Crispell abandons fortissimo surges for a medium-volume, even-tempered revelation of beauty contained within the piece's two chords and rhythms. "Serakunda" is similar in concept as Peacock presents a continuing vamp over which Crispell performs with sustained chords and upper-register melody. "Isle of Nowhere" seems to develop as Crispell sets up with single-note minimal sketching a haunting mood without pre-arrangement, Peacock and Poole following her slowly blossoming creation. Likewise, "And Yet" suggests that through immediate inspiration, Crispell examines tonal possibilities, tentatively enough for Peacock and Poole to follow her un-rehearsed lead. Crispell accompanies Peacock's resonating work on "Lucid Air" with her chiming treble chords, but the interesting component of the track is Poole's textural development at its start and throughout. Peacock is even more resonant on "In Motion." The title track finds Crispell much in the middle register with dense minor chords, as Peacock and Poole join with connected but individual statements, not as accompaniment but as conversation. This is a trio of seasoned professionals who respond spontaneously to one another and by doing so record a remarkable album.

Bill Donaldson

# New Issues

VARIOUS ARTISTS  
THE BOSTON  
CREATIVE JAZZ SCENE  
1970-1983  
CULTURES OF SOUL  
RECORDS COS 014-CD  
FOR MARGOT / TAROT:  
THE MOON / SKETCH PARTS  
1 AND 2 / ROAD THROUGH  
THE WALL PARTS 2 AND 3 /  
THE CREATOR IS SO FAR OUT  
/ EGYPT / 9 DEGREES BLACK  
WOMEN LIBERATION / PLAY  
SLEEP / HERDS AND HOARDS.  
74:01.

Mark Harvey, tr, Fr hn;  
Stanton Davis, flgh; Wil  
Letman, Steve Guttman, Haru  
Sawada, tr; Arni Cheatham, as;  
Phil Musra, flt, ts, perc; Peter  
Bloom, ts, p; Leonard Brown,  
ts; Len Detlor, Tom Guralnick,  
John Hagan, Dave Liebman, ss,  
ts; Michael Cosmic, pic, flt, ts,  
zurna, org, perc; Yoshi Maruta,  
flt, ts; Earl Grant-Lawrence,  
flt; Bill Pierce, alto flt; Vagn  
Leick, elec p; Alan Pasqua, p,  
elec p; Shaddu Jones, p; Mark  
Styles, synth; Baird Hersey, g;  
David Saltman, elec b; John  
Jamyll Jones, Jerry Harris, Paul  
Socolow, b; Craig Ellis, perc, p;  
Kiah T Nowlin, Huseyin Ertunc,  
dr, perc; Chauncy Hutcherson,  
Vinnie Johnson, Bob Weiner,  
dr; Michael Standish, David  
Moss, perc; Dorian McGee,  
Les Lumley, Arnie Clapman,  
cga; Roy Hall, vcl, perc; Larry  
Roland, spoken word. 1970-  
1983, Boston, MA.

As one listens to The Boston Creative Jazz Scene 1970-1983, and reads about it, it becomes very clear that trumpeter Mark Harvey retains not just a fondness, but more aptly a reverence, for the avant-garde scene in that city of forty years ago, give or take six or seven years. As a part of that scene, Harvey remembers details about it very well. So dedicated is he to the movement in which he participated that he researched, wrote and published more than merely liner notes. In addition, he includes with the CD a 76-page booklet describing the scene itself. The founder of the inimitable and widely admired Aardvark Jazz Orchestra and a senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvey has striven to document the excitement within the movement at that time. He also makes available as much as possible with the publication that accompanies its recordings that he has acquired or borrowed for CD's release. Harvey remembers the members of the Boston avant-garde scene well. His recollections allowed him to redress the neglect that its lack of documentation may have encountered as the jazz press covered more comprehensively the avant-garde musicians in New York and Chicago. Harvey briefly describes the progress of the Boston scene as it absorbed members from other parts of the country, like himself, and then as they consequently may have moved on to influence other regions. He reminds us that Cecil Taylor first recorded in Boston and that Jaki Byard originated from there, even as other pioneers like Ran Blake and George Garzone remain in Boston. And Harvey pays due respect to the Boston natives like Lowell Davidson and John Voigt who augmented the diverse freely improvisational approaches that made the Boston avant-garde scene one deserving of recognition. Attracted by Boston's academic environment or by the scene itself, the avant-garde musicians chose to immerse themselves in the artistic opportunities they found in Boston despite their relative lack of commercial success. Indeed, Harvey tracked down some rare self-produced vinyl recordings for the CD compilation; in other instances, groups he recalls had no extant recordings available for re-release. The album begins, appropriately enough, with the most accessible album from the seventies: his

# New Issues

own. The Mark Harvey Group in Concert at Harvard-Epworth Church includes two tracks, the very brief "For Margot" and the extended "Tarot: The Moon." Indicative of the creative liberties that the Boston avant-garde musicians advanced, "Tarot: The Moon," more than being a selection from other tunes, represents the inspired freedom that reigned at the time, and still does in many venues. Impressionistic in its approach, the group improvised impressions of visual objects, abstract ideas, literary scenes or everyday sonic occurrences. In this case, the track involves a collective interpretation of the meaning of a tarot card, as Craig Ellis's aggressively produced chords ground Harvey's excursions on French horn and Peter Bloom's passionate swirling on tenor sax. Strangely contemporary in its sensibilities, The Worlds Experience Orchestra's "9 Degrees of Black Women Liberation" combines Larry Roland's poem, spoken in cadence, with a musical accompaniment consisting of flute, keyboard, bass and drums. Describing the experience of several women waiting for a bus in extremely cold weather in the early morning, Roland uses the sounds of his words to set up his own percussiveness, onomatopoeia, repetitions and melodic phrases. Joining the Boston avant-garde scene from Chicago, brothers Phill Musra and Michael Cosmic introduce from the album *The Creator Spaces* their own style of freely performed spiritualism. "The Creator Is So Far Out" teams them on tenor saxophones providing call and response, as well as untethered blissful outpourings over Huseyin Ertunc's energetic drum work. "Egypt," in contrast, features a quieter, calmer meditation with both Musra and Cosmic on flutes with Middle Eastern references. Broadening the album's instances of the musical variety arising from the seventies' Boston jazz scene, Baird Hersey's *The Year of the Ear* performs "Herds and Hoards," a varied and succinct finish to Harvey's sonic and written essay about avant-garde jazz in Boston in the early second half of the twentieth century. Though the last track lasts but four-and-a-half minutes, Hersey packed into that piece several changes of mood and tempo, and it includes a vertiginous soprano sax solo in seven-four by Dave Liebman early in his career. Yoshi Maruta's initial lulling rhythmless flute solo gives no hint of the force and excitement that follow. The performance breaks into a breakneck pace of sax and guitar solos over a trumpet riff and congas recalling the seventies "Shaft"-like funk. With *The Boston Creative Jazz Scene 1970-1983*, Mark Harvey has documented the lesser-heard and -known jazz explorations that were happening in Boston. The ideas arising during that period of fertile creative activity continue refinement today, most notably, of course, in the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra.

Bill Donaldson

# New Issues



**(1) CHICAGO JAZZ  
PHILHARMONIC  
HAVANA BLUE  
316 RECORDS CD31608**

HAVANA BLUE SUITE: SABOR/  
CONGRI / SOLTERAS / EL  
MALECON / AL FIN TE VI /  
HAVANA @ 12 / ORLANDO'S  
WALK [REPRISE] / CHEGA  
DE SAUDADE / MANTECA  
/ SERAPHIM / ORLANDO'S  
WALK. 51:29.

Orbert Davis, conductor, tpt,  
flgh; Leandro Lopez Varady,  
p; Stewart Miller, b; Ernie  
Adams, d, cajon; Jose Rendon,  
cga; Suzanne Osman, perc  
(1-7); Steve Eisen, flt, a flt,  
ts; Anna Najoom, cl; Michael  
Salter, b cl, ts; Erendira  
Izguerra, bari s, vln; Sylvia  
De La Cerna, Talia Pavia, vln;  
Lynn LaPlante-Allaway, vla;  
Ellen Frolichstein, cel; David  
Spencer, Chris Davis, tpt, flgh;  
Jessica Pearce, Fr hn; Tracy  
Kirk, tbn; Henry Salgado, tbn,  
b tbn. April 13, 2013, Chicago.

Orbert Davis, co-founder and artistic director of Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, began a collaboration involving the music and dance of Cuba with River North Dance artistic director Frank Chavez, following a trip Davis and Chavez made to Cuba in October of 2012 to absorb its musical and artistic culture. The musical results of this project may be heard on (1), which includes a live performance of Havana Blue Suite, Davis's seven movement work of music and dance, along with four more selections. The movements (all but one written by Davis) are varied, containing appealing and sentimental melodies ("Sabor," "Solteras"), high energy latin rhythms and dynamic brass and big band sounds ("Havana @12"), drama and impressive musical development ("El Malecon"), and fun and fanciful qualities ("Al Fin Te Vi," written by the eminent Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona and arranged by Davis for clarinet and bass clarinet). Davis, who conducted the ensemble performing this suite in a concert presented at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago in April of 2013, is also a featured trumpet and flugelhorn soloist, and is superior in that role, as is pianist Leandro Lopez Varady and several other ensemble members. Besides the suite from the live concert, Davis's excellent composition "Seraphim" is among the four remaining pieces which were recorded in a Chicago studio. Zoe Davis's striking photographs of several scenes in Havana, Cuba adorn the CD cover and interior, setting the mood for this celebration of Cuban musical culture.

Don Lerman

# New Issues

## (2) THE MUSIC OF MILTON MARSH REVISITED VOL. 1

ALANKARA RECORDS ALK-  
0002

NOT FAR FROM HOME /  
SUBTLE ANOMALY / GREAT  
EXPECTATIONS / MISNOMER  
/ TEARS OF JOY ARE MORE  
PRECIOUS THAN PEARLS  
/ I WONDER WHY I CARE /  
DIALOGUE / LOVING YOU / BY  
DESIGN. 40:36.

Marsh, Idr, conductor (1, 2, 5),  
p (9); David Eure, Robert Flax,  
Lily Honigberg, vln; Helen  
Sherrah-Davis, vla; Junko  
Fujiwara, cel; Carlos Averhoff,  
ts; Samuel Batista, as; Stanton  
Davis, tpt; Clifford Weeks, tbn;  
Ona Jonaityte, ft; Elizabeth  
London, ob; Juliet Lai, cl;  
Anne Howarth, Fr hn; Sam  
Childer, bsn; Kevin Harris,  
p; Keala Kaumeheiwa, Brian  
McCree, b; Steve Langone,  
Jaz Sawyer, Greg Bandy, d;  
Yuriano Sobrino, Les Lumley,  
cga, perc; Henrietta Robinson,  
vcl, narration. August  
2008, Brookline, MA; July-  
November 2015, Somerville,  
MA.

Milton Marsh composes for groups of varied sizes and instrumentations, utilizing both classical and jazz elements on (2). His pieces have an intense quality, performed by groups ranging from four to ten pieces, and including strings on five of the nine cuts, horns on four cuts, and rhythm sections and/or piano on all selections. Violinist David Eure possesses an expressive singing quality on Marsh's "Subtle Anomaly" and "Loving You," and solos with intensity on "I Wonder Why I Care." The playing of pianist Kevin Harris contributes great beauty to several of the Marsh pieces, for example on his moving solo on "Dialogue." "Great Expectations" provides a dramatic vocal statement, sung and narrated by Henrietta Robinson, regarding power-seeking political leaders. The recording closes with a superb ensemble performance from four woodwinds and French horn on "By Design," a striking Marsh composition in the modern classical mode that rewards repeat listenings.

Don Lerman

# New Issues

## (1) DINAMITRI JAZZ FOLKLORE & AMIRI BARAKA LIVE IN SANT'ANA ARRESI 2013

RUDI RECORDS RRJ 1029  
KONGO BELLS / AMIRI'S  
BLUES / AKENDENGUE /  
WHEN AMIRI WAS IN AFRICA  
/ THE SLAVE SINGING /  
BARAKA / SUN RA / TERRA /  
ARIA / THERE REALLY WAS  
AN AFRICA. TIME. 66:45.  
Amiri Baraka, vcl; Dimitri  
Grechi Espinoza, as; Simone  
Padovani, perc; Gabrio  
Baldacci, el g; Giuseppe  
Scardino, bari s; Emanuele  
Parrini, vln; Paolo "PeWee:  
Durante, kybd, elec; Andrea  
Melani, d; Avram Fefer,  
as (10). August 29, 2013,  
Sant'Anna Arresi, South  
Sardinia (Italy).

## (2) NAFTULE'S DREAM BLOOD NDR 103

SITTING IN SOME TRAIN WATCHING  
THE TUSCAN LANDSCAPE GO  
SPEEDING BACKWARD / BLOOD / ABY  
KIRLY THE WAR HERO / CALABRIA /  
BOSS SHABBOS / KLEZ SPIRITUAL /  
CAHSING IVO LVI / TURKISHER / IN  
SEARCH OF HER LULLABY. 43:48.  
Glenn Dickson, cl; Gary  
Bohan, cornet; Michael  
McLaughlin, acc; Andrew  
Stern, g; Jim Gray, tub; Eric  
Rosenthal, d. June 30, 2013,  
Jamaica Plain, MA.

**A**miri Baraka joined the 7-piece world music group Dinamitri in 2008 to perform the "Akendengue Suite" in which he recited excerpts from his book "Wise, Why's, Y's: The Griot's Song Djeli Ya." In 2013 Baraka again appeared with Dinamitri for their performance on (1) at the Sant'Anna Arresi jazz festival, which that year was dedicated to Sun Ra. Alto saxophonist and composer Dimitri Grechi Espinoza dedicated this recording to Baraka, who throughout this set articulates poetically on the subjects of jazz phraseology, jazz history, slavery, and other topics. On "Sun Ra" and the ensuing "Terra," Baraka describes the "philosopher musician" Sun Ra and his interplanetary music, and passes on a message from Sun Ra that "the world is in transition" and other conceptual ideas. Performing behind and along with Baraka's commentary, Dinamitri's rhythm section of percussion, drums, guitar, and keyboards create rhythmic auras of great vitality, with the baritone and alto saxophones supplementing the rhythms with strong lines and intense solos.

**N**aftule's Dream is a 6-piece group whose unique music contains both klezmer and jazz elements. The all-original program on (2) is made up of compositions from three of its members. The writing of clarinetist Glen Dickson, who provided three compositions, and cornet player Gary Bohan, who contributed one, emphasize the klezmer identity of the group, with its characteristic minor harmonies infusing melodic lines which are often lively and sometimes pensive. The pensive and thoughtful side is represented more fully by the writing of accordianist Michael McLaughlin, whose five compositions include interesting use of space and rhythms. In "Calabria," for example, McLaughlin's opening peaceful and deliberate bass figure from the tuba is joined by seemingly incongruous lines from the accordian, while the opener "Sitting in Some Train..." pairs placid sounds from the tuba and horns with odd-metered figures from the drums and accordian. The program's final piece, McLaughlin's "In Search of Her Lullaby," is well-constructed, beginning with an elegant minor waltz from solo accordian which is joined in turn by the tuba, clarinet, clarinet/cornet harmonies, and finally the drums, with ensuing musical development from the group filling out the piece in a natural and musically rewarding manner.

Don Lerman

# New Issues

## ROLF STURM YOUNG

WATER STREET MUSIC  
WSM-126

SWEET SUE, JUST YOU /  
A WEAVER OF DREAMS /  
COWGIRL IN THE SAND  
/ GHOST OF A CHANCE /  
WHEN I FALL IN LOVE / ONE  
OF THESE DAYS / LOVE  
LETTERS / POCAHONTAS  
/ MY FOOLISH HEART /  
STELLA BY STARLIGHT /  
TELL MY WHY / GOLDEN  
EARRINGS. 56:58.

Sturm, g. No date or  
location.

## THE FAT BABIES, SOLID GASSUH, DELMARK 257.

Doctor Blues / After A While  
/ Feelin' Good / Did You  
Ever See A Dream Walking?  
/ Original Charleston  
Strut / Pencil Papa / I Miss  
A Little Miss / Parkway  
Stomp / You Were Only  
Passing The Time With  
Me / Alabamy Bound /  
Slow River / Delirium /  
Egyptian Ella / Sing Song  
Girl / Maple Leaf Rag. 47:35  
.Beau Sample, b; Andy  
Schumm, cnt; John Otto,  
cl, as; Dave Bock, tb;  
Paul Asaro, p, vcl; Jake  
Sanders, bjo, g; Alex Hall,  
d. Chicago, IL.

Guitarist Rolf Sturm provides well-crafted solo guitar versions of tunes from two noted North American composers named Young, Victor (1900-1956) and Neil (born 1945). Sturm's melodic statements and improvisations of tunes from these composers contain a well-done balance of chordal phrases, single lines, and a combination of the two, with occasional double-time spurts, and are bordered by thoughtful introductions and subtle endings. Sturm performs eight Victor Young pieces, each a classic standard written over the period of from the late 1920s to the early 1950s, a highlight being his superior performance of "Golden Earrings," from the 1947 film of the same name. Providing an interesting contrast in era and musical style are Sturm's fine readings of four Neil Young songs, which were hits dating from 1969 to 1992 and are more folk and rock-based in concept.

Don Lerman

Interest in early jazz has never completely gone away but it seems to have had a bit of a revival in recent years aided by its consistent presence in Woody Allen's movies and the occasional musician breaking through to wider recognition like Bria Skonberg. The Fat Babies are a Chicago band that has been playing this music for several years with plenty of drive and no hint of condescension. They play together tightly on this CD. The horns weave beautifully through each other, clarinet, trombone and cornet jousting merrily on "Charleston Strut" and "Parkway Stomp". Pianist Paul Asaro also helps the mood along with cheery, broad vocals on tunes like "You Were Only Passing The Time". "Delirium" and "Sing Song Girl" have tricky clockwork arranging reminiscent of old cartoon soundtracks from the 1930s'. You might be inclined to write the old-timey energy of these tunes off as quaint but there are moments so full of emotion and fun they'd make any jazz fan take notice, moments like John Otto's and Andy Schumm's slow-drawling Southern ooze on "Delirium", Schumm's "dirty" cornet grind on "Egyptian Ella", the bluesy strutting of "Pencil Papa" and the all-out joyful stomping of "Maple Leaf Rag". Traditional jazz fans will eat this up but even those who prefer more modern sounds should find something they like here.

Jerome Wilson

# Artist Profile/Review

## PROFILE REVIEW

Name: Szilard Mezei

Instrument: Violin, Viola, Contrabass

Place of Birth: Senta, Serbia

Overview: Born in 1974 and reared in a multi-ethnic milieu, Mezei has been something of a musical polymath since the days of his training. Specializing in viola and violin, Mezei studied composition at university and has consistently performed in a wide range of instrumental and musical settings. Well versed in twentieth century new music, as well as a range of improvised and non-idiomatic musics and Hungarian folk traditions, Mezei has developed a very interesting discography, including creative orchestra compositions, folk music performances, and a wide series of collaborations with European and North American improvisers (including Charles Gayle, Herb Robertson, Frank Gratkowski, Joelle Leandre, and others).

## SZILARD MEZEI TRIO WHITE FLOWER

SLAM 569

Wild Geese I-III / Shadow Show / White Flower. 70:03.

Mezei (vla, kaval), Svetlana Novakovic (ft), Maja Radovanlija (g). August 12, 2005, Novi Sad, Serbia.

It's been a while since I've heard from the once-ubiquitous Mezei, and his marvelous new release dates from his period of heaviest documentation. But other than that, it's something of an outlier for him, in terms of instrumentation and in terms of his use of folk materials (always an element of his style, it's more foregrounded here). After an opening drone, the trio plays craggy and intervallic music that sounds like Julius Hemphill sitting in with the String Trio of New York, crossed with Louis Sclaviss acoustic quartet covering Messiaen. I'm in. One key to the success of this music, aside from the superb instrumentalism, is the indissoluble melding of texture and line, which is one of my favorite (and most difficult to achieve) elements of truly top improvising. As strongly neoclassical as "Wild Geese" is in places – lyrical here, densely chromatic there, with some lovely a cappella sections for Mezei – it's in the dynamic grain and color of the trio that the music is most wondrous. With music this detailed and complex, that's as necessary as the players' technique. Speaking of which, I absolutely loved the guitarist's playing, combining dense chordal investigations with fleet finger-picking and some bright lyrical flourishes that contrast smartly with the timbres and harmonic choices the other two tend to make. Breathy flute opens "Shadow Show," a lengthy tribute to John Carter that grows in rhythmic intensity, abetted by Mezei's use of the booming kaval percussion instrument, which seems to goad Radovanlija into her most gnarly playing of the date, and Novakovic to her most terpsichorean. When Mezei switches back to viola, the music swings infectiously. Things are similarly bracing on the fantastic title track, with overtones skirling amidst guitar chords, and a somber, almost gagaku-like feel in the flute-heavy sections. Terrific music!

Recommended Works: *Cerkno*; *Sivatag*; *We Were Watching the Rain*; *Bot*; *Nad/Reed*; *Underflow*.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues

## RICH HALLEY 5 THE OUTLIER PINE EAGLE 009

RECIPE FOR IMPROVISERS / URBAN CRUNCH / AROUND THE FRINGES / GREEN NEEDLES / DU FU'S STEW / LONG BLUE ROAD / RISING FROM THE PLAINS / THE WAY THROUGH / RECIPROCITY / THE NUTHATCHES. 65:34.

