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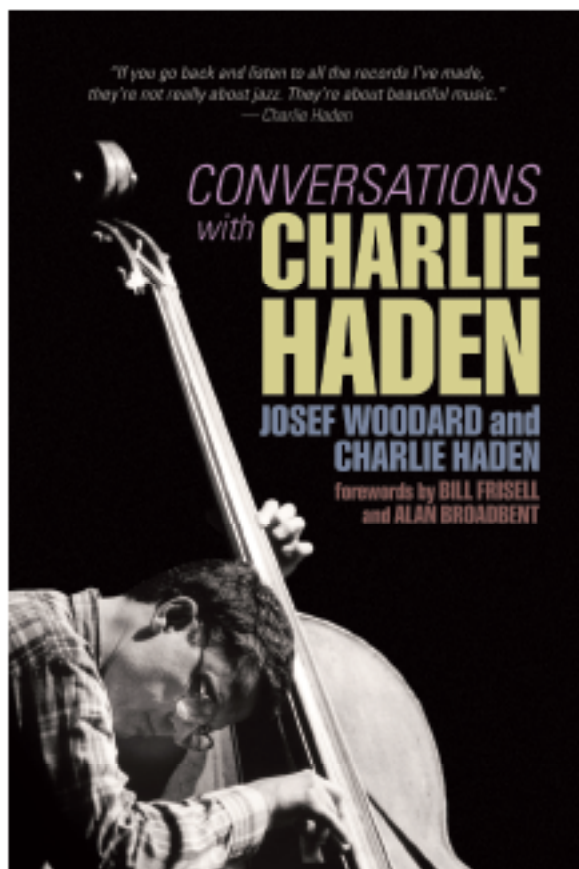
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New book about **Charlie Haden**



"Charlie Haden's story is a classic American saga, and Josef Woodard allows him to tell it eloquently and in soaring detail."
—Francis Davis

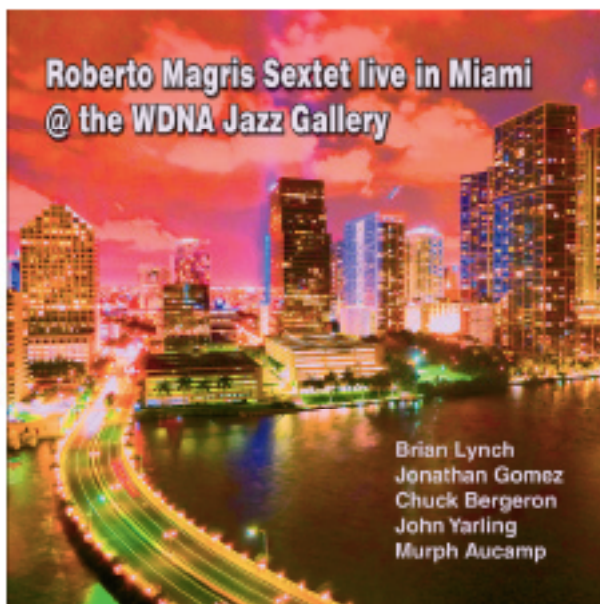
"Woodard's treasure trove of interviews with Charlie Haden gives us such an intimate feeling of the jazz giant that we feel like we're sitting in the room with an old friend... Haden opens up about his iconic musical associations over the years, allowing us see access into the broader world of jazz itself."
—Michelle Mercer

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 Eley, Carla Eley, Keith Jarrett, Billy Higgins, Paul Motton, Dewey Redman, Pat Metheny, Geri Allen, Brad Mehldau, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and many others.

Published by Simon & James Press (www.simonjamespress.com).
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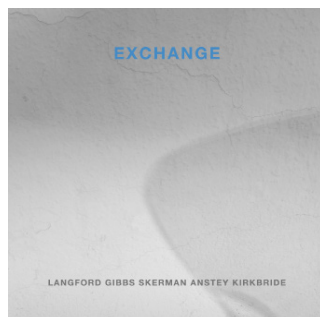
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EXCHANGE: Paul Anstey bass, Phil Gibbs guitar, Hugh Kirkbride bass, Mark Langford reeds, Roger Skerman drums

"...Listening to the long cycling improv of Streams, it is possible to glimpse five musicians taking on a collective act of spontaneous performance. It is a high order encounter...Jo fellow Langford's lines dropping into the abyss through that long black slick (also bass clarinet) is to touch the bottom of the ocean. The full depth"

Steve Day, *Sandy Brown Jazz*



ANGEL PAVEMENT by Konik
Mark Langford tenor sax & bass clarinet, Dominic Lash double bass, Roger Telford drums.

"...Telford with his jittery, crashing flow invites for a strong presence, a constant incantational lament...Langford builds on Telford's while water capricious with careful, deliberate pace on the snickily maneuvering bass clarinet and the sparkling tenor sax, foaming and spraying as he flies around the tightest corners. ...Lash's pizzicato becomes clear as a diving force, as constant propulsion, economic, with agile bandwidth and no steady rhythm, more like Heisenberg's particle cloud"

Robert Dillner, *Eard Alchemy*

FRINGE MUSIC: Paul Anstey double bass, Phil Gibbs guitar, Bob Helson drums, Mark Langford reeds.

"... Right from the off, there is a light, sprightly, integrated weaving of lines. Mr. Gibbs sounds relaxed as he plays a series of quick yet calm waves with that careful older jazz guitar tone. When Tenor man, Langford comes in, he also seems to be riding the waves created by the tight yet slippery rhythm team. This five quartet sounds like they have been playing together for a long while..."

Bruce Lee Gallanter, *EMJG*



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"*Four All Times*" with vibraphone lead at the outset is getting close to Eric Ripley's timeless masterpiece *Out To Lunch!* ... this group works so well together as one cohesive unit. Listening to each other, always listening.—Roger Evans, *All About Jazz*

"... everything is ruled by the power of collective creativity."
—Anand Ambekar, *Jazzworld*

"It's a beautiful mesh of players....all four musicians merging into a unique soundscape."
—Robert Tompkins, *The New York City Jazz Record*

First Set

CAROL LIEBOWITZ (piano), NOCK LOPES (alto saxophone)

Carol Liebowitz / Nock Lopes
FIRST SET



"... the music proceeds intimately, almost as in a flashback of ideas, dense with meaning. ... *Boy's Joy*, with the alto sax's beautiful lines, clean and precise, is a truly inspired performance. ... the two musicians know how to seduce the listener and leave a deep mark in his state of being."—Vitório La Costa, *americanjazz.it*

"This improvisational pair recalls the duo performance of Steve Lacy and Paul Bollen in style and intensity.... almost telepathic.... hypnotically engaging...."—Roger Evans, *All About Jazz*

"Both players evince an acute sensitivity to one another and to their own internal impulses, keeping the music alive and unpredictable across a wide spectrum of human feeling."—Paul Winter, *americanjazz.com* (musicallyspeaking: an avid listener's observations)

Peggy Lindal Liebowitz

BILL PAYNE (clarinet), IVAN LINDAL (violin), CAROL LIEBOWITZ (piano)

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—Ray Astarion, *All About Jazz*

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—Vitório La Costa, *americanjazz.it*

"Simply put, they sound like an old trio.... a soundscape in which each dynamic and rhythmic contrast is of the utmost importance.... the recording is superb.... captures the perfect environment for this supremely sensitive trio, from whom I hope we hear a lot more."
—Rae Rubin, *Galena Magazine*



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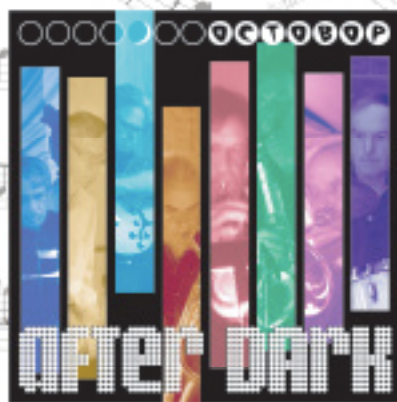
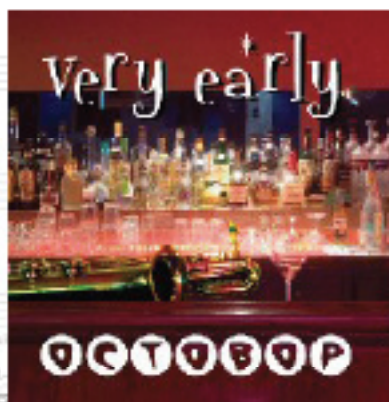
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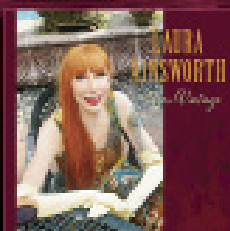
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We thank Lou Donaldson, Louis Hayes, Camille Thurman, Harold Mabern, Arturo O'Farrill, Dezon Douglas, George Coleman, John Webber, Juni Booth, Jimmy Cobb, Reggie Workman, Slide Hampton, and all the many musicians who performed for us at
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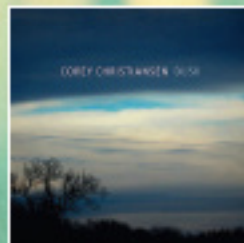
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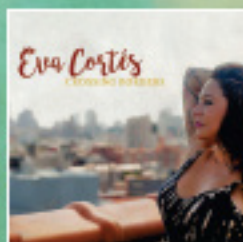
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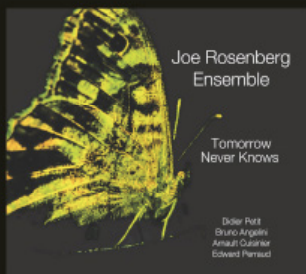
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Creative Improvised Music Projects

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 clean, 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*

"She doesn't just cover Warren Zevon, Elvis Costello, and James Taylor, she reupholsters them..." **Hew Hallock**

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"It's been a long time since I've come across a CD that compelled me to listen to every song from top to bottom, and left me wanting for more. The song selections and performances truly reflect the incredible chemistry between Jenna and Rolf. Needless to say, I absolutely love their CD!!! Go Jenna & Rolf!!!" - **Larry Batiste (Music Director for the Grammys) on Jenna & Rolf's "Spark" CD.**

Vocalist Jenna Mammina & guitarist Rolf Sturm present this 2017 collection of classic songs from Jimmy Van Heusen & Sammy Cahn, Tania Maria, and Rodgers & Hart to Soundgarden, Todd Rundgren, and Cheap Trick!



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Top 10 Best Album of 2017 - Cadence Magazine
Jerome Wilson's Top 12 Best Of 2017 - All About Jazz

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**New CIMPoL releases:****CIMPoL 5032-5036:****CIMPfest 2011: LIVE IN VILLACH, AUSTRIA**

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

CIMPoL 5037:**Trio-X - Live at Kerrytown**

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

CIMPoL 5038:**Trio-X - Live at the Sugar Maple**

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

CIMPoL 5039:**Trio-X - Live at Craig Kessler & Janet Lessner's**

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

CIMPoL 5040:**Trio-X - Live in Green Bay and Buffalo**

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

Earlier CIMPoL releases:

| | | |
|-----------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 5001 | Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen | AIR: Above and Beyond |
| 5002 | Odean Page | Serenity |
| 5003 | Joe McPhee & Dominic Duval | The Open Door |
| 5004 | David Bond Quintet | The Early Show (live at Twin's Jazz) |
| 5005 | Salm Washington | Live at St. Nick's |
| 5006-5012 | Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen | Live on Tour 2005 |
| 5013 | Gebhard Ullmann + Steve Swell 4tet | Live in Montreal |
| 5014 | Eric 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 2008: Live in Villach, Austria | Live in Villach, Austria |
| 5025 | Seth Meicht and the Big Sound Ensemble | Live in Philadelphia |
| 5026 | Eric Flaks 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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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

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



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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."

TOP TEN RECORDINGS AND CONCERTS FROM 201743

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Top Ten Recordings 2017



Top Ten Recordings 2017

Robert Iannapolo

- Jane Ira Bloom - *Wild Lines (Outline)*
- Buffalo Jazz Octet - *Pausa Live (Cadence)*
- Sylvie Courvoisier / Mary Halvorson - *Crop Circles (Relative Pitch)*
- Kaja Drakslar Octet - *Gledalec (Clean Feed)*
- Fujii / Smith / Tamura / Mori - *Aspiration (Libra)*
- Gato Libre - *Neko (Libra)*
- Jason Kao Hwang - *Sing House (Euonymus)*
- Mario Pavone Dialect Trio - *Chrome (Playscape)*
- Wadada Leo Smith - *Solo: Reflections And Meditations On Monk (TUM)*
- Tyshawn Sorey - *Verisimilitude (Pi)*



Top Ten Recordings 2017

Jerome Wilson

- Brian Landrus Orchestra - *Generations (BlueLand)*
- Dominique Eade & Ran Blake - *Town and Country (Sunnyside)*
- Matt Wilson - *Honey And Salt (Palmetto)*
- Wadada Leo Smith - *Najwa (TUM)*
- Joe Rosenberg Ensemble - *Tomorrow Never Knows (Quark)*
- Laura Campisi - *Double Mirror (self-released)*
- Jane Ira Bloom - *Wild Lines: Improvising Emily Dickinson (Outline)*
- Harris Eisenstadt - *Recent Developments (Songlines)*
- Jihye Lee Orchestra - *April (self-released)*
- Rudresh Mahanthappa's Indo-Pak Coalition - *Agrima (self-released)*



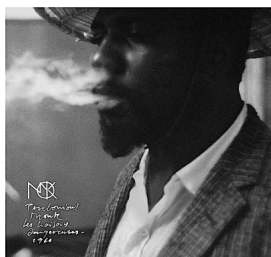
Top Ten Recordings 2017

Larry Hollis

- Bill Charlap - *Uptown, Downtown (Impulse)*
- Peter Berntein - *Signals Live (Smoke Sessions)*
- Dave Stryker - *Strykin' Ahead (Strikezone)*
- Tom Harrell - *Moving Picture (Highnote)*
- Joey DeFrancesco - *Project Freedom (Mack Avenue)*
- Harold Mabern - *To Love and To Be Loved (Smoke Sessions)*
- Pat Martino - *Formidable (Highnote)*
- Steve Slagle - *Manhattan Alto (Panorama)*
- Danny Grissett - *Remembrance (Savant)*
- Grant Steward Trio - *Roll On (Cellar Live)*



Top Ten Recordings 2017



Top Ten Reissues/Historical 2017

Larry Hollis

Thelonious Monk - *Les Liasons de Dangereues (Sam)*

Art Pepper/Sonny Stitt - *West Coast Sessions, volume 1 (Omnivore)*

Hank Mobley in Holland - *To One So Sweet (Dutch Jazz Archive)*

Wyton Kelly/Wes Montgomery - *Smokin' in Seattle (Resonance)*

Art Farmer/Jackie McLean *Complete Live in Tokyo 77 (Jazz on Jazz)*

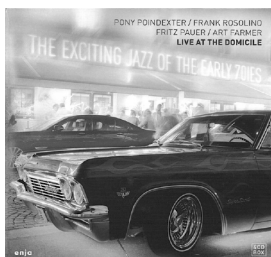
Woody Shaw/Louis Hayes - *The Tour, Volume 2 (Highnote)*

Art Pepper/Jack Sheldon - *West Coast Sessions, Volume 5 (Omnivore)*

Roy Haynes - *Modern Group (Legacy)*

Gene Harris/Three Sounds - *Groovin' (Hard Resonance)*

Pony Poindexter/Frank Rosalino/Fritz Pauer/
Art Farmer - *The Exciting Jazz of the Early Seventies, Live at the Domicile (Enja)*



Top Ten Recordings 2017

Ludwig Van Trikt

George Colligan - *More Powerful (Whirlwind Recordings)*

Tiziano Tononi and Southbound - *Trouble no more...All men are brothers (Long Song Records)*

Ken Schaphorst Big Band - *How To Say Goodbye (JCA)*

Philipp Gropper's Philm - *Sun Ship (Why PlayJazz)*

Jass - *Mix of Sun and Clouds (Yolk Music)*

Brian McCarthy - *The Better Angels of Our Nature (Revolution Recording Collective)*

China Moses - *Nightintales (MPS)*

Jason Rigby: Detroit- Cleveland Trio - *ONE (Fresh Sound New Talent)*

Steve Coleman's Natal Eclipse - *Morphogenesis (Pi)*

Ambrose Akinmusire - *A Rift In Decorum - Live at The Village Vanguard" (Blue Note)*



Top Ten Recordings 2017



Top Ten Recordings 2017

Ken Weiss

Rudresh Mahanthappa's Indo-Pak Coalition - *Agrima* (self-produced)

Miles Okazaki - *Trickster* (PI Recordings)

The Vampires - *The Vampires Meet Lionel Loueke* (Earshift Music)

Irene Schweizer-Joey Baron - *Live!* (Intakt)

Satoko Fujii Quartet - *Live At Jazz Room Cortez* (Cortez Sound)

Thelonious Monk - *Les Liaisons Dangereuses 1960* (Sam Records/SAGA)

Nick Finzer - *Hear & Now* (Outside In Music)

Bobby Zankel & The Wonderful Sound 6 - *Celebrating William Parker @ 65* (Not Two)

Brian Landrus Orchestra - *Generations* (BlueLand)

Beholder - *Claim No Native Land* (self-produced)



Top Ten Recordings 2017

Don Lerman

Will Caviness Sextet - *A Walk* (Cellar Live)

Ed Neumeister - *Suite Ellington* (PAO Records)

Billy Mintz - *Ugly Beautiful* (Thirteenth Note Records)

Roberta Piket - *One for Marian Celebrating Marian McPartland* (Thirteenth Note Records)

David Friesen & Glen Moore Bactrian (Origin)

Terrell Stafford - *Forgive and Forget* (HHM)

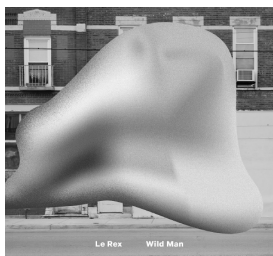
Stevko Busch / Paul Van Kemenade - *Dedication*

DNL2015.2 / KEMO

Le Rex - *Wild Man* (Cuneiform)

Chicago Jazz Philharmonic - *Havana Blue* (316 Records)

Valentin Clastrier/Steven Kamperman - *Fabuloseries* (Home Records)



Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2017



12/4/16 Charles Lloyd & The Marvels at Montgomery County Community College. Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



12/8/16 Nels Cline-Larry Ochs-Gerald Cleaver Trio at Johnny Brenda's. Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



1/21/17 William Parker's 65th Birthday Celebration at Painted Bride Art Center. Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



2/25/17 James "Blood" Ulmer's Odyssey Band at Montgomery County Community College. Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

Top Concerts 2017 – Philadelphia, PA *Ken Weiss*

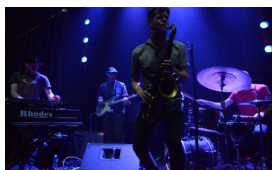
12/4/16 Charles Lloyd & The Marvels at Montgomery County Community College – The 78-year-old NEA Jazz Master showed off his many musical sides with the help of Bill Frisell, Reuben Rogers and Eric Harland. Starting off with a blues, before moving into a Dylan protest song and then a country hillbilly, rambling rendition of "Shenandoah," Lloyd ended with a Christian hymn and some free playing in-between.

12/8/16 Nels Cline-Larry Ochs-Gerald Cleaver Trio at Johnny Brenda's (Ars Nova Workshop) – The trio had not performed together since their last round of gigs eleven months prior, the last of which came in this town (it was listed as a top 2016 gig). This performance topped their last one. Cline was ferocious on guitar and twiddled some interesting effects that Ochs responded to immediately as Cleaver ground out surprises. Newly formed music was in the air.

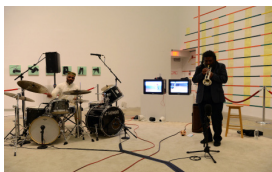
1/21/17 Bobby Zankel & The Wonderful Sound 6 Celebrating William Parker @ 65 at Painted Bride Art Center (Ars Nova Workshop) – A thrilling one-off event in celebration of the prolific and innovative bassist and his journey into Medicare. Organized by alto saxophonist Bobby Zankel, with strong support from Dave Burrell (p), Steve Swell (tbn), Diane Monroe (vin) and Muhammad Ali (d), the long pieces had plenty of variability and the solos that came late often reached peaks. Their out version of "Happy Birthday" was an added bonus.

2/25/17 James "Blood" Ulmer's Odyssey Band at Montgomery County Community College – Just days past his 77th birthday, the harmolodic bluesman broadened perspectives of those in the audience. Charles Burnham (vin) and Warren Benbow (d) helped guide the music's complex shifts and flow.

Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2017



3/7/17 Donny McCaslin's Blackstar Group at Johnny Brenda's.
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



3/18/17 Wadada Leo Smith and Pheeroan akLaff at ICA.
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



4/30/14 Part of Outsiders Improvised and Creative Music Festival
Keir Neuringer, Kahil El'Zabar, David Murray, Jamaaladeen Tacuma.
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



9/16/17 Hank Roberts, Bill Frisell, Petra Haden, Luke Bergman.
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

3/7/17 Donny McCaslin's Blackstar Group at Johnny Brenda's (Ars Nova Workshop) – McCaslin's group famously backed David Bowie's final project but they proved their newly gained star power was no empty title. McCaslin's crew cooked on several Bowie titles while heavily featuring Jason Lindner's synth work. McCaslin impressed with dynamic blowing but it was hardest to take eyes off drummer Nate Wood who crafted his own dialogue.

3/18/17 Wadada Leo Smith and Pheeroan akLaff at ICA (Institute of Contemporary Art) (Ars Nova Workshop) – Although Smith had played with the younger akLaff since the drummer was 19, this marked the first time they played in duet. They performed The Blue Mountain's Sun Drummer, which Smith had done with the late Eddie Blackwell in 1986. A stunning display of uncanny chops and invention with no dull moments.

4/30/17 Third annual Outsiders Improvised and Creative Music Festival at Philadelphia International House - Bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma's event that hits on International Jazz Day and always features a wide array of heavy hitters who rarely, if ever, play in town but many of whom are tight with the gregarious organizer. This year's fest featured the Harriet Tubman Trio, Tacuma with David Murray, Kahil El'Zabar and Keir Neuringer, as well as Craig Harris and Jamie Saft in bands.

9/16/17 Bill Frisell HARMONY at Ardmore Music Hall – The guitar maestro dove into his beloved book of Americana songbook with the stellar support of vocalist Petra Haden, cellist Hank Roberts and electric bassist Luke Bergman. Normally an entire set of the same tempo tunes would be a drag but this performance was too beautiful for that to be an issue.

Top Concerts - Philadelphia 2017



10/7/17 Art Ensemble of Chicago.
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



10/27/17 Benny Green -
Christian McBride-Lewis Nash.
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

10/5-8/17 The October Revolution of Jazz & Contemporary Music at FringeArts – I'll stretch the top gig definition to include this new blockbuster festival produced by Ars Nova Workshop which unleashed an adventurous lineup of music inventors that spanned free Jazz, free improvisation and contemporary Classical genres. Standout performances from Anthony Braxton, Claire Chase, David Torn's Sun of Goldfinger, Burton Greene and Zeena Parkins/Brian Chase Duo fit well with memorably inspired sets by The Art Ensemble of Chicago and the Sun Ra Arkestra led by Marshall Allen.

10/27/17 Christian McBride-Benny Green-Lewis Nash at South Jazz Parlor – Acclaimed bassist McBride played in front of his hometown audience and family and shared the spotlight respectfully with his powerhouse trio. Each man dazzled with off the chart chops in the cozy club and told tales and spun music revolving around late bassist Ray Brown, who had mentored all three of them.