Halley, ts; Vinny Golia, bs, b cl; Michael Vlatkovich, tbn; Carson Halley, d; Clyde Reed, b. November 21-22, 2015, Portland, OR.

**I**nventive writing for three horns, bass and drums along with freely improvised solos form the core of this recording from tenor saxophonist Rich Halley and his quintet. Well supported in a non-intrusive way by bassist Clyde Reed and drummer Carson Halley, all three horn players display energy and ideas in their playing, each being a skilled soloist in the free idiom. In "The Nuthatches," which closes the hour and five minute set, a minor riff from Reed and bass clarinetist Vinny Golia is set over marching drums, followed by strong individual solos from trombonist Michael Vlatkovich, Golia, Carson Halley, and Rich Halley, with joint improvisation from the three horns completing the ten minute selection in interesting fashion.

## MOUTIN FACTORY QUINTET, DEEP, JAZZ FAMILY 009.

Love Stream / Hope Street / Fat's Medley / Exploded View / A Soothing Thrill / Hell's Kitchen / Shift / Bliss / In The Name Of Love. 63:52.

Francois Moutin, b; Louis Moutin, d; Jean-Michel Pilc, p; Manu Codjia, g; Christophe Monniot, as, sop; Thierry Peala, Axelle Du Rouret, b vcl.

**T**his CD starts out as facile "smooth jazz" but quickly becomes more intriguing. The first couple of pieces are frictionless jazz fusion that don't promise much, but things improve with a bass and drum conversation with Francois and Louis Moutin on two Fats Waller tunes, a loping "Ain't Misbehavin'" and a speedy "Honeysuckle Rose". Things continue to get better from that point on. "Exploded View" is a more interesting style of jazz-rock with angular rhythms, cascading piano and fizzy saxophone. "Soothing Thrill" is a quiet melody meandering under thick layers of guitar and saxophone, "Hell's Kitchen" is herky-jerky funk and "Shift", with its running piano and soprano sax, sounds like one of Chick Corea's up-tempo flights. "Bliss" is the liveliest track. François thrashes his acoustic bass like Stanley Clarke while Louis bashes the drums and the rest of the band careens and jangles over them. "In The Name Of Love" takes things out on a softer romantic note, sax, guitar and piano softly exploring a romantic theme while the brothers stay well in the background. Overall this is attractive and intelligent fusion music, polished but not too slick.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

(1) ROBERTA  
PIKET  
ONE FOR  
MARIAN:  
CELEBRATING  
MARIAN  
MCPARTLAND

THIRTEENTH NOTE  
AMBIANCE / ONE  
FOR MARIAN / IN THE  
DAYS OF OUR LOVE  
/ TWILIGHT WORLD  
/ THRENODY / TIME  
AND TIME AGAIN /  
SAYING GOODBYE /  
KALEIDOSCOPE. 44:28.

Piket, p; Steve  
Wilson, as, flt; Virginia  
Mayhew, ts, cl; Bill  
Mobley, tpt, fgh;  
Harvie S, b; Billy Mintz,  
d, cga & bongos; Karrin  
Allyson, vcl (4). 2016.

(2) ED  
NEUMEISTER  
SUITE  
ELLINGTON

PAO RECORDS PAO  
CARAVAN / COME  
SUNDAY / THE  
QUEENS SUITE:  
SUNSET AND THE  
MOCKING BIRD /  
LIGHTNING BUGS AND  
FROGS / LE SUCRIER  
VELOURS / THE SINGLE

PEDAL OF A ROSE /  
NORTHERN LIGHTS /  
APES AND PEACOCKS /  
FROM FAR EAST SUITE:  
DEPK. 47:27.

Pianist/composer Roberta Piket pays tribute to Marian McPartland in the best possible way: by providing outstanding and thoughtful versions of several of Marian's compositions on (1). The performances by Piket and her sextet capture McPartland's affinity for wistful and romantic melodies endowed with rich modern harmonies. Among Piket's excellent arrangements are "Time and Time Again" and "In the Days of Our Love," in which finely crafted voicings of the horns render the McPartland compositions with beauty and subtlety. The program is enhanced by the fine soloing of Virginia Mayhew on tenor (on "In the Days of our Love" and other selections), Steve Wilson on alto and flute (on "Ambiance" and other selections), Bill Mobley on trumpet (on "Kaleidoscope"), and Harvie S on bass (on "Threnody"). Piket's own playing is exemplary, undoubtedly influenced by McPartland, while as well displaying McCoy Tyner influences on "Ambiance" and "Threnody." Piket also pays heartfelt homage to McPartland with two of her own compositions, "One for Marian" and "Saying Goodbye," each well performed by the group.

The live recordings of the music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn on (2) from the group of trombonist Ed Neumeister offer fresh and outstanding performances of well known and lesser known Duke/Strayhorn compositions. The presentation is much aided by top-notch arrangements for the sextet by Neumeister, who had the experience of working with original Ellington and Strayhorn scores to write arrangements for the larger Ellington orchestra during a 16-year stint with the Mercer Ellington-led group. Neumeister's innovative writing and superior soloing from all group members lead to successful takes of over ten minutes each on the opening two numbers ("Caravan" and "Come Sunday"). The remaining seven selections feature particularly interesting and well-crafted Neumeister arrangements of pieces from two of the Ellington/Strayhorn suites, "The Queen's Suite" and the "Far East Suite." On six movements of "The Queen's Suite," a work which was originally written for the Queen of England in 1958 but not released to the public until 1976, Neumeister uses the sounds of the clarinet, trumpet, and trombone individually and in ensemble to elicit sounds of nature, such as mocking birds (first movement of suite), lightning bugs and frogs (second movement), or apes and peacocks (sixth movement). These natural sounds were integrated with the playing of pianist Fritz Pauer

# New Issues

Billy Drewes, cl, as; Jim Rotondi, tpt, flgh; Ed Neumeister, tbn; Fritz Pauer, p; Peter Herbert, b; Jeff Ballard, d. December 8, 2010, Graz, Austria.

## H DUO / HBH TRIO, Q SESSIONS, SLAM 576.

CD 1: ABACADA / USINA SPIRIT / TWELVE BARS-IMPROV / TIEMPO DE SWING / NIGHT SOUNDING / SONG FOR JULIA / FAREWELL FLIGHT. CD 2: GUIBA / COMING SUR / DAJO HALF STEP / CHRONOS OF LYCEA / TOCAYO / VERMEJO / RESONANCE / REFLECTIONS ON A GROOVE / INCISION. TT=108.53.  
David Haney, p; David Bajda, g (CD 2 only); Jorge Hernaez, b. CD 1: 11/12/15, Buenos Aires, Argentina. CD 2: 11/11/15, 11/17/15, Mendoza,

in roles that were likely done by the Duke on the original recordings. Of course, the core of this suite consists of its the unmatched Ellington/Strayhorn musical constructions and melodies, two examples being "The Single Petal of a Rose" strikingly performed by Neumeister on solo trombone, and the beautiful "Le Sucrier Velours," featuring the three horns and once again top-notch playing from Pauer, a wonderful and creative pianist to whom Neumeister dedicated this album (Pauer passed away in 2012, since the recording was made). Don Lerman

Pianist Haney had the good sense to document a pair of encounters with sensitive, resourceful Argentine improvisers. The approach and the results are different on each of these discs, though equally satisfying. I've long been a fan of how elegantly Haney can invoke some of his key pianistic influences – Herbie Nichols and Monk most frequently – in even the most abstract contexts, and that kind of balance between the idiomatic and the open-ended is well on display in the duos with Hernaez, with whom Haney has developed a deep sympathy through their collaborations in recent years. The bassist opens "ABACADA" by oscillating between melancholia and gently scratching pulse, allowing for focus on Haney's touch and lyricism. Hernaez is really resourceful in his balance of traditional chops (and hear him walk briskly on "Usina Sprint") and more gnarly textures, as when he joins Haney's dense chordalism at the outset of "Twelve Bars" and moves through spiky asides and billowy pauses.

Each piece is filled with judiciously used contrasting tempi and textures, ranging from tasty overtones to soft preparations ("Night Sounding"), or from deep register contrast ("Tiempo") to elusive harmony ("Song for Julia"). Pleasingly, things are even more spacious with the addition of the guitarist. From the opening notes of "Guiba," the music is patient and exploratory, almost as if it's building from the sound of wood in each instrument. When the trio hits its stride, I'm reminded very strongly of British free improvisation in places, sometimes perhaps a bit too much, since it ends up sublimating some of the players' lyrical strengths a bit too much. "Dajo Half Step" gets things going in a different direction, strongly lyrical and contrapuntal. And "Chronos of Lycea" is also satisfyingly emphatic, with slashing bass and choked-tone guitar figures evolving into a lovely pulse and drone section. The more I dug into soft and burnished tracks like "Vermejo," the greater my impression that Bajda is almost too reclusive as a player, given regularly to soft chordal shapes in the vein of John Russell and Roger Smith. He sounds great when exchanging phrases with Haney on the lyrical "Resonance," and I wish there were a bit more of that. Still, that's not a knock on the fine music overall.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues

**RYAN MEAGHER,  
MIST. MOSS. HOME.**

PJCE 26.

THE HIPSTER'S FOLLY /  
FIRST PLACE / BANTER\* /  
CHILDREN IN THE PARK / SKIP  
/ VASONA / PLATITUDES (FOR  
WAYNE SHORTER AND ALEX  
HOFFMAN) / THE LEGEND  
CONTINUES...+. 58:04.

Meagher, g, el p\*; Tim Willcox,  
ts, beer bottle; Chris Higgins,  
b; Charlie Doggett, d; Ben  
Turner, el p+. Portland, OR.

**BARRY GUY /  
MARILYN CRISPELL  
/ PAUL LYTTON,  
DEEP MEMORY,  
INTAKT 273.**

SCENT / FALLEN ANGEL /  
SLEEPER / BLUE HORIZON  
/ RETURN OF ULYSSES  
/ SILENCED MUSIC  
/ DARK DAYS. 52:07

Guy, b;  
Crispell, p; Lytton, perc.  
5/21/15, Maur, Switzerland.

Crispell walking through dark, winding paths in romantic fashion before the trio gathers force and she begins to charge against Guy's furious bowing and Lytton's pulverizing drums with some reference to McCoy Tyner peeking through. Many tracks start out slow and spacious before slipping into a fast, roaring mode with Crispell racing, Guy tangled in his bass and Lytton drumming for dear life, but there are exceptions. "Silenced Music" has ominous rattles and chiming, single piano notes and "Ulysses" is a swirling maelstrom from the start. "Dark Days" is also impressive with Crispell hammering away at single notes while Guy and Lytton yawn and stretch around her before the sound changes into a mass of spinning, weaving and sawing. You'd expect excellence from this trio and they deliver a bracing and stimulating ride.

Jerome Wilson

On this CD guitarist Ryan Meagher leads his band in a series of supple and lush grooves. On most tracks his nimble picking knits together with Tim Willcox's sax as closely as John Scofield and Joe Lovano. "First Place" and "Skip" show what they can do riding over a solid, chugging rhythm laid down by Charlie Doggett and Ben Turner. They spiral around each other dizzily on "Hipster's Folly" and on "Vasona" they glide along a hesitant waltz melody that includes noisy effects and shards of psychedelic rock. "Children In The Park" is an introspective country blues with Willcox doing effective warbling and Doggett quietly simmering on the drums. "Platitudes" is a slow, winding breather and "The Legend Continues" ends things with Meagher playing a trance-inducing line on electric piano that gives the other instruments the foundation to slowly proceed to an eloquent, stately climax where Meagher, no kidding, recites a climatic speech from the movie "Boggy Creek II: The Legend Continues". The loose but structured atmosphere gives off the same vibe as artists like The Bad Plus, Brad Mehldau and Radiohead, a feeling of quiet, purposeful determination. This CD is an unassuming little gem.

Jerome Wilson

This long-standing trio of master musicians is in a melodic frame of mind here. Barry Guy wrote all the compositions and they bring out a taste for the grand gesture in everyone. "Scent" is a dark, cascading melody with a Spanish tinge. "Fallen Angel" has Marilyn

Crispell walking through dark, winding paths in romantic fashion before the trio gathers force and she begins to charge against Guy's furious bowing and Lytton's pulverizing drums with some reference to McCoy Tyner peeking through. Many tracks start out slow and spacious before slipping into a fast, roaring mode with Crispell racing, Guy tangled in his bass and Lytton drumming for dear life, but there are exceptions. "Silenced Music" has ominous rattles and chiming, single piano notes and "Ulysses" is a swirling maelstrom from the start. "Dark Days" is also impressive with Crispell hammering away at single notes while Guy and Lytton yawn and stretch around her before the sound changes into a mass of spinning, weaving and sawing. You'd expect excellence from this trio and they deliver a bracing and stimulating ride.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

## VINCE ERCOLAMENTO, INNER SOUL, (NO LABEL OR #).

SPIRIT SONG /  
PENDULUM\* / IT'S THAT  
TIME / FELIZ / IT'S FOR SURE\*  
/ NOTHING BETTER / WALKIN'  
BAYOU / THE LATIN NIGHT  
/ SOMETHING'S STRANGE /  
INNER SOUL. 59:50.

Ercolamento, ts, ss, fl; Joe  
Chiappone, g; Peter Chwazik,  
b, g\*; Paul Mastriani, d, perc.  
Rochester, NY.

## SONIC SKYPILOTS, INTERPLANETARY MEDIUM, (NO LABEL OR NUMBER).

OLYMPUS MONS /  
SEA OF TRANQUILITY  
/ NEPTUNE NIGHTLIFE  
/ MAGNETOSPHERE /  
REVOLUTION OF EUROPA /  
ORBITING JUPITER / EREBUS  
TERMINAL / ICE CAPS  
ON MARS / EXOPLANET /  
VENETIAN KVETCHING / ICY  
MOONS / HYPERION JIG /  
THE SHERIFF OF SHOEMAKER  
/ MERCURIAN WIND  
CHIMES / MAGNETIC FIELD /  
WEIGHTLESS / OORT CLOUD  
7 / ITHACA. 62:47.

Richard Carr, vln, elec; Joe  
North, EWI, sax, elec.

**T**his is a CD that seems to have no higher aspiration than to be crowd-pleasing music and it mostly succeeds in that. Once you get past the snoozey “smooth jazz” on the first track, it’s fun to listen to. On the more soulful parts of the disc, there’s such a deep groove you could almost think you’re listening to the Crusaders. “Pendulum” has a nice rhythmic soprano sax line and on “It’s That Time” the band shows real fire with Vince Ercolamento’s tenor heavy and blasting and Joe Chiappone’s guitar tight and twisty. “It’s For Sure” is nicely simmering Southern funk, “The Latin Night” has Ercolamento working out on flute over a dancing bass line and “Walkin’ Bayou” is, as you might expect, a New Orleans second line groove.

The most interesting tune on the CD is the last one, “Inner Soul”. Here Ercolamento’s tenor tumbles out on a pretty, meandering melody before everyone solos with Chiappone, in his turn, playing heavy rock guitar. Ercolamento and his partners are very good at the kind of jazz they pursue.

Jerome Wilson

**T**he evocative and ethereal sounds of New Age music are alive and well on this musical journey through the Solar System. It starts with the recognizable sound of a saxophone fading in and out against a wheezing harmonium but then largely drops off into droning and beeping electronics. There are more distinctive instrumental sounds here and there like moaning sax and sawing violin on “Exoplanet”, agitated gypsy violin on “Shoemaker” and an extended crying sax soliloquy against wheezing violin and electronic crackle on “Oort Cloud 7”. The humanity shows up in spots but honestly, this is more of interest to electronic music than jazz fans.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

CAROL ROBBINS,  
TAYLOR STREET,  
JAZZ CATS 109.

THE FLIGHT / DEEP CANYON / TAYLOR STREET / FULL CIRCLE / TREKKER / SMOOTH RIDE / THE CHILL / GREY RIVER / THE LOCAL. 53:28.

Robbins, hrp; Billy Childs, p, el p; Bob Sheppard, sax, cl; Larry Koonse, g; Curtis Taylor, tpt; Darek Oles, b; Gary Novak, d; Ben Shepherd, el b. Los Angeles, CA.

Harp is still an unusual instrument for jazz, mostly found in spiritual or avant garde settings. Carol Robbins, though, plays harp here in a straight-ahead jazz setting with distinction, making her presence felt among the other players. She keeps pace nicely on “The Flight” and “Trekker” with Bob Sheppard’s sax and Curtis Taylor’s powerful trumpet. Elsewhere she adds a lot to the urbane and soulful “The Chill” amidst muted horns and guitarist Larry Koonse doing Wes Montgomery octaves and the title track, a slick piece of uptown funk with an easy groove set by Billy Childs’ Fender Rhodes playing. “Deep Canyon” is a lovely ballad waltz with Taylor in the lead and drummer Gary Novak providing a strong underneath presence while “Grey River” is a peaceful, brooding line for harp, piano and clarinet and “The Local” has the slick professionalism of a Steely Dan backing track with driving horns and Robbins stepping out with her most swinging solo of the session. Whatever you might think the role of a jazz harp is, this disc proves something different.

Jerome Wilson



# New Issues

## AFRO PERUVIAN NEW TRENDS ORCHESTRA, UNITING BEATS, BLUE SPIRAL 12.

EL DORADO\* /  
YAMBAMBO\* / MAGIA  
Y RITMO ANCESTRAL+ /  
GUAJIRA SON+ / ARUHE  
5:18\* / A SACA CAMOTE  
CON EL PIE+ / MINOR  
MISDEMEANOR\* /  
ENLIGHTENED HEART / YOU  
TOOK ME BY SURPRISE+  
/ MORE THAN YOU CAN  
AFFORD+ / COME ON AND  
DANCE\* / WARRIORS OF THE  
SUN+. 66:58.

\*Hyuna Park, p; Michael  
Gam, b; Vince Cherico, d;  
Perico Diaz cajon, cga, bgo;  
Jay Rodriguez, sax; Amadis  
Dunnell, tb; Jonathan Saraga,  
Bryan Davis, tpt; Todd  
Anderson, ts; Charles Lee, Eric  
Nevedoff, as.  
+Zaccai Curtis, p; Moto  
Fukushima, b; Cherico; Diaz;  
Andy Hunter, tb; Sam Hoyt,  
Justin Mullen, tpt; Anderson;  
Bruce Williamson, as; Derrick  
James, as, fl.

The leader and guiding light of this orchestra is composer and arranger Corina Bartra and this entire disc reflects her vision of an Afro-Peruvian jazz hybrid. It's a warm, classy mixture of jazz and Latin rhythms unlike any other Latin jazz around, best represented in the tricky rhythmic dancing of "Guajira Son" and the elegant glide of "A Saca Camote". That mix also shows up in "Yambambo" which is warm and classy with a subtle Latin backbeat and "You Took Me By Surprise" which has a swaying rush emphasized by Latin percussion.

Some of these pieces emphasize the jazz side far more than the Latin. "Minor Misdemeanor" is a pealing variation on Miles Davis' "So What" with a few Quincy Jones-like interjections. "Enlightened Heart" is hip swinging dance music with sensual saxophones, "More Than You Can Afford" is a lazy reggae rhythm with Todd Anderson's tenor loping above the off-kilter beat and "Come On And Dance" is hard-charging old-school soul with bubbling trumpet and alto solos that shifts into a brassy 60's soundtrack theme in the Henry Mancini style. On this session Corina Bartra shows original and intriguing ideas on how to approach the big band format.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

## 'BUSELLI-WALLARAB JAZZ ORCHESTRA, BASICALLY BAKER, VOL. 2, PATOIS 22.

CD 1: THE HARLEM PIPES / THE GEORGIA PEACH / WALT'S BARBERSHOP / SOFT SUMMER RAIN / BLACK THURSDAY / SHIMA 13. CD 2: BEBOP / HONESTY / 25TH AND MARTINDALE / KIRSTEN'S FIRST SONG\* / TERRIBLE T. TT=91:14.

Brent Wallarab, con, dir; Tom Walsh, Bill Sears, Rich Perry, Rob Dixon, Ned Boyd, sax; Tim Coffman, Freddie Mendoza, Brennan Johns, tb; Rich Dole, btb; Celeste-Holler-Seraphinoff, hn; Dan Perantoni, tba; Luke Gillespie, p; Jeremy Allen, b; Steve Hougthon, d; Mitch Shiner, vib; Monika Herzig, cel; Tony Kadleck, Scott Belch, Graham Breedlove, Jeff Conrad, Mark Buselli, Pat Harbision, Randy Brecker\*, tpt; Dave Stryker, g\*. 6/22-23/16, Bloomington, IN.

**D**avid Baker was a trombonist and composer who, in later life, became a pioneer in jazz education through his work with the Jazz Studies program at Indiana University. The Buselli-Wallarab Orchestra contains a lot of Baker's colleagues and former students and here they play a lot of his big band writing never heard before outside of Indiana University jazz concerts.

Baker studied under George Russell and his writing bears some of Russell's taste for experimentation but never goes too far away from jazz orthodoxy. His work compares favorably to Charles Mingus, Thad Jones and Quincy Jones in its mood setting and exuberance. "The Georgia Peach" always keeps its source, "Sweet Georgia Brown" in view but adds interesting countermelodies and harmonies while "Black Thursday" has an insinuating big city sound with soulful tenor soloing by Rich Perry.

"Soft Summer Rain" is a pretty layered ballad with soprano sax gracefully arcing against waves of brass while "Shima 13" mixes sophisticated reed work with punchy Latin trumpets. Baker's careening arrangement of Dizzy Gillespie's "Bebop" has the entire trumpet section working through the finger-busting theme before Tom Walsh takes an appropriately Bird-like alto solo. "Honesty" starts as a brass chorale before turning into a sax-led gospel stomp with a freewheeling trombone solo by Wayne Wallace and "Kirsten's First Song" is a gentle lullaby pushed along with the aid of ripping guitar from Dave Stryker and bright trumpet from Randy Brecker.

David Baker isn't a name even many hardcore jazz fans know but this two-CD shows, he was an excellent writer who could create soulful impressive music as well as anyone else in his generation. This is an exceptional tribute to a largely unknown master.

Jerome Wilson

# New Issues

## MARK LEWIS, NEW YORK SESSION,

AUDIO DADDIO 1042.

KOAN / CHILD'S PLAY  
/ DL BLUES / ROBERTO'S  
MAGICAL WORLD / CONNIE  
/ SIERRA LEONE / UP TO IT /  
NOT AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU  
/ SUMMER IS OVER / THE  
LYDIAN EXPRESS / ROLL 'EM  
JOE. 66:00.

Lewis, as, flt; George  
Cables, p; Essiet Essiet, b;  
Victor Lewis, d. 9/16/2015.  
NYC.

## CHRISTOPHER IRNIGER PILGRIM BIG WHEEL LIVE INTAKT 271

ENTERING THE CONCERT  
HALL/ ACID/ ENDING AT  
THE DISTRICT/ FALLING  
11/ LOST IN SPACE/ THE  
KRAKEN 62:44

Christopher Irniger, ts; Stefan  
Aeby, p; Dave Gisler, g;  
Raffaele Bossard, bass; Michi  
Stulz, d November, 2015  
tracks 1,5,6 Berlin, tracks 3,4  
Altenburg

Sightless saxophonist Mark Lewis is a completely new name to me but a run-through listen to this release will reassure one and all that he is far from novice status. With over four decades of playing experience and over a thousand original compositions to his credit (all eleven heard here are his) Lewis has somehow been under this listeners radar. One can often judge an artist by the company he keeps and the altoist has chosen an impressive trio of jazz stalwarts for this Big Apple session. The sterling George Cables, the ever dependable Essiet Essiet and the impeccable Victor Lewis all contribute equally to the success of this impressive date. From the opening exotic "Koan" with appropriate flute work to the closing time-twister "Roll 'Em Joe" it is all covered in Ted Gioia's astute liners. One of my own personal musicianship tests is how freshly they play the blues and on "DL Blues" Lewis navigates the ageless form devoid of cliché. This one passes the test with flying colors.

Larry Hollis

This is a nice old-fashioned sounding record. Bop based with variations and very laid back.

Irniger and Gisler handle most of the solo work, but Aeby puts in some nice efforts as well. Irniger's tenor is light and he relies on building on melodic lines while Gisler is a bit heavier on his attack. This makes for a nice contrast.

All the tunes are by members of the band, with Irniger responsible for half of them. The tunes are all interesting. The most interesting track to my ears is "Kraken" which is freer than the others, with some nice dissonance, along with some good interplay. Irniger really lets loose here with everyone coming along. I wonder if the title comes from an old John Wyndham novel "The Kraken Wakes" which is an early disaster type of novel. The monster comes up but is finally subdued, which could describe the tune. And for a good contrast "Lost" is really laid back featuring Aeby.

No surprises here but some nice playing, which was clearly appreciated by the applause at the end of the CD.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## WADADA LEO SMITH AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS CUNIFORM 430/431

CD 1: NEW ORLEANS: THE NATIONAL CULTURE PARK USA 1718? EILEEN JACKSON SOUTHERN, 1920-2002: A LITERARY NATIONAL PARK/ YELLOWSTONE: THE FIRST NATIONAL PARK AND THE SPIRIT OF AMERICA- THE MOUNTAINS, SUPER-VOLCANO CALDERA AND ITS ECOSYSTEM 1872 43:14

CD 2: THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER: DEEP DREAMS FLOW THE RIVER—A NATIONAL MEMORIAL PARK C 5000 BC/ SEQUOIA/KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS: THE GIANT FOREST, GREAT CANYON CLIFFS/ PEAKS, WATERFALLS, AND CAVE SYSTEMS 1890/ YOSEMITE: THE GLACIERS, THE FALLS, THE WELLS AND THE VALLEY OF GOODWILL 1890 53:21

Wadada Leo Smith, tpt;  
Anthony Davis, p; Ashley Walters, cel; John Lindberg, bass; Pheeroan akLaff, d;  
Jesse Gilbert, video Artist  
May 6, 2015 New Haven Ct

I am a big fan of Smith. I reviewed his Ten Freedom Summers a few years back and saw him perform some of that. Here he has another set of program music. I must admit to not being a fan of program music in that the music doesn't really tell you the program unless you already know it. Thus the music must stand on its own. And, in the case of Smith, it certainly does.

The first piece, which takes up close to half of the disc, is heavy and brooding so I am not sure how Smith sees this park or what his message is, but the music is excellent. A very heavy drum beat, mixed with some great bass and cello playing, not to mention the piano work of Davis and, of course, the trumpet playing of Smith.

The other two pieces on Disc 1 are similar in that the compositions are very interesting and the solo work excellent. All three pieces, though, are slow in tempo and require serious listening.

The first piece on Disc two covers more than half of the disc and moves through a number of sections. I suppose I could imagine myself on a boat going down the river and experiencing a range of things. But, I would have to have had some of that experience to apply it to the music. I rather just enjoy listening to the music for what it is: an interesting suite for jazz quintet, heavy on the composition, but with ample space for improvisations, most of which sound like developments of the themes.

My favorite piece is a section of "Sequoia" which features an interesting duet between Smith and akLaff. Over all, this set is excellent. The compositions are complex and the playing is excellent. My only criticism is that the whole package is a bit moody. For a celebration I would have expected more upbeat music. But if that is how Smith hears things, that is fine with me.

And the booklet has some incredible photos of the parks.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

## FILM IN MUSIC DRIP AUDIO 1207

TURN OF EVENTS/  
LOYALTIES/ GRUESOME  
GOO/ EGG HATCHED/ WILD  
BILL/ EPILOGUE TO PART  
1/ AN EYEBALL FOR DAN/  
ENSEMBLE/ DANGLING W/  
A WALK THROUGH TOWN/  
NAGGING DOUBTS/ FINALE:  
A GOD'S LAUGHTER AND A  
PARADE 56:03  
Jesse Zubot, vln; Kevin  
Elaschuk, tpt; Peggy Lee, cel;  
Chris Gestrin, p; Ron Samworth,  
g; Andre Lachance, elec bass;  
Torsten Muller, acoustic bass;  
Dylan Van der Schyff, d Feb  
2014 Vancouver, Canada

## ARCOMUSICAL MEIAMEIA NEW MUSIC FOR BERIMBAU INNOVA 922

BERIMBAU SOLO NO.1 HOME-  
ING/ APENAS SEJA/ BRIMBAU  
DUO NO.5/ MUDANCA DE  
ONDA/ BERIMBAU TRIO NO.1  
HARMONIA/ QUEDA DE  
QUTRO/ BERIMBAU QUARTET  
NO.1 CHIP/ PALINDROMO/  
BERIMBAU QUINTET NO.1  
SOKATTU/ DESCOBERTA POR  
PAU E PEDRA/ BERIMBAU  
SEXTET NO.1 KORA/ UM SO  
60:35  
Collective Personnel Gregory  
Beyer, Alexis Iamb, Christopher  
Mrofcza, Kyle Flens, Abbey  
Rehard, Alexv Rolfe, Daniel  
Eastwood, berimbaus DeKalb  
Illinois, May 14-18 2015

**T**his CD is a mixed bag of styles, from soft fusion to some abstract playing with some very nice melodies and arrangements. The changes were interesting since I never knew what was coming next. This could be a criticism but in this case it isn't since, even on the dissonant noisy tracks, there is a continuity of playing.

I am somewhat familiar with Peggy Lee, having reviewed a CD of hers a couple of years ago. That was also in the soft fusion vein and I didn't care for it. Her playing here is a bit more interesting.

The last track sums up the whole CD with good melodies and lots of interaction, dissonance and exuberance. The main soloist is Blaschuk and he has a nice flowing style. The ensemble writing is nice.

Some of the highlights for me are the noisy cello on "Goo", the nice melody and piano playing on "Wild", The use of brushes and a Zappa like guitar on "Epilogue", and the abstract drum playing on "Eyeball."

This CD is interesting while being laid back.  
Highly recommended.

Bernie Koenig

**T**he berimbau is an African-Brazilian instrument which looks a bit like a big bow. This is basically Gregory Beyer's project. As the notes state he has been studying the instrument since 1999 and upon coming to Northern Illinois University in 2005 he started the NIU Berimbau Ensemble. I have heard the berimbau played before on various South American records. I know it has been used in some jazz contexts. Here we have a series of pieces, all composed, but sounding like folk music. That is probably due to the sound of the instrument.

The record is quite nice. Some of the pieces really demanded attention, such as Quartet No.1 and Palindromo. I really liked the quartet in that one could here nice interplay between the instruments and there was some nice distinctive rhythmic passages. The piece sounded like it had distinctive movements as well, like a small classical string quartet. This is for people who love the instrument.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

ALFRED HARTH  
KEPLER SUITE  
AN ALLEGORY OF  
LIFE IN AN ALIEN ERA  
KEPLER EDITIONS 336  
KEPLER SUITE 51:41  
All instruments by Alfred  
Harth, voice by Yi Soonjoo  
San Antonio Texas July 2016

JIM BLACK, OSKAR  
GUDJONSSON,  
ELIAS STEMESEDER,  
CHRIS TORDINI  
MALAMUTE  
INTAKT 283

ALMOST AWAKE/ TOYS  
EVERYWHERE/ DUSK SCOUT/  
CHASE RABBIT/ INTO THE  
POOL/ STRAY/ JUST TURNED  
TWO/ SOUGHT AFTER/ COOL  
DOZE/ EAT EVERYTHING/  
FULL DISH/ PUGGED/ NO  
LEASH 52:22

Oskar Gudjonsson, ts; Elias  
Stemeseder, kybds; Chris  
Tordini, elec bass; Jim Black, d,  
sampler March 25/26 2016,  
Hoboken NJ

The first ten tracks are all electronic sounds. Sometimes a melody or a pattern can be heard and sometimes a rhythmic pattern is maintained, but mostly just sounds. Tracks 11 and 28 are brief alto sax solos. Track 13 has voices mixed with the sounds and there appears to be a voice behind the sounds on track 16. Mostly this sounds like a lot of music composed back in the 1960s by various experimental people such as Cage and Berio. As electronic sounds go there are no surprises here. I can say that Harth was having fun doing this. But for me this is not an alien landscape but a very familiar one.

Bernie Koenig

I was unfamiliar with Black until I reviewed a CD of his recently. It was definitely not for me with very hard rock like rhythms. After listening to this CD my view has been affirmed. He not a drummer I want to listen to. There are some very nice moments here, especially some soft, melodic playing by GudJonsson, whose tone sometimes reminds me of Stan Getz, but all too often Black's drumming overshadows the mellow melodic lines of GudJonsson. I also seem to hear a clash of rhythms where GudJonsson wants to swing but is held back by what is essentially a rock-fusion rhythm section of Black and Tordini.

On some tracks electronic sounds are used, reminiscent of something Weather Report did. I did not like their use of electronics and I do not think they work here. Possibly because I like serious use of electronics as in experimental classical music, I find the use of electronics here simplistic and intrusive.

"Eat Everything" perhaps tells me what is wrong with everything on this CD. Nice tenor playing spoiled what is to me very obtrusive drumming mixed with some noisy synth. Even though I was not through the whole CD, at this point I was tempted to turn it off. But I persevered.

This is a CD for old-fashioned fusion lovers, but that is about all I can say.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues

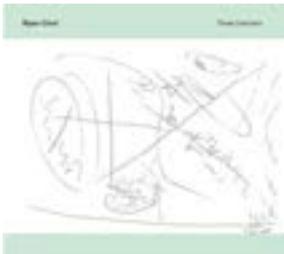
UDO SCHINDLER,  
FRANK PAUL  
SACHUBERT  
PARNASSIA  
PALUSTRIS

FMR 403

CELEBRATE THE LIGHT/  
COLOURS OF MORNING/  
POINTED GREEN/ LITHELY

BUILT 45:14

Udo Schindler, ss; Frank Paul  
Schubert, ss January 30,  
2015, Munich



RYAN CHOI  
THREE DANCERS  
ACCRETIONS 060

PREPARATIONS 1 AND 1V/  
APOLLON AT EROS/ THREE  
DANCERS 19:53

Ryan Choi uke; Perc; Elec no  
recording information

I love duets. This one, with two people playing the same instrument, posed some listening challenges. The biggest one was determining who was playing since their tones blended so well.

The first track, which takes up almost half the CD, displays their virtuosity as well as their ability to listen to each other. I have always thought of free playing as a form of conversation, where musicians converse musically. Celebrate the Light is a long, complex conversation, with intense moments as well as with pauses. And it ends harmonically.

Colours of the morning sounds like a couple of birds on a tree outside my bedroom window trying to wake up. Lots of growls, but still fun.

“Green” is probably the most successful track as it has everything that the others do and is a bit shorter. And the final short track is like a short “goodnight.”

Very enjoyable and a must for all soprano fans.

Bernie Koenig

This record is short and sweet. It is made up of three short tracks featuring the ukulele, with overdubbed percussion. I did not hear any obvious electronics except on the final track

The three tracks are essentially dance music with some nice syncopated rhythms.

All I could find about Choi is that he was born, and lives in Hawaii, so I assume this was recorded there as well. As I write this while listening, I find myself moving about trying to get in sync with his rhythms. And as I get into the third track I can visualize three Hawaiian dancers working around each other.

This is a must for ukulele lovers and for lovers of highly complex, syncopated, but approachable, dance music.

Bernie Koenig

# New Issues



## FRED FRITH TRIO ANOTHER DAY IN FUCKING PARADISE

INTAKT 267

THE ORIGIN OF MARVELS

/ DANCE OF DELUSION

/ POOR FOLLY / LA

TEMPESTA / GLIMMERS OF

GOODBYES / YARD WITH

LUNATICS / ONLY LIGHT

AND SHADOW / THE SLEEP

OF REASON / STRAW MEN

/ THE DESERTED GARDEN

/ SCHLECHTES GEWISSEN /

PHANTOMS OF PROGRESS /

THE RIDE HOME. 49:03.

Frith (g, vcl), Jason Hoopes

(b), Jordan Glenn (d, perc).

January 2016, Oakland, CA.

Guitarist Frith has been especially productive in recent years, if his documented material is anything to judge by. And it's good to see him so active in the improve scene in the Bay Area. His new trio, with the resourceful Hoopes and Glenn, finds Frith getting in touch with his expressive, noisy side. Most of the pieces are condensed and quite punchy, though some are enigmatic. "The Origin of Marvels" captures this odd balance or mix of approaches, combining bells and swirling electronic sound with a deep bass boom, only to end up, improbably, in what sounds like a weirdly mournful gamelan piece. This almost hyperbolic sense of change is the chief characteristic of this disc. And while I like old-school postmodernism as much as the next listener, this same quality is also, to my ears, the music's chief drawback. There certainly isn't any lack of energy from the trio. Just listen to the buzzing fury from Hoopes and Frith on the clattering "Dance of Delusion" or the noise raveup on "La Tempesta." In terms of punch and affect, it's not unlike Brotzmann's electric trio in some sense, brash and loud on tracks like these. But the trio is also fond of drones and texture, as with "Poor Folly" and the spaced out "Glimmers" and "Yards" (the latter with Hoopes on acoustic, and playing with more subtlety). But while there are many diverting moments, something about the date doesn't quite find an identity, to my ears. Too many tracks begin with either scuffling bass and drums or ominous spectral backgrounds, leading into Frith springboarding into action. Often tasty, often cosmic, often skronky, but curiously leaving little impression.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



## I.P.A. I JUST DID SAY SOMETHING

CUNEIFORM 422

KORT HILSEN /  
SAYEMBARA / NAKED O  
/ MAJKEN / GLOBUS / SIR  
WILLIAM / BARBRO VIOLET  
/ SLAKT SVING / I JUST DID  
SAY SOMETHING. 53:59.

Atle Nymo (ts), Magnus  
Broo (tpt), Matthias Stahl (vib),  
Ingebrigt Haker Flaten (b),  
Hakon Mjaset Johansen (d).  
July 5-6, 2015, Trondheim,  
Norway.

Many readers will be familiar with at least three of these Scandinavians. But Nymo, new to my ears, stuck out to my ears perhaps the most. He's a serious fire-spitter in the tradition of Mars Williams. As is common among Scandinavian players of (roughly) this generation, there's a fantastic mix of composing and improvising here, and plenty of room for the players to stretch out. After living with this one for a while, it does strike me that perhaps it's Stahl who brings a lot of it together, helping to amplify the more percussive sections (as with the lovely staccato unison of "Kort Hilsen") and also to add depth to the textural, abstract stuff that I.P.A. layers throughout. This isn't to shortchange anyone else, of course; Broo in particular seems like he's always in the middle of a killer solo. What's especially impressive, though, is the group's energy and cohesive identity across a very diverse set of pieces (and they absolutely nail every shift in tempo, arrangement, or feel). Haker Flaten opens "Sayembara" with the most curious bass timbre, almost like a hambone. The piece evolves from free-sounding meter into a fine unison that recalls some of Tim Berne's circuitous, jittery lines (though it's based on a traditional Balinese piece). There are furtive, sotto voce effects and tight trumpet mute on "Majken," which opens with a soft-shoe brush-shuffle and blooms with counterlines. They can play it funky ("Globus," which also boasts the tasty use of shakers during the vibes solo), brash (the churning "Sir William" strongly resembles Atomic, the easiest and most accurate comparison for I.P.A. as a band), elegantly ballad (dig the close harmony on "Barbro Violet," and its almost languid solo by composer Broo), or sheerly jubilant, as with the township vibe of the closing title track. Tough to find fault with such an exuberant, inventive record.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



**JUERGEN WUCHNER  
/ RUDI MAHALL /  
JOERG FISCHER  
IN MEMORIAM:  
BUSCHI NIEBERGALL**

SPOREPRINT 1604-07

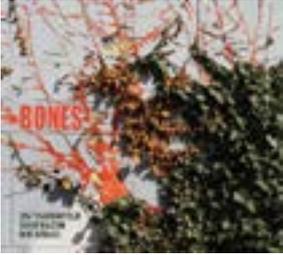
UNTITLED 1-6. 51:58.

Wuchner (b), Mahall (bcl),  
Fischer (d). September 24,  
1997, Darmstadt, Germany.

Goodness knows why this pungent session has sat on the shelf for nearly two decades, but it's nice to have it. It's rolling, propulsive stuff anchored by the lithe, exuberant bassist (which is fitting, given the dedicatee). And for those who are fans of the excellent Mahall, you'll be pleased to know that there's something about Fischer's intensities at the kit that spurs the bass clarinetist to some of his wildest playing, ranging from stuttering percussive blasts to whinnies to occasional lyrical asides amid the greatest heat. (There are also Monk-like repetitions here and there, forecasting some of the stuff Mahall would get up to in other combos within a few short years.) It's a pretty rangy date in a lot of ways. They find the music's prickly underbelly on the second piece, all scratching and snuffling, moving from there into a brusque miniature, some mutating swing and post-bop lines that somehow recall Jimmy Lyons to me, and even a sustained low squeak on the fifth piece. It works because of the shared commitment of the players, each of them able to play rough and elegant in the space of a single phrase. And when the lather is good and worked up, all arco, rolling snare patterns and splattery bass clarinet, it's got a distinctive, and pretty irresistible musical personality. Recommended.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



ZIV TAUBENFELD/  
SHAY HAZAN/  
NIR SABAG  
BONE  
LEO 743

UNDER THE AB TREE / BLUE  
KEY / MILONGA / KIWI  
FLOWER (DEDICATED TO  
IRENE) / GOLD WOOD /  
BUSES CHASING PIGEONS  
/ EGGE / CITRUS VILLAGE  
(DEDICATED TO MIKI). 44:27.

Taubenfeld (bcl), Hazan  
(b), Sabag (d). May 2015,  
Amsterdam.