Top Concerts 2017 – Rochester, NY *Robert Iannapolo*

3/10/2017 Dave Liebman / Bill Dobbins / Eastman Studio Orchestra - Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY

5/24/2017 In The Sea (Tristan Honsiger / Joshua Zubot / Nicolas Caloia) - Bop Shop, Rochester, NY,

9/16/2017 EIO (Dave McIntyre / Ryan Oldham / Brian Padovic) and Friends - Bop Shop, Rochester, NY,

Short Takes Vancouver, Canada

The 2017 TD Van. International Jazz fest ended July 2nd with Scott Hamilton 3 (Rossano Sportiello piano and bassist J.J. Shakur) appearing at Pyatt Hall. This drummer-less trio played 2 sets of standards, ballads and bossa novas starting with Tangerine, Old Fashioned Love by James P. Johnson, Three Little Words, Meditation and an exquisite version of Darn That Dream. Pianist Sportiello had a solo feature on Estate on which he displayed formidable stride chops. Bassist Shakur shone on his introduction to Black Orpheus. Hamilton's playing displayed his Prez roots throughout, constantly swinging and endlessly inventive. A surprise tune was Frank Sinatra's hit The Summer Wind that swung mightily. Other groups that appear at the festival were Cyrus Chestnut 3; Emmet Cohen 3 with Ron Carter; Buster Williams and Something More;; Branford Marsalis & the Van. Symphony Orch; Ingrid & Christine Jensen with Ben Monder; Kenny Barron playing a solo concert; and Tierney Sutton's band playing the music of Sting. The free afternoon concerts at performance works are always worth hearing. I heard Sylvie Courvoisier's 3 with Drew Gress & Kenny Wolleson play her edgy but interesting tunes including one that I thought sounded like free-from ragtime. I also heard the Wojcinski-Szmada 4tet – a Polish group comprised of bassist Ksawery Wojcinski, trumpeter Maurycy Wojcinski, pianist Szymon Wojcinski and drummer Krzysztof Smaeda. This group was completely amazing playing originals whose titles I couldn't spell but had high energy and was imaginative. Their music ranged from meditative ballads, bluesy originals and one that recalled Miles' mid-60s group. The band were highly skilled especially the bassist who was all over his bass. A very impressive band! A third group I heard at Performance Works was the Bob Murphy Tribute Project. Bob Murphy was a local pianist, composer and teacher who passed in 2015. The group included trumpeter Brad Turner, Bill Runge alto sax, Tom Keenlyside tenor/flute, Miles Black piano, Miles Foxx-Hill bass & drummer Buff Allen. The band played Murphy's originals whose titles reflected his offbeat sense of humor such as Don't Touch Me There and an up-tempo swinger called Here Hold This. Bob would have been pleased to hear his music played with such love by those who played with and knew him over the years. Over at Frankie's Jazz Club, guitarist Dave Sikula's Quartet Wes played a tribute to Wes Montgomery with Chris Gestrin piano, bassist Paul Rushka & drummer Jesse Cahill. Also at Frankie's was pianist Tony Foster's quartet that featured guitarist Pasquale Grasso, bassist Nate Parker and drummer Joe Poole. This was one of the highlights of the festival for me. Grasso is the most impressive guitarist I've heard in many years, a throw-back to 50's guitarists like Jimmy Raney and Chuck Wayne. He played clean, lightning-fast, single-note lines and put his chops to work on bop classics like Bud Powell's Celia, Monk's Hackensack and Bird's Relaxin' at Camarillo as well as standards When Lights Are Low and I Can't Get Started. Drummer Poole played brushes most of the night, keeping things swinging. I have to hear more of Grasso!...Frankie's has a full lineup scheduled for the rest of 2017. Van Django kicks Oct. off 10/1, while trumpeter Brad Turner is Oct. artist in residence appearing 10/4 & 11. Pianist George Colligan appears 10/5 with bassist Jodi Proznick & drummer Jesse Cahill. Cat Toren celebrates

Short Takes Vancouver, Canada

Thelonious Monk's centennial 10/10 with trumpeter Kevin Elashuk, Dave Say reeds, guitarist Dave Sikula & bassist James Meger. Matt Jorgensen + 451 appear 10/12 followed by Miles Black's 3 plus vocalist Greta Matassa 10/13-14, John Stetch & Vulneraville's CD release 10/19, Jeremy Kahn 4tet, 10/20-21, Marquis Hill Blacktet 10/21, Tim Tamashiro 10/22 & New York's Eric Alexander 10/27-28. In November, saxophonist Steve Kaldestad is the artist in residence appearing 11/1. Akiko Tsuruga & trumpeter Joe Magnarelli appear 11/3-4, David Braid & Mike Murley 11/5, Corey Weeds Little Big Band 11/10-11 and Jeremy Pelt 11/24-25. Elsewhere, Hudson with Jack DeJohnette, Larry Grenadier, John Medeski & John Scofield are at The Chan Centre 10/18. At Cap. University, pianist Brad Mehldau appears 10/24 at the BlueShore Centre for the Performing Arts followed by Maria Schneider 10/27 with the "A" Band and NiteCap vocal group. Diana Krall appears at the QueenE theatre 12/8...For Vancouver jazz information, go to <http://www.coastaljazz.ca>.

Short Takes Chicago, IL

Jimmy Bennington Colour and Sound
featuring: Jimmy Bennington- drums, Fred Jackson Jr. (AACM)- tenor/
soprano saxophones/ flute, Artie Black- tenor saxophone, Dustin Laurenzi-
tenor saxophone, Mike Harmon- bass.

*Mon Sept 11, 2017, 9:30 pm
the Whistler / 'Relax Attack' Series
(2421 N. Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL, 60647, Ph: 773-227-3530)

*Jimmy Bennington Colour and Sound also appear the 1st Sunday of every
month at the Historic Heartland Cafe, 7-10pm, \$5.00 cover
(7006 N. Glenwood Ave, Chicago, IL, 60626, Ph: 773-274-5463)
www.jbcolourandsound.com

Short Takes Calgary, Canada

April was jazz appreciation month in Calgary, which meant four weeks liberally peppered with about 50 jazz performances. Among them, the Calgary Association for the Development of Music Education (CADME) presented its 19th Annual Celebration of Youth In Jazz. This year featured multiple Grammy Award-winning saxophonist Ted Nash, in residency with numerous high school and community jazz ensembles that produced five days of public performances. Also in the special event category, North West Calgary Jazz brought in New York-based Le Boeuf Brothers on the release tour for their newest album, *Imaginist*. Drummer Jon McCaslin, with percussionist Bob Fenske and guest tap dancer Shayne Johnson from *Decidedly Jazz Danceworks*, presented a two-hour performance at the central public library aimed at promoting the library's jazz collections. The American composer, arranger (*Airmen of Note*), educator, bandleader Alan Baylock guest-conducted the University of Calgary Jazz Orchestra. Alberta's Latin jazz ensemble *Montuno West* brought back the Grammy-winning trombonist Luis Bonilla for yet another creative collaboration, and so on. The whole shebang soared to a high note at month end, with very satisfying international and local jazz music and the celebration of International Jazz Day on April 30, along with announcements of goodies to come.

The final concert in the TD Jazz series at the Jack Singer Concert Hall was the Miles Electric Band—a group of global artists who span generations and genres and who really kicked up some dust with their Miles repertoire plus their original tunes. The all-star lineup is led by Grammy-winning drummer, former bandmate and nephew of the late jazz icon Vincent Wilburn, Jr. Twice Grammy-nominated pianist Robert Irving III, P-funk guitarist Blackbyrd McKnight, percussionist Munyungo Jackson, saxophonist Antoine Roney (Lenny Kravitz, Elvin Jones), the Rolling Stones bassist Darryl Jones, programmer/re-mixer DJ Logic, and Grammy-nominated trumpeter Christian Scott complete the roster. This stellar finale of the season also brought an announcement of the 2017/18 TD Jazz series. First up: the hard-swinging jazz supergroup *Hudson*, featuring the great Jack DeJohnette, Larry Grenadier, John Medeski and John Scofield on Oct. 17. They are on tour in honor of DeJohnette's 75th birthday this year and are expected to release a studio album this summer. It promises a mix of original music with "extraordinary renditions of songs" inspired by Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Jimi Hendrix and others. Next will be the lighter-swinging American jazz composer, pianist, and three-time Grammy-winning musician Ramsey Lewis, with vocalist Ann Hampton Callaway, and trumpeter Marquis Hill on Nov. 17. The impressive US vocalist Stacey Kent, whose repertoire includes the *Great American Songbook*, French *chanson* and Brazilian music, plus original tunes, performs Feb. 22. The series closes with a flourish: a genre-bending fusion of jazz, progressive rock and psychedelic soul, with African, Middle Eastern and Caribbean rhythms, as embodied in Ms. Lisa Fischer & *Grand Baton* on Apr. 26. Arts Commons, the name of the building in which the Jack Singer Concert Hall resides, also offers a world music series that often encompasses performances appealing to jazz fans. One such group, the *Sachal Ensemble*, will cut loose with their symbiosis of jazz and traditional

Short Takes Calgary, Canada

Pakistani music Nov. 7. I have heard their cover of Dave Brubeck's Take Five so often on FM jazz stations in the past few years that I can't imagine passing up the chance to hear them perform it live--flute, bansuri, tabla, sitar, guitar and dholaks a'blazing!

From full-on global on the big stage on Thursday we went to full-on local on the intimate stage of Lolita's Lounge the next night. Vocalists Glennis Houston and Deb Rasmussen performed a crowd-delighting friendly musical sparring match of standards, originals and scat, backed up by the equally delighting inventive musicianship of pianist Sheldon Zandboer, bassist Simon Fisk and drummer Robin Tufts.

The biggest deal of the weekend was, of course, Jazz Day on Sunday, with a citywide celebration organized by the volunteer collaborative JazzYYC. It was the fifth time Calgary celebrated United Nations International Jazz Day and this was their biggest yet, with 16 jazz events taking place across the city from morning to night. Most of the day's activities were centred in the city's oldest commercial neighbourhood of Inglewood, with a jazz walk featuring free live performances at five venues from noon to 9 p.m. An open house and the official Jazz Day concert were held at the King Eddy room in the National Music Centre, with performances by the Ambrose University Ensemble led by Joel Untinen, the B3-4tet led by baritone saxophonist and composer Gareth Bane, and tap dance performances by the Tri-Tone Rhythm Ensemble. Performances across the city included a jazz brunch, jazz duos at public library branches, a matinee with Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, and an evening concert at the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts at Mount Royal University, starring Calgary's elegant pianist and composer Michelle Grégoire.

Jazz Day started out with an announcement of the acts that will appear at this year's JazzYYC Summer Festival, June 15 - 18. New this year is a main stage concert at the Taylor Centre featuring the powerful and sensitive playing of four-time Juno Award-winning pianist Renee Rosnes in a duo with acclaimed Toronto bassist Neil Swainson June 17.

There also will be three concert series. The Canadian series at the Ironwood Stage & Grill opens June 15 with a sax summit featuring the Joel Miller Quartet from Montreal, and the Brett McDonald Quartet (formerly of Calgary, now NYC). Vocalist Cheryl Fisher, whose latest album *Quietly* There won a silver medal in the Global Music Awards, a competition for independent artists featured in *Billboard* Magazine, performs on Friday. Then on Saturday night, Calgary's beloved veteran trumpeter Al Muirhead's Canada Session features guest vocalist and pianist Laila Biali from Toronto. The series concludes Sunday with Halifax's Gypsophilia, a sextet who have won four East Coast Music Awards.

A new late night series at the Ironwood will have three shows: Calgarian Jim Brennan's 10tet +1, featuring Jon Day (Friday), the Edmonton vocalist and composer Mallory Chipman (Saturday) and a jam session and wrap party hosted by Brett McDonald (Sunday).

The late night international series at Lolita's Lounge includes the Gabriel Palatchi Trio from Argentina, guitarist Nobuki Takamen, from Japan and New York City, in trio, and the Fraser/Davis/Malaby Trio from Toronto and

Short Takes Calgary, Canada

NYC. Guitarists Takamen and Portland, Oregon's John Stowell (who will be performing with Fisher Friday night) will give a guitar workshop. Joel Miller will give a saxophone workshop, and Cheryl Fisher and Laila Biali will give a vocal workshop, all at the National Music Centre and all free of charge. Yet another jazz walk is being planned for the festival, with numerous performances primarily by local artists at various venues throughout Inglewood. It will be a busy four days, both for the artists and the fans. This year, many of the acts are being shared with the jazz festival at Medicine Hat, which is a three-hour drive east on the Trans-Canada from Calgary. The Hat's festival runs to June 25, starting the same day as Calgary's ends. Among the exceptions to shared performers is the American guitarist and keyboardist Kurt Rosenwinkel and his Caipi project, scheduled to hit the stage at the Studio Club in the Hat's lovely Esplanade arts centre on June 22. Another is the trio led by Toronto keyboardist David Restivo, with Vancouver bassist Jodi Proznick and NYC drummer Alyssa Falk on June 23. The festival is known for being able to throw a rousing dance party. This year, it is presenting a swing dance for the first time, with Winnipeg trombonist and bandleader Brad Shigeta's Swingtime Band, along with free dance lessons in the afternoon before the show for anyone new to the idea. There also will be, for the third time, a Latin dance party, with a band led by Cuban-born Yoslai De La Rosa, an international recording star who has lived in Canada since 2009. Despite putting on a comprehensive festival, Medicine Hat is not a large city (63,260 people), so venues can be in short supply. The organizers, with producer Lyle Rebbeck at the helm, have come up with creative solutions, such as the city transit bus terminal parkade, for a free dance party with bands Kool Ray and the Hip Katz (local) and Teresa Riley and the Bourbon Rebels (formerly local, now Vancouver). The audience seems to love the idea of alternative spaces. The Latin dance party, which typically takes place in a hangar at the Medicine Hat Airport, has become one of the hottest ticket items in the 21-year history of the festival.

Sheila Thistlethwaite

Jazz Stories: Lester Chambers

LESTER CHAMBERS,
BORN IN 1940 IN
MISSISSIPPI, USA ON
THE MILES DAVIS
GET UP WITH IT
SESSIONS.
COMPILED BY T. WATTS



The Chambers Brothers
Album: The Time Has
circa 1960s.



The Chambers Brothers
Album: The Time Has
Come

As much as lovers of Miles Davis are not going to want to believe it, the Prince of Darkness pulled a dirty fast one on me.

I first remember Miles Davis checking out the Chambers Brothers while we were still on the New York coffee house circuit. One night as we were on stage at the Café Wha?, I saw Miles (even though I didn't know him yet) standing in the kitchen doorway watching us perform. During a break, I asked the bartender who that was.

"Aw man, that's the world famous trumpet player, Miles Davis. Don't you know him?"

"No, but I'd like to meet him," I said. As fate would have it, Miles was on at the end of our last set.

However, about a year later, we were doing pretty well and playing a disco in Greenwich Village called the Downtown.

Miles came in there a few times and left messages for me to get in touch with him. I didn't respond because, you know, sometimes you put things in your pocket and they don't come back out after the little girl comes by!

Anyway, speaking of girls, I introduced him to his then future wife, Betty Mabry who, of course became Betty Davis. She was one of a kind and before her time. She was the deal. She was real and totally honest with herself. She and Janis Joplin had the same kind of heart.

After the Chambers Brothers signed with Columbia we started recording the album, *The Time Has Come* at their New York studio. One day we were getting out of the car and Betty Mabry, whom we had met at the Electric Circus or the Cheetah Club at a gig, (I can't remember which) ran up on us talking fast and said, "I just wrote this song for Lester, cuz I know he can sing it. I know he can sing it, I just wrote it." Then she started singing it, "I'm goin' uptown to Harlem, gonna let my hair down in Harlem..."

I thought to myself, "This is right on, so we went upstairs and presented it to David Rubinson and immediately worked it out and it became a very

Jazz Stories: Lester Chambers



The Chambers Brothers
Album: The Time Has
Come



Miles Davis Compilation
Album Get Up With It
1970-74.

well regarded song. While we were laying tracks for The Time Has Come, Miles was recording at the same time. When our group with Betty and her friends got off the elevator, Miles saw her and asked me later, "Who is that girl?"

"Her name is Betty."

"Oh man, I like her. That's my kind of woman. Who does she belong to?"

"She doesn't belong to anybody. We're just good friends."

"Man, I want to meet her. You gotta introduce me to her."

So I introduced them and the rest is history. As a matter of fact, I've not seen her since. On the song, "Uptown (To Harlem), David Rubinson hooked it up and the Chambers Brothers learned it right away. Rubinson brought in a great session piano playing woman whose name I can't remember who just made the music happen. It was a great session. Anyway, a couple of years went by and Miles and I became good hangout partners. He invited me to bring my harmonica up to his brownstone. This was in the early '70s. He was really keeping up with me on my off time with my brothers. It was interesting. We ate some shrimp which he loved and couldn't get enough of. He liked it so spicy hot that it was almost painful to eat. Then we would sit around and play music, him on trumpet and me on harmonica.

One day he invited me over and shouted from upstairs as I knocked, "Come on in, the door is open."

So I opened the door and went in. Now, Miles didn't have much furniture downstairs cuz he didn't want anybody comin' over. He was that into himself and had very few friends.

He had a stool sitting in the middle of the room. He said, "Have a seat, I'll be right down." I sat down on the stool. There is no art on the walls, nothin' to see. So I sat there, five, ten, fifteen minutes and it starts to seem ridiculous. There is nobody up there with him. Nothin' is movin'. Well, he was up there

Jazz Stories: Lester Chambers

watchin' me to see what I would do. So I got up and left.

The next time I heard from him, it was through Columbia Records. The message was that Miles Davis wanted me to record with him. The next day he sent a limo for me and I went to the studio. This was for the session that would eventually be released as his album *Get Up With It*. We recorded some stuff that he was doing and I played on it. When all the musicians took a break, I stayed in the studio cuz I knew what they were going to do. I told them I would be there when they got back. So I was writing this tune that I didn't have a name for and started playing, not knowing they were listening to and recording me in the sound booth.

Miles took it, incorporated it into a tune with the rest of band on the date, played all around it and called it "Red China Blues." Then, on the credits, he changed my name from Lester Chambers to Wally Chambers. I had no idea until the album came out. When I didn't get a copy, I went to see why. I found out that they had eliminated all the harmonica work I did on the album except for "Red China Blues."

I confronted Miles about it. "Miles, why did you call me Wally Chambers? You know damn well who I am. We've been doin' all these things together and you call me Wally Chambers?"

He looked at me, crossed his legs, took a hit off his cigarette and said, "Well, who the fuck is Wally?"

I said, "I don't know. Who is Wally?"

"That's what I mean. Wally don't exist. Wally ain't nobody. Wally ain't got no driver's license. Wally ain't got no birth certificate. Wally ain't got nothin'," retorted Miles.

"Miles, that's really cold," I said.

As if to challenge me, he responds, "What the fuck you wanna do?"

I just said, "You're a cold blooded motherfucker, man." I got up and left and never saw Miles again. I did however, call his company many times trying to get it straightened out. They finally told me that Miles said to leave it like it is. I appealed Columbia, but they too turned a deaf ear.

Miles had really wanted me to leave my brothers and go on the road with him. We really did sound good together. He tried to convince me that my brothers weren't on par with me musically.

He said, "I need you with me."

I said, "No man, I can't do that to my brothers. I am a Chambers Brother."

He called me a bunch of stupid mf's for that. Then he said, I was gonna offer you \$50,000 a month. I thought that might change your mind."

"No man, my loyalty is with the Chambers Brothers." In hindsight, I think that's why he bit me back. Cuz I wouldn't leave the Chambers Brothers and go with him.

Jazz Stories: Gunter Hampel



Louis Armstrong

GUNTER HAMPEL, NEW YORK MEMORIES

We have to be more personal, to develop our own, but also the team work. Of course that was Duke Ellington, that was Charlie Parker, all these guys, Monk. I've met Monk, I've met a lot of people in my life. And I learned from them how you just have to be yourself.

My name is Gunter Hampel, I was born in Gottingen, Germany in 1937. When I was very young, I listened to the AFN that was the American Forces Network Radio and the first thing that I was really aware about was Louis Armstrong, because that man was singing to me like no one has ever sang, and what Louis Armstrong was handing me there was giving me in his songs and music was hope and glory. And the terrible war, if I tell you of my experiences of this war you wouldn't believe it. But we don't want to go into that now. But this is the way I was like turned on to jazz. Because I had experienced nothing but war in my life: being eight years old I thought the whole world was on fire. So when I heard Louis Armstrong, because I am a musician, my father was a piano player and roof maker to make his money, but I heard something which I had never heard before so he turned me on, Louis Armstrong turned me on, I couldn't have asked for a better person to turn me on than Louis. From that moment on I felt there was something that I wanted to go along to, this is how my life really started, when I was turned on to jazz music.

There was a concert in New York which was called the History of Jazz, so the concert was starting, New York, all famous musicians, with Dixieland and Swing and went all the way up to modern times And I and Perry Robinson, who was in my band at the time, we were invited to join. It was in one of those churches. And so when they played Dixieland, we didn't wait till the free jazz was on, we played with those Dixieland players and people were saying "Hey I thought these guys were free jazz musicians they cannot play, yeah? You know, we played with our clarinets, we played Dixieland and Swing and when it came more and more to the modern times, then a lot of these people stopped playing. But there was this trombone player, was a very old man, old black man, he kept on playing. His name was J.C. Higgenbotham. He played with Louis Armstrong

Jazz Stories: Gunter Hampel

and all that stuff. And then when we played the free part, he couldn't stand any more and he sat down, and later when he was getting off the stage, he said, when you call this free jazz, I've played this all my life he said. Okay? So that is the real message of jazz.



When I was going out on the streets in the night at 2 o'clock in New York, to go to the river, because when I had my head full and been working all day like in an office in my house, I go take a bike ride to get fresh air, because the fresh air is coming from the sea into the city. And there, all the people are dancing, singing and walking and all this stuff and they were doing just, I mean they were doing more jazz live than you could hear from the jazz musicians playing in the clubs. So the music, the hip hop, etc was something wonderful.



Gunter Hampel 2008

Jazz Stories: The Necks

Taken by Ken Weiss on
February 26, 2017. Photos
by Ken Weiss
A.



Tony Buck
Photo Credit:
Copyright Ken Weiss



Chris Abrahams
Photo Credit:
Copyright Ken Weiss



Lloyd Swanton
Photo Credit:
Copyright Ken Weiss

TONY BUCK (PERCUSSION) MEMORIES

When I was a kid, I'd be in the house looking out at the garden, and where the lawn was really a tight, hard line of green to the brown of the soil, where the rose bushes were, when I went outside I remember being really aware of the closer I got, the less defined this border between the green and the brown was. It wasn't just a straight, hard edge. As I played around in the garden, you could see that the ratio of light green to brown changing, it wasn't a clear, hard line and that the transition was blurred the closer you got. I remember it being an almost synesthetic feeling. I remember that physical feeling and the intellectual idea that things aren't always as they appear from one perspective as they are from another. That experience has given me a fascination, in music in particular, for the idea of transition of one thing to another, where it becomes that thing, that transition of one section of music turns into another. And that's the thing that The Necks pursue.

Another childhood memory was when I was in first class at school, age 6, there was a class activity where the teacher drew on the board some semicircles, circles and some lines of different lengths and asked everybody to put them together to make something, to make a picture that made sense. And it was really obvious that it was a clichéd shape like an anchor. Everybody in the class was doing the same thing, so I thought, 'What's the point of doing the same thing as every else is?' Because I had gone sailing with my father a lot, I'd rarely seen an anchor that looked like that clichéd anchor, so I drew two lines, making a shovel-type situation which a lot of small boats have, a thing called a "pick" in Australia. It looks more like a pick than that clichéd one, so I drew that. The class all had to line up after another and show the teacher our drawing and say what it was. And so everyone's lined up and the teacher said, "Yeah, that's an anchor, very good. Yeah that's an anchor, very good," and then I put mine up, which looked very, very different. It was a geometrical combination of shapes, and she said, "What's that?" And I said, 'An anchor,' and the teacher actually yelled at me – "Have YOU ever seen an anchor that looked like

Jazz Stories: The Necks

that? Now go back and do it properly!" The thing was that I actually had seen an anchor that looked like that but I dared not contradict her, and for the rest of my entire time at school, for years and years, I don't think I ever stood up and offered on my own volition any kind of input because of how that kind of creative thinking was greeted when I was 6. I thought never again. That's a very clear memory. I had creative thoughts out of school, but not in school. [Laughs] Bitch! [Laughs]

CHRIS ABRAHAMS (PIANO) MEMORY

One of my all-time amazing musical memories happened when I was in my early twenties and I was in a group with Lloyd before The Necks were formed. We had managed to get invited to the North Sea Festival in Holland and, it must have been the day before our gig, playing on the roof of one of the venues was the Sun Ra Arkestra. Sun Ra was still healthy and dancing and doing what he did, and it was one of the most amazing things to have seen. I feel so privileged to have seen that. It gets back to when I first heard Sun Ra's music, it was on record and I had a very different take on it to what I had after I saw him live. I think seeing something live, like Sun Ra, I mean the memory is important because I think it really showed the difference between the experience of purely recorded music to that of actually witnessing a live performance.

LLOYD SWANTON (BASS) MEMORY

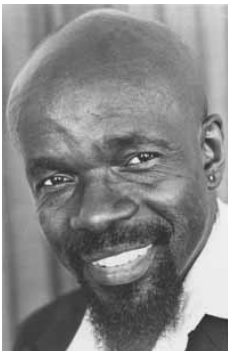
When I was about two and a half years old, my mother took my siblings and me on a picnic to a river and at one point I went back to the car, which was parked on the river's edge, with an older brother to get something, and then he left me there. I was playing around inside the car and climbed into the front seat and, it would appear, that I bumped the hand break and the car rolled down and into the river. My mom turned around to just see the sunlight clinking off the chrome bumper bars as it disappeared over the edge. Miraculously, the car didn't sink straight down, it floated out into the middle of the river and a gentleman who was picnicking there by the name of Irving Bramble, and was a very strong swimmer, he dived in. My memory of it was that I was actually having quite a good time. I had no sense of the danger. He swam out to the car and opened the door and the water came pouring in and the car started sinking very quickly so he closed the door again. I was refusing to come over to the window, which fortunately was open, so he leapt through the window and pulled me out and swam back as the car sank. [Laughs] Yeah, I was on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald the next day. So I had a life in the public eye from an early age! I stayed friends with Irving and I wrote a song in memory of him years ago on the first album of my band The Catholics. I only remember snapshots of the whole thing and one of them was the next day when we went down to see the car being retrieved with a tow truck that hauled it out and amazingly, my mother's handbag had floated out from the front seat of the car where it was and landed on the trunk and was sitting on the trunk of the car as it was towed out of the water.

Jazz Stories: Steve Swell

STEVE SWELL,
TROMBONIST,
BORN IN 1954 IN
NEWARK, NJ, USA
SHARES A MEMORY
OF MAKANDA KEN
MCINTYRE



Steve Swell
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss



Makanda Ken McIntyre

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 Stories: Steve Swell



Steve Swell
Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

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 Stories: Nels Cline



Photo Credit Ken Weiss

NELS CLINE, GUITARIST, BORN IN 1956 IN LOS ANGELES, CA, USA.
A MEMORY OF CHARLIE HADEN.
COMPILED BY KEN WEISS



Charlie Haden in 1981

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 Stories: 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, possible 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.