To call this an understated recording would be an understatement. Yes, the trio format suggests it might be a conventional kind of blowing date but it's anything but. Rather, it's almost like the musical equivalent of topography. For all the presence of pared down phrases and the occasional pulse or compositional direction, the experience is really like listening in to a succession of gestures: a resonant thwack or patter, a soft clarinet burr, just barely massaged strings, and so on. This kind of stuff isn't for everyone, but it's very tough to maintain the focus and restraint required to pull it off. Ghost sounds are everywhere, and especially important is Taubenfeld's propensity for drama via held tones. Occasionally things do open up a bit more, as when "Blue Key" even endeavors to swing, but it's never mere blowing. Hazan and Sabag work really nicely on the modestly grooving "Kiwi Flower" or the skulking low tones of "Gold Wood" (where the drummer's solo evokes tympani timbres). Sometimes it's Taubenfeld who injects a bit of additional heat, as with the chortling that shifts to avian squeal on "Milonga." Elsewhere it's Hazan, as with the big bouncing lines of "Egge," which skitters and races along into the album's peak intensity. But for the most part, each of the three players melds and morphs together, in a very elegant and satisfying program of improvisation.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



## ROCCO JOHN QUARTET EMBRACE THE CHANGE

UNSEEN RAIN 9947

WINGS / ESCAPE /  
CIRCUITS / DIAL UP / TANGO  
/ WHISPERS / 72'S / WINGS  
(EPILOGUE). 67:54.

Rocco John Iacovone  
(as, ss), Rich Rosenthal (g),  
Francois Grillot (b), Tom  
Cabrera (d). March 2015,  
Riverdale, NJ.

What's not to like about a fine quartet of superb but under-appreciated players working that sweet spot between post-bop and the outside? The date opens up with a nice tasty drum spotlight, followed by the leader's fulsome alto lines, both fleet and tart. In time, they cede the spotlight to the excellent Grillot and Rosenthal, whose clean tone and buzzing lines I really dug, not least because they make for an excellent contrast with Iacovone throughout. Some vigorous, bustling post-bop ensues on the exuberant "Escape," whose loping unisons move through a nice series of overlapping lines, bobbing up and back, with slight intensities welling up here and there. The further one gets in listening to this group, it's not too unlike one of Joe Morris/Rob Brown's more inside dates, at least in terms of the compositional/structural approach; the actual instrumental languages differ, as is obvious on the stair-stepping "Circuits," where Rosenthal's nimble, inventive playing brings some serious energy. He and Iacovone romp on the funky, shuffling "Dial Up" and are equally impressive on the abstract, balladic "Tango" (which only hints at its musical inspiration). "Whispers" meanders just a bit to my ears, though it's certainly filled with nimble playing and excellent instrumental interaction – perhaps just not enough thematic meat for what these guys are trying to accomplish. Things are very much back on track with "72s," where the fabulous work from Grillot and Cabrera sets up some of the record's finest improvising from the leader and the guitarist. Closed out by a nice, mid-tempo second version of "Wings," it's a strong date overall.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



## MATTY HARRIS DOUBLE SEPTET

PFMENTUM 093

PARTY TIME / 10,000

KIMMYS GIBBLER /  
COCKAPOO ARMY / OH, A  
LITTLE DAY TRIP AROUND  
THE CRUNCH. 35:34.

Harris, Vinny Golia (reeds);

Paul Novros (ss); Ryan  
Parrish (ss, bari s); Joe Santa  
Maria (ss, sopranino s, picc);

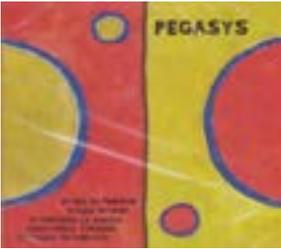
Greg Zilboorg, Brandon  
Sherman, Louis Lopez (tpt);  
Michael Lockwood, Tim Carr  
(d); Jake Rosenberg, Nathan  
Phelps (b); Garrett Grow  
(kybd); Maxwell Gualtieri (g).

January 14, 2015, Ojai, CA.

If song titles are any indication of creativity, Harris is off to a good start on this album. Featuring a great lineup of West Coast stalwarts (not least the estimable Golia), this is one helluva rich sequence of compositions, dense with detail and arranged almost like a suite. “Party Time” is anything but boisterous in its opening minutes, but builds almost like a symphony warming up, a steady swell in which all of the group’s textures are audible, like something enormous awakening. I love the shifting glissandi moving in opposite directions about midway through, filled with the sound of detuning and lower-register awesomeness. But eventually the piece rears up with a fabulous groove, the whole ensemble moving in counterpoint (though the Rhodes and sax lines stand out) before the pulse falls off musician by musician to reveal a kind of ragged fanfare. “10,000 Kimmys Gibbler” is like an Either/Orchestra piece, pairing an intense, slow-moving, King Crimson-ish low end with some tasty grouped trumpets and soprano. The great section writing and multiple moving parts are characteristic of Harris’ work as a whole. And he’s unpredictable in his arrangements too. The pulse of “Cockapoo Army” is almost laconic, though the drummers do a great job of keeping it limber, almost like it’s a rough march at the end of a long day. The marvelously-titled concluding track has an opening feel of a heavily rearranged Wayne Shorter tune, one that gets more antic and free over its duration, taking in steadily increasing polytonality. It’s a great band, with a flair for mischief and left turns. Very highly recommended.

Jason Bivins

# New Issues



## PEGASYS PEGASYS SLAM 572

RED DISC: PEGASYS / MAD  
LEGS / CLOUDS / STILL  
INSENSITIVE / TUTTAVIA  
/ VIAGGIO LUNGO UN  
GIORNO. 35:26. YELLOW  
DISC: COMPOSITIONS I – VIII.  
27:14.

Errico De Fabritiis (as), Biagio  
Orlandi (ss, ts), Francesco Lo  
Cascio (vib, perc), Gianfranco  
Tedeschi (b), Cristiano De  
Fabritiis (d). April 4, 2015,  
Rome.

This twofor is chock full of very tasty freebop from Italy. With the key addition of Lo Cascio's vibes, these fine musicians range from the mid-1960s heyday of combined idioms into the more contemporary appropriations of, say, a Ken Vandermark small group. This is especially evident on the Red Disc, which is more easily identifiable with "jazz." A nice taut drum solo opens up into a mid-tempo swinger, with big vibes and overlapping tempi that serve to accentuate the contrasting saxophonic approaches. Across each of these tunes, from the craggy "Mad legs" to the lushly lyrical "Still insensitive," the group moves easily and elegantly between free-sounding sections and tight unisons, often buoyed by Tedeschi and De Fabritiis' nimble pulse-driving. Orlandi has a great tone, and he sounds really effective when he dials up some bluesy lines. The altoist plays more brightly, and he's extraordinary on the compelling, somewhat somber "Clouds." They've got a distinctive sound and real chemistry, which one definitely needs in order to pull off some of their trickier pieces, like the counterline-heavy "Tuttavia."

More of a somber chamber vibe opens up the Yellow Disc, with grouped horns, a very lithe, expressive arco solo, and some really haunting vibes. It proceeds through a series of miniatures, some ("II" or the tasty horn duo "IV") exploring a single idea or texture, while others ("III") are brisk and multi-directional. The latter pieces (including "VIII") are impressive in how quickly they gear up and winding down, with the players managing not to trip over each other despite the energy conjured up. But I certainly was more compelled by the textural pieces, as with the low furtive sounds on "V," eventually cresting in held tones. Overall, the first disc is more of a success, but you have to tip your hat to a group with such range and such fine improvising. A winner.

Jason Bivins

# Papatamus

## REVIEWS OF CDS, LPS AND BOOKS

A collection from  
Robert Rusch of  
sometimes  
disparate material  
though generally relating to music  
recordings or performance.

A NOTE TO READERS: I cover a lot of items in this column and it is only a fraction of what crosses my desk. I choose to only write about things that I find of interest, usually that is due to quality of music but not always. You can contact me at [rdr@cadencebuilding.com](mailto:rdr@cadencebuilding.com). Mail received is subject to editing and may be included in the next column at my discretion. If you do not want your correspondence printed please let us know. Cheers, rdr.

ANDREW DURKIN [piano] previously recorded as part of The Industrial Jazz Group [2001-2003] and here has stepped out on his own on BREATH OF FIRE [PJCE Records 028]. This, too short [36:46] 8 tracks, features Durkin's compositions played by his sextet [David Valdez-as, Tim Willcox-ts, Ryan Meagher-gtr, Andrew Jones-b, Todd Bishop-drm]. Durkin has written some engaging music but I would have liked to hear it developed more with room for the players to stretch out.

In the '50 Andre Previn made a series of recordings with Shelly Manne and Leroy Vinnegar that were very popular with Jazz folks. Among those recordings was the score to My Fair Lady, which was a best seller for years and was followed by a number of off shoots for Contemporary Records. STU HARRISON opens his CD, VOLUME 1 [One Nightstand Records 2016-001] with "On The Street Where You Live" and it brings to mind the Previn-Manne combination; fleet swinging hip jazz. Other standards here have more gravitas and on some Bill Evans comes to mind. There is a good variety of moods here; "Cheek To Cheek" is taken a bit slapstick with a semi-stride effect. Recorded in 6/22&23/16, this recording is a set of standards [50:56] properly addressed and lovely to listen to. Neil Swainson [b] and Terry Clarke [drm] are excellent support to this trio.

I have not thought about MARK LEWIS [as/ft] since LP days (c 1980), even though he since has recorded on CD, as it was his LPs on Audio Daddio that held my fascination. NEW YORK SESSION [Audio Daddio rs 1042] is a quartet [George Cables-p, Victor Lewis-drm, Essiet Essiet-b] date from 9/16/15 on which they play 11 Lewis originals [66:02]. Anxious and expectant to make his acquaintance again, I was, at first listen, somewhat underwhelmed. On subsequent listenings I realized that Lewis is not one to rush you with a big musical hug but perhaps eases

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into something more like a secure handshake. This is a (too) relaxed date and I remain underwhelmed by the rhythm section as they seem reluctant to mix it up, opting instead to go through the professional motions. However, it is good to see Lewis back in action and nice to reacquaint myself.

CLAUDIO FASOLI [ts/ss] and his Double Quartet [Michael Gassmann-tpt, Michele Calgaro-gtr, Michelangelo Decorato-p, Andrea Lamacchia & Lorenzo Calgaro-b, Gianni Bertoncini & Marco Zanoli-drm], do a lot of stretching out on the 7 originals [45:34] that make up INNER SOUNDS [Abeat Jazz Records ab jz 158]. Now in his mid seventies and playing professionally since the mid '60s (for years with the Italian group Perigeo), Fasoli is trying something new. When I think of a double quartet, I think (probably because of Ornette Coleman's Double Quartet) of a highly energized grouping. This CD [5/2/16] is music which is very laconic from start to finish. Like the Durkin recording the emphasis is on composition but even though the music is notated, there is more stretching out here with the occasional solos that are supported by the ensemble. Fasoli presents a palette—the listeners can finish the canvas.

JOEY DEFRANCESCO et al. [org/keys/tpt] have put together a wonderful offering on PROJECT FREEDOM [Mack Avenue Records mac11121]. With tunes such as "Imagine", "Lift Every Voice and Sing", "So Near, So Far", "A Change Is Gonna Come" plus 7 originals [64:27] it is clear that the freedom here is not referring to musical freedom but instead, freedom in relation to social situations and the human condition. The quartet [Troy Roberts-ts/ss, Dan Wilson-gtr, Jason Brown-drm] is impressive and has been with DeFrancesco more or less for 2 years. On occasion, DeFrancesco plays trumpet in a Miles-ish style and over dubs with piano. This has the finish of a produced album but still retains a very fresh and ad-lib quality of testifying. If you're a fan of organ, this powerful set is for you.

TROY ROBERTS [ts/ss] who is impressive on Project Freedom has his own release with TALES & TONES [Inner Circle Music INCM 066cd], a 3/4&5/16 session with Silvano Monasterios [p], Robert Hurst [b] and Jeff 'Tain' Watts [drm]. Roberts' contributes 6 originals of the 9 tracks [64:04] which also includes "Take The A Train" and "Bernie's Tune". This is a strong group and Roberts likes to blow and change directions at a moments notice. I feel some sense of restriction here as they seem ready to blow-out but are held back, perhaps due in part by tune constructions of which many have different parts/sections that often require tempo changes. I got more of a sense of freedom (within individual playing) on the Joey DeFrancesco release and based on Roberts' work there—this is anti-climatic. There are moments, in particular on the last track "Boozy Bluesy", where sparked by Watts kicking things along as he often does—the music rips. T'were it only true on the previous 8 tunes.

ANDERS BERGCRANTZ turns is a tour-de-force on SOULFULLY YOURS [Vanguard Music Boulevard Records vmbcd 118]. Bergcrantz plays flugelhorn, trumpet and on a few tracks—trumpet with a Conn Multi Vider, which gives it an electric effect. The 7 originals [46:47] range from straight ahead quartet, to moody, to vocal and to larger groups doing electric rock-

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jazz. All of which, while well done, is likely to please very few overall. Other than the soul of the trumpeter there is very little here one might equate as soul and might understandably feel misled by the CD title.

BILLY MINTZ [perc/composer] has put together a strong group of folks [John Gross-ts, Tony Malaby-ts+ss, Roberta Piket-keys, Hilliard Greene-b] for the 2 CD set UGLY BEAUTIFUL [Thirteenth Note Records tnr-10]. The 17 tracks [124:10] here are all Mintz originals, mostly up tempo and a few with alternate takes. The compositions often have parts (composed I assume), full of abrupt shifts in tempo and tone. There seems a method to his madness, Mintz, who is 69 has played professionally for over 50 years, says he believes in music of the moment and there is very much a feeling of spontaneous liveliness in the music. All of which is a little surprising since Mintz apparently had well prepared for this 12/15 recording to the point of over-dubbing some of it. Anton Denier [as], is at one point, along with Malaby, brought in for over-dubbing. Piket has some strong parts on piano, she also plays electric piano and a B3 which is more for coloring. The title track [13:00] is a cooker. This music ranges from Ayler-esq invocations to Sun Ra like flurries to more straight ahead. There are no liners which is too bad as most of the specifics I've noted came from the hype sheet supplied with the CD. The music may speak for itself but as a consumer I'd want to know the particulars. There's one very strong CD here or 2 good CDs. Yer pays yer money and you take yer chance.

GUNTER BABY SOMMER [perc] is the most recent recipient of the European Jazz Legends series on Intuition Records. As with others in this series the release is a concert with the final track being an interview with the musician. LE PICCOLE COSE Live at Theatre Gütersloh [intchr 71321] captures a concert (10/31/16) with Sommer's quartet [Gianluigi Trovesi-as/clt, Manfred Schoof-tpt/flg, Antonio Borghini-b]. Each member contributes originals to the 7 tracks [62:45]. Sommer is the other drummer of the European free movement but living in East Berlin he had the respect but not the exposure of Dutchman drummer Han Bennink. The interview is in German but one can discern a bit without knowing German. Sommer speaks about his nick name (from Baby Dodds) and his early work (1960s on) and history. Sommer sets his mark on the varied concert with some impressive rhythmic drumming on music clearly influenced by Ornette Coleman to funereal dirges. Sommer is well deserving of this tribute and for the listener the rewards are here.

JOERG KAUFMANN [ts/flt], whose previous recordings have mainly been with big bands/orchestras, joins with JOHANNES WELSCH [perc/sonic artifacts] on the cleverly titled CD, NOW & ZEN [Sonic Flame tlr-17-jz-021]. Basically Kaufmann plays against Welsch's gongs and assorted sonic (coloring) makers. Not entirely jazz as much as sounds for contemplation. 12 tracks [62:14] that blend together well and nice solo sax over background soundscape.

LEO CIESA [drm/keys] and JULIE JOSLYN [as/vln/elet/voc] are a duo who have been recording for the past 30 years as Iconoclast. Their latest CD is DRIVEN TO DEFIANCE [Fang Records ic-989-17]. These 12 originals [52:44]

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were recorded 7/7&8/16. Iconoclast sounds different from one track to the next. It is not a case of more of the same over the course of the CD. Between them they double on so many instruments and change direction so often it is hard to get a read on them. Much of their music is minimalistic though they can on occasion work up a froth. Joslyn is the feature on one vocal; both the content and delivery are forgettable. Iconoclast is not senseless but they are of-the-moment. I prefer my defiance to be logical, depending on your preference you might feel differently.

Trumpeter DAVID WEISS, lately of The Cookers, has a new [11/10&11/15] recording out called WAKE UP CALL [Ropeadope Records rao-328]. The 9 tracks [76:13] here are with his (?) group; Point Of Departure [Myron Walden or J.D. Allen -ts, Ben Eunson or Travis Reuter or Nir Felder - gtr, Matt Clohesy-b, Kush Abadey drm] and most of the material is drawn from the jazz composers book. This incorporates some of the jazz/rock sound mainly from the guitarists but as it falls away solid jazz blowing takes over. Take this release seriously.

CYNTHIA HILTS has issued LYRIC FURY. [Blond Coyote Records 888295 484558] A CD of 10 Hilts compositions [75:07] recorded 10/9&10/14. Her group is Lyric Fury [Jack Walrath-tp, Lily White-as/ts, Lisa Parrott-bs/ss, Deborah Weisz-tbn, Marika Hughes- cello, Ratz B. Harris-b, Scott Neumann-drm] and is made up of a number of outstanding New York area musicians. The group and strong compositions, make this a solid recording. With the amount of releases flooding the "market" and lack of name recognition, this release will most likely end up being overlooked. (Another case of all things I could be if I were named...). On a few tracks Hilts sings. The songs deal with declarations of peace and love and she delivers them effectively in a halting spoken style. This work often reminds me in spirit of a Mingus group effort in that the individual voice is really secondary to the overall musical designs. There is soloing however and in particular, Walrath, Parrott and Weisz stand out. The instrumental blend and crosstalk, along with the anticipation that the rhythms and directions of the compositions bring about, is reflective of Mingus. There are some mighty players in Lyric Fury and even so they are secondary to the sum of the parts. A wonderful record and some heavy compositions.

I believe CYNTHIA HILTS has only 2 other recordings out: STARS DOWN TO THE GROUND [Montana Artists Refuge Records 01] and SECOND STORY BREEZE [Blond Coyote Records 001]. Hilts' first recording [9/24&25/00] was the result of a 1999 residency at The Montana Artists Refuge, which closed its doors in 2011 after 18 years. This is a fascinating CD which features M.J. Williams who plays trombone, sings and co-produced with Hilts on this CD. She was also one of the four founders of the refuge and is a talented voice too little heard from especially as of late. Also aboard are Craig Hall [gtr], Mike Carey [b], and Brad Edwards [drm]. This a good example of the kind of unfettered artistic creativity that can result at an artist refuge. The 10 compositions [65:51] are all Hilts' originals in music and lyrics and they tell stories. Fortunately a lyric printout for most of the tunes is within the CD notes. I've listened to this music and it takes a few listens to absorb all its

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messages as much of this music/lyrics induces other memories. A wonderful and evocative production and still fresh 17 years after it was written. I am not sure how available this material is today but if you want to hear something fresh and original seek it out.

From about 2007, *Second Story Breeze* is the second release by Cynthia Hilts. Here she covers 7 originals along with "Love For Sale", "My Favorite Things" and "Three Blind Mice" [60:52]. Hilts' singing is limited to "Love For Sale" and "Favorite Things" and 4 of her originals are sung, often in an exaggerated theatrical way. These are the weakest moments for me, others may find it a perfect fit à la Morgana King. Backed by Ron McClure [b] and Jeff Williams [drms], it is the left of center playing that I find most attractive. There is a touch of Monk and, as with the Montana Refuge CD, Mose Allison. A lyric printout on the originals would have been appreciated as it takes a moment to digest the lyrics. Hilts offers a full listening meal.

HEATHER BAMBRICK is a Canadian singer, actor and broadcaster whose latest release is *YOU'LL NEVER KNOW* [HBCD 003]. Bambrick sings in a forward fashion and makes good use of jazz accompaniment [Mark Kieswetter-p, Ross MacIntyre-b, Davide DiRenzo-drm, Rob Piltch-gtr, Chase Sanborn or Guido Basso-tpt/flg, John Johnson-saxes]. The program here is 14 [68:40] not overly familiar tunes which suggests additional effort went into the programming. Bambrick is a convincing singer, her sincerity and occasional original phrasing make for good listening and re-listening. A carefully produced un-dated CD archives a seamless and pleasant listening experience. My only gripe is (and you've read it here before) is the use of fade-outs on some of the tracks.

A look at some of HEATHER BAMBRICK's earlier recordings shows careful effort was evident from the beginning. *IT'S ABOUT TIME* [HBCD-001] offers up a program of 11 tunes [56:56] that are a mixture of standards and some wonderful originals. The opening track is "Joyspring", and a joy it is. The basic group here is a trio [David Braid-p, Michael McClennan-b, Davide DiRenzo-drm]. On various tracks, the trio is augmented by guest musicians, including Mike Murley [ts]. First let me state this is a terrific recording but I must mention a caveat: this is basically karaoke. The musicians were recorded prior to Bambrick's vocals, a fact she makes very clear in the liners and which I wish I was ignorant about as it makes me face my prejudice about splicing together creative improvised music. That said this is beautifully matched voice with instruments. Great care must have been taken to result in this seemingly perfect outcome—the timing is perfect and the instrumental jazz wonderful. Once again it takes a jazz artist to bring a greater shine to the mundane proved here by Bambrick's insightful delivery of Prince's "How Come U Don't Call Me Anymore?". A strong release.

HEATHER BAMBRICK's next CD *THOSE WERE THE DAYS* [HBCD-002] was recorded over a two year period [2004-2006]. This time there are no originals as the program [52:33] is made up of 12 standards/covers. Backup includes Fred Hersch or David Braid [p], Michael McClennan [b], Ted Quinlan [gtr] Mike Murley [sax], Chase Sanborn [tpt] Anthony Michelli [drm]. Again vocals were recorded after the fact. This recording seems less spontaneous

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and while it has its pleasantries (the title track and “Where Or When” in particular), overall it is much more average. On the liners, Bambrick adds commentary about her choice of tunes, not the performance. Heather Bambrick, Julie Michels and Diane Leah make up the vocal group BROADSWAY and they have put together [c August 2015] THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME...MAYBE [Duplium Records bwcd 002]. Some of the 11 tracks [42:25] are recorded live and show a group well equipped to bring humor in parodying some lyrics. But most of the material is traditional to the Christmas season and only a little jazz based. I doubt this will fully satisfy traditionalists, jazz fans or comic tastes, though picking out different tracks would appeal to a wide range of radio programming.

Also from Canada comes CHELSEA McBRIDE's big band which she calls SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL and their debut recording is THE TWILIGHT FALL [Browntasaurus Records ncc-1701j]. There really are 2 elements at work here: McBride's music and her lyrics. The 10 originals [62:55] on this 9/16 recording features music/band that is pretty dense but the writing does leave some space to feature soloists. A particularly fine solo by William Carn [tbn] is beautifully placed compositionally in “Arrival Of The Pegasus”. There are other solos worth noting by Anthony Rinaldi, Patrick Smith, Colleen Allen and McBride on saxes, David Riddle [gtr], Geoff Bruce [drm], Brownman Ali [tpt] and Chris Bruder [p] but most of the space is given to the entire ensemble. My only criticism is I wish the scoring had more variety in tempo and included more moments of lightness. The other major factor is vocalist Alex Samaras who is scripted on 6 of the compositions. He has a mid range voice and is well suited to the lyric stories of McBride's. On re-listens the score seemed to open up, my ears actually, to the music. A lyric printout is part of the extensive liner notes. An effort worth making, the effort to explore, music worth the effort.

Also from Canada comes JOE SULLIVAN's big band, UNFAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS [Perry Lake Records plr 005]. On this undated 2 CD set Sullivan brings his regular quintet [Lorne Lofsky-gtr, André White-p, Alec Walkington-b, Dave Laing-drm] into a big band setting. The program here [98:42] is made up of 3 suites [11 tracks] by Sullivan [tpt/flg]. The parts hang together nicely as a whole in a contemporary, but not blaring, big band setting. Each section features soloists out of the band placed comfortably in Sullivan's arrangements. Sullivan and Perry Lake Records continue to make fine pre-free jazz recordings. Indulge.

A number of musicians in Joe Sullivan's band are also present on KIRK MACDONALD's [ts] COMMON GROUND [Addo Records ajr 032]. This is a 2 CD [88:13] set by his Jazz Orchestra featuring 7 of MacDonald's originals. Soloists are Rob Smith [tpt], P.J. Perry [as], Pat LaBarbera [ts], Perry White [bs], Joe Sullivan [tpt/arr], Lorne Lofsky [gtr], Kevin Turcotte [tpt], Alastair Kay [tbn], Nancy Walker [p], Luis Deniz [as], Kelsley Grant [tbn], Brian O'Kane [tpt], Neil Swainson [b], Barry Romberg [drm], Terry Promane [tbn] and Virginia Frigault- MacDonald [clt]. Recorded 6/15&15/5015, the success of the music lies in that the soloists carry much of the weight but on one title here [Shadows] the orchestra bracing falls away and the piece flounders as

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a result.

It has been over 20 years since PAT KELLY's [p] PsychoAcoustic Orchestra last issued a recording. FUN WITH NOTES [Cabin 2 Music Records c2-cd 1004] recorded 8/16&17/15 was just released. While the bands name and the title may suggest a certain craziness this is in fact a fairly conventional 13 piece band. Kelly wrote and arranged the 9 tracks [68:34]. Kelly gives a good account of all the music in his liners; one piece [Ornette] is from 2002. This is a very easy modern swing band and the music neatly holds many solos [ Marc Fields-tbn, Hank Mautner & Kim Pensyl & Jeff Folkens & Hank Mautner-tpt, Rick VanMatre-as, Garin Webb & Steve Hoskins-ts, Mike Sharfe-b, Marc Wolfley-drm]. Many of the band members were with Kelly over 20 years ago. Kelly thanks Lou Lausche for hospitality and I mention this because many from Cincinnati have mentioned his name to me as a supporter and facilitator of jazz in the area. To steal a phrase .....it takes a village.

MARK MASTERS is back for his 8th recording for Capri Records and this time he uses his arranger chops to take on the music of Charles Mingus and Gerry Mulligan on BLUE SKYLIGHT [Capri 74143-2]. Masters uses a septet to sound out his arrangements of 11 [48:33] lesser known compositions by Mulligan [6] or Mingus [5]. The highlights are by Gary Foster [as] and Adam Schroeder [bs] on a couple of tracks. Foster's angular approach fits the Mingus titles well and Schroeder sounds like Jeru who was an influence on his bari playing. Interesting choice to put out an album with music by these two particular composers as their musical personalities are not a natural fit and this is really emphasized as the tunes alternate back and forth. Not the best Masters recordings but that is measured against a very high standard of past issues by Masters. Recorded 4/1815.

Guitarist DOUG MACDONALD has issued his most ambitious recording to date in JAZZ MARATHON 2 [Blujazz Production bj 3446] a 2 CD set recorded live 9/27/16 in California with a small big band. The program is made up of 11 well known jazz standards and one MacDonald original to make up a total of 12 tracks [132:12]. This is a nice relaxed affair and also nicely spaced out with plenty of stretching room for soloists [Lanny Morgan-as, Pete Christlieb and Ricky Woodward-ts, Carl Saunders and Bob Summers-tpt, Linda Small-tbn, John Campbell or Josh Nelson-p, Jim Hughart or John B. Williams-b, Paul Kreibich or Roy McCurdy-drm]. This is a bit of an all star band but not one which will make you tired after 2 hours plus. There are different groupings of musicians over the course of the 2 CDs. The general sound of the band is relatively restrained but moved along by solos that dovetail nicely without losing a beat. This is a choice item for those who like the familiar bop with swing and plenty of improvisation. This is perhaps MacDonald's most ambitious recording. This is not a balls-to-the-wall band but a laid back sleeper, hip and compelling.

BEN MARKLEY[p] features Terell Stafford in a 8/1&2/16 recording called CLOCKWISE: THE MUSIC OF CEDAR WALTON [OA2 Records 22139].

Although he solos little, Stafford is the ringer, but the real star here is Cedar Walton and his music. Walton was known for his compositions but as far as "songbooks" go he tends to be overlooked. This is possibly the first recording, Walton aside, to exclusively feature his music. The charts on

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the 10 compositions [75:47] strike me as pretty straight ahead with ample solo space. Some of Walton's compositions have become standards like "Bolivia" and "Holy Land" but so much is being recorded and released it is hard to notice. This is true also for individual efforts and combos, many of them mentioned in this column quarterly, there are great individual artistic performances but they do not often have the money or payola to fight through the tide of new releases long enough to be noticed. It's dispiriting for me as a writer/producer think of the frustration individual musicians must feel being overlooked.

I'm a bit late in catching up with JAKOB NORNGREN's Jazz Orchestra's PATHFINDING [Wime Records wmm 012] as it was recorded 3/6&7/14 and released in September 2015. However there is no use by date on good music and this is indeed good music. This is Norgren's 4th release a big band/ Orchestra and it is impressive. The 6 originals [43:06] which make up the CD are all written and arranged by Norgren. The most descriptive words for this band are vitality and dynamics. Not all flash with little substance but dynamics and substance throughout. Within the compositions are shifts in dynamics, tempo, meters and coloring. All of this is supported by fine solos by the leader on reeds as well as, Peter Fredman [as], Kai Sundquist [bassoon/clt], Mats Åleklint [tbn] and by Jonas Kullhammar [ts]. Kullhammar is a force all by himself in jazz. Throughout the band swings all the while demanding to be listened to. It might be interesting hearing Norgren arrange Ellington and/or the songbooks of music already established. Fine listening.

JAKOB NORNGREN's first big band recording [c 2005] was WIDE MEADOW SOUL [Wide Meadow Music wmm 001], an interesting collection of 16 tracks (3 of them originals) [73:53], which covers music from R'n'B to contemporary big band Jazz. Most of the tunes are with vocals, but on the 3 Norgren titles [Soul Sisters part 1-3] there are no vocals and strictly from a jazz point of view they are the 3 strongest pieces. Again, Jonas Kullhammar [ts] is in the band and afforded solo space. Surprising Norgren, now 50, didn't take up the sax/jazz until he was 19. He developed through soul/funk musics and obviously has an affection for the music and handles it authentically and respectfully and is responsible for almost all the arrangements. Marino Valle is the main vocalist here and does well with the vernacular. A great record for a blindfold test.

JAKOB NORNGREN's next recording with the group Splash was a 4/17/06 recording called EAST OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE [Wide Meadow Music wmm 002]. The 6 tracks [53:32] include 4 Norgren compositions. This is contemporary big band with range, touching on electro-acoustic, a bit of free improv, some sampling and, even some funk on "Sailing Shoes" and "I Can't Stay Here". Again Marino Valle is the featured singer. When I read back my description of this recording it sounds less than interesting so I should mention nothing is a cheap effect, it is all musical and swinging overall. On 6/14-17/09 JAKOB NORNGREN was back in the studio with Splash to record ANOTHER APPLE [Wime wmm 005], a recording with 11 tracks [55:37], 4 of them Norgren's, all arranged by Norgren. Again the album is

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laced with R'n'B and is similar to what Ray Charles would do backing his vocals with fine jazz from his band. Again Norgren mixes originals, in the vernacular, with covers. And again Marino Valle is aboard for vocals along with John Németh, Sven Zetterberg and Greta Bondesson. As usual there are no vocals on the 4 Norgren originals, it would be interesting if he started penning lyrics or teams up with someone to write them.

THE EMERSONS MOLLOWS [Wime Records hmm 008] is JAKOB NORGRÉN's electro-jazz group and this is a bit of a sampler as it reissues some EPs, remixed material plus adds previously unreleased material [49:29]. Marked too often by heavy beats, this has little of the charm compositionally or musically that his previous recording have. 4 out of 5 is an 800 batting average, not bad.

DIDRIK INGVALDSEN [tpt], who I know of mainly through Frode Gjerstad's Circulation Totale Orchestra from the '90s, takes some of the Gjerstad irregular energy and places it in a mostly metered environment. Here he and his orchestra have produced THE EXPANDING CIRCLE [Hevhelia HV 0124-2-331]. Make no mistake this is post bop orchestration, some of which is exciting in of itself. But what really sells this music is the individual solos which cut across the orchestra's originals, on this undated [2016?] CD. 11 originals [61:56] make up the music played by his Czech/Norwegian octet in which Marcel Bárta [ts/clt] is outstanding. Liner notes, dates and identified soloist would have been appreciated. Still, full dynamic listening.

One gets to hear more of DIDRIK INGVALDSEN's trumpet work on his quartet [Glenn Brun Henriksen-as, Aleksander Grønstad-gtr, Ståle Birkeland-drm] CD, ROCKET POCKET [Dada 10 cd]. The 11 originals [50:03] are sans liners or dates. Again as with his octet, Ingvaldsen solos in an insistent Freddie Hubbard like manner. Again the outline of the music is metered. On one track [Gliwice Railway Station] the drums and guitar are set against the horns affecting a "Big Noise From Winnetka" groove. The unfolding of composition and improvisation is similar to the Octet sound but thinner, the extra 4 musicians on the Circle date make a difference and the absence is heard here. A fun listen and solid improv but missing the backbone of octet which made for a remarkable listen.

Curt Hanrahan [[ts/ss] leads THE MILWAUKEE JAZZ ORCHESTRA on WELCOME TO SWINGSVILLE [Blujazz bj 3444], a 5/18/16 live recording of 3 originals and 4 standards [48:37]. This includes a very fine and original arrangement by Don Schamber of "After You've Gone". The name of the CD accurately gives you an idea of the bands direction. The album states that the performance is live and unrehearsed. This of course absurd as one does not put together a band as seamless as this without plenty of rehearsal. As for being live, if this suggests in front of an audience (which it does)—then (if they exist) they are silent. Well worth a hearing.

Taking a spur off Miles Davis' amalgam of 20th Century sounds ADAM RUDOLPH [perc] brings it into the 21st Century with his octet, Moving Pictures on, GLARE OF THE TIGER [Meta Records 020]. Recorded in June 2016 the 11 originals [55:04] pretty much present a potpourri of musical sounds woven together into a sound fabric. Heard outside of the group sound

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are mainly Graham Haynes [tpt] and Ralph M Jones [flt/reeds]. Improvised repetition .

PETER BOLTE [flts/saxs] has, among other things, spent decades with the NDR bands. Now issued is 2016 [Ergin Records cd 010]. The 10 originals [44:01] here are heavy with overdubbing and what Bolte call "processing". The result is little more than sound and lacks an emotional impact and is notable for that. Recorded between 9/13 and 11/16.

THE URGE TRIO [Tomeka Reid-cel, Keefe Jackson-reeds, Christoph Erb-reeds] has recorded [10/4/15] from Chicago LIVE AT THE HUNGRY BRAIN. This is one long improv called "Heche Toda De Agua" [34:00]. The music here at times squawks and squiggles which eventually leads into organic breathing. The resonance of the cello at times gives the effect of a reed trio. For a "live" recording it was void of audience ambient noise or applause. For these ears it offered moments but overall felt overlong and overwrought. Also from Chicago comes a 11/7/14 recording, ESCAPE LANE [The Bridge Sessions tbs 05]. This set of 7 improvs [59:35] by MARQUIS HILL [tpt], JEFF PARKER [gtr], JOACHIM FLORENT [b] and DENIS FOURNIER [drm], is rather laid back and melodic. Hill's playing is melodic and Florent and Fournier keep a pretty tight hold on the rhythmic structures of the improvs, while Parker weaves in and out of those structures. There are times when this goes from relaxed free improvs to free bop with momentum. It is interesting how this quartet navigates disparate waters and styles. Interesting but I found involvement elusive and repeat listens taxing on my patience.

Vocalist RON BOUSTEAD cites Mark Murphy as his main influence and that is apparent on UNLIKELY VALENTINE [Art Rock Music 888295 519427]. Boustead, who first came to my notice when Mopro Records issued an LP of him in 1984, doesn't have the range Murphy had but his clear enunciation and sense of freedom is very similar. The 10 cuts here [44:01] are a mixture of standards and Boustead original lyrics, "I Won't Scat" being a fine example of his lyrics, very much in the hip tradition. Boustead is a storyteller, as was Murphy, but he is also his own man and on this CD, short as it is, leaves space for un-rushed instrumental solos. Backup includes Bill Cunliffe or Mitchel Foreman [producers/p/B3], Bob Sheppard [sax/flt], Bob McChesney [tbn], Ron Stout [flg] and Pat Kelley [gtr].

SIDNEY JACOBS [voc], appears very button down, with his collared shirt, tie and carefully coifed look on the cover of his new CD FIRST MAN [Baby Chubs Records 0638872 618773]. However his singing is definitely not button down. Here is a singer with range and power and an original delivery. You can hear some Bobby McFerrin, some Joe Lee Wilson and a little Bill Withers and Lou Rawls but you wouldn't mistake him for any of those folks. He is an original voice that encompasses so many parts that upon first listening I kept thinking about those parts and where they came from. He is a very direct singer and yet on this release he can croon, worry and be subtle. The CD has a program of 15 tracks (seven originals) [65:23] ranging from jazz to soul with backing from a pool of 11 players. Cathy Segal-Garcia, (a talent in her own right) lends her voice to 3 of the tunes on this undated recording. Jacobs suggests respect and deserves it. Originality, range and hipness.

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SIDNEY JACOBS' first recording, *BEEN SO LONG* [Baby Chubs Records no number] is not the artistic success of the subsequent release noted above. This undated release of 14 originals [46:06] falls more in the area of smooth/soul singing and is aimed at a commercial audience. Jacobs probably could be a credible soul singer, unfortunately this is way overproduced and at one point during a rap the end falls apart with self-conscious laughter while other tunes sound like fragments. Back-up is synthesized. Jacobs is obviously talented and based on his current release, lucky for us, he is headed in the right direction. When it comes to jazz, usually if an artist with an original voice issues an impressive release and gets noticed, folks and producers whisper or pressure the artist to record music with a broader appeal. This generally results in originality (and ultimately the essence of what brought him/her to the public's attention to begin with) taking a back seat on subsequent releases. Jacobs has reversed that progression and it is my feeling that he is now headed in the right direction—if so the next release should be most interesting and I look forward to it with anticipation. Remember the name.

A singer who goes by the name KHADIJAH RENEE [aka Renee Morgan] has issued a CD called *SENTIMENTAL ME: A Tribute To Sarah Vaughan* [no label 888295 338592]. There's a natural tendency for imitation when someone chooses to pay tribute to another performer. But, who needs that? This is a short program [28:01] made up of 4 standards and 3 originals by guitarist Gerald "Twig" Smith. The accompanying musicians making up the quintet are George Bussey [as], Jim Holton [p], Lee Smith [b] Duck Scott [drm]. Renee has Sassy's lower range and smokey delivery down, but not quite or comfortably, nor does her voice have the purity of Vaughn's. Back up is basic with Bussey sounding Bird-like and Smith's originals have promise. Be Your Self—it is the great secret eventually known to most—the trick is not waiting too long to figure that out. I don't yet know Renee's talent. MAYA RAE's [voc] debut CD is *SAPPHIRE BIRDS* [Cellar Live cl 101816] and I'm feeling ambivalent about how much it appeals to me. Her voice lacks tension and her delivery is matter is matter-of-fact and atrabilious but at least it is distinctive in its sound. This CD is made up of 8 standards and 2 originals (by Rae) [37:36] with backing from Miles Black [p], André Lachance [b], Joel Fountain [drm], Cory Weeds [ts] and Vince Mai [tpt]. Her originals are desultory and fit well her delorosa style, a style I associate with the singer James Taylor. My prejudices may not be yours and one might feel counter to mine. On uptempo tunes, "Lullaby Of Birdland" and "I Got Rhythm" she loosens her sound but is less distinctive. Rae is 14 so she has lots of time to grow.

I'm also ambivalent about GABRIELLE STRAVELLI's recording *DREAM AGO* [no label 888295 531238]. 9 of the 11 tracks [52:35] are originals and they are of interest structurally as well as for lyric content. The promotional hype sheet makes the point that Stravelli has a great range from jazz to opera and while I don't hear opera, she obviously is comfortable with different genres. It is her strengths that are also the weaknesses of this CD. Most people buy a recording preferring somewhat of a purist taste. Here jazz work on

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about a third of the CD is fine. Her voice glides and surges with a touch of Ella Fitzgerald in ambience and scattling and there is also a moment that brings to mind Annie Ross. The rest of the program comes closest to musical theater or nondescript pop, nice enough but not for jazz snobs. Backing on this 5/15/15 to 4/29/16 recording includes Art Hirahara or David Cook [keys], Pat O'Leary [b], Eric Halvorson [drm], Scott Robinson [reeds/brass], Saul Rubin [gtr], Kenny Washington [guest voc].

VIRGINIA SCHENCK [voc], who also goes by the stage name VA, has released AMINATA MOSEKA [Airborne Ecstasy ae1113]. This is an Abbey Lincoln tribute and a good one. Lincoln's lyrics did not primarily deal with moon in June but were often pointed lessons of life. Half the success of this CD could be just for just the 12 Lincoln [71:08] tunes/lyrics [Blue Monk is a Monk tune but Lincoln wrote the lyrics). But Schenck is key here and in her gentle approach, she brings brings Abbey's songbook to life. One can't help hearing Lincoln and her very original delivery but Schenck's approach welcomes the listener in a sweeter approach without compromising Lincoln's lyrics. The power of Abbey Lincoln is more and more being discovered by jazz artists, it is a rich area to investigate and not to be taken lightly. Appropriate backing comes from Kevin Bales [p], Rodney Jordan [b], Marlon Patton [drm], and on one track Kebbi Williams [as]. On "Caged Bird", Schenck has added Maya Angelou's powerful poem, Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?. Recorded 8/14&15/16.

VIRGINIA SCHENCK's previous release, INTERIOR NOTIONS [Airborne Ecstasy ae1112] was recorded in January [9,10,11,22] 2014 with the same trio as the Lincoln tribute, plus Kinah Boto Ayah [perc] and Kevin Spears [kalimba and background vocals]. This is made up of 7 standards and the title track, which is an improv [61:21]. Interior Notions is a free improv interesting work like lyrics over nice kalimba playing. "Throw It Away" is again sung here but with a bit more bite, in fact this CD is a bit more theatrical and excellent in parts. Low point is "Nature Boy" which opens with a too long listen to nature sounds which is followed by a too long [15:51] development of the song. This gives the musicians a chance to stretch out and while I appreciate making an exotic mountain out of a mole hill I remained unmoved. On the other hand versions of "Midnight Sun" and "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" are exceptional. Schenck has written liners for each track.