Jazz Stories: Bobby Zankel



photo credit Ken Weiss



Cecil Taylor playing in his apartment in New York City in 1972

I've had so many wonderful experiences and have been so blessed to play with so many great players. I've played with so many of my heroes, it's been quite a musical life. The memory that stands out in my mind is sort of a collective memory – it's my relationship with Cecil Taylor. I remember hearing him in 1969 for the first time at Slugs, and then meeting and playing with him the next year. I performed with him for the first time in 1971 in New York with Ornette Coleman sitting in the front row. I played with Cecil at Carnegie Hall in 1974 with Jimmy Lyons and Charles Tyler on either sides of me. These are great memories but the experience that's most profound in my mind was the experience of this past spring – March and April of 2016. I had seen Cecil at the end of 2015 and his arthritis was really painning him and he wasn't playing at all, although his spirits were remarkably good. He talked vaguely about something coming up at the Whitney Museum which I really didn't understand because the Whitney is a museum and what would a month retrospective about a musician be doing at an art museum? I spoke with Ben Young, Cecil's friend and archivist, in February who said Cecil had asked me to perform with him at the museum and we talked about rehearsing, which was very exciting. As time went on, there was no rehearsals, although Cecil went to the museum a few times to rehearse there, so he was playing a little bit. But by March it seemed like he wasn't going to the Whitney and still there were no rehearsals. One stop along the way was Cecil's birthday party at the end of March, which was only two weeks before the supposed performance, and Cecil was in so much pain. It was so hard for him to move that I really didn't think that he would be playing. I had been going up to New York frequently at the time to visit my daughter who had Downs Syndrome and she passed away on April 7 which was a very, very profound experience for me. The first person I took Astara to see when she was born in 1972 was Cecil, so the tremendous sadness of this loss seemed like a part of a larger mysterious cycle... It came down to the day of Cecil's scheduled performance on April 14 at the Whitney. I had spoken to him the day before and it looked like he was gonna play and then he

Jazz Stories: Bobby Zankel

wasn't gonna play, so I woke up the day we were supposed to play uncertain. I called him and spoke with his caretaker and she said he was eating, and then he was in the bath, and it went on and on and it didn't seem that he would get over to the Whitney to play. I've known Cecil for a long time and when he doesn't feel like it, he doesn't do it no matter how big it is. So I went to work, I teach music in a jail. I came out at my lunch break and spoke to some people in New York who were with Cecil and they said he hadn't gotten out of bed yet but that I better come up to New York because he needed me to play with him, so I headed up the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the Whitney. Cecil wasn't there when I arrived. The place had been sold out – 500 tickets- for months, and people were lined up. Cecil was supposed to perform with Min Tanaka, the great Japanese dancer he's worked with for many years, and Tony Oxley, but he wanted also some of his New York and European players with him. It was a beautiful experience when Cecil arrived and Min Tanaka's manager said, "Min will only dance with Cecil, he won't dance with these other guys," and Cecil looked at me and said, "I've known this man since 1970. He knows my music." And I was really touched. The playing that night was really unworldly. Cecil was like a kid. He was playing so beautifully, so fluidly and energetically, with a big smile on his face the more excited the band got. It was sort of like time traveling. It was so wonderful to share that experience with someone after so many years. You know it was a very, very gratifying experience and I hope to have more.



Cecil Taylor at The Whitney, New York, 2016

Jazz Stories: Gunter Hampel

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

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

Jazz Stories: Gunter Hampel

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

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

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

Mikole Kaar

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

Regards Mikole Kaar

Jazz Stories: James Bennington



James Bennington talks about Dizzy Gillespie



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

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

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

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

Jazz Stories: James Bennington

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

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

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

Jazz Stories: James Bennington

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

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

September 6, 2017

Feature: Vision Festival 22

VISION FESTIVAL 22
JUDSON MEMORIAL
CHURCH - NYC
May 29- June 3, 2017
Photos and Text by
Ken Weiss



Patricia Parker leading
Artists for a Free World
Marching Band through
Washington Square



Chicago Plan
- Michael Zerang/
Fred Lonberg-Holm/
Gebhard Ullmann/
Steve Swell



Kahil El'Zabar-
David Murray-Carmen
Rothwell

The fact that the Vision Festival celebrated its 22nd year is a testament to the leadership skills and indefatigable nature of Patricia Parker and her dedicated staff that includes Todd Nicholson, Executive Director. The festival's slogan this year was "Free Jazz Festival For A Just Future" and the program notes proclaimed "Music is the healing force... Free Jazz can be the sound of resistance... Our way of life and the Art we love is under attack... We support the present by remembering and respecting the past and preparing a future where improvisation and freedom have a place." This year's festival felt different from past years. It seemed the audience was more connected with each other as a result of the daily turmoil emerging out of the nation's capital and Parker even announced that people should talk and get to know each other during the breaks. Each of the nightly performances reached high levels, especially on the first night where this year's Lifetime Achievement awardee, Cooper-Moore, held court. The charismatic multi-instrumentalist presented three of the groups he's been associated with through the years – In Order to Survive (William Parker, b; Rob Brown, as; Hamid Drake, d), Digital Primitives (Assif Tsahar, ts; Brian Price, ts; Chad Taylor, d) and Black Host (Darius Jones, as; Brandon Seabrook, g; Pascal Niggenkemper, b; Gerald Cleaver, d; Trevor Dunn, d) – playing piano and a number of his invented instruments including the Diddly-Bow. Cooper-Moore was his usual colorful self, getting the audience to stand – "Standup! Sitting is the new smoking," and getting everyone to sing with him – "I'm so happy, so happy to be alive!" When Parker introduced him before one of his sets – "With Cooper-Moore, it's not a profession, he's making art," to which he answered, "If I made some money, it'd be a profession!"

The following five nights included especially heartfelt and moving performances from a number of dancers including Miriam Parker, Yoshiko Chuma, K.J. Holmes, who persuaded an unsuspecting listener to leave his seat to help her down off the stage (she ended up on his back as he became part of the dance), Djassi DaCosta Johnson, and the spirited Patricia Parker, who battled through some significant war wounds suffered in a

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Cooper-Moore on
Mouth-bow



Robert Dick/Miya
Masaoka



William Parker



BassDrumBone
Gerry Hemingway-Mark
Helias-Ray Anderson

first night collapsing stage fall.

Some of the most outstanding performances included Three Stories, which featured a rare performance by flute maven Robert Dick, who mesmerized with his gigantic contrabass flute rigged with his Glissando Headjoint invention, the debut of the Tomas Fujiwara Double Trio, including Ralph Alessi (tpt) and Brandon Seabrook (g), Trio 3 (Oliver Lake, as; Reggie Workman, b; Andrew Cyrille, d) joined by pianist Marc Cary as the trio entered into their 27th year together, Jason Kao Hwang's Burning Bridge which took inspiration from the emotional traumas of war, the Odean Pope Saxophone Choir, Darius Jones & Farmers by Nature, Chicago Plan (Gebhard Ullman, ts, bcl; Steve Swell, tbn; Fred Lonberg-Holm, cel; Michael Zerang, d), Joe McPhee's The Dream Book celebrating the lives of Ornette Coleman and Dominic Duval, the Dave Burrell Quartet, which found saxophonist Kidd Jordan shooting quotes from Porgy & Bess, as well as "Wade in the Water," BassDrumBone (Ray Anderson, tbn; Mark Helias, b; Gerry Hemingway, d), which has been an item for 40 years, the David Murray Trio with Kahil El'Zabar, and the finale with an orchestra led first by Oliver Lake and then William Parker.



Dave Burrell-William Parker-Kidd
Jordan-William Hooker

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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 express 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 derivate for the popular Jasmine perfume used in the brothels of New Orleans. Parents of the Stephen Forster 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 Pressley, 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.

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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 hot jazz swing

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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 for two weeks at the ballroom in Los Angeles, would enable the musicians

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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 booning, 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."

The band had no way of knowing, the huge crowd of youngsters pressed

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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,

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Fletcher Henderson to compose fat's Waller's song "Honey Suckle Rose" 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 bands 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. Hourok 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

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Company was asking \$689.00 for its fully equipped 1938 “De Luxe” Ford V-8. 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.

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Benny no longer had to worry about playing before a half empty hall. A 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."

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

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chaotic, taking some forty seconds simply getting all the musicians in 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

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“Ziggy” Elman on trumpet. The audience loved the song; it even seemed 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

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the heart and soul of the arrangement. There was some brief applause as 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

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usually left to the gossip columnists. Most newspapers covering the concert 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 nightclub 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.

Feature: The Long Road to Carnegie Hall

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 respects. First, Columbia had introduced the thirty-three and a third

Feature: The Long Road to Carnegie Hall

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 be 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 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.

Thoughts on South Africa and the Birth of Jazz

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. Musicians 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

Thoughts on South Africa and the Birth of Jazz



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.

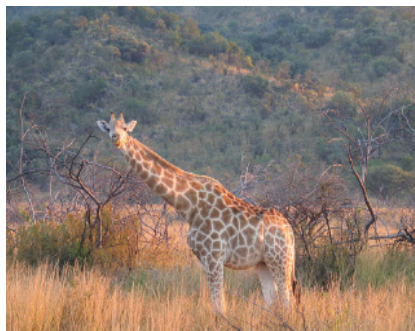
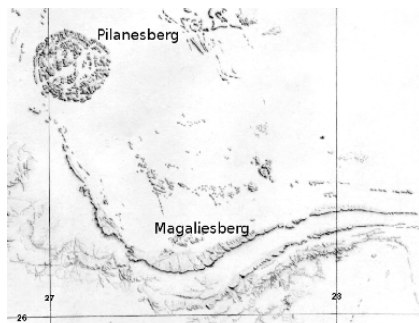
While the house of Nelson Mandela is quite austere and simple there are holes in the walls from the police who would use the house for target practice. The house was also firebombed. At one point an extra wall was put up so the children could lay down and be safe from the bullets. It was a lot to take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

Thoughts on South Africa and the Birth of Jazz



It was after lunch that I got my first chance to see a performance of gumboot dancing. The performers dance in miners 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.

Thoughts on South Africa and the Birth of Jazz



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.

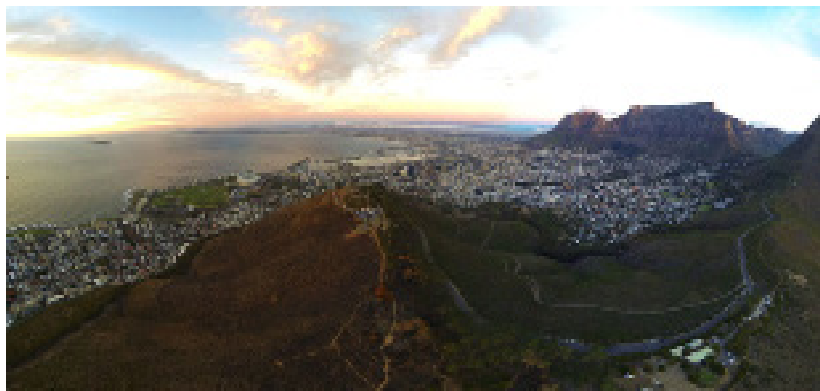


View from Landsat 8

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



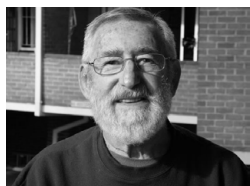
On day seven, we flew to Cape Town, a beautiful city on an expansive bay on the edge of the world. I can't think of any place else where you'll see baboons and penguins within miles of each other. One wouldn't think an oasis such as this holds such a powerful legacy of oppression. On our last day in 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.

Jazz in Johannesburg, South Africa

Jazz in Johannesburg, South Africa

By Don Albert



In 1994 and with the first democratic election in South Africa many, many things changed including jazz.

In 1995-1996 I wrote: Over the past few years jazz in South Africa has made a major move away from its original form.

In general, especially with black musicians, the American influences have been cast aside and African roots have replaced them.

Swing and bebop, as well as 2/4 and 4/4 rhythms have been abandoned, and in their place there are original African melodies set against basic indigenous or back-beat (fusion) rhythms, often played on African instruments such as the mbira, tribal drums, marimbas and the Makhweyana bow, these are usually combined with the normal drum-kit, saxophones, guitars, electric bass, keyboards and trumpets.

All this appears to have come about with the abolition of apartheid, the release of Nelson Mandela and all that followed. The new "unbanned" South Africa became the "flavour of the month" and suddenly we were party to wonderful possibilities for our music.

In this new climate of freedom and independence, these young musicians inevitably looked inward for their inspiration. They travelled internationally but eschewed the familiar and chose to develop a music that was their own. Traditionally South African record companies have compelled jazz oriented musicians to record the more familiar commercial music whereas M.E.L.T. 2000 (formally the UK Company B&W Music) has offered South African musicians the opportunity to record with complete artistic freedom. The musicians have grabbed the opportunity with both hands which has led to the breaking of the shackles and exciting musical experimentation. At last the musical creative juices of South Africa are flowing!

What the young lions are creating is a mixture of African or township inspired jazz and world music, in essence an African fusion which I prefer to call South African heritage music, of which Philip Tabane and Malambo were pioneers. I believe the word jazz should be eliminated entirely from what is happening here today.

Jazz in Johannesburg, South Africa

Just like the blues is a basic element to North American jazz or the samba to Brazilian music, so marabi and mbaqanga are deep seated in the new idiom, and as it's a unique and evolving art form, new ideas are continually being added.

The exciting thing about today's South African scene is this heritage music is not restricted to only black musicians. A good example is the white band named The Jazz Hounds. They combine African, Eastern and gypsy music into a highly original sound.

Over the years critics have pigeon-holed various styles of jazz. For example Dixieland, New Orleans, swing, bebop, progressive, cool, mainstream, funk and so forth.

In a chat to American trumpeter and educator Wynton Marsalis, who feels quite strongly about critics, he said: "We (the musicians) play something, and the critics have the audacity to tell us what we are playing."

So with those words ringing in my ears, I am going to cop out and leave it to someone else to name and pigeon-hole the emerging styles of our heritage music which is being made by the likes of Moses Molelekwa, Pops Mohamed, The Jazz Hounds, Vusi Khumalo, Tananas and Siphu Gumede. Someone I might stick my neck out for is Zim Ngqawana, who keeps pushing the boundaries of African music, and call his efforts Afro-avant-garde.

What I have found is that there is a definite style which emanates from Cape Town. A listen to the late Basil "Manenberg" Coetzee or Robbie Jansen from the Mother City (Cape Town), compared to Khaya Mahlangu or Barney Rachabane from Johannesburg, highlights the differences in interpretation.

Coetzee was emphatic when he told me in 1987 "My music is South African, not jazz."

Abdullah Ibrahim, feels all the music that comes from the coast of Africa has a similarity. The rhythms are very much alike, as compared to what is played inland.

I have always felt that the rhythmic swagger of the Cape has a lot in common with the beat of Brazil, for example just compare the sounds of the Cape Carnival in Cape Town with that of the Rio Carnival. To me there seems to be an umbilical cord joining the two. I think there is a great resemblance in the samba and Kaapse Klopse.

So where to from here? Who knows? The Rainbow Nation is just starting out, and our new heritage music is only in its infancy stage. Maybe like the bossa-nova grew out of the samba, so this Afro style might become nouveau-mbaqanga, but there I go putting names to styles. I think I might stay with Duke Ellington who said: "There are only two kinds of music. Good and bad."

I believe though that the American jazz influence will never be completely ignored by all South African musicians, and just like the late Kippie Moeketsi was inspired by bop and Charlie Parker, such people as Winston Mankunku Ngozi, Bheki Mseleku or Alan Kwela will continue to use the form, but as long as their feet are firmly planted in South African soil, they will always add a dose of their roots to the music.

Jazz in Johannesburg, South Africa

Sadly since writing the above my flood of enthusiasm has waned. The promise of a new and exciting African genre has not come to pass. Most of what is churned out is Afro-fusion wallpaper.

Hugh Masekela has barely played a note of jazz since his return from exile, and most of the newer guitarists all sound like clones of George Benson's pop/soul period.

M.E.L.T. 2000 has gone and been replaced by Sheer Sound, who for a while recorded the majority of top South African jazz artists, mostly in the smooth/fusion bag. Exceptions are Voice, a quintet in the Jazz Messengers tradition, pianist Andile Yenana and trumpeter Marcus Whyatt who keep the jazz flag flying.

The untimely death of Moses Molelekwa has left a void. The Jazz Hounds have disbanded, and Basil Coetzee and Allan Kwela have passed on while Zim Ngqawana continues to create his own sound telling South African stories through his music.

Young talent is coming out of the universities and Technicon's, bassist/arranger/composer Concord Nkabinde is beginning to show a direction. He translated the lyrics of "Summertime" into Zulu for a Soweto String Quartet CD, and guitarist/arranger Bheki Khoza is beginning to blossom.

One of the most discouraging aspects of the scene today is that all the accolades and gigs, have been bestowed upon returning exiles, leaving those who carried the jazz torch during the apartheid era starving. One example is trumpeter Stompie Manana who keeps on practicing, but no gigs come his way.

I understand the rush of patriotism when the exiles first returned, but it's time to level the playing fields.

Others deserving jazz recognition are trumpeter Feya Faku, pianists Ebrahim Kalil Shihab, Tony Schilder, Tete Mbambisa and Andrew Lilley to name but a few.

So where to from here? Who knows? The Rainbow Nation is just starting out, and our new heritage music is only in its infancy stage. Maybe like the bossanova grew out of the samba, so this Afro style might become *nouveaumbaqanga*, but there I go putting names to styles. I think I might stay with Duke Ellington who said: "There are only two kinds of music. Good and bad." I believe though that the American jazz influence will never be completely ignored by all South African musicians, and just like the late Kippie Moeketsi was inspired by bop and Charlie Parker, such people as Winston Mankunku Ngozi, Bheki Mseleku or Alan Kwela will continue to use the form, but as long as their feet are firmly planted in South African soil, they will always add a dose of their roots to the music.

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Jazz in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Now over the last few years up to today 2016, South African Jazz has turned around again and is at its best ever, and the inventiveness is out of the box. There are so many brilliant musicians on the scene now and if I had to name everyone it would look like a telephone book, and even then I might leave someone out, which would be sad. So I'm only going to mention three.

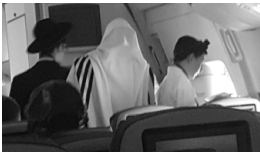
Two are pianists/composers/arranges who have each released a five star CD. Ramon Alexander's is named "Echoes From Louwskloof" and David Cousins "Flight of Fancy". The third is the exciting Delft Big Band from Cape Town. Then there is Orbit, a world class jazz venue in Johannesburg, featuring South African jazz six nights a week.

Feature: Koktebel Jazz Party

JAZZ IN CRIMEA
ARTISTIC EXPRESSION
AFTER THE
ANNEXATION
by Julia Storrs and
David Haney



Maximilian Voloshin



Hasidic Jews practice
devotional Daven
on Aeroflot Airline
Flight to Moscow



Koktebel Jazz Party
bandshell on the beach of
the Back Sea

When the Russian poet Maximilian Voloshin lived in Koktebel during the Russian Civil War of 1917, he opened his house for refugee soldiers from both sides of the battle. One story goes that while he was harboring a Bolshevik soldier, counterintelligence officers came to Voloshin's house in search. He distracted their efforts with his persuasive skills as a great host, offering them food and wine while telling vivid stories about medieval knights.

Cadence Magazine was asked to cover the Koktebel Jazz Party 2017- an annual festival in Crimea, in the small resort town on the Black Sea. How can one turn down such an intriguing invitation to post annexation Crimea? It's a long journey to a very different place. From New York City it's a 10 hour flight to Moscow, another 4 hour flight to Simferopol, Crimea, followed by a two hour taxi ride.

Our unusual experience began when we boarded our Aeroflot Airlines plane to Moscow and were greeted by stewardesses in fitted orange suits and hats harkening back to the costume of our Pan American Airlines stewardesses of the 1960s. But it was their cultural sensitivity that impressed us the most. They did not miss a step or raise an eyeball when the devout Hasidic Jews on our plane took up large parts of the aisle in an effort to face Jerusalem and practice their afternoon Daven. Life, as we knew it, was starting to fade...

After a tiring journey we landed in Simferopol and were picked up at the airport by a lovely man in a bright yellow cab. Dennis was the first one to give voice about what it is like to live in Crimea. His work in a seasonal occupation made the fair weather his motivation to work enough to store away funds to support his family during the off season.

As we headed down a narrow highway surrounded by trees and gas stations, the car light in the dark created a mysterious tunnel like effect. What was at the other end?

It was dark when we arrived at our hotel, The Lexx. It wasn't until the light of day that we could see that we were close to the shore of the Black Sea

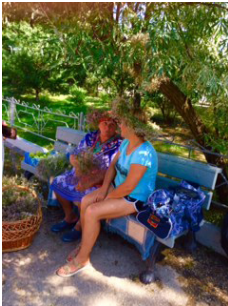
Feature: Koktebel Jazz Party



Town of Koktebel with a back drop of the Kara Dag



Press conference with Joe Lastie and band.



Fortune teller with lavender boardwalk



Holding up the tarp. First night rained out.

and in view of the Kara Dag or “Black Mount” a volcanic formation and backdrop to the small town of Koktebel. Both views were breathtaking, but in contrast to the concrete and rebar unfinished housing projects and potholed roads that surrounded our luxury hotel. One got the feeling that the annexation of Crimea from the Ukraine in 2014 left the funding for these efforts in the dirt. We walked down one of these roads to reach our first press conference passing stray dogs, families heading to the surf, large bellied men in little bathing suits.

The press conferences were held in a large rectangular tent above the outside amphitheatre and site of the weekend event. Starting Friday, the daily gatherings featured that evening’s performers and, if foreign, the questions usually started with how they felt travelling to a country viewed as tumultuous. Dmitry Kiselev, chairman of the Koktebel Jazz Party committee, So what side is music on? (What would Voloshin say?)

For this year’s Koktebel Jazz Party, the garden of the house of Maximilian Alexandrovich Kirienko-Voloshin (1877- 1932) was the setting for the jazz concerts by youth performers. The house is now nestled in the arc of a touristy beachfront promenade comprised of booths with nesting dolls, cheap hats and water toys. For the price you can visit a fortune teller, a Dolphinarium, or have your legs brushed with boughs of lavender if you are a woman in need of some sexual prowess. Beyond this façade of shiny trinkets the Black Sea lies warm and inviting, a magnet for those seeking relief from the heat and their hardworking lives.

Families flocked the beaches and they came to hear the music. The first night of the festival was rained out due to a dangerous thunder and lightening storm which brought thick sheets of rain and danger to the open bandshell of the amphitheater. But the next night the families returned and added a wonderful melee of young and old, the spirited and sedentary enjoying the music together. We were blown away when, the highlight of the night ,USA’s own Joe Lastie’s band

Feature: Koktebel Jazz Party

from New Orleans played old American favorites like “When the Saints Come Marchin’ In” or “Hello Dolly” so many sang along. Yet try to find someone who speaks English.

And for the grand finale, all quite unannounced, and without an increase in security, Vladimir Putin showed up at the 2017 Koktebel Jazz Party. He hit the tail end of the last night with this to say, “Music is a language like Esperanto, it needs no translation and unites people.”

When we drove down that tunnel of light to Koktebel we arrived to an unknown. What we found was a great effort by many to bring music to everyone. It didn’t matter what road one took to get there or what country one was from. The music was the unifier and, like Voloshin, able to bring us all together.



Unannounced star of the show: Russian President Vladimir Putin comes to the Koktebel Jazz Party 2017



Swimmers enjoying the warm waters of the Black Sea.

Koktebel Jazz Party Concert Highlights



Joe Lastie's New Orleans Sound



Anders Bergevantz, Brazilian All Stars



Edson Da Silva, Brazilian All Stars



Lew Tabackin Group



Eddie Palmieri Latin Jazz Band

Barbara Dane's Circle of Riffs

by Tee Watts



Barbara Dane circa 2015



Barbara Dane in 1957



Barbara Dane and Bob Dylan in 1963.



In her own words Barbara Dane's legacy spans cultures and continents. "I'm probably the only singer you'll ever come across who was invited to tour with America's Ambassador Satch, Louis Armstrong, as his latest discovery on the one hand and Mikis Theodorakis, Greece's greatest composer, on the other. Theodorakis wanted me to be his English language singer on a tour of Australia. I was in Europe at the time the invitation reached me, and I had come down with pneumonia, which the doctor thought was tuberculosis. He sent me home to the states and I had to cancel all my engagements. I didn't get to do the Armstrong tour because of State Department censorship. You can see what a wide cultural spread those invitations spanned. Not to boast, but I really don't think you can find anyone else who would have been capable of handling both genres."

Barbara Dane's complete discography contains well over 40 entries, dating back to 1957. In August of 2016 she released *THROW IT AWAY* in collaboration with renowned Bay Area pianist Tammy Hall. We asked her about the origin of her musical pairing with Hall.

"You know, she was playing with a group in Berkeley called Upsurge! Poets Raymond Nat Turner and Zigi Lowenberg with Richard Howell on saxophone. They're a terrific group that is always coming up with poetry right on the mark, whatever the current issues happen to be. The way they handle poetry and lyrics and the musical end of it is so exciting. I've been to many of their shows. One time in particular I went and there was this woman on piano who just knocked me out. I said to myself that I'm going to work with her someday. So the next time I had a chance to do something, I called her and she said, 'I'd love to work with you.' So we did. She's really one of the best. Whatever she touches is great. She's such a sensitive accompanist, with tremendous empathy. She knows what you're singing about, cares about it and illustrates it in very specific ways. She's

Feature Interview BARBARA DANE

remarkable. I feel so fortunate to be able to work with Tammy Hall.”

Dane is currently writing her biography and, while she acknowledges the joy of performing and her love of the audiences, as is her style, she is totally up front about the sordidness of show business that she has encountered. In her conversation with Cadence, she reminisced about the notoriously mob-connected booking agent, Joe Glaser, and his attempts at representing her at the time she was pulled off the Armstrong tour. “Anybody who is in the music business needs to study him. He was the sort of person who lurked about the back rooms of our country’s cultural life wreaking all sorts of havoc. His most valuable clients were Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday. I knew Flo Kennedy, who was Billie’s lawyer, who told me that when Billie was on her deathbed, Glaser was trying to get her to sign the rights to her life story over to him. Billie refused. Flo said Glaser was probably one of her enablers as far as drug use goes. I imagine that Louie decided at some point early in his career to let Joe Glaser handle everything so that he could concentrate on the music and not have to worry about business. Glaser made sure that Louie didn’t speak out too much on racial issues because his image as a ‘happy old darkie’ needed to be projected. I’m sure he also kept him from getting hit by numerous charges of marijuana possession too. But the Little Rock crisis of 1957 prompted Louie to break out of Glaser’s control and speak out in the press, telling Eisenhower he should go down there and walk the kids into the high school himself, if he had any guts. At that point, Louie was very valuable to the State Department, even publicized as Ambassador Satch. They were trying to convince the world that the U.S. didn’t have a race problem by sponsoring Black musicians to travel abroad. So when the State Department looked up my track record and saw that I was very outspoken on the race question, they pulled me off the tour. Why would they want to let me loose as Louis’ latest discovery, the blue eyed blonde girl who would certainly speak up on these issues, making every reporter in Europe keen to interview her? I know this to be true, but I can’t prove it. Louis’ biographer, Jazz writer Gary Giddins, agrees with me that this is probably what happened.