VIRGINIA SCHENCK's first recording VA [Airborne Ecstasy 1111] confirms what the latter two Recordings suggest, that this is an exceptional singer: jazz singer. In addition it is again evident, from the 11 tunes [58:03] chosen, that Schenck looks for songs with greater meaning than moon in June. This recording [8/2011] again uses the same trio support plus Melvin Jones [tpt] on one tune [When I Fall In Love]. Again she references Abbey Lincoln for 2 tracks [Learning How To Listen & The Music Is The Magic] and contributes one original [Compromise] that is quite nice. On "Better Than Anything" she adds some extra lyrics. What comes through in her delivery is Schenck's believability. It looks like Schenck records about every 2 years, but don't wait another two years, pick up any of her 3 recording and anticipate the forth. This is a compelling jazz vocalist.

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Fans of Alan and Marilyn Bergman's lyrics might be pleased with MONIKA RYAN's, WINDMILLS [no label 700261 451381]. Ryan is backed by a septet that at the same time sounds miked too close to the singer but not particularly well integrated with her. In general the audio plane sounds crowded which makes listening to these 10 tunes [47:32] tiring. This CD would have been more enjoyable with some shifts in audio dynamics affording Ryan greater individually, sensitivity and warmth.

COMES LOVE [Riverlily Records 003] is a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass by PATRICE WILLIAMSON [voc/flt] and JON WHEATLEY [gtr] marking the occasion of the centenary of Ella's birth. Monk, Buddy Rich, Dizzy and Cleanhead, among others, also have their centenary births in 2017. So watch for more centenary concepts released on CD this year. Nicely packaged in faux sepia tones, this CD might understandably suggest something it doesn't offer—Williamson and Wheatley are no Ella and Pass. Nothing wrong with that, in fact when Errol Parker put out his excellent tribute to Monk it was notably non imitative and that was in itself refreshing. But Williamson, who has a reasonably distinctive contralto voice, is at times flat and sounds like she has 7 feet of lyrics for a 6 foot space. She scats which is passable but conveys little joy or pathos. Wheatley, who has been on a few mainstream releases, notably with Ruby Braff, offers pretty basic accompaniment. The 12 standards [49:49] really are only of tangential association with Ella and Pass, which is also fine. I'm not familiar with Williamson's previous work but I'm intrigued enough that I'll look into it. Guitar fans in particular should find joy in the work of JAN KNUTSON. His first recording, OUT OF NOWHERE [Knutson Music km 010] is a solo effort from August 2014 playing 11 [47:12] familiar standards that have a reflective quality I'd expect from someone like Herb Ellis but not a 15 year old lad. There seem to be more and more capable artists their teens. Knutson is a real player who happened to be 15 when this recording was made circa 2015. This recording, made without edits, is impressive and one can feel the intensity as he navigates the solo and bass lines, at times nearly stumbling over himself. The guitar he plays is a 17" archtop built by his father. JAN KNUTSON's latest recording, LOOKING BOTH WAYS [Patuxent Records cd-284] has 13 tracks [62:66] making up this date [12/15] which is a mixture of 3 originals and 10 standards. It is a pleasure to hear Knutson play solo counterpoint to himself as he negotiates chord changes throwing out one line then playing underneath it. Knutson is nicely supported on some tunes by Steve Abshire [gtr], Tommy Cecil [b] and Danny Knicely [mandolin] and it is a nice break from his solo sides. His phrasing and timing clearly suggest an artist of a maturity past his 17 years for here he shows a relaxed ambience of assured confidence. Cleanly recorded, sit back and enjoy. It will be interesting if he continues in this pursuit...stay tuned.

Also enjoyable is the guitar and bass work of BRAD MYERS and MICHAEL SHARFE respectively on SANGUINARIA (HOPEFULSONGS) [Colloquy Records13214]. This undated recording [59:49] contains 4 originals plus 8 compositions more or less known to jazz fans. All of which comfortably fits together, as do Myers and Sharfe. This is a very light (as in tender) date and

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with an excellent program choice, it goes down well on repeated listenings. Myers' originals are also substantial. On various tracks various percussionists guest and on the title track Dan Karlsberg guests on melodica. Light, airy but solid.

Also light but solid and not so airy is NORBERT STACHEL's SHADES OF THE BAY [Cheeseburger Records chug 2015-3]. Satchel plays all manner of reeds and has for years been the back up of many pop, rock and jazz outings. The 10 originals [53:04] here are funk, best when featuring baritone sax, organ [Dave Mathews or Peter Horvath], guitar [RayObiedo] and drums. Tiz commercial funk, 3 out of 5 on the grease-o-meter.

More light listening come from AL MUIRHEAD [tpt] on NORTHERN ADVENTURES: The Canada Sessions Vol. 1 [Chronograph Records cro 46]. Actually it would be more accurate to call this not so much light, but relaxed listening. The program here is 12 standards [58:07] with no surprises but is pleasant. Muirhead, now 82, surrounds himself with some of the finest including; Guido Basso [flhn], Mike Murley [ts], Don Thompson [p], Tommy Banks [p], Reg Schwager [gtr] and others who make appearances at various times over the duration of this CD recorded in Alberta, Canada [6/22/15-6/23/16]. Mainstream relaxation and pleasant.

CHANSONS! [Millesuoni Records wj113] is an undated CD led by FABIO ZEPPELELLA [gtr] joined by Emmanuel Bex [org/voc], Géraldine Laurent [as] and Roberto Gatto [drm]. There are a number of reasons not to like this date; it uses electric modifiers, the program of 11 French tunes/songs [52:28] can be schmaltzy and there are fadeouts. On the other hand there is a nice flow to the program, it is never NOT jazz, Laurent's alto is quirky, Zeppetella's guitar work is multi-dimensional, the music is approached in a wonderful variety of ways. If you don't enjoy a tune wait a minute or two it will change. Each member of the quartet gets equal billing on the CD packaging but the photo revealed behind the cd through the clear tray is one of a guitar which suggests the guitarist is the leader, my apologies, in advance, if anyone feels slighted. Bex's vocals are very negligible and limited to parts on 3 titles. A well thought out CD.

TORBEN WALDORFF [gtr] imparts a Nordic ambience on his new CD, HOLIDAY ON FIRE [Artist Share 0151]. Recorded 10/21/15 and 4/12/16 with Ingrid Jensen [tpt], Maggi Olin [keys], Drew Gress [b] and Johnathan Blake [drm] on 7 originals [51:14]. The music walks a fine line between wonderful atmospheric playing/composition to rather vacuous statements made in space that seems very controlled. These maladies are unfortunately magnified when Olin plays on a Rhodes electric piano. Things open up when Jensen is given space to do her Freddie Hubbard influenced trumpet work and Waldorff also has some nice space. Sound infringed on by composition.

Guitarist JIM YANDA has released two 2 CD sets: REGIONAL COOKIN' [Cornerstore jazz cjs 0056] from 5/23/87 and HOME ROAD [Cornerstore jazz cjs-0113/0114] from 6/10&11/14. These releases are almost 30 years apart and are made by the same trio [Drew Gress-b, Phil Haynes-drm], a pairing that goes back to the early '80s. Where to begin? The 1987 (Regional

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Cookin') date is no throwaway, it bristles with energy through 9 originals plus "Round Midnight" for a total of 10 tracks [65:09]. "Round Midnight" opens very deliberately before breaking into up tempo. Yanda, who comes from the mid-west, shares with Haynes and Gress mentoring from Paul Smoker (about whom there are many stories yet to be collected). In his fascinating liners, Yanda speaks candidly of his childhood as a Catholic farm boy and the internal struggle with getting this music out. Listening to this music there is a sense of discovery of something very real and immediate at the time. As far as I can tell these are Yanda's only recordings other than a Steve Adams B-3 date from 2013. The second recording liners reveal nothing about what Yanda did between 1987 and 2014 or for that matter why isn't the second date more current? The 2014 sides open with a very relaxed reading of "My Ship", the only one of the 11 tracks [77:23] which is not original. The energy here is more subdued and although not that prominent, Yanda's, Wes inflections on the previous recording are gone. Overall there is a greater abstraction and bending of notes in the guitarists lines. This is a warm session and pleasant enough but lacking the edge and excitement of the '87 date and, based on that issue, in comparison, this is a bit anticlimactic.

Guitarist DOUG MUNRO and La Pompe Attack Create some infectious swing on THE HARRY WARREN SONGBOOK [GotMusic Records gmr-1004]. Munro, along with various groupings of band members, take 14 Warren compositions and 2 Munro originals [66:13] and play them Hot Club style. You can hear the Djangoesq approach but it is far from a carbon copy. Recorded over a period of a few months [6/17/16 to 8/24/16] this is a happy and most pleasant CD. Various back-up includes Howard Alden, Vinny Raniolo, Vic Juris or Ernesto Pugliese on guitar, Andrei Matorin or Howie Bujese on violin. A vintage recording of today.

More contemplative and also very pleasant should you choose or not choose to get involved with guitarists' lines of thought is CROSS COUNTRY LINES [Invisible Music im-2050], an undated duo recording with guitarists MARK KLEINHOUT and JOHN STOWELL. 12 standards [51:38] on which the duo casts pointillistic and harmonic thoughts. Occasionally the duo moves far away from the well known themes but that's part of the strategy and fun. One oddity here is on the last piece "Alone Together" which has what sounds like a premature fade ending, perhaps an electrical glitch about which Bill Milkowski's otherwise fine liners makes no mention. Worth your resources.

RICK HIRSCH [ts] has kicked around big bands since around 2000 and now has gathered friends to make a 19 piece big band (which he calls his Big Ol' band) to record 7 of his compositions/arrangements plus 2 non-originals [48:04] on POCONO GIT-DOWN [Hirsch Music hm 1701]. Hirsch and collaborators come out of or are based in the central Pennsylvania area. This has proven to be a rich area for known and unknown jazz artists and an area regularly mentioned in this ongoing column. This is a kick-along band but capable of shifting the mood as they do on "Tonight, We Tango" where Hirsch mixes his raspy tenor with guest, Alex Meixner on accordion making

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an effective French tinged tango. He has also composed a happy mambo "Mambo Over The Mountain" and legitimized Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel" as a big band standard. Fine writing and arrangements make this a solid debut. Recorded 8/9/16.

I know of drummer JEFF "SIEGE" SIEGEL [drm], along with bassist Rich Syracuse, as pianist Lee Shaw's rhythm section for many years. Siegel has now recorded KING OF XHOSA [Artists Recording Collective arc 2710]. This recording is 13 tracks [71:13] with Siegel's core group [Erica Lindsay-sax, Francesca Tanksley-p, Rich Syracuse-b] and special guests; Feya Faku-flg and Fred Berryhill-perc featured on 5 tracks. The CD opens with African drums and a chant which had little meaning for me. Fortunately it only lasts a bit longer than a minute before the guts of this recording come forth. And the guts are very strong as everybody in this band is right on target. There are times when the shadow of Coltrane looms large. Faku is the least known personality here and while he had been around jazz since the early '90s, he has not been recorded a great deal. Faku has a warm sound and sincere style and fits in well with the spiritual tone of the music. This may be the best record you'll overlook this year.

DAVID SOLDIER has written and produced an opera for mezzo-soprano, choir, improvising soloists, orchestra and electronics... adapted from the earliest surviving illustrated book and sound score called THE EIGHTH HOUR OF AMDUAT [Mulatta records MUL 035]. Backed by a full orchestra and mewing cats this combines parts opera and improvisation. Marshall Allen is credited as "playing" Sun Ra, saxophone and electronic valve instrument and he has 6 features and a few colorings in the 14 sections [58:39]. Neither fish nor foul I'm not sure who this interesting effort will appeal to other than Sun Ra fanatics. Allen is as expected.

Drummer JEAN JOHN [born Žan Tetičkovič] has issued an ambitious recording called THE PORT OF LIFE [ZKP RTV 3838898114441]. This is a composed musical narrative of immigrating from (his) hometown in Slovenia to pursue dreams and find the happiness and inner fulfillment aboard, in New York City. A dozen or so musicians play the 15 parts [73:14] that make up this recording. The music is part orchestral, part jazz and part classical but mostly orchestral. John was born 5/28/91 and moved to NYC in 2010. Overall the music is understandably melancholy and at one point plays over president Obama speaking of immigrants which is particularly meaningful now during America's somewhat fascist approach to immigrants. I mention this recording in large part for the handsome packaging: the CD plus a 40 page [5 1/2" X 6"] booklet of recording info, prose and pictures is housed in a hardcover book. Nice music (not jazz per se) and nice packaging.

KATHY INGRAHAM's debut release also comes packaged as a hardcover book/CD [8" X 8" 24 pages] called COOL NIGHT [Peiridon Production 0028672 376667]. The 10 tunes [39:19 are Ingraham originals. The lyrics for all the tunes are printed in the book. The graphics are by Richard Del Rosso. Backing comes from many and includes Danny Flam [tbn], Pete Levin [keys], Will Lee [b], John Tropea [gtr], Clifford Carter [p], Don Harris [tpt], Eric

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Lawrence [sax/flt]. Ingraham's "stories" are well outlined in dealing with love and loss and she sings well but while this has a jazz element it leans more towards pop. A good gift for pop lovers and nicely done.

HARRIS EISENSTADT [drm] has written and issued a fascinating CD, RECENT DEVELOPMENTS [Songlines 1620-2]. Comprising 14 sections [41:09] with the longer parts separated by interludes the whole of this work is a very controlled musical adventure made up of seemingly disparate instrumental parts [Anna Webber-flt, Sara Schoenbeck-bassoon, Nate Wooley-tpt, Jeb Bishop-tbn, Dan Peck-tuba, Brandon Seabrook-bjo, Hank Roberts-cello, Eivind Opsvik-b]. The use of the various instruments is remarkably integrated into the music. Eisenstadt has managed to make banjo, bassoon, tuba, etc. not exotic in this setting but a nice fit into this tale of many parts. My only complaint is the tale ends on an unfinished note, leaving this listener waiting for more. There really is no extended blowing here but there is improvisation and some minimalism but it is very musical and stays fresh on repeated listenings. Excellent use of 41:09, a piece that would work well in a concert setting.

NOAH PREMINGER [ts] is out with a new release. This time the theme is MEDITATIONS ON FREEDOM [Dry Bridge Records 005]; political freedom, women's freedom and freedom from environmental blues. As in previous recordings the quartet's [Jason Palmer-tpt, Kim Cass-b, Ian Froman-drm] music is released unedited (that means not messed or tampered with) from complete recorded takes; "live" as it were. Of the 9 tunes [50:02] here, 4 are from the "pop" canon; Bob Dylan, Bruce Hornsby, George Harrison, Sam Cooke—"A Change is Gonna Come"—consider how many decades ago that was written! The remaining 5 tunes are Preminger originals with titles such as "We Have A Dream", "Women's March" and "The 99 Percent". This time out Preminger's playing is less gritty but he is no less serious in his statements. It is a wonderful un-compromised group deserving of your support.

GREG ABATE [ss/ts/as/flt] turns in a sprightly performance on ROAD TO FOREVER [Whaling City Sound wcs 090]. As with his last recording, this features original music with the Tim Ray [keys] trio [John Lockwood-b, Mark Walker-drm]. The 10 undated tracks [68:43] were recorded in a single session and it is mainly the first takes issued here. With some horn overdubbing this is a generic bop date, cogent and solid but aside from the original compositions rather faceless. After almost 40 years I still wait for Abate to have his own sound. That aside he makes fine music. Fans of Duke Ellington's music will find much to rejoice in on DUKE'S DREAM [Intuition Records int 3445 2] a duo recording with ENRICO PIERANUNZI [keys] and ROSARIO GIULIANI [as/ss]. Made up of 7 Ellington chestnuts plus 3 originals this is a most reinvigorating program [51:17]. The entire set is wonderfully handled by the duo who go at the music with verve and independence. Pieranunzi even plays some electric piano on 2 tracks. On one track he produces a sound that is buoyant rather than the shimmering effect usually associated electric piano. However, the shimmering effect is used (to good effect) on "Come Sunday". The duo makes the familiar fresh and brings attention to the less familiar including the 3 fine originals. This is

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a wonderful pairing and offers hope for the jazz canon in the future. JOHN O'GALLAGHER [as] has a rather individual earmark to his playing. His Ornette Coleman influenced lines often seem unattached but float out logically and powerfully. TRIO Live in Brooklyn [Whirlwind Records wr4697] was recorded 11/11/15 and has some of his finest work to date. Joining O'Gallagher is his regular trio [Johannes Weidenmueller-b, Mark Ferber-drm] for 7 originals [49:44]. There are points here that O'Gallagher goes solo, masterfully building his improv and retaining a sense of reserve. Support is never wavering at other points. This is one hell of a post bop date of which all 3 should share pride.

NICHOLAS PAYTON's AFRO- CARIBBEAN MIX TAPE [Paytone Records 006] is an elaborate double set with Payton on trumpet, vocals, clavinet, keys, synth, bass and percussion. He is leading a number of musicians, the main one being Kevin Hays [p], through a series of 22 tracks [128:19]. All but one track are Payton originals. The narrative here is Black contributions to the West and in particular jazz. Payton, now in his mid 40s, has conceived this as a mix tape with the result being a mix of jazz, hip hop, turntable and electric sounds. A 16-page liner booklet clearly outlines purpose and breaks down the discography. Some of the compositions are beautiful but it is not so much about the music as the message. Some of the message is carried by voices including Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, Miles Davis and Duke Ellington. There is a lot to digest here and it is carefully done and would serve as an excellent choice to lay on a teenager. Recorded between 4/26/16 and 11/26/16.

In the previous Papatamus I wrote about LAURA DUBIN's 2 CD set from the Rochester Jazz Festival and said I thought it was her debut recording. I was wrong, as she has 2 prior releases: INTRODUCING THE LAURA DUBIN TRIO [no label 888295 015479] and PLAYS THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK [no label 744773 020253]. Both of these recordings are excellent examples of Dubin's considerable talent. The Introducing CD is from 9/10/13 with Sam Weber [b] and Antonio H. Guerrero [drm], while the other is from January 2015 and has Nick Dubin replacing Weber on bass. Dubin's originals make up the whole of the 2013 date, while the 2015 date comprises 10 standards. I've paired them together in this fashion as they are both excellent and fine examples of Dubin's forward enthusiasm and wide ranging technical ability; she holds little back and brings to mind Dorothy Donegan who had phenomenal technique and mixed enthusiasm and showmanship. My only reserve is the drums often are too forward in the mix. Jazz fun and entertaining and played with verve.

Pianist EMMET COHEN heads off Cellar Live Records' MASTERS LEGACY SERIES VOLUME 1 [clo 31616]. The trio [Yasushi Nakamura-b and Jimmy Cobb-drm], recorded live 3/16/16, cleanly plays 11 tunes (3 originals and 7 standards and one short uncredited track; "Interlude") [TT 69:17]. Cohen plays in a single note style which oddly reminds me of Red Garland though he really doesn't sound like him— perhaps the similarity lies in his breezy unadorned approach. This issue says featuring Jimmy Cobb and it surely does. As well, the liners speak more of Cobb than Cohen. After reading the

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notes and listening to this fine music it would be understandable if one assumed this was the drummer's date. On two tracks, Godwin Louis joins the trio on alto sax; his high-toned pitch makes it sound more soprano-ish. Good listening.

Pianist LIVIO MINAFRA is a more reserved player than Cohen as demonstrated on his two CD set; SOLE LUNA [Incipic Records inc 222]. One CD here, Sole (sun), is dance-y and upbeat with Minafra playing piano "normally" as well as employing sound effects by way of looping and using "toys". There are moments it sounds like he summoned Vince Guaraldi. This is a "solo" record but because of the various effects, most of the time, I could only hear this music as a block of sound and felt unable to get inside the playing—maybe it was just too cluttered for me. The fade outs gave the pleasant melodies an ephemeral feel. The 7 tracks [32:43] on the first disc and the 14 cuts [42:03] on the second cd, Luna (moon), are all by Minafra. Luna is more reflective (even romantic) and makes apparent Minafra's classical background. Four of the tracks are under 2 minutes making for a fleeting feeling. The longest track here is over 5 and a half minutes and I found the faint sound of sleigh bells in the background distracting. Between the sun and moon I am lost in the stars.

Because it opened with one of Monk's finest compositions; "Misterioso", I spent a good deal of time with BILL ANSHELL's RUMBLER [Origin Records 82728]. Anshell not only offers up a fine arrangement here but he takes the composition head on and goes through various tempos, at one point turning it into a straight blues. Brian Monroney contributes some wonderful guitar work and saxophonist Richard Cole contributes strong playing—offering up chewy Johnny Griffin-like work. With the exception of the Monk composition and "For No One" (Lennon/McCartney) and "Reflections In D" (Ellington), the 11 tracks [65:55] here are Anshell originals. While the tunes have personality, the trio [Chris Symer-b and Jose Martinez-drm] plus "guests" on various tracks, fails to excite in the manner of the opener and so for me the rest of the CD was anti-climatic, paling in comparison.

Starting in the late '80s, Pianist BRIAN DICKINSON was a mainstay with the Unity label. Here, Dickinson has issued THE RHYTHM METHOD on Addo Records [ajr 033] with a very probing and capable quintet [Kelly Jeffersons, Luis Deniz-as, Neil Swainson-b, Ted Warren-drm]. The highlight of the 10 Dickinson originals [64:59] is the title track which is a 5 part suite in homage to Lennie Tristano. There is a definite Tristano slipperiness to the heads, not so much to the trunk of the music, all very enjoyable. Recorded 7/24&25/15 the opening track "Orion" is a tribute to Wayne Shorter (of the Blakey Messengers period). Fine listening.

Pianist NOAH HAIDU is pretty much a new name to me but after spending time with INFINITE DISTANCES [Cellar Live Records CL080216] I felt a bit ashamed that I managed to overlook this talent as it has been almost 20 years since his first recording. This recording from 6/24/15 and 2/15/16 is a fine display of not only Haidu's talent as a player but his compositions are also very impressive. This recording is made up of [69:54] 10 originals plus Joe Henderson's "Serenity". Haidu's writing has a wonderful insistent

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quality to it and an upward emotional projection. The final track is the Joe Henderson and the change from charge to stroll is noticeable to the point of anti-climax. The sidemen [Jeremy Pelt-tpt, Sharel Cassity-as, Jon Irabagon-ss/ts, Peter Brendler or Ariel Alejandro De La Portilla-b, John Davis or Mark Ferber-drm] are up for the challenge and the length of playing time of the compositions afford lots of space for soloing. A cut above.

On first listen I didn't think much of JO ANN DAUGHERTY's [p] BRING JOY [no label 888295 473576]. However, I put the CD on repeat and while I was trying to understand why it left me a tad cold, it began to grow favorably on me. The CD has a set of 10 tracks [44:20], 6 of them originals by Daugherty or bassist Lorin Cohen plus 2 by Abdullah Ibrahim and one each by Herbie Hancock and Stevie Wonder. Filling out her trio is Ryan Bennett (dms) with occasional appearances by Neal Alger or Felton Offard [gtr] or Geraldo de Oliviera [perc]. Daugherty has a basic style similar to early Ahmad Jamal and she is the spotlight for some very lovely original compositions. What was missing for me was the edge of surprise and real interplay with the rhythm section making most of this sound very rehearsed, similar to what you might find on a guest shot on a TV show; pleasant.

What's better than a SATOKO FUJII [p] CD? A double Satoko Fujii CD (!), and that is what you get with INVISIBLE HAND [Cortez Sound csj 0001/0002]. Recorded 4/28/16 this set has Fujii playing solo on 10 originals [88:02]. This is a bit of a change for Fujii as usually her recordings find her in the company of a dynamic free wheeling big band or smaller group. Also surprising is how subdued the playing is whether she is playing inside the piano or as one "normally" would—on the keys. Much of the time Fujii is in "duet" with silence particularly on the first set/CD which is all freely improvised. While the second set/CD has some written music, the difference between the written side and improvised side was not apparent to me. Perhaps set one is grabbed my attention more and but it could be the next day it might be the other way around. It matters not—it just matters that either way on another day, I'd feel compelled to revisit both sides.

If you have a fondness for standards (and who doesn't?) latch onto GIANNI BIANCHINI's, TYPE 1 [GB no number]. This is as fresh an approach to 12 mostly well worn standards [73:36] as I've heard in some time. Bianchini's piano and occasional vocals are joined by Brandon Guerra [drm], Richard Mikel [b] and Jason Marsalis [perc]. The title comes from this being Bianchini's first recording and that he has Type 1 diabetes. His singing is straight forward and acceptable, forcing him to stay within the familiar structure of the song but it is his inventive piano playing that I'd rather hear. Karen Tension guest vocals on one track and she is a pleasant addition. Bianchini is a special talent.

The AMP TRIO [Addison Frei-keys, Matt Young -drm, Perrin Grace-b] has recorded THREE [no label 191061 179825]. Except that this was recorded 9/8/16, in Brooklyn, New York there is little I can tell you about this trio as there are no liner notes. The 13 tracks [56:45] are all originals by group

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members with the exception of "Smile". Pianist Frei is very directed and plays confidently. This is easy to follow and gives the listener a secure listening experience. He is not reflective like Bill Evans or twisty like Monk, nor dense as a Cecil Taylor but this is not to suggest this is easy listening or without edge. Most of a sense of instant composition comes from Young who is never far from upfront. My biggest complaint is the use of fades which make the music seem ephemeral.

The LOUIS ROMANOS QUARTET [Dan Sumner-gtr, Luca Lombardi-b, Alex Noppe-tpt/flg] has put together some very pleasant music on SERENITY Sonamor Music 888295 542586]. Serene it is as the quartet plays 9 [44:36] well thought out original compositions in an undisturbed manner. Relaxing yet stimulating and every member of the quartet has shining moments including Romanos whose drum solos are quite musical. This is an understated gem.

CAROL MORGAN [tpt] has put together a pleasant quartet [Joel Frahm-ts, Matt Wilson-drm, Martin Wind-b] on POST COOL: VOL. 1 [Carol Morgan Music cmm 003]. The program [40:45] is made up of an original each by Morgan and Frahm plus the standards: "Strollin'", "A Night In Tunisia", "On A Misty Night" and "Autumn Leaves". Recorded 9/28&29/16 this group plays with care and originality. A fine example is "Tunisia", where Morgan and Frahm each take a crack at the 4 bar break after the refrain and each contribute to the music in an unexpected and fresh way. The most promising thing here is this is called volume one hopefully volume two will be with the same group. Post cool, nice job, no sweat.

Pianist SEBASTIEN AMMANN is full of jumps and turns which is reflected in both his writing and playing as illustrated by COLOR WHEEL [Skirl Records 034]. Recorded 3/22/15, this CD comprises 10 Amman originals [57:14] played by a quartet [Michael Attias-as, Nathan Ellman-bell-drm, Noah Garabedian-b]. Attias is an intense player and because Amman's writing includes space it allows Attias to throw out his lines, develop these lines and then pass the mike off to the already freely supporting group to finish off the piece. There are many such developments here which stand alone and are very satisfying as a whole unto themselves and do not overstay their welcome. Very nice indeed.

DECAYING ORBIT [Silpakorn University no number] is by a group [Dan Phillips-gtr, Hamid Drake-drm, Jeb Bishop-tbn, Mars Williams-saxs, Krzysztof Pabian-b] called CHICAGO EDGE ENSEMBLE. This group looks to be headed by DAN PHILLIPS as he is credited as producer and composer of the 7 tracks [54:14], recorded [8/8/16] in Chicago. Essentially this is free music attached to heads and structure—it is also very good. Phillips is wonderful and his amplified guitar refrains from pointillism or vagueness. Flowing through this is a bit of a countrified sound and fits well within this very strong group. Williams, Bishop and Drake are up to their expected strengths. Pabian is new to me but whether his bass is picked or bow'd his playing is forceful and well miked. Lots of fun listening to this inspired grouping.

Moppa Elliott's [b] latest with his group MOSTLY OTHER PEOPLE DO THE KILLING is LOAFER'S HOLLOW [Hot Cup Records hc161]. The program of 8 Elliott originals [40:13], recorded 3/25/16, are mainly dedicated to writers

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(Joyce, Vonnegut, Pynchon etc.) and each named after different towns in Pennsylvania. The odd mix of avant guard music and more traditional styles follows in the European (improv) fondness of mixing genres within jazz as well as mixing jazz genres with various genres like classical and theatre. Think in the tradition of Willem Breuker, and even earlier by American composer Charles Ives. This is entertaining to a point, the problem is Elliott has concentrated on the cute too much, leaving this listener wanting to hear in addition more improvisation from a group [Steven Bernstein- tpts, Jon Irabagon-ts/ss, Dave Taylor- b.tbn, Brandon Seabrook-bjo/ele, Ron Stabinsky-p, Kevin Shea-drm] that's eminently capable of stretching out. Had there been greater emphasis on solo development this would have been a killer record. As it is A+ for composition, cuteness, execution and affect but C- for the jazz enjoyment. MOPDtK is consistently thoughtful about their records; from the music—to the album and tune titles—to the cover concept and liners. It is always interesting to see what they'll do next. One of their previous recordings [Blue] recreated Miles' Kind Of Blue album note for note, and to be cynical this gets press attention and radio play but at what sacrifice? To recap: this is a wonderful grouping here on Loafers but the pool of talent is somewhat under utilized.

Bassist ERIK APPLGATE says he is a HUGE fan of bass duos and to underscore that fondness he has recorded TWO'S COMPANY [Artist Alliance Records 700261 450445] a CD of 10 duets with various artists [Dana Landry-p, Steve Kovalcheck-gtr, Kenyon Brenner-ts, Tom Amend-p, Paul McKee-tbn]. I believe, these musicians are all from the Colorado area where Applegate teaches at the UC. This CD breaks no new ground but is a very pleasant listen and Applegate keeps it grounded and very full. Due to the changing partners it sometimes has an ensemble feel. Ten originals [57:17] by various musicians on this recording make up the pleasure. Low keyed but quiet pleasant.

ERIK APPLGATE brings together Kovalcheck and Landry plus Jim White [drm] for an earlier [c 2009] recording, his first as leader. RED SKIES [Artist Alliance Records 700261 277721] comprises 6 Applegate originals plus "Motherless Child" [49:31]. Again a relaxed date. Landry, who has played with Applegate for years, plays some electric piano where acoustic would have sufficed but it is Kovalcheck who dominates with some fleet guitar work. Applegate does a fine bluesy arrangement on "Motherless Child" approaching the melody in a relaxed and somewhat indirect manner. The same group, but this time under the leadership of DANA LANDRY, appears on a 12/14 recording called STANDARD ELEVATION [Artist Alliance Records 150021]. Here the program [47:33] is 8 standards plus one Landry original. The quartet jumps out for a fresh reading on the opener, "Puttin' On The Ritz" and again Kovalcheck impresses in soloing. There is no credit for arranging on tunes but it apparent that, either written or run-through, arrangements were brought to bare. The verve that is present on the opener sags a bit and by the middle changed my feelings from excitement to pleasant. They do however do a killer reading of "Yours Is My Heart Alone" for a glorious finish. A tight group which with greater focus could be hard to

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match.

AINO JUUTILAINEN [cello] and ESBEN HØJLUND [p] together call themselves Vela and they have added Anders Vestergaard [drm] for a 7/16 recording called WANDERING [Eclipse Music Records ecd-201745]. This, as the title implies, is a wander through 8 improvs [50:09]. Often beautiful, with a breathy quality, it is also often dour. The music moves in and out of jazz classical voicing. Vestergaard's drumming often clouds the music and I wonder without it if the duo would have been clearer and been allowed to venture out further. On the other hand without the drums this might have fallen into chamber music. Very settling mind music.

In the January Papatamus I wrote about SIMON VINCENT [p] returning to acoustic piano after almost 2 decades using electronics. Vincent has now issued STATIONS OF THE CROSS [Vision Of Sound voscd-003] and calls this a contemporary classical work for solo piano and as he is the composer and player, I'll take his word for it. This is a short CD [32:01] and with it largo and deliberate pacing it's as much about silence as it is the notes and decay.

To me while I am informed that it is written it is at the nexus of improvised and written music or instant composition and pre-composition and in fact Vincent says that the composition came out of intense improvisation. It is almost Satie like without the melodic harmonies. Lessons in silence and space.

ROSCOE MITCHELL [ss/as/flt] has released a 10/16&17/09 recording with Stephen Rush's [moog/Fender Rhodes/euph/noise makers and whistles] group Yuganaut [Tom Abbs-b/cel/vln/tu/didg, Geoff Mann-drm/cornet/bjo]. FOUR WAYS [Nessa ncd-38] is made up of originals by group members and improvs [62:46], and it is hard to say what is composed what is improv. I found this tedious listening with little logic in its form other than random sound. I mention this release only because Mitchell and Nessa are of interest concerning the history of creative improvised music and therefore notable.

BILL O'CONNELL [p] goes solo and leaves much of his latin side behind on MONK'S CHA CHA [Savant scd 2161]. The 9 tracks [58:15] are made up of 5 originals and 4 standards and O'Connell shows a wide range of artistry from a stunning two handed gallop on "The Song Is You" to a masterful original approach and development on "Dindi", to the writing of originals, such as the title tune. Recorded live in concert on 6/21/13 it is a wonder it is just now being issued as it is top notch solo piano and O'Connell's first solo issue. This was a wonderful way to spend and re-spend an hour of listening. Who knew?

Also quite pleasurable from the composing [10 tracks; 2 originals, 68:25], scoring (basically heads & changes), and playing [Kevin Turcotte-tpt, Perry White-sax, Renee Rosnes-p, Terry Clarke-drm] is DAVE YOUNG's, ONE WAY UP [Modica Music 829982 177162]. This is a bit of an all-star group who play with great verve and sound like they are awake and engaged. Every member of the quintet plays with steady passion but without grandstanding. In his liners, Young writes this would be my last recording. If true, he is going out in high artistic style.

Next up and relatively low key for a sax/drum duet is THE WILD [Pine Eagle

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Records 010] a 10 piece improv [59:37] set between RICH HALLEY [ts/wood flt] and his son CARSON HALLEY [drm]. The 2 Halley's have been playing duos for near 20 years when this 6/27 & 8/27/15 was made and Carson has been a member of Rich's combo for almost 10 years. I think duos are perhaps the most difficult grouping in improvised music as you are pretty much out there without a net and not only do you have to find your way but you also have to fine your way in concert with another voice. Halley Sr. has fine solo work but I don't find Halley Jr. so much in concert as in parallel playing. There are exceptions of course but more in volume than direction. Halley the elder plays wood flute on one track and it is a pleasant diversion in color from the urban to the Pacific Northwest.

Deer Head Records, which I covered extensively in the January 2017 Papatamus, continues to produce CDs from dates at the Deer Head Inn. From 2/28/15 comes CLARICE ASSAD: LIVE AT THE DEER HEAD INN [Deer Head Records 007]. Brazilian singer/pianist Assad [voc/p] has a vibrant and welcoming voice and sometimes sings wordless vocals on these 8 tracks [50:52]. Many of the familiar (mostly) indigenous Brazilian songs here are made fresh by Assad's free wheeling rhythmic approach and by the full backing of Keita Ogawa [perc], Bill Goodwin [drm], Adam Niewood [ts], Tony Marino [b], Richard Burton [keys]. Added to this delight is Nancy Reed who sings and duets a bit with Assad.

BOB DOROUGH is a singular artist who has made some classic recordings as well as some not so classic. I'm not always sure what a new Dorough side will bring but I always look forward with anticipation. That is the "problem" having produced a classic recording—it sets the bar too high and portends disappointment. Dorough's latest, LIVE AT THE DEER HEAD INN [Deer Head Records 008] was recorded on his 92nd birthday 12/12/15. Joining the trio [Pat O'Leary-b, Steve Berger-gtr] are guests Aralee Dorough [flt] and Larry Fink [hrm]. This is unusual in that I can't think of another live Dorough recording that is so free of his hits and so personable a performance as this date. The comfort found here may well be the fact that the Deer Head Inn is near where he lives and the audience is a friend of the court. The appearance of his daughter on flute is brief. She is obviously classically trained, never-the-less her addition is a nicely placed. Photographer Larry Fink's harmonica is also brief and is only coloring. Not surprisingly, Dorough's voice is showing it age but his piano chops are still on the mark. Excellent, if a bit fawning. Patrick Dorian contributes the liners writing about Dorough and the music [11 tracks / 59:14]. The CD ends on "Devil May Care". Dorough's best in years.

Calling themselves the MUH trio, ROBERTO MAGRIS [p], FRANTISEK UHLIR [b] and JAROMIR HELESIC [drm] have a new recording [10/9/16] out called PRAGUE AFTER DARK [JMood 015]. The program [65:37] here is a mixture of 7 originals and 3 covers (D. Pullen, H. Nichols and J.Kern). Played with little fanfare this makes for very pleasant listening. Magris has been issuing records on JMood since 2008 but this is the first trio recording since almost that time. This is fine straight ahead jazz played so matter-of-factly there seems little change in temperature or mood from one track to another. The

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tracks are structurally and improvisation-ally solid, strung together they are less than the sum of the parts but still hats off to the trio. Some very nice features from Uhkir.

CHRIS ROGERS [tpt] turns in a very credible outing on VOYAGE HOME [Art Of Life Records al 1045-2]. Rogers has been active in jazz since the early '80, but this is his first led CD. I'd like to believe he waited until he felt ready and had something to say but then I noticed that Michael Brecker is on this CD [2 tracks-13:55] and then I'm confused as Brecker died in 2007, so at least 2 of the tracks were recorded earlier. I'll assume the rest of this undated CD was recorded in 2016. The remaining 7 tracks are Rogers' originals and he is joined in by Xavier Davis [p], Jay Anderson [b], Steve Johns [drm] and in various groupings Ted Nash [ts/as] Steve Khan [gtr], Mark Falchook [keys] and others. In case you are assuming the 2 Brecker tracks are subpar and merely issued to capitalize on name value, fear not—they are burners and deserve notice. The rest of the CD is deserving also though I'll admit a little lower in listening satisfaction. But having said that, if that brings attention to this trumpeter's efforts, then good. The liners include extensive notes by Randy Brecker and program descriptions by Chris Rogers.

## CDRs

A CDR is a CD which has not gone through the same finishing fabrication/manufacturing process as a regular CD. When one burns a copy of a CD on home equipment, that is a CDR. You can tell a CDR by looking at back (music) side of the CD. If it is a CDR it will have a blueish hue and there is no specific wording/lettering in the center hub that identifies it to the specific title/label/matrix number of the recording. In addition a CDR often has a glued on sticker on the title side. CDRs are less costly to make and can be replicated one at a time. A CDR is far less durable than a CD (it is a copy of a CD).

I believe it has been a few years since KENDRA SHANK [voc] has had a new release. HALF MOON [Ride Symbol Records 22], captures her in duet with GEOFFREY KEEZER [p] on a live [1/3/15] concert recording. The 11 tracks [6645] on this CDR offer a mixture of originals and standards with tunes by Abbey Lincoln, Norma Winstone, Judy Niemack and so forth. Shank is not a comfortable singer and her choice of material is as challenging as the interpretations. Keezer's accompaniment is a significant force in this outing and his solos are inspired. The title track is improvised on the spot. A fine example of the inspiration that can occur between artists and audience. Not for casual listening. I should note that this is packaged in a manufactured full color gatefold CD case. (I suppose it is possible that reviewers are supplied with CDRs).

Unseen Rain Records, which I believe only issues CDRs, has issued a tribute to Will Connell by ROCCO JOHN [Iacovone] [as/ss/p] and his Improvisational Composers Ensemble [Ras Moshe Burnett-ts/fit/bells, Sana Nagano-vln, Michael Lytle-b.clt, Rich Rosenthal-gtr, Phil Sirois-b, Dalius Naujo-drm, John Pietaro-perc]. PEACE AND LOVE [ur 9932] was recorded live [12/26/14] about a month after Connell's death. John's 3 long compositions [62:12] leave plenty of room for improvisation. Along with being a talented fine alto

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saxophonist, Will Connell was a self-effacing man who spent much of his time behind the scenes as a copyist. While there is improvisation of interest, in particular violinist Nagano, the general structure is rambling and could use tightening up which would have presented a better showcase for the artists. Like the Kendra Shank disc, this is packaged in a manufactured full color gatefold CD case.

BLAME IT ON MY YOUTH [OK No Name Productions no number] is a 3/14/13 live recording by the LES PEETZ [p] trio [Lou Benanto-b, Rachel Gonzales,voc]. This is a Hawaiian based group and this relaxed session was originally produced for Hawaii Public Radio. The 11 [55:37] tracks are, with a few exceptions, standards. The 3 originals do not have vocals and fit in well with the show. This is a better than average trio and grew on me pleasantly as I had it as a default disk on my CD player. And after a couple weeks it grew on me exponentially to the point I was playing it no longer as default but purely for my listening pleasure. A case of familiarity breeding increased joy not contempt. I wondered about this transformation as the date is casual and I think that the very casualness of it is what gives it its edge. It did feel I was listening to a radio show not a finished CD program. Unfinished, imperfect and quite enjoyable.

## HISTORICAL & REISSUES

Mosaic Records have once more produced a magnificent effort in documenting jazz of the 20th century. Ten CDs make up the CLASSIC SAVOY BE-BOP SESSIONS 1945-49 [Mosaic Records md 10-264]. A 32-page book(let) accompanies the set with liner notes by Neil Tesser chronicling the sessions. Also within is a full discography and almost 50 photographs from the Francis Wolff collection. The photographs are at times misleading as they were often from Blue Note sessions and not specifically from the sessions heard here. Most of these sessions were produced by Teddy Reig. Reig's overall career as a producer is nicely and succinctly laid out in an essay by Bob Porter. Herman Lubinsky, who ran Savoy, is pretty much not referenced? which is understandable as this was Reig's bailiwick. Reig was slippery and Lubinsky was reported to be even less forthcoming. I'm sure a well researched book on both would make fascinating reading, though documenting all the scoundrels in the jazz business over the years (past to present) would fill up many volumes. With Mosaic's Dial and Bird boxes one pretty much has the early bop recorded history. At the time of what would become these classic Savoy sides, Blue Note was recording trad jazz and didn't begin a real commitment to documenting bop until 1947 and by then their productions were less raw. Over its 70 or so years bop has divided and subdivided itself and long strayed from its early roots and spontaneity. I think a lot had to do with the time limitations of 78 RPM records which make those illicit bandstand and air checks all the more informative. But for conciseness the early bop 78s set a tone marked by bop's squirrely lines/heads and the free(er) irregular drum bombs. All of this material here has previously found issue or reissue on LPs or CDs. There are over 200

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titles reissued here and as I listened I realized its now been decades since I first listened to some of these sides. My first Savoy sides were the Charlie Parker recordings (those sides are not issued here). Few of the participants in these line-ups are still alive. Music has the ability to bring us back to a specific time and also erase the passage of time especially when the music stays fresh and feels young. Eventually you realize that although the music is ageless, you are not. Mosaic has changed the format, previously they have put alternate takes at the end of each CD. On this collection alternate takes follow original issues, which I prefer. Musically there are some gems here as well as some pretty thin material. The sound runs from fine to its (original) less than fine. As with most Mosaic's these are definitive issues and if shelf space is tight this will take up a fraction of the space that vinyl needs.