I also was denied work in Las Vegas because I had Wellman Braud in my band. He was then one of the most respected bassists in Jazz and a New Orleans Creole who worked closely with Ellington for years. This was a strange thing because the agent who proposed the job was Charlie Barnett, formerly a highly regarded White band leader who, had been one of the first to hire Billie Holliday. He told me point blank that, ‘A White woman could not front a mixed band in Las Vegas because those high rollers from Texas won’t buy it.’ So I literally told him, “F*&% you” and walked out the door.”

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Barbara frequently performed material that was central to the African-American experience and also frequented Blues & Jazz clubs, but as an unescorted White woman this sometimes prompted unsavory and inaccurate opinions of what her line of work was exactly. Musicians as well sometimes assumed that sexual favors might be part of the plan. Knowing part of the story beforehand, we asked Ms. Dane if, for example, Lightnin' Hopkins ever hit on her.

"Of course he did. Why wouldn't he? I was a friendly woman who was also a musician. He was a gentleman too, though. I understood culturally that flirtation was part of the game. I should also say that I knew I had to be very careful about walking and talking the music business and nothing else. I'd have to make it clear that I was a singer and was there for the music. I ran into a lot of situations where people made the other assumption. I didn't find it insulting. That was what people were trained to expect.

The funniest time was with Alcide "Slow Drag" Pavageau, the bass player from New Orleans for the George Lewis band and one of the most well-known sights, dancing in front of a band coming away from a funeral, the guy you see in the opening theme of 'Treme' on TV. Slow Drag had this really heavy French Creole accent and no teeth, making it hard to understand him. He was a little short guy, a really wonderful bass player. I used to come around a lot and sit in with the George Lewis band and one day we were at a reception of some sort; a social situation at a hotel, I believe. Slow Drag whispered in my ear, 'I give you \$5 if you go upstairs with me!' So what did I do? I invited him to go fishing with my family the next week. That was my method of letting him know that I wasn't the kind of woman he thought! My husband at the time, Byron Menendez really loved fishing and was really good at it so we took Slow Drag out to fish for striped bass in the sloughs of the California delta. I think he had a really good time!"

Though born in pre-depression era Detroit in 1927, Barbara Dane's family migrated there from Arkansas earlier in the decade. Her development as a singer coincided with her evolution as an activist. Blessed with an indomitable revolutionary spirit and a voice to match, she began by sitting in with any group that would invite her to the bandstand. She found her activist voice by singing at union halls and factory gates, recognizing early on that the poor and working class were getting the short end of the deal, seeking a way to support and encourage their organization.

"My parents were a couple of youngsters who came up to Detroit to get out of the small town poverty pit in Arkansas. Growing up in Detroit, I remember at five years old my childhood friend Gloria, who lived across the street. Her dad just sat in a chair all the time wheezing because he had been poisoned with mustard gas in World War I. I reasoned right then that well, war is a

terrible thing.

Everyone around me was out of work and poor. I saw that. My dad had been a barefoot farm boy but somehow obtained a pharmacy degree and my parents struggled hard to get their business going. I would watch the children come to the candy counter in the drugstore and try to figure out how to split a penny's worth of candy three ways.

I think children have kind of a built in thing about fairness. You can always hear kids saying, 'that wasn't fair, that wasn't fair.' As a child, I saw that much of life wasn't fair. People were not always fair to each other. During the depression some would band together but others would try to get over on the other ones. There was a group in Detroit called the Black Legion which was actually a northern version of the KKK. They were down on Blacks, Jews and Catholics. So that hate stuff was all around me. My neighborhood was White, everyone I knew was White and I didn't know anybody that wasn't White. Most were kind but I also saw that some were mean-hearted. Even the Sunday school teacher wore an America First button, the symbol of a group that was affiliated with the Black Legion.

Then there was this racist Catholic priest, Father Coughlin, on the radio every Sunday preaching anti-Semitism. Much of the political rhetoric of the day was framed by Henry Ford, who owned a newspaper that was tailored for different neighborhoods. It would be anti-Catholic over here, anti-Black over there. Ford was a huge manipulator of the populace. That then, was the atmosphere in which I grew up.

When I was about 11 years old, I had a friend named Bill Hall, whose father must've been some kind of a union man because one day Bill explained, 'There's three ways of organizing society; Capitalism, socialism and communism.' When he defined the three I realized that capitalism sounded terrible and I became immediately interested in finding the communists, people with socialist ideas. As soon as I got out of high school, I joined the American Youth for Democracy as well as the Michigan Communist Party. In Detroit's Cadillac Square there was a hotel called The Barlum that had denied Paul Robeson access, some years before we youngsters decided to do a test case there in 1946. We put together an interracial group to sit down at a table in their coffee shop, where we were denied service. We recruited some churches and unions to join us and started picketing the Barlum Hotel every Saturday. We made a big fuss. That was actually where I found out what my voice was for. I knew I was going to be a singer and was singing all the time, every form of music I could find. My voice teacher specialized in Bel Canto opera singing. I knew I wasn't going to be an opera singer but classical music teachers were the only kind I could find. He taught me to throw my voice out there, as if to the back of a huge hall. In that way I could lead the singing to encourage and support the pickets.

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Right next to the music school where I was studying singing, there was a record shop where I discovered the Blues on 78 rpm records. Lil Green with Big Bill Broonzy, singing 'Romance In The Dark' and 'Why Don't You Do Right'? And Joe Turner singing 'Piney Brown's Blues.'

Barbara Dane's ability to interpret the Blues and Jazz stems from her affinity with poor and working class people. "I try to understand the lives of the people who made the songs I'm singing. Why are they saying this? Many singers are too focused on how they look and sound, worrying about whether people think their voice is great, etc. None of that really matters. You have to lose yourself in the song. Choose songs that talk about things that you care about. Then let the song take over and forget about self. That is how to put veracity in your singing."

In 1949, Ms. Dane migrated west and landed in San Francisco. "I won a contest in San Francisco sponsored by KGO/ABC in 1951 called Miss U.S. Television. The prize was a 26 week television series." There she was able to showcase her talents on those little black and white screens of the day. The producer of the show suggested she form a West Coast version of the Weavers, the popular Folk quartet which, by that time, had been blacklisted.

"After my son Pablo Menendez was born, I took up the challenge. We called ourselves the Gateway Singers, made up of myself, Lou Gottlieb, Jerry Walters and a fourth member whose name escapes me now. Right after our first exposure, a fund raiser for some then-current progressive cause, Gottlieb called a serious meeting, to tell me that I could not be in the group anymore because they had just discovered I had been expelled from the Communist Party and as loyal members they were not permitted to associate with me. That had happened in 1949 when the FBI was actively infiltrating and trying to break up the party clubs, possibly targeting the Hunter's Point (San Francisco) chapter I was in. As I was leaving the meeting, Gottlieb had the nerve to call me back into the room and ask if I knew anybody I would recommend to take my place. I said, 'Sure, I know exactly the right person. Elmerlee Thomas. She knows the repertoire and her vocal range is similar to mine. Call her.' And they did. That changed the Gateway singers into the first group that was 3 White guys and a Black woman. They had a pretty nice career. For me, there was nothing to do then but remake my life. I began listening to the bands that made up the traditional Jazz revival which was then raging in San Francisco and fell in love with that world. I had the opportunities to sit in with some of the greats who came to town, like George Lewis and Kid Ory. That is when Blues became central to my musical life." She landed her first Jazz gig with Turk Murphy's Band in

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1956. Her first album, *TROUBLE IN MIND*, was released in 1957 and is now considered a classic.

By the end of the decade Barbara Dane was garnering national press and appearing on radio and TV. Leonard Feather in *Playboy* likened her to “Bessie Smith in stereo.” *Time* magazine declared her voice “rare as a 20 karat diamond.” And Louis Armstrong famously told *Time*, “Did you dig that chick? She’s a gasser.”

Of course her ascension also garnered controversy in its wake. *Ebony* Magazine in 1959, published a lengthy spread which showcased the “startlingly blonde” songstress photographed amid brilliant African American musicians from the worlds of Gospel, Blues and Jazz. Muddy Waters, Clara Ward, Memphis Slim, Willie Dixon, Benny Carter, Earl “Fatha” Hines and others. Dane states that despite the article’s groundbreaking foray into the subject of interracial entertainment, Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon were somewhat mystified at the acclaim accorded Dane.

“They were both great to work with, however in his biography, Willie lets on that he and Memphis Slim were upset because ‘that White girl’ got the featured article in *Ebony* Magazine. Apparently he and Memphis were smiling in my face but pissed that I was featured instead of them. No question that they deserved it, but that would have been a different story.” Pressed more on working with Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon, Dane states obvious and not so obvious facts about them both. “Well, I remember Willie Dixon being very excited because both of his wives’ had babies the same week! I loved working with him because he was a great player and I could always get him to take up the slack when I was running out of gas. I could toss the ball to him and he would sing one of his compositions and live up the show. He got the job with me because of Memphis Slim. When I first went to Chicago to work, I didn’t know who to hire, but had heard Memphis Slim play in a little dive in 1947. I said to myself, ‘One day I’m gonna work with that guy.’ When I did hire him he asked if I thought the club owner would hire a bass player too. So I went to the club owner and he said okay. Up until that time, I didn’t know Willie Dixon from a hole in the wall, but he was already a mover and shaker in the Chicago Blues scene. Memphis Slim though, used to rag on him for selling his tunes to Leonard Chess for \$25, trying to make Willie mad and he would respond by saying, ‘I’m a lover, not a fighter.’

We further queried Ms. Dane on her work with Benny Carter and Earl “Fatha” Hines.

“The way the album I did with them, *LIVING WITH THE BLUES*, came about was because the producer thought I should be a Jazz singer. He said, “You’re noted as a Folk singer, you’re a Blues singer, but I think you should be a Jazz singer and I want you to record that way.”

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So Dane and the producer then started mulling over what musicians to use. Earl "Fatha" Hines was chosen because despite his artistic importance in the formation of Jazz, at the time he was not being utilized for his strength as an innovator. The producer chose Benny, one of the greatest session players on reeds, because he knew that Benny also loved to play trumpet. We made the album with no pre-planning at all. I had just come off the road and didn't even have a list of tunes I wanted to do. I would just call a tune and because Benny and Earl were so knowledgeable, they would put their heads together for about two seconds, briefly discuss intro and outro and they'd be ready to go. Bang, bang. We cut the album in about 3 hours. When you work with top people, that's what you can do.

As great as he was, Earl Hines should have been presented more as a solo artist. I always like to say that as Louis Armstrong was to the trumpet, Earl Hines was to the piano. He was a very important piece in the puzzle of how Jazz came about."

Despite her adeptness at Blues and Jazz, Dane never abandoned her affinity for singing and playing Folk music. She loved the coffee house circuit and played the first Newport Folk Festival in 1959. Despite her popularity, she never was invited to play it again because of her public criticism of the business practices of promoter George Wein. She also supported her friend and Folk icon Pete Seeger when he was blacklisted, boycotting the popular Hootenanny TV show along with Joan Baez and others, which of course led to further blacklisting, but it did not deter her.

"Blacklisting is a very subtle thing. You don't always know it's happening to you. You don't know who or what or why. In fact, one of the things you do when you're blacklisted is blame yourself first. You ask yourself, 'What did I do wrong?' Sorry mister, but I didn't believe that anything I had done was wrong. So I didn't have that burden. But, I have been surveilled off and on since I was 18. They finally give up when you get too old and they figure you are no longer any danger. I have been getting my FBI files through the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) and have quite a stack of them now. I know people want to know how I lived through that. Truthfully, I just paid it no mind. I was told by Daniel Ellsberg's lawyer Leonard Boudin, that the reason I was never arrested was probably because I was always totally out front with my activities, so there was nothing there to use as coercion. You know, it seems that I've always had opportunities to be one of those performers whose name becomes a household phrase, but then, I would come up against a situation that involves betraying my own ethics, something I couldn't do. Once, a big agency booked me to tour with comedian/actor Bob Newhart in about 1960. He was just starting out so this was before his TV show. It was his first big concert tour and I was the other half of the bill.

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When they were putting the thing together, Jerry Perenchio, one of the most powerful agents in Hollywood held a planning meeting to discuss the material that would be presented. At the time, I was featuring an Ida Cox tune entitled Last Mile Blues. It vividly describes the execution of a Black man and his lover's lament, condemning the judge for his sentencing. The reason I featured that song was that the issue of capital punishment was about to come up again in the legislature in California.

When I sang that song at the planning meeting, Newhart just about had a heart attack. He said, "You can't do that. How can I do comedy after a song like that?" Perenchio interceded though and said, "Let her do it. It's one of her strongest songs."

So we went ahead with the planning and they asked what musicians I was bringing. At the time I was working with Kenny Whitson, a fabulous Blues piano and cornet player who hated the system so much that he never recorded on his own. His only recording was with me on Capitol and when they offered him a solo project after that he wouldn't do it. My bassist, Wellman Braud, was one of the early members of the Ellington Band. He was with Duke for many years and people thought of him as the 'Father of the walking bass.'

Kenny Whitson had this great ability to comp on piano with his left hand while playing these wonderful cornet solos with his right. I told him, 'Kenny, we need to get a bass player to free you up to play more horn.' At first he resisted saying, 'They all give me a stomach ache!' Then he thought of Braud, who had retired and was living near L.A.

Kenny started courting him in a musician's way. He would go was over to Braud's house and Braud would cook up some Blackeye peas while they talked. Maybe Kenny would bring over some greens to cook. Eventually Kenny convinced Braud to play again and that's how he became my bass man.

So, getting back to the Bob Newhart tour, when I told them what musicians I was using, Jerry Perenchio says, "Oh no, you can't bring a Black bass player." I said, "What are you talking about?" I was ready to tell Perenchio to kiss my backside. The Ellington guys were always faultlessly professional. The way they carried themselves, the way they dressed, they were perfect gentlemen, not to mention Wellman's legendary reputation as a player.

I went to talk to Papa Braud, who was very hip to the workings of the music world. He argued hard for his opinion, which was that I should go ahead and do the tour without him because when it was done, I'd be able to write my own ticket, use whomever I pleased, because by then they would know my value. It was the only time in my life that I made that kind of compromise but I did go ahead and do the tour.

So we head out on tour, playing all these big theaters across Canada and along the coast. When we pull into Sacramento, the capital punishment

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issue is slated to go before the state legislature the next day and I'm really primed to do that Ida Cox song. As I'm being announced and start to walk on stage, Newhart comes running over to me and literally gets down on his hands and knees and begs, 'Please, please don't do that song!' My brain goes click, click, click and I respond by saying, 'Okay, if I don't do the tune, I want my regular bass player back.' I realized it wouldn't change a thing as far as the way the legislature voted. So the next day, I have Braud back in the band and he played the rest of the tour with us.

We didn't travel with Bob Newhart on the tour and he didn't hang out with us. That was possibly the only time he gave a thought to what the musicians were doing. What really finally turned me completely off from him was one night when I took the time to hear his routine. He did this thing where he receives a phone call and the audience hears his side of the conversation. 'Hello? Oh, oh, oh. Really? Oh, Patrice Lumumba has been killed? Well who was she, anyway?'

I could have strangled him in that moment. Such ignorance. It seemed so emblematic of American popular culture. It takes you completely over to this know nothing realm, disconnected from the real world. To say something like that when a man like Lumumba had just been assassinated through a CIA plot, a man who was the hope of the Congo."

In May of 1961 Barbara Dane opened a nightclub in San Francisco's fabled North Beach, on Broadway.

"I called it Sugar Hill, Home of the Blues, the first Blues club anywhere that wasn't located in the Black Community per se, where the faint-hearted White public was afraid to go. It was in North Beach, right across the street from the Jazz Workshop. I only had it for about a year and a half before (and I'm tempted to use the B word but I won't) the investor, whom I didn't know very well, took it away from me. In my naiveté, I thought a handshake was a contract. I thought a person's word was their bond. I didn't have any paper on the thing. So since she put the money up, she was able to put her name on the licenses and took the club away from me. It was a really great room, a club that I'd planned to keep all my life. A way to give all those old Blues legends a place to be heard, maybe for their last time, and a way to have a base where I could make my music and raise my kids without the constant absences.

Big Mama Thornton would come in often with her posse of girlfriends. They'd have a table in the corner and she would get up and sing her heart out because, if Big Mama is gonna sing, you gotta let her. She also liked the music of Whitson and Braud a lot. I'll tell you something else that people don't realize. She was a great ballad singer. She really sang some beautiful ballads at my club. I was really thrilled with that. That's why we had jams, so

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the artist could experiment and do stuff that they couldn't necessarily do at a regular gig.

On one occasion, when I had booked the great T-Bone Walker at Sugar Hill for a couple of weeks, I didn't get to spend much time with him. He did however, stay at my home during the engagement and spent the time working out arrangements on the piano. My twelve-year-old son Nicky, now known as Jesse, kept him comfortable, bringing him his scotch and orange juice all day as he worked, and actually got to know T-Bone better than me!

Carman McCrae made a great album at the club after I lost it entitled, Carmen McCrae: Live at Sugar Hill - San Francisco."

Dane made many appearances at the famed Ash Grove in L.A. and recorded a live album there on New Year's Eve 1961-62. Here she relates stories of Reverend Gary Davis and working with the Chambers Brothers during that period. "I used to work opposite Reverend Gary Davis at the Ash Grove. The Rev was quite a character. He was one of the greatest guitar players that ever lived. He created kind of a ragtime style on the guitar. They might have called it Piedmont Style, but to my ear it was based on ragtime piano. He was a genius. Here's this old blind guy, probably hard pressed to have a good pair of shoes when he first went to New York as a street preacher. He became teacher to all these young White guys who wanted to play that kind of guitar. They had to go to him because he was the only who could play that way.

People talk about the fact that he liked to touch the girls. Well a blind man doesn't have any way of knowing what you look like unless he can touch you. I'm sure he touched boys too. He touched things to know what kind of world he was in. So I don't put much stock in the criticism of him for that. It's nobody's business but his own. I think his contribution to the music world was enormous, in fact irreplaceable.

The Chambers Brothers and I made one album together for Folkways. They were a great Gospel quartet in L.A. at the time that I met them. I discovered that I felt very comfortable singing with them one New Year's Eve at the Ash Grove. Later, when they became a rock band, I realized that I actually preferred them with the washtub bass format that they were doing when I first heard their Ash Grove Show before they became one of the first well known African-American Rock bands.

I could tell you a lot about recording the Folkways album with them and it is not all nice. The first time I flew out to San Francisco from New York where I was living at the time. I was determined to do it with them because I thought that the cultural message of us working together was important at that time especially. The Freedom songs lent themselves well to the way they sing and came from the same culture. I arranged for them to drive up from L.A., had the hall booked and the equipment in place. When they

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showed up 2 hours late, they were so hoarse that they could not sing a note. Someone had offered them a deal to record a single and they had worn their voices out for 2 days getting that produced.

So I went back to New York trying to figure out how to get it done and realized the Newport Folk Festival was coming up. I called Pete Seeger and he arranged a Chambers Brothers appearance right away. When they got to New York, in my opinion they got kind of star struck, playing and jamming here and there and the record went out the window until I finally said to a couple of the brothers. 'Look, we're gonna make this record and we're making it tomorrow in the studio.' Moe Asch, owner of Folkways, engineered it. That was another one of my albums we did in 3 hours. We didn't need to rehearse. We just fell into it, hummed the songs for a minute to get the keys right, then cut it. It was a natural fit. It's a beautiful album, released in 1966 and is still available from Folkways. After Newport, they got all kinds of offers because of their originality and skills. I didn't want to be their manager, I just wanted to do the album and wasn't interested in anything else. A friend by the name of Carroll Perry, who was instrumental in the evolution of the Ash Grove in L.A. and the Cabale Creamery in Berkeley, eventually did become their manager. My oldest son, then a teenager named Nicky Cahn, became their first drummer after being their roadie. Nicky later became Jesse, and fronted his own group, the Goodnight Loving Band."

In 1966, Barbara Dane became the first American artist to tour post-revolutionary Cuba, after which she met and conversed with Fidel Castro, who came to her hotel to thank her. Ever bold, she asked "El Comandante" about the possibility of one of her children studying music at the Escuela Nacional de Arte in Havana. Castro readily agreed, making it possible for her second son, Pablo Menendez to study in Cuba from age 14. He has remained there ever since, becoming in the process, one of the most loved musicians in Cuba along with his band, Mezcla.

Cuba has also not forgotten Barbara Dane. On December 22nd, 2016, she received an honorary membership to the UNEAC (Cuban National Union of Writers and Artists) presented to her by famed Cuban author Miguel Barnet. Then, on December 28th, Havana's Casa de las Americas celebrated Barbara's upcoming 90th birthday and commemorated the 50th anniversary of her historic concert tour of the country. Barbara performed at the Casa de las Americas with her accompanists, renowned pianist Tammy Hall and bassist Ruth Davies and several noted Cuban guest musicians, including her son Pablo with members of Mezcla and her grandson, Osamu who is known in both Havana and Miami as a pioneer of Cuban rock and inventor of the genre he calls Rock con Sabor.

In February of 2017, Barbara Dane will receive the Spirit of Folk Award at the Folk Alliance International's 29th annual conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

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Continuing festivities for her 90th birthday, which is on May 12th, she and special guests will perform at SFJazz Miner Theater on July 16, 2017 and at UCLA's Royce Hall on October 21, 2017.

Always a torchbearer for freedom, Dane still offers sage advice for activists, musicians and any given career path in times such as these.

"You can't let that scary stuff bother you. It's all about controlling your own agenda. If that one doesn't work, make a new one. Keep going. If they kick you out of one career, find another one. Everybody has a lot more talent than they realize. Some people make music, but others cook well, grow good vegetables, build solid yurts, clean their own houses well, cure their bodies or even their minds. As long as you're alive and walking, you can always do something else. People have to realize this in these times we are facing now, they are trying to set the agenda. You have your own agenda. Keep your eyes on the prize. Your precious little career is only a blip in the history of the world. If they mess with you, walk off and get another one so you can keep on following what your gut tells you is the right thing to do. Then when you get to be 90 you can be like me, an ancient relic with a peaceful heart."

Jack Wright and the Free Musics

By Ken Weiss



Photo Credit:
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*Jack Wright (born Nov. 2, 1942, Pittsburgh, PA) is a veteran saxophone improviser based in Philadelphia and Easton, PA. He played as a youth and then left it for twenty years, coming back to music after hearing free jazz through the '70s. One day in 1979 he woke up and started playing freely, and that has become his life's pursuit ever since. His first review in Cadence Magazine was in July, 1983, for his album, "Free Life, Singing." During the '80s he traveled back and forth across the country and in Europe, looking for partners and spreading the word of this (relatively) rare approach to music. Wright is an "underground" by design," as one reviewer put it, who has played with many more unknown musicians than those well-known. His earlier political and community activism is evident in his musical interests, for he wants to draw attention to the music itself rather than achieve a career. He once said "The aim to increase recognition and reward is repulsive to me." Wright's as happy to play to a room of fellow musicians as to a packed house, and at 74 still tours widely. He's funny, quick witted and intelligent. He's just released an impressive and unique book – *The Free Musics* [2017,] which features the history and character of free jazz and free improvisation. This interview took place on 2/17/17 at Wright's former home in Philadelphia, which he's turned into a residence for improvisers and a frequent site for sessions. Information on Wright is available at springgardenmusic.com.*

Cadence: *You begrudgingly agreed to an interview. You really didn't want to talk about yourself. Why so?*

Jack Wright: [Laughs] I do like to talk, and I appreciate the opportunity to do this. I was just apprehensive because most interviews focus on the person, and are aimed at the music public. I'm more interested in communicating my ideas about playing music, and encouraging some fresh thinking. Also, interviews are aimed at the music public, but I'm more interested to communicate with musicians. I'm wary of becoming significant in the music world, or more significant than I need to be. [Laughs] That is, any attention from the press helps get your name out there, and there aren't many paying gigs for those without a name that's gotten attention. Musicians get paid for their name more than for their actual music—just a fact of life. And the best strategy is for names to

play with other such names. My preference is to play with people strictly out of musical interest and curiosity. That has included very few well-known musicians. If I think there's some possibility of a good musical meeting with them I will get in touch, but from my experience, the more a musician's name evokes audience and press attention, the less interesting they are to actually play with. Their music may be sparkling but they're not the best collaborators. Their ideas come from outside the moment of playing. There are some wonderful exceptions, but in general that's the case. Anyway, I'm at least ambivalent about an interview in a widely-read publication—here he is, finally getting the attention he deserves, getting his career off the ground. I think that kind of thing, that image, distorts you and cuts you off from your music.

Cadence: I asked that question because in person you're such a colorful character, you're very funny and personable but there isn't a lot of information out on you so I'm hoping to fill in some of the gaps while also talking about the music. One thing that's apparent to me, as someone who's been present for your performances through the years, and to those close to you, are your engaging and unique eccentricities. You tend to wear shorts as deep into winter as possible. You sometimes perform in pajama pants and have a reputation for scouring refrigerators for neglected leftovers. You've made a mixtape entirely of the repeating patterns of vinyl pops that are heard when an LP has ended but is still spinning, and have played it in the morning when you get up and danced to it. Anything else to admit to?