The use of legendary when applied to a musician is overused. Buddy Bolden is legendary because those who heard him spoke of him with awe and there is no recorded evidence of his playing. In the same way OSCAR DENNARD [p] is legendary but by the time musicians began talking about him he was already dead, having died in Egypt in 1960 of Typhoid fever [1928-1960]. His recordings were few; an unissued session in 1956, some sessions with Lionel Hampton's big band in 1956-1958 where his playing for the most part is buried and an A.K.Salim date for Savoy in 1958 accounts for most of his documentation. Now Sunnyside Records has released IDREES SULIEMAN [tpt] THE 4 AMERICAN JAZZ MEN IN TANGIER featuring OSCAR DENNARD [ssc 4752]. Recorded in July 1959 during a tour with the quartet [Jamil Nasser-b, Buster Smith-dr] this is a 2 CD set. One CD was previously issued in Japan under Dennard's name and was recorded in a studio [61:56] with not great but passible sound. The second CD [42:33] was recorded [April or March 1959] at a party in NYC and has fairly terrible sound but considering the limited documentation of Dennard, I'm glad to have it. For decades I have asked musicians and been told by musicians about the prodigious talents of this pianist. So this recording both excites and disappoints me, the result of unrealistic expectations. Based on these recording one hears a very full pianist who uses sort of a waterfall/cascading affect, not a pianist in the Bud Powell school but still at home with bop. On the NYC date he does an extended improv on "3 Blind Mice" that has elements of Tatum in it. Sulieman's work is passable and he must have been taken with circular breathing as on both occasions he blows it beyond musicality and into gimmick territory. All that said this is a valuable release for which we should be grateful.

Avid Records continues to issue 2-fer CD sets usually 4 LPs of vintage jazz (and other genres) initially issued 50 or more years ago. Some of recent issues include:

TEDDY CHARLES who along with Don Elliot, Milt Jackson and Lionel Hampton was remarkably active in the 1950's but by the 70's Charles (and Elliot) faded out of the scene. In the late '90's and 2000's, Charles, was happy sailing charter boats off the Long Island Coast, as CAPTAIN TEDDY, and also had a brief reemergence as a jazz vibes player. FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [amsc 1174] brings together Evolution [1953/1955], Tentet [1/6,11,17/57],

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Coolin' [4/14/57] and Salute To Hamp [2/10/59]. As a whole these sessions were not remarkable and reflect both the west coast style and even more so—the bop scene of the 1950's in NYC. In hindsight what is of interest are the members of the groups including John Jenkins. Jenkins was a solid alto saxman in the Jackie McLean mode who made his recording debut with Charles. Then, after a flurry of records all done in 1957, Jenkins disappeared all together with the exception of appearing on a Clifford Jordan date in 1990. He died at 62 in 1993. Also here we have Charles Mingus, J.R. Monterose (who also made his recording debut with Charles and had an abbreviated career), Art Farmer (a different player in the 1950's than he would later become), George Barrow (mainly a baritone player also very active in the 1950's and was favored by Mingus and Dave Amram. He died in 2013 at 91). Music more interesting than enjoyable.

West coast bassist DON BAGLEY had a long tenure with Kenton in the '50's, then with Les Brown, then Kenton again in the '60's before drifting into studio work. He died in 2012 at 85. FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [amsc 1231] brings together the following LPs: New Concepts [9/52] which is with the Kenton band and includes Kenton introducing the orchestra members and some Kenton pedagogy; and Bagley's 3 LPs as leader: Basically Bagley [6/27 & 7/23/57], Jazz On The Rocks [9/19/57], The Soft Sell [2/26 & 3/26/58]. These 3 LPs are not easily available today and feature Jimmy Rowles, Phil Woods, Eddie Costa and Paul Horn. It is also notable as it is Tommy Loy's [fr.h] only jazz date; a Texan who probably found better employment elsewhere. Pleasant jazz with some very nice contributions from Shelly Manne.

RED CALLENDER [tuba/b] was the Milt Hinton (in a go to session guy way) of the west coast and was (along with Buddy Collette) an important west coast force for over half a century. He led many sessions and FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [amsc 1194] brings 3 of them together; Speaks Low [10/28/56], Swingin' Suite [11/30/55] and The Lowest [4/30/58]. These 3 sides all have Buddy Collette [flt/reeds] featured and are pretty solid examples of west coast jazz. The last date was with the Nat Cole/Lester Young trio and comprised 4 classic tracks from 7/15/42. In addition issued here are 3 other tracks from Young led dates (not identified on the Score 10" release or by Avid). All of these tracks have been reissued dozens of times including by Mosaic. Callender was a champion of the tuba and there are times here it is a hard slog and at other times a hip bottom. Some nice sides here and the Pres is a lovely bonus.

A New Yorker transplanted to the West Coast, GERALD WIGGINS [p] was a solid utility man and on call for many of Concord's 1990 sessions. I don't remember being wig'd by his recordings but I don't remember any being unpleasant either. The four reissues on [amsc 1191] are The Gerald Wiggins Trio [10/56], The Loveliness of You [2/57], Music From Around The World In 80 Days [6/12/57], and Relax And Enjoy It [10/10/56]. All the LPs are with his trio [Joe Comfort or Eugene Wright-b, Bill Douglas or Jackie Mills-drm]. Adroit, clever and skilled, Wiggins was a player who could fit in anywhere in the mainstream and please all. 34 mostly standards at 140:29.

MEMPHIS SLIM [aka Peter Chapman] was a robust piano player and singer of boogie, blues and barrelhouse piano. He was heavily recorded on both

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sides of the Atlantic perhaps because he was so classic in his approach. FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS [amsc 1148] brings together 2 LPs and an EP he recorded in England [7/14/60] with Alex Korner [gtr] and Stan Greig [drn] and pairs them with 2 solo efforts for Folkways Records [1959]. Not much to say about the 47 cuts here [156:50] it is so classic it sounds clichéd. If you don't have any Slim this will do fine.

JERRY LEE LEWIS [p/voc] THREE CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS [amsc 1235] starts with his first Sun recording from 1958 and finishes in 1960 and covers 49 singles. Credited as one of the first icons of R'n'R there is everything here from rockabilly to gospel to boogie. Lewis is one of the most original performers of rock and one of its most compelling characters. A fascinating look at an original's first work about much can be, has been and will be written.

RAY CHARLES: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [amsc 1233] brings together; The Genius Hits The Road [3/60], The Genius Sings The Blues [1961], The Genius After Hours [1961] and Genius+Soul=Jazz [12/60]. Now let me preface this by saying I could enjoy Ray Charles singing the phone book. That said, these are not Charles' best but they do have their pleasures including some tasty work from David Newman, who like many of his band mates never sounded better outside the RC band. ...Hits The Road was a Ralph Burns arranged date focusing on 12 tunes singing about geographical locations [Alabama Bound, Moon Over Miami etc.]. Sings the Blues sort of connects his earlier Charles Brown period. Half the tunes are Charles', none really had legs. But the program here offers a very credible "I'm Movin On"; with steel pedal and foreshadowing his country & western period. After Hours suggest a live date but it is not. It's 8 tracks featuring Charles' piano work (no vocals) stretching out a bit. Nothing exceptional. ...Soul=Jazz borrows many Basie Players past and present with arrangements from Quincy Jones and Ralph Burns. This plus Charles' spare but distinctive organ work, turns in a notable big band recording. Vocal work is just limited to two tracks but Aah, those 7 memorable words from Charles on "One Mint Julep"; just a little bit of soul now...

BOBBY JASPAR [ts/flt] died in his mid 30s after a heart operation. Between 1945 and 1963 he was heavily recorded on both sides of the Atlantic with some notable associations including J.J. Johnson, Chet Baker and Blossom Dearie. THREE CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS [amsc 1237] brings together: All Stars [12/55] a rather plodding quintet date with Sacha Distel [gtr] and Rene Urteger [p]; Tenor And Flute [5/57] which also includes in the quintet Idrees Sulieman [tpt] and George Wallington [p] on the quartet sides. Less plodding and a workman like date often turned in by Riverside and Prestige of the time, Interplay For 2 trumpets & 2 Tenors [3/57] this is one of the many collective recordings Prestige was recording faster than they could sell at that time. Generally they were relaxed blowing sessions, The 2 trumpets were Webster Young and Idrees Sulieman and the other tenor was Coltrane with a fine rhythm section of Mal Waldron, Kenny Burrell, Paul Chambers and Art Taylor. Because of the inclusion of Coltrane this has been reissued many times but if you don't have it get this and a side helping of Jaspar. The plus material here is a Jaspar and Distel EP issue from 9/11/57 and 2 tracks

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from a Chet Baker 12/26/55 recording.

Resonance Records continues to dig up vintage material of interest. LIVE AT THE 4 QUEENS [hcd-2015] is SHIRLEY HORN [p/voc] with her regular trio [Charles Ables-b, Steve Williams-drm] at that time [5/2/88]. These 9 standards [52:45] are fresh to her recorded discography and she doesn't sing on 3 tracks. While her piano work is excellent, when I saw "Isn't It Romantic" on the program I looked forward to [10:08] hearing her stretch out in the laconic ballad style of which she was a master. Instead she takes it up tempo and makes it a nice feature for her rhythm section as well. Another reason for getting this is the 56-page booklet included which is full of reflections and anecdotes from producers and others that worked with her. Good music, good sound and good production.

GENE HARRIS' The Three Sounds [Andy Simpkins-b, Bill Dowdy-drm] existed from 1958 to 1974 and made dozens of records mostly for Blue Note. Later Harris made dozens more recordings, mostly for Concord. GROOVIN' HARD [Resonance Records hcd-2025] is a collection of 10 tracks [51:32] taken live at Seattle's Penthouse club from 1964 through 1968. Harris was a consistent player of blues cum funk and fans of The 3 Sounds will not be surprised or disappointed by their efforts here. 20 pages of liners give background but does not deal with the turbulence and eventual disbanding of the group. On some tracks Kalil Madi or Carl Burnett substitute on drums.

GEOFF MULDAUR, developed out of Jim Kweskin's Jug Bands, has gone on to explore American music from various periods. BGO Records [bgocd 1261] has reissued 2 of his mid-70s recordings (licensed from Warner Bros). IS HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME/MOTION will have peripheral interest to jazz fans. The music touches on dance band music circa 1930 to gospel and rhythm pop circa 1970. A number of jazz artists provide back-up including; Doc Cheatham, Bob Wilbur, Harold Vick, Ron Carter, Frank Wess, and a number of others. Unfortunately their presence is only as contracted studio players. Still if you enjoy the kind of mix Paul Simon does then you will enjoy the Wonderful Time sides. The Motion tracks are basically pop very similar to what Melissa Manchester was doing at the time. Full personnel listing is included along with John O'Regan's excellent overview of Muldaur's career. While not jazz I should mention that BGO Records has also reissued 4 MELISSA MANCHESTER LPs [Home To Myself/ Bright Eyes/ Melissa/ Help is on the Way] on a 2CD set which covers her earliest Bell releases [BGO Records [bgocd 1266]. I mention this as she is an excellent and distinctive voice similar in many ways to Bette Midler. Full personnel info and fine liners by Charles Donovan (with input from Manchester herself) in the enclosed 24-page booklet. Excellent.

BGO Records has reissued THE BASS [bgocd 1260] by MIROSLAV VITOUS. This was Vitous' first lead release and depending on the source referenced was either recorded on 10/8/69 or on 11/69. This has had many reissues. This reissue retains the original title of the German issue (in the USA it was originally issued as Infinite Search on Herbie Mann's first and short lived label, Embryo). There is some deviation of programming all of which Charles Waring sorts out in his informative liners. The quintet was made up of

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Herbie Hancock [el.p], John McLaughlin [gtr], Joe Henderson [ts], and Jack DeJohnette or Philly Joe Jones or Joe Chambers on drums. This was very much an electric date and overall a good one. McLaughlin and Vitous have some stunning moments that help make up for the occasion lack of focus in the music. The program [47:25] contains 6 Vitous originals and "Freedom Jazz Dance". It is too bad BGO could not have issued all 8 titles from the original date.

## BOOKS & VIDEOS

TALKING STICKS [Living Arts Productions no #] is a documentary [63:00] of the rather fascinating story/history of the vibes and marimba. The film weaves around ARTHUR LIPNER [vbs] as he travels around parts of the world speaking to various musicians and craftsmen about mallet instruments. What emerges is a unity between dissimilar cultures as regards mallet instruments. This is not a jazz video per se, however in context there are on screen appearances with Gary Burton, Jerome Harris and Mike Mainieri and vintage performances with Lionel Hampton and Milt Jackson. Curiously, there is no mention of Red Norvo. This is an interesting tale, well told, and one which should be seen by any budding mallet player, or anyone interested in cultural connections.

It has been awhile since LES McCANN has been heard from musically which is a loss as he made some terrific recording and even his more commercial recordings contained some gems. INVITATION TO OPENNESS [hard cover, 200 pages, publ. by Fantagraphics Books. \$33.99] is a book of Les McCann's photos taken from 1960 through 1980 which was a particularly volatile period in the USA. These photos, mostly of jazz artists, reflect the styles of the time; afros pretty much the do of the period. This is a book sure to bring enjoyment to jazz fans. While some of these shots are of minor interest artistically, there are also some truly artful candid and all are of interest. Some of the photos are accompanied by McCann's very interesting observations. His comment included with some photos of Gene McDaniels was "greatest singer I ever heard". Included is an interview between McCann and the book's curator Pat Thomas. The interview reveals McCann as open and not protective or qualifying of his feelings. Along with the photos of jazz artists are occasional pictures of political and show business personalities. His figure studies are not included here, perhaps another book.

Two books for kids dealing with jazz have been published: BIRD AND DIZ by GARY GOLIO and art by ED YOUNG; STRANGE FRUIT by GARY GOLIO and illustrated by CHARLOTTE RILEY-WEBB. The Bird & Diz book [published by Candlewick Press 14pp \$19.00] would be fun for youths 4 to 7 years old first as read to them or self read. Wonderfully illustrated [Ed Young], in what looks like chalk or cray-pas, it tells the story of Dizzy And Bird meeting and making joyful magic music together and creating bop. This story is simply told in well stated text and beautifully illustrated. The book has a magnetic cover latch and designed in such a way that surely will fascinate youngsters. The pages are connected accordion like so as you turn them to the end they reverse and you finish the book at the beginning. Yes, I know my description is probably leaving you more confused than informed but take my word for

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it, you have to see it to understand the layout. Get this for kids it will likely become a favorite.

STRANGE FRUIT is a read alone book [42 pp \$19.99 published by Hillbrook Press] about Billie Holiday and specifically about her relationship to the tune, "Strange Fruit". It is not surprising the sub text is about about racism and Jim Crow. This is an important read and an important subject (racism), the Achilles Heal of the United States from the first landing of immigrants over 400 years ago. This is a serious book and handles the subjects flawlessly. It is aimed at children I'd say starting at 10ish. It is a children's book which won't make one feel childish. With source notes and a selected bibliography the serious effort by Golio is reflected and I could not find a misstep in the text or a punch pulled. If you are with toddlers or soon will be, get Bird And Diz and leave Strange Fruit around for teenager+/- to happen upon. Important subjects for impressionable ages.

## ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS

In the January 2017 Papatamus: "Nunca" and "Pure Imagination" are sung in Spanish ; "Nearness" in Italian by Eleonora Bianchini. She sings the other vocals in Portuguese.

Also in that column in the coverage of Elma the CD label should have read AD REM Hevhetia and Maciej Garbowski played bass.

Robert D. Rusch Edited by Kara D. Rusch

# Karl's Corner

## MEET THE ARTIST - CD REVIEW

By Karl Stober

NANCY RUTH

SANGRIA JAM (2016 SELF)



The core of music is like a new road open to you; you do not know where it leads but travel it well with respect, for the destination is up to you alone. With memories and love attached to each note, music is the one journal of your trip through life that is allowed to exhume romantic and living emotions with the touch of a single chord. This occurs when the music sheets and arrangements become the second-class citizen and the heart becomes center stage for the artist. Many times this is defined as the "Feel" of the artist but it also through the archives of jazz history known as the "Jam." There is no other exciting occurrence on stage than that of a collection of artists just going with the sound and letting it take them to parts unknown. This is the quest Canadian born vocalist Nancy Ruth took and conquered with the weapons of her heart, soul, and memories; newly sharpened, to take the journey towards the Sangria Jam. When I asked Ms. Ruth about her new project and what influenced her, she expressed it in this fashion, "My main inspiration for the Sangria Jam CD was my 15 years of living in Malaga Spain; learning the culture in all its beauty and 'picaresca'... Ms. Ruth further elaborated, "I came here alone, with no money, job, contacts or ambitions, other than to find my own voice. I think the lyrics to 'Temporary Home' and 'Beauty in the Ruins' best describe some of my experiences, as well as 'Jasmine Tree'.... It's been a huge adventure, following my instincts, all logic tossed aside." Ms. Ruth, the sultry "Flamenco Echo" has her roots firmly embedded in the jazz culture and branches off to the flamenco and Latin stylings with deep insight and innovation. Sangria Jam is encased in originals, with music and lyrics by Ms. Ruth herself, thus expressing her past transformation and relocation to a whole new existence in Spain. Through out time jazz has had many relationships with other styles of music but none so endearing as with flamenco. Ms. Ruth expounds on this with her passion and bringing the two together adding to the historic romance. In the fourth cut Buleria #1 the beat the ivories project from the start come at you with a fever pitch just igniting the fire in the belly. The first chorus comes in on a cloud but the ignition of the flamenco style just upped the octane of the listeners driven soul with ivories and skins afire. Your passions will be driven by a thousand nails, as you fall into this well constructed vibrant echo called Temporary Home, the ninth cut on this spin. Written by Ms. Ruth, The solo string manipulation of guitarist Luis Robisco is outstanding and then after a well scripted chorus, the sizzling sax solo of Manuel Olmo just drives the cut into a new and exciting dimension which exits the piece with ones heart is still beating full speed. The nucleus of Sangria Jam is the pulse of Ms. Ruth with her past meeting the present in body and soul. The foundation is her Canadian roots seeded in a little log cabin to the adventure she undertook back to her homeland of Spain. There Ms. Ruth found solace in her spirit and music, which together inspired her melodic and lyrical gifts. The project takes the listener to all compass points of her voyage by blanketing them with her flamenco beat and tucking them away with her lively ballads. Sangria Jam not only designs Ms. Ruth and a global storyteller but also an innovative jazz pedagogue.

# Obituaries

AL JARREAU, singer died on February 12, 2017. He was 76.

BENNY BART, drummer of the Mastersounds and Montgomery Brothers died on January 27, 2017. He was 86.

BILL HORVITZ, guitar, died on January 25, 2017. He was 69.

BUDDY BREGMA, arranger, died on January 8, 2017. He was 87.

BUDDY GRECO, piano and vocals, died on January 10, 2017. He was 90.

CHARLES BOBO SHAW, Avant-Garde Jazz Drummer, Dies at 69

CHARLES GOERING AKA BARRELHOUSE CHUCK, piano, died December 13, 2016. He was 58.

CHUCK BERRY, guitar, singer, songwriter, died on March 18, 2017. He was 90.

CHUCK STEWART, photographer, died on January 20, 2017. He was 89.

CLYDE STUBBLEFIELD, the 'Funky Drummer' for James Brown, died. He was 73.

ED BERGER, historian, died. He was 67.

HENRY "BUTCH" RUSSELL, guitarism died March 9th in Oklahoma City at age 71.

HORACE PARLAN, piano, died yesterday evening – Died on February 23, 2017. He was 86.

LARRY CORYELL, guitar, died on Sunday, February 19 in New York City.

Coryell, 73, passed away in his sleep at his hotel from natural causes. He'd performed his last two shows on Friday and Saturday, February 17 and 18, at the Iridium in New York City.

JAKI LIEBEZEIT, drums, died on January 21. He was 78.

JAMES COTTON, bluesman, harmonica, singer, songwriter, died on March 16, 2017. He was 81.

LEON WARE, producer who worked with Marvin Gaye, died on February 23, 2017 He was 77.

MICHAEL WHITE, violin, died on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2016. He was 86.

MISHA MENGELBERG, pianist, co founder ICP Orchestra. died on March 3, 2017. He was 81.

SVEND ASMUSSEN, an early master of Jazz violin, died on Feb. 11, 2017. He was 100.