Wright: [Laughs] Well, I don't think of myself as eccentric but yeah, those things are probably true. We don't normally know the impression we make on others. I've heard some very funny Jack Wright stories, and it's like they're about someone else. I'm pretty conventional, but I do usually perform in colorful clothes. To me the serious musician image is laughable—like the dour looks of most band publicity shots. Eccentricities can come from a personal base of who you are, or they're just practical. I wear shorts to mute the bell of the alto against my bare thigh. The same with pajama pants, since most pants can't be raised high enough. If you want a good Jack Wright story, here's one: I was playing in a radio studio with Bob Marsh and had long pants on, so I just took them off and played in my underwear. The guys in the control room got a good laugh, but I'd have felt more foolish if I'd sacrificed the music to the rules of decorum. Like many who are pointed out as being eccentric, I have no intention to be that, there's an explanation for everything. [Laughs]

Cadence: That technique where you use your bare thigh to mute your saxophone, did you develop that technique or did you see someone do it first? Other people are doing that same thing these days.

Wright: I did follow others in putting bottles in the bell, but then I was frustrated that it either had that particular sound or it didn't, nothing in between, and the interruption of doing it breaks the flow. Usually saxophonists use their pant leg, but I found the flesh is a much better seal, and by adjusting the amount of opening you have a huge range of sound you can control—pitch, volume, and multiphonics. I also sit

when I play partly for that reason--it's all about control, very functional. People—especially Americans—often think technique gets in the way of spontaneity. That's true of technique handed down authoritatively from others, but not when it's the result of your own investigation and standards. Anyway, I don't think other people do the bare leg mute because they saw me doing it. But if you're relatively unknown, it's hard to imagine that people have picked up things from you. I claim to have a patent on it, but of course that's a joke. Maybe someday we'll see every sax player in shorts. Or better yet, their underwear!

Cadence: *You recently published [The Free Musics](#) [Spring Garden Music Edition, 2017, available from Amazon or directly from Jack Wright at his website]. It is an impressive book detailing much of what's to know about free improvisation and it also discusses free Jazz. What inspired you to write the book?*

Wright: Well, don't expect this one to be short! Since the '80s I've been writing about free playing in order to work out my own relationship to what I was doing. That is, thinking feeds right back into the playing and vice versa. When I was traveling around in the '80s, I took some things I'd written and handed them out to people, little booklets. I felt that to just play music – just do your thing and leave—was not enough. I liked the idea of presenting some kind of question about what this is--what do I think I'm doing, what would motivate someone to do what is obviously not very popular. I wanted to get to people's subjectivity—hey, you can do this. Not only is free improv a strange phenomenon but it creates a very different kind of musician—not the career model—so questioning is natural. Then in the early '90s I had a period of collapse of confidence in my whole musical project. I felt I was becoming a performer and I didn't want to be that, I just wanted to play music. A performer is aimed at the audience and personally needs to get a response from them. The best way is to develop some kind of shtick, however broad and imaginative it might be, something that will draw people and will give them a repeated experience, something their name will be known for. That's assumed if you're a soloist, and at the time I couldn't find many partners so I was mostly playing solo. I felt the important thing to do is to play wherever you are at that very moment. Whatever is "free" in free improv, that's part of it. It throws you off track to need to get something back from the audience at the same time. Anyway, my writing has this story background. I was part of the underground, that is non-advertised, self-determined, NY improv community in the 80s. I was one of those with career aspirations. In the NY atmosphere it's hard not to imagine someday making it. My dream took the form of, 'I'm in the tradition of saxophonists. People are gonna like this stuff once they hear it.' Nothing inherently wrong with that, but it doesn't work that way. I didn't doubt what I was doing was really good, so I couldn't understand why I was being shut out of the NY upward ladder. Talk about living an illusion! I thought I could go over the heads of the avant-garde honchos, but I was repulsed by what you had to do to get the gigs. No matter how good or adventurous your music is you must be associated with the right people, and your playing shouldn't be a threat

to what they're doing. In fact it must not appeal directly to people. It has to be mediated; music can't stand on its own. Also, I had been living in Philly and wouldn't consider moving to NY, which was a requirement to get in the game. After a while several musicians I was close to were augmenting improv with other forms, and I wasn't about to start playing tunes or getting into conducted improv, like John Zorn's game pieces.

I'd been doing huge loops touring around the country, and in '88 I moved to Boulder, Colorado, and stayed there for fifteen years. I had a new love interest, but I was also in retreat from the NY scene, tail between my legs. Out there I looked in the mirror and saw myself becoming something like the "Wildman from Borneo" in the circus. I couldn't stand that image. Not that I was very popular, but I could see where it was headed, the pattern where I would eventually succeed, like putting yourself on a conveyor belt. Boring! No audience in Colorado, but lots of people excited to improvise. That became FRIO, the Front Range Improv Orchestra, the first serious group of improvisers I'd been involved with. It wasn't a band but a group actively playing privately together. We had a couple campout weekends in New Mexico, and in the early 90s Boulder had the vibrancy of a local scene of all kinds of artists. While I was out there I wrote about all the issues that had been bugging me. Like, what does it mean to want people to approve of you? Musicians especially get caught in this thing, like being caught in adolescence. It's very difficult to escape, I mean for me too. Anyway, when I finally moved back east, in 2003, I felt like I was throwing myself back into the maelstrom, the real world. I was happy to do it, let's see what happens this time around. There was a resurgence of improv going on, and for that reason I was willing to follow some of the rules, like get a website, put out CDs, build the bio, organize. But after a while I began to feel alienated from my music. You've got to sell yourself, and you're not supposed to notice you're doing it. The audience doesn't understand what it takes for musicians to get gigs, like boiling yourself and your music down to an impressive bio. You have to select the best music, which means what you think people are gonna like. What really excites you gets lost. This confused me because I had this long period of focusing on being as honest as possible. So I pulled back a bit and used writing to get some perspective.

Then in 2011, I was invited to the Colloquium of the Guelph Jazz Festival in Canada to speak on the situation of free improvisation and how it evolved into the present. It was an academic gathering, but it was mainly improvising musicians I wanted to address, and that would be through writing something more extensive. My concern was the conditions we are playing under, how our playing is affected by our role as artist entertainers. This has a lot to do with what kind of music gets paid and what is thought unworthy of attention and an audience. Can we be free of obligations to the audience and the music world, I mean internally, among ourselves, and play something that we don't know is going to interest anyone other than ourselves? How do we relate to each other and to the music world, that frames what we do? I traced this back through sixties Free Jazz and its later revival, and free improvisation as it developed in the UK and then in this

country. What I learned is that the situation we're in now is very different from when Free Jazz and free improv originated, when these musics were made by a profession of performing musicians. Today the vast majority of musicians are not thinking at all of having a career—that has become irrelevant to the playing of music for most. Those coming out of music school are career-driven, but that when they have to face reality the career becomes teaching, not performing. When was the last time musicians actually earned a full income strictly from performing? What percentage of musicians are doing that? There are no statistics on this but I think at least the musicians know the answer, we just keep it to ourselves.

[Laughs]

Cadence: *So the roots of your book go back many years and you started writing to understand the music. When did you get the idea to actually release a book?*

Wright: I knew there would be a book after that talk at Guelph; I appreciate the invite as a stimulus. I was writing the way I wanted to, a continuation of my first serious writing back in the 70s, but now I was also learning how to write for others. It's interesting, that's the opposite of what I do with music. I guess because if you want to present ideas and subject them to criticism you have to put them into prose. You have to aim to be understood. I have no such intention with music. [Laughs] Music is poetry; if people are scratching their heads it's a good thing. Anyway, I couldn't find anyone to read the book through to give me feedback. Now that it's out, I'm amazed at the enthusiasm. That says something about print vs. a virtual book. I was afraid of the response because I said some things about jazz and free jazz that I was sure would offend people rather than persuade them. Of course mostly people just ignore or quietly dismiss whatever they don't agree with. My interest is the big picture, how music and musicians fit with everything else, and how that changes. Jazz scholars don't look at that, they focus on the details. I haven't had any formal music study, just some private sax lessons when I was a kid. Maybe that was a good thing, since I was looking at music as an activity of a large number of people like me, whereas music courses are focused on the few individuals thought to represent the various genres. I do talk about such musicians in the period of sixties Free Jazz, only because they changed what other musicians were doing. The same can't be said of contemporaries today—jazz and free jazz musicians have been giving repeat performances since the 80s, the golden oldies. But they're not to blame; the entire cultural order has changed. The academics of jazz and free jazz haven't noticed. They use the present tense to talk about the past. And teachers think playing Coltrane patterns is keeping jazz alive.

Cadence: *Would you briefly explain the difference between free Jazz and your preferred genre of free improvisation?*

Wright: First of all, I think of what I do as free playing, or "just playing," which is not a genre but an approach. For musicians in general the genre name is just what we call our music so people will have some idea what to relate it to. This is part of the job of drawing an audience, helping out with

publicity. For professionals it's part of the contract to play the genre you're billed to play. It's an identity with specific characteristics. Jazz musicians used to say, it's just music, forget the name. For these characteristics to be a genre it must be known to a wide number of audience, part of the culture. They will know it when they hear it, and not because publicity tags a musician with it. Free improvisation is an effective genre in the UK and Europe, where it has a long and known history, but not in the states. When the title is used here it is commonly classed under free jazz; that is, all improvisers are expected to be somehow doing jazz, and that isn't true. I myself have a close relation to jazz but few of my partners do. Improvisers are likely to announce what they do as experimental improvisation to avoid confusion. I tell people promoting a show it's free improv and they call it free jazz. That's fine; they'll just think this is what free jazz sounds like today. [Laughs] The two are very linked historically and the relation between them is a very important tension, I would say.

What makes the difference is four things. First of all, free jazz has a relatively consistent form, often a loose composition. It begins usually slow and quiet and leads to sustained high energy, a blur of beats and notes, moderate to high volume, with no gap in the stream of sound. All this shows the musicians' strong emotional commitment. Secondly, it follows jazz in featuring individuals with solo spots, and distinguishes soloists and rhythm section, which plays constantly. Thirdly, instrumental sound is traditional and mostly acoustic. When sound goes outside the normal range of the instruments it is for emotive expression, and electronics are rarely included, at least subordinate. Finally, it is oriented towards performance; sessions are not essential.

Free improvisation, or what I call playing freely, is just as commonly played in private sessions as in performance. Anyone can do it, you're skilled or never touched an instrument. It has no consistent form, so it lacks specific characteristics, an identity, except for what is missing. People might stop playing, but not because someone is soloing. Perhaps most strikingly, no one ever solos; anyone who forces a solo space is not playing freely. Apart from that you can do whatever they feel like, even play way over the volume of others. What is essential is the interaction of the group, and there are no rules for that. But, if you don't interest your partners they won't invite you back. You play with those who excite you, basically, and that ignores whatever audiences might think.

Given this, you might say there is another kind of music that has this range of freedom, and that's new music composition. Some improvisers did take a relatively compositional direction in the late 90s. It was called reductionism, sometimes lower case music, and was centered in Berlin and London and Boston. I got very engaged in with these musicians, went to Europe to play with them, because I felt trapped in what I knew how to do. In fact I became as poor at reductionist playing as I am at jazz. [Laughs] It was about sparse and quiet sounds, often outside the normal tone of the instrument, an intensity completely opposite to jazz. An improvised performance had the kind of unity found in composed music. It took free improv further away from its association with free jazz. Like jazz it

aimed for a specific aesthetic effect, by establishing parameters that were expected to be followed. The sounds you make don't depend strictly on your relation to others in the midst of playing but on a prior form, which is similar to what happens in jazz. In free playing form comes from the immediate interaction of players, which can't be predicted. To come back to the main question, the musicians know the distinction between free improv and free jazz because they have to choose who to play with. There are exceptions, but if you want to improvise freely you would hesitate to play with somebody expecting free jazz, since they will play a continuous high-energy stream. Maybe I know the difference because I used to do that myself, I'd be doing what I now avoid, playing parallel to others rather than with them.

Cadence: *Do the critics understand your playing?*

Wright: Sending out recordings for review has been the normal musician practice since the 80s, at least for those trying to grow an audience. The idea is that by "getting the critics on your side" and piling up reviews you slowly gain a following. I used to do that regularly but not now. Maybe I'm just bored with going through the motions of being a serious musician; after all it's a front you have to keep up. Writers don't often reflect back to me anything that provokes my own thinking—maybe that's what "understanding" means. But also I think that sending out for reviews implies that there is a critical public for free improv. This is not the case unless it can be classed as far-out jazz. Practically speaking, do people come to these basement shows we play because they've read a review? Hardly. Today's music writers are mainly publicists doing favors for people they think will make it, or already have an audience. Some are paid hefty sums to boost a CD—the sleaze of the music world that audience doesn't want to know about. Reviews today mostly just confirm to musicians that they are worth something, self-gratification. In the '90s I was gratified when a writer wrote that another sax player was from the "Jack Wright School of Screech" and I thought – there's a school? [Laughs] Someone else wrote that I was a post-Evan Parker saxophonist. That's the old belief in a linear progression of saxophonists, a modernist idea—musical progress is being made. The fiction may have still functioned when I was starting out in the '70s and '80s, but no one I perform with or comes to my shows thinks in those terms.

Cadence: *You make it clear in your book that playing free improvisation does not lead to financial benefit, you cannot make a living off of playing it. There's a blog posted on your website by Tom Djl that includes your quote – "I choose not to make a living from my music, and that freed me from having to tailor my music for any mass appeal. I'm not at the mercy of club bookers or agents or record producers." In *The Free Musics* you note, "My true joy was to discover what is authentic strictly for myself." Would you talk about dedicating your life to an art form with such a limited appeal to the public? That aspect is seemingly one of the major attractions of the music to you.*

Wright: In the late sixties I realized that my philosophic perspective on history did not conform with university job requirements. When I

got involved with music it was easy to see the same would apply there. Working as a handyman, I could keep my needs for living simple and expenses low, and the balance of my time would favor what really motivated me. This was where radical politics had taken me—a break with middle class needs and modes of thinking. In the 80s I assumed that free improv would catch on, as in the avant-garde model. Eventually I realized this model was a matter of lip service. We live in a period of stagnancy and preservation of the past, when any new approach to art will fall on deaf ears. The avant-garde goes ahead as if nothing has changed, for instance thinking that musicians are professionals, like doctors. In fact we're not getting paid. We're hobbyists, playing first of all for each other. That's not self-indulgence, it's just common sense! If we're basically paying to play, why not explore for music ourselves? Who says people won't like it?

Cadence: *Recently you told me that you "don't really know Jazz." At a recent performance, you heard (guitarist) Lucas Brode and (percussionist) Julius Masri perform an unannounced [Thelonious] Monk tribute. It was interesting to hear you say that you recognized the music as Steve Lacy inspired [Lacy often covered Monk] rather than recognizing it as Monk's music.*

Wright: Oh, I just meant they were quoting a Monk riff, just a couple intervals really, the way Lacy often did, rather than a jazz group playing a Monk tune. When I say that I don't know Jazz, I mean not like people that know all the classic recordings, who the sidemen are, the legends and all that. I did spend a lot of time listening closely to Jazz in the '70s and early '80s especially. Jazz is still where I'm mainly coming from. It's an identity rooted in the unconscious, not something I put out there. I'm not claiming jazz knowledge, but I'm not diluting or weakening straight-ahead jazz by what I'm doing. After five years of lessons it was clear to me that I wouldn't ever be able to play jazz, and so I turned away from music. My story begins with Classical music. My mother was a pianist with aspirations to play professionally, and I just assumed I would do that, out of love and not obligation. It wasn't until I was about thirty that I awakened to jazz, after the period of sixties Free Jazz. That's when I first heard Coltrane's A Love Supreme, which literally knocked me down on the floor, a heavy experience. I went from Classical to that in one swift leap. It hit me not as a consumer but—this is what I've gotta do. Love is then what you're doing, and it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks of it. When I was living in NY in '67 I heard Ornette play and I wasn't prepared for it at all. I mean people today have very little understanding of what it was like to live in the '60s and get hit by what was going on politically and culturally, to experience this rush of culture that was just hitting you in the face. I ran away from Ornette, but then five years later, after having thrown myself into political activism I heard his recording Love Call and I knew that this was the same music and it was just beautiful. I understood it completely because I had a kind of transformation, which many people went through. We were hearing music we could not accept but in that strange period we were won over by anything that challenged us. It had nothing to do with fashion.

Cadence: What cultural impact does free improvisation make?

Wright: None. [Laughs] I laugh because cultural means the big picture, and that's not free improv. The only epigraph that I have in the book is from [Willem] de Kooning, who said, "We have no position in the world except that we just insist on being around." Free improv is not known in our society as a distinct approach. This book is about a relative handful of people in the country who would call their music free improvisation, and we're not going away. The field for touring is mostly the Midwest and the Northeast today, to some extent the Southeast, but those who hear us mostly come to hear the other, local groups, which themselves have only a small following. We just happen to be on the bill. Maybe a few come for "free improvisation," but probably out of curiosity for what they know nothing about. They hear it and they're like, "What d'you call this?" [Laughs] So there's some curiosity about it but it's not at the level of any cultural impact. On the East Coast, the audience is pretty much just the other musicians playing on the bill or their friends. This isn't upsetting to us; to have an impact means big audiences, and a loss of intimacy. I've said since the 80's, I'd rather play fifty concerts for ten people than one concert for five hundred. A mass audience and mass response is boring. It also leads to a hierarchy, with musicians wanting to play with you just because you're a success, rather than a wide spread of musicians actually stimulated by what you do.

Cadence: Apparently, you woke up one day in 1979 and started playing free improvisation while never having heard it before. You had no reason to even think that anyone else was playing it. What prompted you to play free?

Wright: I had been playing with a local jazz group and trying to play within the chord changes. One day I played something a bit free, outside the strict limit of the changes. One of the guys in the group said to me, "Are you trying to sound like Eric Dolphy or something?" and from his tone I knew it was a criticism. I thought that I was finally catching on and got the impression that I had gone too far. I woke up the next morning and said to myself, 'FUCK THIS, I'm just gonna play.' I turned on the tape recorder and took off. To me that was the spirit of free playing, though it was full of little made-up tunes, moving from one idea to another spontaneously. It's what I call following where the music is going. It was jazz-based, but not chord progressions. Like many free jazz musicians today, it went against that tired line: "You gotta learn the rules before you can break them."

Cadence: How did you become aware that other people were playing in the same fashion as you?

Wright: I was looking for anyone in Philly who would do this; I asked everyone. The message I got was that to play freely, and this was 1979, was the kiss of death. I finally found a drummer, Jim Meneses, who was into this. He was coming from some of the British art Rock, Henry Cow and Art Bears, influenced by British free improvisation. Through him I realized that at least the British were doing this, and also some people in New York. Interesting that other people around the country were discovering it at

the same time, all on their own. The time was right for it. Davey Williams, guitarist, and LaDonna Smith, violin, from Birmingham Alabama were coming up to NY often and inspired people to think of free improv as something anybody could do. If John Zorn didn't need to come up through the ranks of established musicians neither did I. Eventually I found more people in Philly, like saxophonist Elliott Levin, who got started on his path through an invitation from Cecil Taylor. Elliott told me, "Music is my religion," which I could relate to. Later Jim and I set up a Monday Night venue called the Wet Spot, which lasted until the building was to be torn down. So things were changing, people were coming into the music.

Cadence: *So free improvisation was developed by the British, one of whom was Derek Bailey. Did you have a relationship with him?*

Wright: I knew him and he was generally open to playing with people, but I couldn't see how we could connect. It's the difference between appreciating a musician and being able to engage with him musically. My approach at the time, like his, was fairly soloistic, but I wanted closer integration with partners than he did, more bending towards each other. For me, free playing has always meant mutual seduction and it's very subjective who will turn you on. And unstable—over the decade's subjectivity changes, so I might seek out very different people. Anyway, unlike Bailey's playing mine had become increasingly emotive, forceful, direct, pushing out a lot, I guess pushing against the world. Around '83 I started playing with William Parker; we'd play very hard for at least an hour without stopping, driven by a similar inexhaustible energy. At that time Bailey's playing felt too cool for me. It would have been dishonest to play with him. I would be associating with him to advance myself, as many Americans were doing. People who think that music is based on models to be followed will naturally think they should play with those of highest reputation. Then they display them in their bio as if they were real partners. That would be the stepping stone career path, as I was beginning to see, and it totally repelled me—I didn't yet realize it was being fostered in the schools. I did go to Europe for extended periods, since that's where I found the most musicians I could relate to. I brought back some for touring in the US—Roger Turner, Wittwulf Malik, Andreas (now Max) Stehle, Lars Rudolph, and later others—but I was rooted in America and wasn't about to move there.

Cadence: *When did you start performing free improvisation for an audience?*

Wright: It must have been the later 70s. There was a house down the street, a poor black neighborhood at the time, where a line of saxophonists got on stage one by one backed by a rhythm section. I knew the setup, anybody could come in and play. You got in line and took your turn. [Laughs] I was scared shitless to do this, but my girlfriend said, "You know you have to do this." The sax players ahead of me were all trying to play in key. I just closed my eyes and [makes growling sounds]. [Laughs] When I ran out of juice, I stopped. I threw myself into it and was too scared to think. That was a fluke, at the time I was still vacillating about music. The first time after that must have been '81 or so, and with a group, and I was

hoping to reach people, as I still do.

Cadence: *Through the '80s you were the only one touring widely with this music, leading (guitarist) Davey Williams to title you the "Johnny Appleseed" of free improvisation. What kind of response were you getting from the public as you went about the country?*

Wright: There were very small audiences, places where there was not much else to do, is my impression. I did a tour through the Midwest in '86 with a dancer, Bob Eisen, who got us into places I never would have been otherwise. A dance community was already in place, a few musicians would also come, and I'd meet them. In the '80s, the different arts audiences were not as segregated as now; this is also the difference between small towns and the big city. A musician in a Midwestern town might go to a dance concert. So I met people and then I had the contacts to go back again. I was happy with 5 or 10 people in the audience. I mean it was advertised and some people would come thinking it was Jazz, so I guess you could call it a public. For the fifteen years I lived in Boulder I was going back and forth to the East Coast twice a year. This meant I'd play in Lincoln, Nebraska. I remember a woman who came with her son because she had seen a sign announcing a saxophonist and she wanted to encourage her son, just starting to play. I was wearing a kind of death mask with a big mouth opening that allowed for the saxophone. So here's this mother and her kid and I'm just going [BLAT!!!!] I wonder what happened to this kid. [Laughs] So people came to concerts not really knowing what to expect. That was closer to the sixties thing than today, where art audiences are more likely to calculate whether they're going to like it. People came who were really having a new experience of music because they just happened to be there. But the nature of the thing was that it didn't build an audience for me in the career sense, that is, consumers. I just didn't care enough about that. I loved being on the road, finding new people, places I'd never been, without being a tourist, which to me is deadly.

Cadence: *In your book, you estimate that there's maybe 300 full and part-time players of free improvisation. Nothing excites you more than inspiring an audience member to play this form of music or when you find a new playing partner. Why is recruitment of others so important to you?*

Wright: 300 might actually be a stretch; there's no way of knowing. For me frustration with whatever you're doing has got to be part of the picture. You're playing with partners you're perfectly happy with, but then you can't find anything new to do. It's not their fault, you feel bored with your own playing. It's like, you're not exciting them enough to return the ball to you. Adding in a different person creates a new situation, or somebody who you haven't played with for a long time. And finding new people, you never know what they'll do and what they'll make you do. I want other players to push me around. Like in a serious discussion, if the other person doesn't push you a bit out of your normalcy, you're just hearing your echo. Sometimes you have to let others know they can do that. They will hesitate if they look up to you too much. And especially being an older person, there's that gap of respect. You have to let them know you're

missing something for yourself without them. You might get an intuition who will be interesting but you can't know for sure. Somebody who may have no skill on an instrument and yet feels okay in playing, that could put you in a new situation that could be highly interesting. People ask me for a lesson sometimes and I say, let's just play. I do sometimes stop and talk, but only when I feel a real possibility there with them. I am not particularly interested in improvisation becoming more popular but rather, very selfishly, in finding people who can open some new doors. I'd rather play with friends than the so-called best musicians. That is, first you feel you might like someone, then you play. Music is then the medium of a special kind of personal relationship, of love and trust.

Cadence: *So say tomorrow, you wake up and free improvisation is the new thing. The type of music you play is what everybody wants to hear, it's the big rage. How would you feel about that?*

Wright: [Pause] I'd probably do something else. [Laughs] No, I'd try to ignore it, which would be difficult for it would probably mean my own personal success. That's the really difficult situation, to play for people when you're framed as a success. In the '80s I wanted that but had illusions of how I could use it. I said, "If they ever open the curtain for me, I'll hold it open for everyone else." That wasn't idealism, I really didn't want to be singled out. So it raises the question, in our world what are the chances for a collective musical form to establish itself with an audience, like, for free improv to be the new thing? It has come and gone twice now, as something that was catching on with musicians, but never as a popular thing. It finds new listeners for the moment but it has never been fashionable. Anyway, I think people knew my attitude and that I was not someone to be promoted, since I wouldn't feel indebted to the promoters. I was at least ambivalent, and now it's all clear to me that to be the next big thing is the worst thing to happen to musicians' relation to their music, at least in our era. It promises to pay the bills, but doesn't even do that very well. On the other hand, if it were the rage, as you say, for people to just start improvising freely, like at the lunch table at work, wouldn't that be great!

Cadence: *There actually was a surge of interest in this music by the end of the '80s and more people started performing it. What caused that peak in popularity?*

Wright: I'm not aware of any such thing. There were bands with set lists of pieces that had improvised sections, John Zorn was performing his conducted pieces, "free improv" was used to advertise all kinds of things, but no group I know was drawing an audience for a set of just free playing. We were part of a large-scale resistance to the Reagan reaction. Wynton Marsalis joined it by attacking sixties Free Jazz and the New York avant-garde, which he called "improvised music." His message was--"Let's make sure we don't go down that musical path ever again." Punk was viscerally and explicitly anti-Reagan. Maybe what you're thinking of is the resurrected free jazz of the late 80s. But that was the point where free jazz and free improv began to move apart. In my book I show how sixties Free Jazz was dead in the water by the early 80s as the contender for public space it had once been. It was resurrected later as a rejection of Marsalis's

Classic Jazz, which had drawn a line excluding it. It was impossible for free jazz to be adventurous and open to new ideas in that cultural atmosphere; it was frozen in place as a consistent classic style. The free improvisers, less tied to the identity of jazz and free jazz, had more reason to be inclusive. The next set in our little basement space after some wild crashing about might be five Casio piano players working together quietly, nothing free jazz about that at all. It was in the later 90s that the surge of musician interest in free improv occurred, the second wave, which died down around the time of the economic collapse of 2008.

Cadence: Since the '80s, there's been a proliferation of highly schooled musicians, some of whom play free improvisation. What effect does schooling have on performers of this music?

Wright: Actually, there's been a proliferation of all musicians, an important distinction. If you mean university training, I'd say the effect is negative, although that's the main road people take today who think of playing jazz or classical. So it's a dilemma—how to keep free improv from becoming institutionalized. In the early 80s some musicians were schooled, but when they discovered improv they rejected much of what they'd been taught. Today a career is impossible without a degree, and I see no rejection of schooling. In '88, I did a workshop at the University of Michigan. In the classroom the musicians were just frozen, I think because their normal training made free improv a hard pill to swallow. That night, I played a concert with a group of student improvisers in the main rehearsal space and then asked all the music students in the audience to join us. So they started playing and it was like they'd been let out of a cage. They were banging on the big storage closets, moving chairs around, just what any improviser would do. The professors were there and were horrified. They wrote a letter criticizing the teacher who had invited me. I think he had no idea such a thing could happen. Today I go around and do workshops, presentations, at large and small schools where there are faculty-led improv groups. They are mostly coming from Classical music and composition, and are attracted to playing freely; it's like a release from their serious work, although within the traditional bounds of performance. Jazz students, I think, believe they already know how to improvise; playing freely would be confusing. I found a Ph.D. student in improvisation who basically played a composition, while a composition major, who pointedly said he was not an improviser, was fabulous. Putting free playing at the center of your life, constantly reimagining how to play your instrument and staying close to your desire—there aren't many people doing that. It's a hard sell. I have yet to meet anyone coming from these improv programs really on fire for free playing, recklessly bursting out with it, like those Michigan students, but that doesn't mean it won't happen.

Cadence: What defines outstanding free improvisational playing versus unsuccessful playing? What's art and what's just strange?

Wright: I have no idea. [Laughs] Your question is about judging it objectively and that's not my job. I mean, it's what the music world does, critics and curators and teachers, but playing is a different kind

of engagement. When I'm listening to others playing I'm just thinking whether they would be interesting to play with. That doesn't hinge on whether it's art or successful or strange. Playing is very different from standing back and judging. I only care about what my partners think of it, though I'm curious about the audience response, beyond applause, that is. For instance, polite applause can easily mean that they didn't know what to make of it. Maybe the playing was too outstanding for them. [Laughs]

Cadence: *How has your playing advanced over the years? What have you grasped that you're most proud of?*

Wright: To be proud is to have achieved something you'll defend. Against who? I don't even defend my playing against myself. Just today I was playing a session with Zach [Darrup, guitarist] and I was frustrated with my playing in the first piece, then later I thought it was working well. Thirty years ago I had the same kind of judgments, so where's the advance! Advance is an abstraction from the listener point of view, comparing now and then, advance or decline. I'm usually more happy with my playing now than I was twenty years ago, but that's not the same thing. Listening back though, is a very interesting thing; we can hear ourselves outside of the immediacy of playing. We can listen to what we did ten years ago, forty years ago, and really struggle with our judgment. I mean, I was ecstatic with something at the time, so why am I dissing it now? Anyway, I'd say the book is closer to an achievement since it's a solid material thing; can't be erased. Even there, however, I say I could keep on editing and changing it, so how solid is that? I'm not proud enough to say, this is forever.

Cadence: *Is there a key skill that a player of free improvisation has to develop in order to play well with others?*

Wright: No [Laughs] Not even listening—that's a human act, not a skill. To make it a skill is to tell people not to object if they're bored. That's the academic approach. When I walked out on Ornette back in '67 it was because I was listening. I was not bored, I was wide awake and afraid of what was coming in my ears.

Cadence: *How important is it to fit in with the other musicians you are playing with at the time?*

Wright: "Fitting in" is not quite it, and what's important is not what people should do but what they actually do, find themselves doing. For this it would be good to ask a bunch of improvisers. I myself shift between focus on what I'm doing; forgetting what I'm doing, with my mind wandering; and listening entirely to what the other people are doing. The mind wandering is not necessarily a bad thing; it eliminates self-consciousness, and then I'll suddenly be attracted to something I or others just did and wake up. And following others is not literally submitting to others' patterns; the relation can be very subtle. I say in the book that you are playing your own version of what others are doing. You can lose all self-awareness. For instance, when my lip is weak I'll be aware of it and pissed off about it—not fun. I'd rather lose myself in what other people are doing. That helps loosen the great weakness of all serious music—ownership of your music and responsibility. To my mind, responsibility

tightens us up—come on now, this is serious stuff, no fooling around. That's what happens in an art concert—the more formality, the less the playing can take off in its own direction. Free playing is irresponsible in order to respond only to itself.

Cadence: *How does it make you feel to play free music? Are you seeking a spiritual place or getting rid of angst?*

Wright: Neither of these, and you're not seeking something if you're already there. It's an irrational high but not like that from drugs, sex, or 16-hour work days. It's something many musicians feel is our reason for being. Not a single hair separating you and the playing—it happens with all kinds of music. You are every sound you're making, though maybe you've just pulled out of "this is total shit" a minute before. You can't be happy about what you do unless you have felt the wind against you and now it's miraculously at your back. I don't know how else to say it.

Cadence: *As someone who thrives on playing with others, how do you feel about performing a solo set?*

Wright: I feel ambivalent. I am not and don't want to be a soloist. To play a solo is always a specific decision, one I rarely make. Playing with others is first of all for them, stimulated by the audience, whereas with a solo you only have the audience to relate to. Without others throwing in different ideas, solos tend to become formulaic. It's like, the audience wants the best, so here's what I've worked out, what represents me. Our commercialized culture fully backs this up—the musicians' job is to please the other, easily forgotten when engaging other musicians. For me, once something is being recorded, I know someone else could hear it, and it's difficult not to feel I should do something good. This has led me to hold back while recording. Last summer I started playing alone and recording it, but not as a solo. I'd go to the basement early in the morning, turn on the recorder and just play. It was the first time I'd ever escaped the anxiety that accompanies recording. To just play without any nagging judgment was a huge liberating experience, something I didn't plan on. After the summer, I scheduled a couple of solo performances to see if that confidence of "playing alone" would carry over. I was somewhat happy with them but not totally.

Cadence: *What's the most unusual setting you've performed in?*

Wright: Probably when I played in a minimum security prison in Toledo, Ohio with guitarist Chris Cochrane in 1985. All the prisoners were there, a huge audience of black, male prisoners and in front, a few whites. Chris and I were playing this totally crazy stuff and then one of the black prisoners interrupted, saying, "You guys can obviously play music, so why don't you?" Suddenly, everybody was engaged in a passionate inquiry into the philosophy of music. Never before had someone stopped a show of mine and said "This is not music." But he was saying this knowing jazz and other music, and telling us his ears were hurt by what we were doing. Some people seemed to agree with this guy and some white prisoners in the front were saying, "Don't listen to him. We're behind you." [Laughs] They probably didn't like it either but were taking sides. I found out later that the prisoners went back to their cells and debated this all night. Music

mattered vitally to them. Our playing made an impact—there's your cultural impact! [Laughs] Anyway, the upshot was that my friend who was teaching poetry there and got us the gig got fired for it. When people talk of art disturbing the peace and having consequences this is what it means. It's rare, accidental when it happens. That guy couldn't walk out. Makes you think, what if after an audience has come in we post a guard at the door and say, no matter what we do you aren't allowed to leave. No more consumer choice!

Cadence: You play in Europe fairly often. Do you find Europe to be more supportive of this music?

Wright: Yeah, free improvisation is a distinct genre there, with an audience capable of making its own judgments. It's an art music and many more musicians do it exclusively than here. The main thing is that it's possible for Europeans to make a living doing it. Many European governments provide financial support, at least for venues. Here, if it isn't jazz-oriented then it's DIY and underground.

Cadence: What differences have you noticed when performing with Europeans versus American musicians?

Wright: That's hard to generalize. Maybe the Europeans don't play quite as wild, all over the map, as my partners here. [Laughs] They're more restrained in general—technically very trained. However, they don't bring some model of proper music into their improvising.

Cadence: You have a new CD out. How do you decide when it's time to release a new recording?

Wright: Part of the recording is with Zach and Evan Lipson on double bass from a tour [fall of 2016], and the other part is my "playing alone." I had it made to be inserted in the book, when people order it from me, a kind of bonus. CDs are very cheap to get manufactured without the packaging, but still a waste of money if there's no market—the name is the market. CDRs copied one at a time are the answer, and the reason to make them is just to sell on tour. Or Bandcamp and Soundcloud, a good way to let tell potential bookers what you're about, and potential audiences. It's not so much a matter of the right time but of whether I'm going on tour and with whom. All that really matters is playing live. A recording is not the music, it's just a hint of it. But that recording should make it plain that free playing doesn't translate as sloppy technique. Our playing shows a huge vocabulary and is highly precise in both what we play and what we don't play.

Cadence: We're doing this interview at the Philadelphia home you mentioned on Spring Garden Street that you bought in the '70s and have turned into a home for free improvisers. What goes on at this house?

Wright: I had musicians here through the '80s when I was living here. When I moved back in 2003 I tossed out the people who weren't paying rent—quite a bit of that—and made it strictly improvisers. It stayed that way until a few years ago. Now Zach lives here and Jim Strong, an improviser and instrument builder, and soon a dancer downstairs, an improviser. There's also a musician on the first floor who's coming from punk but is not an improviser. I come regularly from my home north of

here to play sessions with Zach and others we invite.

Cadence: *There's sort of a Sun Ra thing going on here.*

Wright: [Laughs] Sun Ra had an orchestra of fixed membership; this isn't like that.

Cadence: *You're also a quite good visual artist. What role does painting serve for you?*

Wright: I started when I was living in Boulder around '89 because I was living with a woman who was a visual artist and encouraged me. I'd thought of painting as something I'd do when I got too old to tour. I saw a Jackson Pollack show just after college that knocked me out, so I immediately went towards abstract expressionism. At the time I felt blocked on the saxophone. I bought a piano and was playing that and painting. The painting reached a point where I became very critical of what I was doing, and when I moved back east, I had no time for it, given the flood of new musicians to play and new musical ideas. Then the book. Now I imagine doing some painting again—I'd love to see what happens after a twenty year break.

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

Ben Bennett (percussion) asked – "Has having kids had an effect on your work?"

Wright: Well, my son Ben has been a very close partner, a double bass player who had a punk band with his brother. I asked him once why he took so naturally to improvising and he said, "I was just listening to you playing all the time," through the '80s when he lived with me in Philly. Captive audience kind of thing, like the prisoners, but he didn't tell me to stop playing!

Bhob Rainey (saxophone/sound design) asked – "How you might view the socioeconomic position of the "fringe" artist as a potential site of effective collectivity."

Wright: I don't identify as a fringe artist myself—Bhob is thinking in market terms, like "marginalized." A fringe points to the mainstream, in fact fringe festivals everywhere are part of mainstream urban culture. It's the cultural left, out to make the world more liberal-minded, using all the entrepreneurial techniques. Free playing is not on the fringe of anything but right at the heart of music. Musicians are directly engaged with other musicians rather than looking to the marketplace. It's true that in the '80s I saw free improv as an extension of activism in some way. I thought it had broken through the conventional social order and had some potential for transformation. It scared those who thought it threatened Music. Since then the social order has adjusted; music is now just a consumer item, doesn't challenge people in any meaningful way. Someday it might be part of a cultural transformation, but not as a fringe. In political terms the fringe is integrationist, and I'm more the separatist—musicians for musicians! That's the collectivity I know about.

Bob Marsh (multi-instrumentalist) said – "I've known Jack for over 30 years and played with him at least twice a year for a long time, plus we toured every other year for many years. We wound up on opposite coasts but I've spent many hours talking to him, so I don't have much in the way of a question for him, it's more of

a conjecture. Did you know that Jack was a doctoral student in medieval French history? He had a really interesting thesis topic. I can't remember what it was but I remember being impressed by it. His thesis adviser however, wouldn't let him pursue it. This led Jack to jump out of the Middle Ages and into the sixties and radical politics and then free improvisation. So the conjecture: What would have happened to me and hundreds of other musicians without that personal contact with Jack's endless and everywhere touring and his incredible generosity if he had gone on to become a medieval French history scholar in an ivory tower somewhere?"

Wright: [Laughs] Well, that's nice to hear, and one of those "what if" questions that can't be answered. I do think it's true that I had some impact on that earlier generation of musicians and a few audience. I get emails from people, "remember when you came through and we played a session?" But improv went through a decline and resurgence of interest in the later 90s, at least on the east coast, and interest in musicians like myself did not carry over. We were the forgotten past. That was fine with me; young players could treat me as a peer and not someone who knew how to do it better than they did. That's what's important with me; we're all peers, dealing just with what's happening.

Cadence: Do you have any final statements to make and perhaps you'd like to say something about playing this form of music that might peak someone's interest in performing it?

Wright: Earlier I said that free playing has lacked cultural impact; it's been absorbed into art music in Europe and assimilated to free jazz here. However, something can be historically significant even though culturally its edge is blunted. That free playing exists at all is a phenomenon. People are creating something very similar to acceptable music in results but from the ground up rather than the top down. That is, out of their immediate relations in real time, not composed in advance and not corrected according to some idea of what people want to hear. The sound-makers have taken over the making of sound, and for their own purposes. That they have no interest in making a mark means that of course it will be culturally insignificant. This is no heroic avant-garde, the next big thing—our culture has absorbed the avant-garde and turned it into a routine. What is historically significant is what is not routine, not expected of the human animal. In the US it has gone through two periods of growth and decline, when it attracted musicians who then got bored with it, the mid-70s-late 80s, and late-90s to late 00's. Each period was marked by its cultural and social environment, and we can't say what the next will be like. We do know that what is called the "world leadership" has been shaken down to its boots, and that the elite of music professionalism has already become a joke, unable to deliver on its promises. It's hard to say what the culture will look like when the present arrangement is more widely and openly known to be no longer viable. I would say, we're on the verge of a Copernican Revolution, all bets are off. The seeds are planted and we can't know what the fruit will taste like, but history, the organic process itself, is clearly not twiddling its thumbs with nothing to do.

THE MELODIC,
PERCUSSIVE PATH
OF BILL COBHAM BY
TEE WATTS



When we talked to Jazz and Jazz Fusion supersonic hero Bill Cobham recently, it was on the heels of one of his curricular passions, The Swiss Youth Jazz Orchestra. This is how he described it for Cadence.

"The Swiss Youth Jazz Orchestra is comprised of young individuals sponsored by different embassies and institutions around the world, to come and take part in a mentorship for one week in Aarau, Switzerland. It's a full six day intensive, all working up to a concert on the 6th day, in a Jazz Orchestral environment.

We had professional players supporting the students. I was supporting two drummers. Renown bassist Neal Jason was mentoring a bass player. Frank Green, great lead trumpet player was mentoring 2 or three other students. The trombone players had a sponsor. The saxophone section had a couple of sponsors. Every day, the whole objective was to go through section rehearsals of materials that had to be prepared for the weekend to be presented to everyone. This experience goes on the resume of kids who come from different parts of the world. We had Russians, Singaporeans, Malaysians, Germans and the local Swiss kids. It's an honor to do it. We've done my music in the past and this year we did a presentation honoring Dave Brubeck. That was a heavy for them, one of the more difficult one's we've ever done."

Ever the educator, another of Bill Cobham's esteemed educational pursuits is his Art of the Rhythm Section retreat. Though the Retreat is an idea whose time has come, Cobham states that it was one that incubated for awhile before its inception in 2014.

"Having observed many things that can happen within the rhythm section over a span of close to 50 years as a professional musician, I felt the time is right to help musicians who are interested in becoming better team players within a group.

We focus more on the social aspects of performing. Specifically, how do you actually hit the ground running with people that you've never played with before? What are the basic fundamental objectives when you sit down

at a jam session? How to turn a 4-way individual situation into a singular stream of thought? How does everyone give of themselves, through their instrument, the common thread between 4 people in the rhythm section? Fundamentally, it's about playing the right notes at the right time based on the understanding of chordal structure. How the feeling is going to lay; groove on one side, harmony on another. What to expect melodically in the most basic of terms from a piece. An individual's past experience comes out in situations like these.

For example, you might want to play a shuffle Blues. If the drummer doesn't know how to play a shuffle, he's going to be out of line with maybe the bass player's (or anybody else's) approach to playing a shuffle. There are ways to do that but just one real way. It's always basically triplets, depending on the tempo. Now, to approach that feeling, how fast you play it, how comfortable you make it, as quickly as possible, like in the first bar, if at all possible – it opens everyone's minds to say, 'Ok, at least we got this far. Where do we go from here? We've established how, as a unit of 4 people who never played together before, are going to move forward to play on a musical level.' This year's retreat is happening July 16-22 at the Mesa, Arizona Arts center and features world class coaches, original members of Cobham's Spectrum 40 Band; guitarist Dean Brown and bassist Ric Fierabracci. Also included are global drum ambassador Dom Famularo and former Tonight Show band member, keyboardist Gerry Etkins.

Though the Art of the Rhythm Section Retreat still has openings for musicians, students and educators as Cadence goes to press. (Registration through 7/6/17.) Participants must play a rhythm section instrument (bass, guitar, keyboards or drums) at a highly proficient level. It is not designed for beginner to intermediate musicians. For registration information go to: <https://www.mesaartscenter.com/billycobhamretreat>

William Emanuel Cobham, Jr. just celebrated his 73rd birthday. It seems like just the other day that the Jazz fusion genre, which in no small part, was fueled by his explosive drum chops, established itself through collaborations and almost collaborations among legendary figures like Miles Davis, Tony Williams, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul, Jaco Pastorius, John McLaughlin, Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone and many others.

The Panamanian born, Brooklyn bred Cobham, grew up in a musical environment that was nurtured by his parents. As a child he heard Jazz, Latin, Classical and Pop in the household. With several years of drumming behind him at 8 years old, he sat in with his dad's band. At the age of 13, his parents awarded him his first drum set when he was accepted at New York's High School of Music and Art.

"My parents bought me a bass drum, a snare drum and seat, a high hat stand and a ride cymbal stand with no cymbals, cuz they couldn't afford them, and a seat. To this day, I have that snare drum around here somewhere.

Roy Haynes signed my permission to get into the New York High School of Music and Art when I was 13 years old. You had to get someone to recommend and sponsor you to gain admission to special schools in New York. Because of Roy, I had a great boost. Years later it was so gratifying to me for him to see him come out to my show and stand off to the side and hear me play, or even be my opening act at Perugia Jazz or something. I remember the days when I was going, "Mr. Haynes, when I grow up, I wanna be just like you." He would say, "Be careful son, be careful."

After graduating from high school, Billy spent 3 years in the U.S. Army Band. He credits that experience as not only enhancing his rudimentary drumming skills learned playing in marching bands as a youth in Brooklyn, but also providing the training ground for combining people and musical ideas together which he still uses today.

Cobham's first steady post army gig was with the great Horace Silver in 1968. He also worked with Stanley Turrentine, Shirley Scott and recorded with George Benson, Grover Washington and Milt Jackson on the Atlantic, CTI and Kudu labels. Our discussion turned to the topic of how he was able to stay away from the temptation of using drugs during such a mercurial time.

"I gotta tell you, I think that I am one of the luckiest people in the world when it comes to drugs. I've seen people, without mentioning names, who are at the upper end of the pecking order of the music business, who have this stand-offish attitude, as if everyone is below them and they say, 'No, they never have.' They don't even wanna talk about it. It's not because they think they're better than. It's more because they're afraid of telling the truth about the dark side of their life. They somehow got through it by looking as if they had a chip on their shoulder. That's what Jazz will do for you. It's part and parcel of a persona that's present in most musicians. They're aloof. They can't or won't talk to anybody because they are geniuses, above everyone else. The reality is, they're not. They're very, very fragile. Then there are others who are just plain into themselves. They're too dumb to understand that there's a world on the outside. As long as you feed them whatever they need, in terms of, 'Man, you sound wonderful.' You're this, you're that. Blah, blah, blah. They will gulp that up along with, 'Here, take this. The money didn't come yet but take this now and this will tide you over.' Then it becomes, 'Man, that stuff you gave me yesterday was great. When's the money coming?'"

'Aw, it'll be here in a few minutes. But take this now man and wait. We'll get it.' And they take that something and the next thing you know, they're just asking for that something that they were given before and well, forget the money. And that's where most of the people who manipulate the artist, want the artist to be. Just do as they say and not as they do. Then ironically, the people who control society give the artist the stuff that they need, tell them it's going to make them better, that they're gonna sound a million times better, those same people

set the artist up for arrest because of course, the drugs are illegal. So they become judge, jury and everything. The point of it all is to divide creative, thinking people into the haves and have nots. They don't want a lot of people thinking. If you're gonna think at all, they want you to think about what they want you to think about.

So let's come back around to me. Why I feel I'm so lucky. I'm looking at people around me. People who say, 'You need to relax. You smoke?'

'No.
'You ever try marijuana?'

'If I don't smoke, how else am I supposed to take it?' I mean, I don't know. I'm asking, almost a question in my own mind. Why would I try marijuana if I don't smoke? A lot of people who ask you that question are expecting you to say a tobacco brand. Something like that. And naw, I don't do that, cuz my folks didn't do that. Kids become mature based upon the foundational concepts of their parents. My folks never smoked, period. I had one uncle who smoked cigarettes, but not in my presence. My parents wouldn't allow him to come to the house and smoke. So he never smoked when he was around us. I never saw my mother or father drunk. From time to time we'd have egg nog with rum or something. My mother used to give us this tonic when we weren't feeling well. (We called it punch.) It consisted of 6 Raw eggs without what my mom called the eye of the egg, 6 tablespoons of sugar and a can of evaporated milk. All that went on top of ice with one bottle of Guinness stout. She would then beat all that by hand with an egg beater. You put that all together and give it to a 5 or 6-year-old, once or twice a month, and after a half a glass of that, I was out like a light. I remember always wanting more but not being able to finish the glass. I believe it helped my immune system, especially with the harsh winters we had in Brooklyn in those days. That's as close to alcohol that I came while growing up. I didn't start to enjoy beer until I was roughly 25 years old. It took many more years for wine. To this day, if I have a glass of wine, I'm pretty much gone for the evening. So therefore, the whole drug/alcohol thing was naturally avoided because I needed to keep my senses if I was going to play. That stuff didn't line up with me. Why would I want to play under this shroud of the unknown? Why am I playing and not enjoying this? I want to be able to enjoy what I play at least as much as everybody else, if not more. If I can't, then why am I doing this?

I started to devise this feeling that playing music is so important to me, that I need to know every note I play because it represents my personality. So, that said, why in heaven's name, when I watch all these other guys, and I read about what they went through—Mingus, I mean I read Herbie's book—Everyone's experimenting with this other worldly stuff, so the say. But come on man, the world can't be that dumb. This is all we really have. Why would you want to—What is it about you that makes you think that if you believe what somebody else tells you that you can get to another level where you can do this. I haven't seen any of those cats do it yet."

As Cobham's career charged toward the forefront of Fusion prominence, in 1969 he joined the group Dreams, which also featured The Brecker Brothers and John Abercrombie. By 1970 he joined Miles Davis and recorded and toured with him as Miles embraced the electrification of Jazz Fusion. The following year he joined fellow electric Miles alum John McLaughlin in forming the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Alternately hailed for its meteoric rise to the top of the genre and cursed for McLaughlin's, my way or the highway leadership style, Billy C. did two tours with the Orchestra. Here he expounds on the pros and cons of that experience as well as the Love, Devotion, Surrender session with McLaughlin and Carlos Santana and their association with Sri Chinmoy.

"I was always and employee. I never thought of myself as being more. I was hired by John McLaughlin, quite honestly to play in the band. He was my boss and I loved the band's concept very much. I felt that my main contribution at that point in time, was to play as best as I possibly could to support that concept. Then there was Jan Hammer, Jerry Goodman, Rick Laird (moreso than anybody), whom I think was the oldest guy in the band, and just laid back, happy to be there. He just did his thing, not looking to do more, but lo and behold, he was sleeping giant in the band because he had all of this knowledge in orchestration and could do a lot of different things. But John didn't ask him to do those things. John asked him to play bass. That's all. And, you know, that's what it was about. We did what we were supposed to do. I did express my interest in writing for the band, but I didn't even know where to begin. I found myself wanting to write and contribute in the same way as John had already done. And here again, I'm looking at myself from the outside. I'm thinking, Why would I want to write the same music or in the same way as John? He's already done it. If anything I need to do something else. I couldn't think of anything else and by then I had already made the suggesting saying, 'Man, I sure would like to help you with new material.' We were getting to a point where we had worked a lot. Over the span of about 2 years, I think we were approaching 500 shows. We were on the road all the time. So I thought, we need new music. We can't keep playing the same thing. We need to continue to build and I wanted to help to build. The only way I could think of it happening was if somehow I could (in my naiveté, cuz I had no idea about publishing) play an idea with 2 fingers on the piano, that John could just take it and envelope it. Naive me! He didn't say no, but his body language did. It was more like, 'Yeah, yeah, sure man.' So I got it. I put it out there. It was not accepted. I need to just do what I do and leave the rest alone cuz I could see also as an observer that Jan and Jerry were really starting to push the envelope about writing material. They loved the material that John was already doing but they wanted to add to it. They saw how they could expand on that. And John wasn't interested in doing that. So they got into a lot of problems. I'm watching them saying, "I need to do something else."

I had already been working myself in the studio, kind of establishing myself as a worker bee/studio musician. We had been working a lot and it pulled me away from New York in a good way, yet, on the other side, I wasn't able to play as much in the studio as I would have liked to. So I was replaced by Purdie or Steve Gadd or somebody like that for Creed Taylor at CTI Records. The connections I had in the jingle business became really thin because I just wasn't around. There were a lot of people around who were looking for work. So I started to feel like I had to do something else to sustain myself because this situation I didn't think was gonna last. I was right. No matter what John had said (he was gonna start another band, he wanted me to play drums, blah, blah) in the end, I got this funny feelin' that this is not happening and sure enough, I was fired and gone before that year was out." (Author's note: Cobham left in 1973 but returned for the reformed incarnation in 1984 for studio work only on the self-titled album, Mahavishnu. Also in 1973, Cobham played on the Love, Devotion Surrender album by McLaughlin and Carlos Santana. In her book, *Space Between the Stars*, Santana's ex-wife Debra discusses her view of the relationships between both guitarists and their guru at the time, Sri Chinmoy, whom she viewed as a huckster. When asked about his observation of those relationships, this is Cobham's response.

"No, I did not observe that at all. I wouldn't disagree with it, but this is my and logic, from the outside looking in, I don't know, man. All these people with these very interesting names from different parts of the world, what the names mean, etc., it was just like another drug. What do these guys need all this for? Look at all the music they've written. Why would they even wanna talk to somebody or have somebody tell them where and when to go take a piss. It doesn't make sense to me. I see life in a different way. I know that people need that. I mean, why do we have churches? That's a very, very serious question. There are many more people today who stand up for their ideas of living life in a common sensical way, doing the right thing at the right time, because it is the right thing to do, as opposed to having to wait for a Supreme Being to tell them somehow, that they should do the same thing. I don't know who's right or who's wrong. I know what's right for me. If I see you and your kid walking across the street against the light and surely you're going to get hit by a Mack truck, I'm gonna say, 'Watch out.' It's kinda like that for me. It just all makes a lot of sense. In the music business, artists have a tendency to shuck everything that they don't want to be responsible for onto somebody else, who will either take and turn it into a money making situation for themselves personally, leaving a husk standing in the corner that represents the artist, after they've taken everything the artist ever had. And that's the music BIZ-NESS! The Entertainment business."

Early on in his career, Billy Cobham was also terminated by trumpeter Hugh Masekela. Interestingly enough, Cobham considers it one of the best moments of his career.

"Hugh was the one boss I always felt did me a great turn. Hugh of

course had a great hit with “Grazin’ In The Grass.” He was also closely allied with Harry Belafonte, who had a great rehearsal hall on 57th Street which, even back then you had to have some money to have a place like that. This is 1967 or thereabouts. I was invited to go play for Hugh Masekela by Larry Willis. I was playing with Billy Taylor a lot and Larry was familiar with what I was doing. So I went to audition for Hugh and I thought the band sounded great, man. I think Bill Salter was playing bass. He and Ralph McDonald had a production company, wrote a lot of songs together and produced Grover Washington who was in the army with me as well. I had a small tie to a lot of these people and in the process everything is going well. At the end of rehearsal, I decide to put out an idea to Masekela. I’d been doing some work on the weekends like weddings with a group that consisted of Eric Gale on guitar, Richard Tee on keys, Chuck Rainey on bass and I believe Pee Wee Ellis. We called ourselves The Encyclopedias of Soul. This was a forerunner to the highly acclaimed band, Stuff. So I said to Hugh at the end of the audition, ‘You know this group could go a long way.’

‘Thank you very much,’ he said, trying to figure out where I was going with it. I had no idea what I was talking about. I was inspired by his wonderful persona. I wanted to offer something since Larry had recommended me. I said, ‘If you’re into it man, I can put us with some people that can get us some parties and dances, things like that.’ And he starts looking at me like I was out of my mind. “Grazin’ In The Grass” had sold millions of records. I had no idea. He then realized that I wasn’t joking. That I just didn’t know and was lacking experience. He said to me, ‘Let me just talk to you for a minute. I’m telling you this because I want you to take it and go and learn. You need to get out there. But I don’t want you to do this now. I’m not going to hire you for this.’ The way he talked to me wasn’t as if he were putting me down. If anything, it was an education. Whenever, I’ve seen Hugh Masekela since then, I always say, ‘This is the one person who gave me the best advice in the world at the time when he fired me.’ And I can laugh about it because I was so naïve. I had no idea what I was doing. He saved me from going down the wrong rabbit hole. This is a guy who dealt with big political issues back in the day. He was married to Miriam Makeba at one point and they were in the vanguard of the anti-apartheid movement. I get it now. I wasn’t ready for any of that stuff. He kept me on the path, so to speak.”

Navigating the Jazz road can be dangerous. Bill Cobham’s observations over a near half century pointedly underscore the perils of the road, the business and rigors of maintaining a successful career. Using the still active Randy Weston as an example, Cobham expounds:

“I focus on Randy Weston a little bit because I know that Randy was blacklisted from the U.S. in the ‘50s and moved to Africa, way back then. It was because he was a musician who chose his own path. He had his own successful record company back then. Those were the days in which artists had to have cabaret cards in New York, obtained

at the Cabaret License Bureau which was overseen by the New York City Cab Medallion Bureau. So you had to go to the Taxicab bureau to get a cabaret card. You had to pay these people off and then go around the corner on 52nd Street to the Musicians Union to get a musician's card. All of this was just so that you could do what you did for a living, which was play. They wanted to control where you played, whom you played for and yeah, there was a reason for unions. I'm not saying there shouldn't have been unions, but come on man, you're an artist. I can see the musician's union. But then to play a club, you're paying extra to some bunch of goons who are controlling the territory, if you will, calling it insurance, for whatever it is. So Randy Weston decided that he didn't want to do that and because he didn't have the right credentials, was forced to leave the country. One could very easily say Black musicians were taken out because they wanted to lead. I don't know. It's not that deep for me. It's just that somebody wanted a piece of your money, win, lose or draw and you had nothing else to say about it. They allowed you to play and he decided not to go that route. So he left. What's interesting about him is that he has been back many times since. He's a walking griot. These are my models; Randy Weston, Yusef Lateef, Dr. Billy Taylor and Roy Haynes."

At the height of the Fusion explosion a lot of Jazz press was given to the percussion question of who was best, Tony Williams or Billy Cobham. Both had tenured with Miles. Both had recording resumes with McLaughlin and both were excellent players. Here Billy talks about their association:

"Tony invited me to come to Japan and work with him once. Honestly, I think he did it on a dare. In my short time of knowing him, Tony never backed down from anything. He had a real sense of self that said, "Oh, you think I can't do this. I'm gonna show you. I bet somebody said, 'Man, you wouldn't want to play with Billy Cobham on the bandstand.' What I was trying to do with him was to get him to play together. Not as competitors, but as a unit, but we never got the chance. We kept living close to each other. He lived in Fairfax and I lived in Mill Valley in the San Francisco Bay Area. We were out there at the same time but he was reclusive. He was part of what I used to call the princes of the Prince (Authors note: a reference to those who rose to prominence through their association with Miles Davis). They were the untouchables. You could not say anything about them. Some of them walked with their proverbial noses in the air. You had to be careful about how and what you said. I didn't feel that way, obviously. But I loved every one of those guys – what they did as artists was unparalleled. Not that they were better than anybody else. It's just that they were personalities unto themselves – to this day. You can tell Herbie's playing just by listening, just like you can tell Chick. Ron Carter is the only bass player that plays like that. There's Tony and Wayne Shorter, George Coleman and there you are man. All these people are special, special, special people. But then after that, they are

human beings just like everybody else and it should be kept in that perspective.

With Tony, we played the Blue Note together. We alternated opening and closing. He had a manageress. I can't even remember her name. She also managed Bill Evans. This was around the beginning of the '90s. We were doing about 3 shows each per night, a throwback to the old, old days when we did 5 shows a night. Anyway she made reference one night to me as opening for the greatest drummer in the world and I never let her forget it. I would say, "You sure about that?" She wasn't dumb. She was kind of pushing the envelope as if to make me a second class citizen in a way. She finally started to avoid me.

During that week at the Blue Note, Tony and I shared the same dressing room and though we'd talk, he wasn't around much. He was in and out, elusive in a way but I was honored to be around him. God rest his soul, I'm still alive, doing what I'm doing.

Once, when I was playing Kimball's in Emeryville, with George Cables and Ira Coleman, he came out with his wife to see us. I was shocked and honored again. I said to him, "What are you doing here?" He said, "What, I can't come out and see you play?" How did I know? I mean, thank you. All I could say was, "Glad to see you. Glad you came." I would never have invited him to come. And if I had, I don't think he would've. It was just one of those things. A pleasant surprise for me. On the same level as having Roy Haynes coming to see me play at a gig. He's 92, sitting there enjoying himself. It far outshines any Grammy Academy Award, anything that could ever happen.

Admittedly, Cobham could still stand more elevation through marketing. In a poignant expression of his analysis of his public profile he states, "Well, I can't speak for anyone else, but there's not a large contingency of people who promote Billy Cobham. There's Billy Cobham and my wife Faina Cobham and that's it. She's also my manager and if you come across me she's around somewhere nearby. In the occupation that I'm in, it can be counterproductive to be married. It's hard to have both. I'm still more married to the music than I can ever be to my wife. It takes that kind of commitment to get where I have to be because I don't have the tools. I'm not a Chick Corea or a Herbie Hancock or someone like that where the marketing is very, very important, combined with the high level quality of what they produce. They have a really strong shot, more than most artists around in terms of people who might be mentioned in the same breath. They're my colleagues and I envy that to some degree but you think about it and you can't have it both ways. Everything has a price and I don't mean this literally, but in the music business, yeah you get in bed with the devil and boy, you've got a price to pay for the rest of your life. It's what you create for yourself and who you tie yourself to. You have obligations and you can't just kick them away."

We can't let Mr. Cobham get away without explaining his take on drum tuning, which he states has evolved over time.

"Keep in mind that the second instrument on earth was drums. That

said, the drums have a specific tone and though you can get different tones out of a drum, it is limited to depth and size and shape of the instrument. But if you add more of those instruments together, then you can assign a specific tonal quality to as many of those instruments as you want, even to the point of creating scales. You can express yourself communicatively, not just with rhythmic patterns on the drum, but also how the listener becomes comfortable with the sound and how it's being presented because the sound is infectious and so the audience starts to move with it, they start to dance with it and react in a positive way, or not, to what they're hearing. The whole objective is to play in such a way as to create a reaction in the positive, not only for those who are listening primarily, but for the person who is performing those tasks, which means you have to understand how the instrument functions and how you want to present your personality through the instrument, or instruments, so, that said, you become more fluid and creative in that way, with the idea of playing more melodically through the drum set.

Consequently, I do tune my drums differently now, as opposed to early on in my career. From the standpoint of, interestingly enough, more in tune to tuning. I used to play the drums only from the position of only playing percussively and everything would sound like a thud, like hitting your chest all the time. The range of sound, was dependent on how big or small the drum was. Now, it's not about how large the cylinder is that holds the two heads on a drum, but where you place that drum in relation to the other drums, so that you can access it when and where you want to as well as its whole sound characteristic. So you've added a lot more dimensions and layers to the whole environment of performance because you're playing to be effective within the environment in which you work, because of all the patterns that you play which are relatively the same as anyone else. They're rudimentary patterns, but, it's where you place the instruments, in which you are playing these patterns in sequence. That's what sets you off from everyone else because your drums are in a different format. You put them there. You've created this environment that's unlike others and you're playing only certain drums that are tuned at certain pitches, when you feel it's appropriate to play them.

As we end our dialogue with Bill Cobham, he lends a bit more of his personal philosophy.

"There's something very strong to be said for common sense. You are responsible for the life that you've been given; good, bad or whatever. At the end of the day, your name is on the marquee. Stand up for the right to live on this planet for the amount of time that you have, if you believe in life in a positive way. You're gonna have to pay a price for it. I can only speak for me. I love life and enjoy it and believe in giving something back. If I'm working on something that's positive, I like to try and share it."

**Aly Keita,
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 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 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 want 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 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.

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 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 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 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 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 Basekou 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 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.

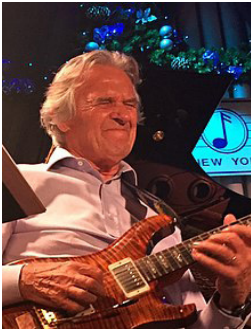
Lucas Niggli also asked – This is a very important question, America must know this answer. “Would you play at a Donald Trump election party for a fee of 10,000 American dollars?”

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 was worth a whole lot more than \$50,000 today.

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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.

And the overall attitude... There's a question of education. This is what I

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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. 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

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

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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.

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

Interview John McLaughlin

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.

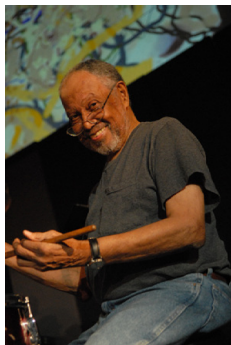
I should point out that I did an educational DVD where people can study konnakol. Konnakol is an Indian system of mastering rhythm and singing it. If you can sing it then it's just a question of application to your instrument. And I recommend, whether you use that system or any other system... as a jazz 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.

ALVIN FIEDLER
 Maybe Not New
 But Something
 Different
 By Ken Weiss



Drummer Alvin Fiedler's (born November 23, 1935, Meridian, Mississippi) lack of greater name recognition isn't due to a shortage of talent, it's that he spent the majority of his career as a fulltime pharmacist in Mississippi before emerging in the '80s to work as a highly skilled and well-versed free improviser who never drifted far from his solid bebop rudiments. A founding member of Chicago's groundbreaking artists' collective, the AACM, Fiedler studied pharmacy at Texas Southern University from 1953 – 1956 while working with many of the area's various Jazz and R& B groups. Moving to Chicago to finish his training, Fiedler joined an early version of the Sun Ra Arkestra and played with pioneering musicians including Muhal Richard Abrams, Fred Anderson and Roscoe Mitchell, with whom he recorded on Sound, Mitchell's 1967 free Jazz landmark album. Fiedler returned home to Mississippi in 1969 to run the family pharmacy, help to desegregate schools, and develop the Black Arts Music Society. He continued performing and in 1975, Fiedler began working regularly with New Orleans saxophonist Kidd Jordan and soon pianist Joel Futterman. This interview took place on June 12, 2016 at New York City's historic Judson Memorial Church while Fiedler was in town to perform at the Vision Festival.

Cadence: In the past you've said, "I have never sought to be a great drummer, just a good drummer that makes the music more beautiful." Why was that enough for you? Why not aim higher?

Alvin Fiedler: I'm really not playing that much, I really should be playing more. If I was playing more I could experiment more and work on things. You've got beautiful drummers out there like Max Roach and Roy Haynes and Kenny Clarke and so forth, and I knew I would never reach that peak. I just want to be a GOOD drummer and satisfy many musicians. Yeah.

Cadence: [Pianist] Joel Futterman says you have a photographic memory. Is that true?

Fielder: [Laughs] No, I've started to forget things already. No, no, not anymore. Maybe

10-15 years ago I did.

Cadence: *After your stroke in 1989, you changed your lifestyle and ended up feeling rejuvenated. How did that effect your work as a Jazz artist?*

Fielder: It changed the way that I played. It effected my left hand at one point in time, it changed the way I approach the drums. I was a very busy drummer at one time and liked to play very fast. That's all changed. I guess I got older, plus the stroke. Things are back to normal now.

Cadence: *You spent the bulk of your life working as a pharmacist, like your father before you, instead of working as an active musician. Any regrets over not pursuing music fulltime and seeing where your career might have led?*

Fielder: Well, during the time I was working as a pharmacist, I was playing a lot. During the time I was in Chicago in grad school, I was working with people like Eddie Harris and Muhal Richard Abrams, so it was on a pretty high level. During the time I was working fulltime as a pharmacist, I was working with Roscoe Mitchell's group and John Stubblefield. I do kind of regret that I didn't spend more time playing however, if I had spent more time playing I probably wouldn't have been able to live a very comfortable life [Laughs] just as a musician. But I tried to do both things very well.

Cadence: *Guitarist Ted Dunbar was also a pharmacist. What other Jazz pharmacists are you aware of?*

Fielder: Ted was a year in back of me at Texas Southern. His mother finished with me and his father was 2-3 years in front of her. I didn't get a chance to play with Ted much, I was playing with older musicians in Houston like Jimmy Harrison, a trombone player from Stamford, Connecticut, who had worked with Horace Silver. I was also working with Richard Lillie, who was Billy Harper's teacher, and Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson. I didn't get a chance to play too much with Ted but he was a very, very brilliant pharmacist with a great grade point average. As far as other Jazz pharmacists? Charles Tolver went to pharmacy school and there was Grady Johnson, the tenor player from Chicago who played with J.J. Johnson and Lester Young.

Cadence: *Past interviews indicate you weren't a big proponent of practicing, at least not while working as a fulltime pharmacist. You only trained when you had a performance scheduled. Were those infrequent gigs enough to maintain your chops?*

Fielder: That's not true, I've always practiced a lot. I met Ed Blackwell in '52, right before I entered pharmacy school. I really wanted to study with another drummer in New Orleans named Earl Palmer but he referred me to Blackwell and to Tom Moore and Harry Nance. Those were the 3 bebop drummers down in New Orleans at that time. Harry Nance swung like mad and Tom Moore was more like a Kenny Clarke-type drummer, and Eddie Blackwell was all Max Roach, wouldn't listen to anybody else except Max then. I'd get my lessons from Tom

and Harry once a week and Blackwell 2-3 times every week. Blackwell started me transcribing so I was transcribing Max Roach early on and Kenny Clarke, Blakey, some Roy Haynes and Shelly Manne. I've transcribed 3 whole books of fours and extended solos and stuff. I still practice every day. No, I do practice, I work on things and on coordination. I try to practice applying the rudiments to the drum kit and thinking in a melodic sense, playing fours, eights, sixteens, and thirty twos. My thing was I was able to write them out too, so that was the beautiful part about it. At one point, I didn't play anything that I couldn't write out, but that's changed now, of course.

Cadence: *Are you still working as a pharmacist?*

Fielder: I retired as a pharmacist 5 years ago.

Cadence: *Do you feel there's a relationship between the healing that a pharmacist provides to that of what a musician can deliver?*

Fielder: {Sighs} I guess so, I can't give you an exact answer about that. Music is a creative thing. I'm looking to create something different, maybe not new, but something different all the time. Pharmacy? You fill a prescription and you think about drug interactions and what you should tell the patient. It's a different ballgame. Both are healing but in a different way.

Cadence: *Have you had musicians try to hit you up for drugs over the years?*

Fielder: No, not many. I guess I was lucky. I've known a lot of addicts, but it was always music. Well, I won't call names but certain well-known musicians, they were users, drug addicts I'd say. But they were always very kind to me. When I first came to New York, there was one that actually looked after me very well. He would tell me where not to go and took care of me. I've been approached by a few. When I first met a lot of these guys, I wasn't practicing pharmacy. I had passed the board but I really didn't start practicing until I was 27, I finished pharmacy at 19. I spent 8 years trying to play music. I got married in 1964 and I decided to work then. [Laughs] Now a days, as far as drug use, it's totally different, most of the guys have gotten really straight. I guess age does that to you. I was able to help some musicians. I took care of Billy Higgins while he was sick. I used to send him his medicine. I took care of all of Blackwell's medicine and Vernel Fournier too. Vernel moved to Jackson and I used to take him dinner and drive him around.

Cadence: *You're very respectful of Jazz' drumming tradition. You make it a point to play something in every concert that's dedicated to a drummer that's come before you.*

Fielder: I do and I really like to mention it if I'm playing something by Max or Kenny Clarke because those were my two big influences. First it was Max Roach. I became acquainted with him in 1948 after hearing him on Charlie Parker's "Koko." Once I got to New Orleans, I heard a Miles Davis record called Dig with Art Blakey on it and he was playing all of this stuff, totally different from Max, and I said, 'Oh, God,' so I started listening to Blakey. And then I got a chance to hear

Roy Haynes with Wardell Grey on a tune called "Twisted," with his beautiful bass drum work. I finally got around to Kenny Clarke. I should have had him up first because that was Max's teacher, Blakey's mentor, and Art Taylor and Philly Joe Jones' teacher. I just didn't know any better. Ignorance is bliss. [Laughs]

Cadence: *You didn't really fall in love with music until, as you said, hearing Max Roach's solo on Charlie Parker's "Koko" when you were 12. What struck you about Roach's playing?*

Fielder: I studied piano for a couple years but the teacher was really square, so I didn't really like music for a long time. I played sports. I listened to popular music by Joe Liggins and, of course, Louis Jordan, until a guy named Jabbo Jones came home from World War II and he brought all these Jazz records, which I didn't know about then. He let me hear Charlie Parker's "Koko." This was a 78 and on the other side was Don Byas' "London Donnie." I listened to "Koko" just over and over, and listened to Max's 16 bar solo, and that just [claps hands] changed me right away. And then I met Blackwell in New Orleans and he only listened to Max Roach.

Cadence: *You've called Max Roach "the most dominant factor in my life" after family. How did you end up forming a relationship with him and please share a memory or two of time spent with him?*

Fielder: I didn't meet Max until much later on, however when I was a kid I used to write Max Roach when he was living with his mother in Brooklyn. Somehow I found out about his address so I would write him notes and mail them to him. No answers, of course. After I met Max, I told him about it and he said, "Look, I never got them Fielder." I got to be very close to Max much later on. Max was a beautiful inspiring drummer. I would go to a lot of Max Roach clinics and he kept seeing me and I was at one in New Orleans and Max walked off the stage and greeted me, so I really got to be quite friendly with him. Max never talked about the drums, though, he always talked about things in life and what needed to be done to be a better person. We never talked about the drums. Billy Higgins and I also talked every month, and we would talk about old drummers, never about technique.

Cadence: *As an educator, do you feel that Max Roach's work is fully understood and appreciated by today's younger generation of drummers?*

Fielder: No, definitely not. It's a funny thing that in our younger years, who we hear is usually the greatest influence. A lot of the drummers haven't heard Max going through the various stages of his playing, like the 1948-'50 stage, the '51-'55 stage, the '55-'60 stage, and then the later Max. Max's style and approach to the drums changed just about every 4-5 years. When you listen to Max Roach's solos from the '40s, '50s, and '60s, they're totally different. Max was taught by Kenny Clarke, of course. There was a club on 52nd Street where Klook played and Max and Shelly Mann would go there to take their lessons at midnight. Max was 15 and Klook was a great teacher, probably the best drum teacher

in modern drumming. He taught a whole lot of European drummers how to play bebop when he moved to France. I've got all his books. Max was at U Mass and didn't teach drums, he taught music. Roy Haynes and Blakey didn't teach, except on the bandstand. Ed Soph and Alan Dawson were probably the foremost drum set teachers. If I had to study with any drummer, it would have been with Kenny Clarke, Ed Soph or Dawson. You've got a lot of great drum instructors out there but they don't swing like those three.

Cadence: *I read a surprising statement of yours from a 2015 interview in the Arkansas Times. You say, "There's been no innovation since virtually the '50s. You haven't seen a drum innovator since Max Roach." Is that correct? What about the work of Sonny Murray, Rashied Ali, Milford Graves and Andrew Cyrille?*

Fielder: I take that back. [Laughs] Well, really Andrew comes from Max, let's face it. I like to group those guys in groups of four. Going back to the bebop era, you're talking about Kenny Clarke, Max, Art Blakey and Roy Haynes. Right after them, you'd be talking about Elvin [Jones], Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Hart, Al Foster and Joe Chambers. The four drummers that I listen to of the younger generation are Billy Drummond, Kenny Washington, Bill Stewart, Carl Allen and Lewis Nash, but really, when you speak about creating something, they have expanded on the past four drummers [I mentioned first]. They all did, Elvin, Philly Joe, and everyone, expounded on Klook, Max, Blakey and Roy. Now, Sonny Murray came up with another way of backing players like Cecil Taylor. I've heard some Cecil Taylor things with Billy Higgins that, you know, fit but it didn't fit like Sonny Murray. Spiritual Unity [Albert Ayler's 1965 recording], that's the one thing I can say that Sonny Murray did totally different. As far as innovation from "the new thing," Sonny

Cadence: *It's ironic that you think of yourself as a bebop drummer, heavily influenced by Max Roach, and yet your reputation is as an avant-garde drummer.*

Fielder: That was because I flunked the grade, I guess. I have a few Max-isms in me, along with some Roy Haynes. Jack DeJohnette and Al Foster and Billy Hart are doing some beautiful things now. They've aged like a fine wine.

Cadence: *Do you ever still perform as a straight bebopper?*

Fielder: I get very few straight bebop jobs, however, I do work on all of Monk's music still. I rehearse with a tenor player named Michael Atkins who now lives in Mississippi. He used to play with Paul Motian. We get together 2-3 times a week, going over Monk's and Charlie Parker's music. I don't get a chance to play with the musicians playing that type of music anymore. There's very few of them left. I worked with Clifford Jordan and Eddie Harris. After I started rehearsing with Muhal and Roscoe Mitchell, I got typed in Chicago. Once I joined the AACM, I stopped getting calls from everyone else.

Cadence: *Your highest profile recording session came with your first*

effort. You were part of Roscoe Mitchell's legendary Sound [Delmark, 1966] album that documented the AACM for the first time. What are your memories of the months that led up to that session, as well as the session itself? What kind of directions did Mitchell give you?

Fielder: Rehearsal, rehearsal, rehearsal. That music was rehearsed. It sounds unrehearsed but it was that loose. Prior to that group, it had been the Roscoe Mitchell Quartet which we had recorded at the University of Chicago studios maybe 2 years prior to that with Freddy Berry on trumpet, Roscoe, and Malachi Favors on bass. That was released much later. For Sound, we rehearsed 4-5 days per week. I actually felt the quartet swung a lot more than the six-member band that recorded Sound. It took us 2 recording days to do Sound and it went well. That was a great group and when we went into the studio, the music just flowed. In Roscoe's group after this one, he started using 2 and 3 drummers and he made us play a lot of little instruments and I didn't want to do that.

Cadence: Why didn't you like that?

Fielder: I was really liking to swing at that particular time. I was just into Elvin Jones then and I wasn't getting the chance to do that, so I formed another group right after that, a trio with [Anthony] Braxton and Charles Clark, which was expanded to a sextet later on with Leroy Jenkins, Leo Smith and Kalaparusha [Maurice McIntyre] and when Charles died, we used Malachi.

Cadence: You were swinging with those guys.

Fielder: Yeah. No recordings were made. Braxton's compositions then weren't like Braxton's compositions later on, it swung, yeah. We were playing one night a week at a club for maybe 10 dollars each a night. That group broke up and I formed another group with Fred Anderson and Lester Lashley, which became my last group with the AACM prior to me moving back to Mississippi. That was a good group too, very successful. Ramsey Lewis' sister was our manager. We were playing at the schools and some AACM concerts, making good money, maybe 100 bucks each a night.

Cadence: How difficult was it to transition from time keeping to playing free?

Fielder: Basically, when we think of playing bebop or playing straight, we think of the regular cymbal pattern or variations thereof, and the hi-hats playing on two and four, or the spaces being filled in with the left hand and the right foot. Usually, you're talking about quarter notes, eighth notes, eight note triplets, but with elusive music, you're stretching those rhythms. You're playing more rolls and more patterns outside of the norm, and the cymbal thing is not as straight. For instance, I like to think of the first real loose drummer as being Roy Haynes because Roy Haynes didn't keep time - two and four on his hi-hats - Roy's playing on upbeats, on one, and figuring in the beats with his left hand. Not playing the chang-chang-a-lang, chang-a-lang, chang-a-chang on the cymbal. Roy was playing ting-ting-chick-a-de-

ching, chick-a-ting, chick-a-de, chick-a-de, stuff like that. Breaking up the thing, whereas Blakey was chang-a-lang, chang-a-lang and Max and Kenny Clarke were pretty much the same. You can go back to Miles Davis' album Miles Davis and Horns and listen to John Lewis' song "Morpheus," where Roy Haynes was breaking up stuff there like you wouldn't believe and that was in [1951].

Cadence: You're a co-founder of the AACM [1965]. You were in Chicago at the time for graduate school in manufacturing pharmacy with the intention of working as a pharmacist back home in Mississippi. Why did you get involved with the AACM organization when you knew you were leaving the state soon?

Fielder: I was there for 10 or 11 years. I went up in 1958 to go to grad school. What happened was that I finished pharmacy school at 19, so I couldn't practice pharmacy any place except in Mississippi with my father, due to my age, so I stayed there until I was 21. As soon as I turned 21, I applied for grad school, got in, and the beat goes on. That's the reason I was in Chicago but in the meantime, I left Chicago and went to Denver for a while. I was working with a bass player there, Sam Gill. Sam was back in the bebop days with Monk and Max and John Lewis. All them cats went to the Manhattan School of Music. Sam Gill was on some of Monk's earliest stuff and on Randy Weston's first trio album. A beautiful bass player. He went to Denver, along with Richard Davis, and tried out for the Denver Symphony, and Sam Gill got the job. We were passing through Denver on our way to Los Angeles and stopped over and met him and he got us some after-hours work playing all bebop for 6 months. After Denver, I went to New York and I was practicing every day with people like Tommy Turrentine, Barry Harris, members of the Yusef Lateef band, Clifford Jarvis, and Tony Williams was in town for the summer, he was 15. When I got back to Chicago, I met Muhal Abrams and that's how it started. I was rehearsing with Muhal's quartet and Roscoe Mitchell stopped by the rehearsal one day and he asked me did I play free music? So I told him yes although I didn't know what free music was. I hadn't heard Sonny Murray and Milford Graves yet. When we rehearsed, it was Freddie Berry, Roscoe and Malachi. With time, the music started to evolve, it got looser and looser. We did a lot of concerts at the University of Chicago and various museums. When I first joined Roscoe's group, I was playing a lot like Max Roach but I loosened up. During that particular time, I had just started listening to Elvin Jones. Elvin had come through and he was working at one of the theaters and I heard Elvin. His drumming puzzled me at first. 'God, what is he doing?' There were 3 or 4 drummers in Chicago who really loved Elvin's playing, but not many drummers did then. Everybody else said, "What is this guy playing? I mean all these triplets and polyrhythms? The music's everywhere, accents everywhere." I started listening to him and I guess I went from Max to him to Sonny Murray. I eventually heard Spiritual Unity and that's what really changed me, I

wanted to play like Sonny Murray.

Cadence: *You left Chicago after your father got sick to take over the family pharmacy. That came at the same time that a number of AACM members moved to Europe creating loss of leadership in the organization. Were there any hard feelings over you leaving at that time?*

Fielder: I played the last of the AACM concerts in Chicago with Braxton, Roscoe, Malachi Favors and Lester Bowie. They wanted me to go to Europe but I couldn't go. If you remember, they didn't carry a drummer at first. No, there were no hard feelings because once I got to Mississippi, I started sponsoring concerts through the National Endowment of the Arts and the Mississippi Arts Commission, and I started bringing them in. Roscoe came down several times, and Fred Anderson, Lester Lashley, Muhal and Kalaparusha. We also brought down a lot of New York guys – Cliff Jordan, Eddie Harris, and Bunky Green.

Cadence: *How was that music perceived in that area of the country?*

Fielder: Very well. It lasted for 3-4 years. We were working mainly in colleges and libraries, no club work. We explained the music to the people.

Cadence: *Preceding your association with the AACM, you joined an early version of the Sun Ra Arkestra. You met Sun Ra in Chicago when you were both hired to play an Easter Sunday dance. What was your first experience with him?*

Fielder: I got to Chicago in the late '50s and on that particular job you mention, that's how I first met him and he invited me to come to a rehearsal. I went there and we were playing his music. There were 3 people in the audience, 2 drummers and maybe his manager. He invited me to join the band, which I did. There was another group I was in that was started by Pat Patrick and I went there with Gene Ammons, Benny Green, Sun Ra and Malachi Favors.

Cadence: *What was your first impression of Sun Ra?*

Fielder: Admiration. He was playing relatively straight bebop then. He sounded good.

Cadence: *Did he talk to you about his philosophies?*

Fielder: Not till I joined his band. I used to go by his apartment, he had a small place with a piano, table and bed. There was nothing else but boxes of music. Sonny was a vegetarian. We'd go out and he'd talk about ancient Egypt. He'd talk about Amen Ra, which was the Sun God.

Cadence: *Your membership with the Sun Ra Arkestra ran from '60-'61. Why so short?*

Fielder: Sun Ra went to Canada at that time. I was working as a pharmacist then and I couldn't make the trip. After Canada, he went to New York.

Cadence: *Would you have been content to stay in the Sun Ra Arkestra?*

Fielder: No. [Sighs] When they wore their capes and gowns, I was wearing a hip sports coat, shirt and tie. [Laughs] I didn't like wearing those outfits. I loved Sun Ra, I loved his philosophies and everything, but I didn't like the costumes. I'm not a follower. The Sun Ra band I played in was basically a bebop band. We had a trumpet player by the name of Hobart Dotson, he played in Billy Eckstein's band and was lead trumpet in the Stan Kenton band, a great trumpet player. We had Nate Pryor and Bo Bailey on trombone and Jim Spaulding, Marshall Allen, John Gilmore and Pat Patrick. That was a good group. We were playing the music off of Jazz in Silhouette, very straight, very bebopish.

Cadence: *The most memorable Arkestra performance you had came in Indianapolis when Wes Montgomery sat in.*

Fielder: That's right, that was beautiful. I didn't know about Wes then. Freddie Hubbard was also there. We had two drummers, "Bugs" Cochrane was the other one. To me, at that time, Wes was just another good guitarist, which was my fault.

Cadence: *Your longest musical association has been with [saxophonist] Kidd Jordan. Clifford Jordan originally told you about him and that Kidd was planning to quit music since he had no avant-garde soulmates to play with in New Orleans. You ended up driving down to New Orleans from Mississippi to find him in 1975 and talk him out of retiring. Why did you do that for someone so far from your home and what did you say to him?*

Fielder: It wasn't that far, it's 3 hours away. I carried a bass player down, London Branch. London and I had met up in Chicago when we both played in Muhal's trio for a quick minute. London had moved to Mississippi to teach. He was a great teacher and bass player. I just admired Clifford Jordan that much to do what he told me to do. He said, "Go down and talk to Kidd, play with him." So I did. I met up with Kidd at the school, and that first time we met, we practiced for 4 hours! I have those tapes. And the next Sunday, Kidd invited Clyde Kerr.

Cadence: *Over the past twenty years or so, you've made a number of impressive recordings with Kidd Jordan and [pianist] Joel Futterman. Why are they such good musical partners for you?*

Fielder: We just felt each other. Joel came down to New Orleans to visit Kidd. Joel and Kidd had worked a duo gig somewhere and Kidd invited both of us down. Joel and I sat down for 2 hours and played ballads together and that was the beginning of a great friendship. It was that simple.

Cadence: *For anyone not familiar with that trio, I'd suggest checking out the recording *Live at the Tampere Jazz Happenings 2000* [Charles Lester Music, 2004]. That was a very special night where everything came together.*

Fielder: Aah, yeah. We were there and they had featured a lot of drummers. Jack DeJohnette had a duo there with John Surman. Of course, Jack's daughter had married John Surman's son. Paul Lovens

was there with his quartet. Susie Ibarra played solo and I think Peter Erskine was there. And I played with the trio. It was a good night, good food, good audience. It just happened.

Cadence: *Why did it take over forty years from the start of your recording career for you to record under your own name?*

Fielder: Nobody asked me to. I got that recording [A Measure of Vision, 2007, Cleanfeed] through Dennis Gonzalez. I was working a lot with Dennis and he had recorded a few albums for Cleanfeed and they said he couldn't be the leader (since he had recorded repeatedly already for them under his name) so he called me and said, "Al, I want you to be the leader on it," so I was the leader. It was supposed to be an all trio thing with Chris Parker, a great piano player, as the third, but Dennis wanted to use his two sons on the job too. If you noticed, the trio things really sounded good. The others, naaah, spur of the moment things. Most of the groups I've worked with Dennis on I've really enjoyed. I enjoyed working with Charles Brackeen and Ahmed Abdullah. We did a double quartet thing that was very nice [Dennis Gonzalez New Dallsorleanssippi – Debenge-Degenge, 1988, Silkheart].

Cadence: How did you end up with Roy Haynes' cymbal?

Fielder: Roy was in Chicago a lot, working at the Blue Note with Stan Getz, Chick Corea, Gary Burton and Steve Swallow, and I met Roy. Roy and I practiced together sometimes. I'd pick him up and drive him around Chicago. We'd go to concerts together and eat together. I was just around him a lot so he gave me the cymbal. I've still got it. Roy's a different type of person, a very comical guy. He was always very friendly, pretty much like Max and Kenny Clarke. Unfortunately, I never got a chance to meet Blakey and Philly Joe.

Cadence: You are known to be a great source of colorful memories from the past. What can you share with us today?

Fielder: When we went to Paris, that was Kidd Jordan, Clyde Kerr, Kent Jordan, Elton Heron and myself, when we went into the studio to record, and I had asked for a Gretsch drum kit, and they did bring me a Gretsch drum kit, but it was old. It sounded like boxes. When we recorded, the last thing I told them was, 'Don't let Kenny Clarke hear these drums.' [Laughs] I don't know if that is funny or not but...It was a really old kit, I mean really OLD.

Cadence: What else should we know about Alvin Fielder? Who is Alvin Fielder?

Fielder: Music first, that's what I am. I love the music, I respect the music. I respect the music so much that I put everything else in back of music. I'm just a regular guy. I don't know, I'm just a lot of skin and veins and blood. I don't have any guilty pleasures. I don't do that much, I only play music. I do watch Law and Order, SVU of course, not the Criminal Intent. I watch Blue Bloods. I worked for the government for a while and I got enthused with guns. I worked out of the White House for two years, during the desegregation era. Spiro Agnew was my first boss in Washington and I met the President several times. So I

got enthused with guns and I have a gun collection.

Cadence: So what exactly were you doing with guns at that time?

Fielder: Do you remember the law the Emergency School Aid Act [1972] ESAA? That was to desegregate the schools in the 13 Southern states. I was one of the people they picked to desegregate the schools in Mississippi. I got the chance to meet Mel Leventhal, the attorney, and the sheriffs and law officials. That was part of my job but I don't really want to talk about that.

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

Kidd Jordan (sax) asked – “Tell me about your days in Houston, Texas and how the drummers in those really good Blues bands influenced you.”

Fielder: There were a lot of drummers in Houston. G.T. Hogan, he did all those Riverside dates with Kenny Dorham and he played with Ernie Henry, Stan Getz and Bud Powell. There was Jual Curtis, he was in Howard McGee's band. They were very good bebop drummers. They also played good Rhythm and Blues, good shuffles, good swing, and that influenced me a lot. I quit playing Blues after I joined Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson's band. He was in Houston to take care of his sick mother for about 6 months and he formed a group. I was working with trombone player, Jimmy Harrison, who was a classmate of Horace Silver, and a tenor player who was a classmate of Sonny Rollins, A.D. Norris, who sounded a lot like Sonny. There was also a piano player named Perry Deal, he's dead now, but he was a cross between Monk and Bud Powell. He wore this fur coat in the summer so you know how odd he was, a bad cat though. The bass player had worked in the old Jimmy Lunceford band, Carl Lott Sr. That was the group. There were a lot of good drummers in Houston at that particular time. There was a drummer that sounded like Kenny Clarke, Al Tucker.

Joel Futterman [pianist] asked – “How important is listening during each moment of improvisation?”

Cadence: Very important. When you play with guys long enough, I can just about read a phrase of Kidd's and Joel's prior to their playing. I've played with them so much, it's sort of like talking to them. You have some idea what's going to happen, some idea.

Donald “Duck” Harrison (sax) asked – “How did you learn the correct sticking of so many great drummers? I find that incredible. You're the depository of all the right information.”

Fielder: I studied them. When I was writing my lessons out, I would write them out and pick out the easiest way of playing those things. When I saw the drummers playing, the sticking might be a little different, but the accents, where it was falling, knowing the rudiments, knowing the single paradiddle from the single stroke rudiment, and the double stroke rudiment. Knowing what a certain pattern might sound like, say if you're playing the flamacue, accent the second note always with the left hand. What you do is just work them out. They may not be

the exact stickings that Max might have used, or Blakey, but it's close.

Cadence: Your skill level and knowledge base is even all that more impressive considering you had no early formal training in Mississippi.

Fielder: None at all. When I first started playing drums, I didn't learn drum rudiments until I got to New Orleans and Texas, which was 3-5 years later. We didn't have a good drum instructor there. My instructor played saxophone.

Thurman Barker (drum/vibes) asked – "Alvin, when I began attending the experimental band rehearsals on Monday nights at Lincoln Center, in addition to the horn players, the drummers I remember were King Mock, Art McKinney, yourself, Ajaramu and myself. My question is how active Jack DeJohnette was with the AACM and with the Experimental Band before I got there?"

Fielder: I didn't even know that Jack was a member of the AACM. Jack was playing mainly piano. Art McKinney was his main drummer in his trio, a beautiful drummer. He was the first drummer that turned all of us on to Elvin Jones. Steve McCall was his second call drummer and I was his third call drummer. I really didn't hear Jack play that many drums when I was there. I never really rehearsed with the Experimental Band, Thurman did though.

Billy Hart (drum) asked – "What a great inspiration you have been to all of us with your progressive and contemporary vocabulary that started with the AACM. Do you realize what an institution you are?"

Fielder: No. [Laughs] No, actually, I first became acquainted with Billy when he was in Chicago. He came through with Wes Montgomery and he came by one of my jobs with Braxton, Charles Clark and Kalaparusha and sat in. He asked me, "How do you play free drums?" And I said, 'You're already playing it.' Billy's that type of guy, a mountain of knowledge. He's always asking questions but look, Billy had a beautiful Roy Haynes-type touch when I first heard him and I really admired his playing. I mean really, he's got a beautiful touch, beautiful ideas.

Cadence: Any final comments?

Fielder: Yes, I'd like to thank all the drummers past and present, going back to Baby Dodds and Shadow Wilson. People don't even think of Shadow anymore and it's a shame. Shadow, Big Sid Catlett, and especially Chick Webb, beautiful drummers. All I can say is thanks for all of them. Many thanks and thanks for wanting me to talk with you. I'm just a plain Mississippi farmer. [Laughs]

STEVE HUNT
INTERVIEW
TAKEN AND
TRANSCRIBED

BY
JAMES BENNINGTON



Photo Credit:
Paul Crisanti, PhotoGetGo

Ed. Note: The following is a quote from a longtime music supporter, who possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of the music (esp. that of Sun Ra), known to most for many years on the Chicago Scene, Brad Markus:

"I first saw Hal Russell perform in 1983 at the Chicago Public Library, now the Cultural Center (at Randolph and Michigan). Hal's music was extreme energy, a bit of outrageousness, and humorous. His saxophone playing was wild.

I remember meeting his drummer Steve Hunt. He was very friendly, willing to share his thoughts on the music. He is still that way today. I see him perform with the experimental Jazz group Extraordinary Popular Delusions. Steve is still a high energy drummer, giving his all to the music. Also in the group is NRG Ensemble alumnus Brian Sandstrom, one of the best bassists in Chicago. Steve still expresses his appreciation when I see him perform. He has great energy, and Joy in his music...."

STEVE HUNT INTERVIEW

CAD: *The legendary Hal Russell had you in his band, did he ever tell you what to do or give any advice or concept as to what he wanted or was it just an intuitive thing with you?*

SH: Well you know actually he, coming from my background, I had played some Rock and Roll, he was always telling me to lay off on my right foot...not so much bass drum (laughs) cause he was more on the lighter sound you know? Because he didn't come from a Rock background....he also told me not to listen to the bass player, that was probably the most infamous advice he ever gave me, he said he didn't want me to Next'lock' with the bass player because, you know, he wanted me to be in a different space... and that really had an effect on my whole concept of playing.

CAD: *Wow, that's almost completely adverse to what most people would tell you. Mostly you hear that the drummer and the bass player are supposed to be best friends.*

CAD: *So you're born in Geneva, IL, how did you get into the music scene? How did you*

arrive at where you are today?

SH: The first time I got involved with music was when I was the age of four in our church choir, where I sang. I was basically a boy soprano since I was four all the way through high school, I would sing in choirs and so I first learned how to sing and learned about music in church, singing in choir. And then the first time I played drums was when I was in sixth grade when we had our sixth grade choir concert and the choir director asked if anybody wanted to play drums and accompany our vocal ensemble and so I said 'sure I will!' and it was like a 'Clutch Cargo' snares- off type of beat, and so I volunteered for that and so that was my first performance (Laughing) with the sixth grade choir at Lincoln School, in St. Charles.

CAD: And so from there did you just keep on playing, I mean were you encouraged sufficiently from that to say 'hey I want to do this all the time'?

SH: From then in sixth grade we formed a Beatles band and I made two little drums on a TV tray, I strapped them together between a TV tray... two drums you know and then my friends made cardboard guitars... and we would do straight classic Beatles and I was Ringo of course (Laughing). And so we just kind of lip-synched along with the stereo, but I was able to play along and make some sort of audible sounds on my little homemade drum kit.

And then I started playing Dixie Land in junior high with my dear friend Jim Masters who's a trombone player at OSU, he's a professor at OSU now, but at the time he lived in St. Charles and we had a group the Brass Leaf and we would play... my first professional gig was when I was thirteen, we played on the St. Charles Belle which was a paddleboat that went up and down the Fox River in St. Charles and we would play private parties for, you know, parties that would go out on the boat for a few hours and I remember we got paid \$32.00 bucks for the quartet, so I would come home with eight bucks, which was pretty good money back in those days.

CAD: Well now how did you come to play Dixieland... was it simply a matter of you ran into someone who played this kind music and needed, had some work, or was it more that you were grabbed by the Jazz bug, or..?

SH: Well I think it was partially because my friend Jim Masters, a trombone player was playing this music. He grew up with a father who played jazz standards and I would hang out at his house, hear him play piano, so I started listening to jazz at that time. A We called ourselves a Dixie Land band, but we actually played a combination of Dixie Land as well as Herb Alpert Tijuana Brass, so we did those sort of songs.

CAD: Yeah, maybe Jelly Roll Morton would say it was like, Dixie Land with a Spanish Tinge, you know?

SH: Exactly, yeah exactly. And then we also ventured into rock when we'd play a party and they wanted us to play something more rock-oriented. We would play 'Vehicle' by Jim Péterik which is a great brass

song... and '25 or 6 to 4' by Chicago. So I was playing rock also as we got older I've loved the Beatles all through my life, so I've never stopped listening to rock but I just expanded into more jazz, especially because of my friend Jim Masters. He taught me a lot about the Be Bop artists that were coming through songs that he was learning how to play. Jim would memorize their solos, and he turned me on to Sonny Stitt, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie...

CAD: Is this as a drummer and as a vibist...were you playing vibes at this time?

SH: No that was just drums at the time. I studied piano growing up... my parents always encouraged me to take piano lessons, which I did, so I learned keyboard at an early age. Unfortunately I didn't stick with it and when I got into college I started playing more mallet instruments and so I kind of re-inspired my love of harmonic instruments, melodic instruments, When I graduated from Wabash College, which is in Crawfordsville Indiana, in 1976, I moved back to Chicago and started studying with Phil Stanger...Phil Stanger was my teacher for years and he had a studio not too far from Frank's Drum Shop right on Wabash Avenue. And so I studied with him and he taught me a lot about sight reading, poly rhythms, and as well as learning all the basic rudiments... the various beats to be able to play professionally, Stick Control, George Stone, you know the whole thing.

CAD: Just before when you mentioned you were playing mallet instruments were you playing tympani and stuff too?

SH: Yes. I was playing tympani at Wabash College. My freshman year I went to Barrington College in Barrington, Rhode Island and there I was playing in the Barrington College Orchestra. So I was playing vibes, tympani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals...all of the Orchestral arsenal of instruments.

CAD: How did you come to start out your College in Indiana since you're in Illinois?...just as a curiosity, I mean there are a lot of schools here.

SH: To be honest with you I was not going to go to College, I was playing in a rock band and I had no intention of going to College...I was very happy to just play in a band and party and we thought we were pretty darn good at the time, which you know, we had a band called Ultima Thule. Ultima Thule was where the world, when we thought the world was flat, where the world ends and you fall off the cliff into the serpents in the ocean. ..but Ultima Thule, we were playing original music and then my dad pretty much made me get out of the band because of smoking pot, and I had no ambition to do anything except just be a Rock and Roll drummer, and getting high. He really pretty much got me out of that band, he just...one day we went out and picked up my drums and he said "Son that's it." I wasn't...I kind of went along with it, I wasn't resistant to it.

CAD: And how old were you at that time?

SH: I was seventeen. At that point I was able to get into Barrington College kind of at the last minute through a friend of my parents who

was Dean there and he was able to get me and Barrington College was the only accredited Music School in the state of Rhode Island so I was able to work on my music at that time. But then I transferred to Wabash in my sophomore year and I studied Composition... basically I got a Liberal Arts Degree with an emphasis in Composition.

CAD: *So how did you feel about the transition from playing in a band, and you were playing in the so called real world everyday... clubs and places like that, going into a University situation with a lot of intellectual study and thought?*

SH: (Laughing) It was a challenge. I kind put up a stink at first but then I realized that this is probably a good move for me, plus I didn't want to hurt my parents. I think they were looking out for my best interests and I could see that our band was, once I stood back and looked at it from 30,000 feet above, I could see we weren't really going anywhere anyway, and so I was appreciative of the opportunity... I met a lot of really cool people in college... played music with all sorts of people in Rhode Island as well as at Wabash, and so I transitioned pretty well... I think academically, I found my footing much better in college than it was in high school, where I was just kind of goofing off... I didn't really take it seriously.

CAD: *Yeah, well there's something to be said though for that time, I mean you were doing it, you were doing it, you know... but it was cool that you stopped in to study. Where were you playing at the time when you were playing in the Dixie Land band what kind of venues and places were you playing... you mentioned the ship, the boat?*

SH: Oh yeah, the St. Charles Belle. We also played, we were like a society band for our parents' parties, you know, we would play like Pheasant Run, a resort in St. Charles on Bourbon St., we would play for the Millionaires Club in Chicago where one of our parents was a member there (Laughing) and we played some parties for them... the Hotel Baker in St. Charles. We'd get dressed up with Mariachi hats and outfits and play Herb Alpert music for private parties. So that's pretty much what that we did.

CAD: *Probably getting' paid too right?*

SH: Yeah we got paid too! Probably I get paid about the same when I play at the Beat Kitchen on Mondays as I did back when I was thirteen... (laughing)... I ain't kiddin' ya!

CAD: *It's a far cry from the Beat Kitchen on Monday night... you know the Millionaires Club and the Pheasant Run and the...*

SH: (Laughing) Yeah.

CAD: *So tell me about your transition into 'so called' more creative music and really music more of self expression rather than a pop mentality or a commercial minded venture.*

SH: It all really started when I moved to Crawfordsville, Indiana my sophomore year in college, and I met my dear friend Eric Johnson... Eric Johnson is a pianist who lives in New York still as a professional musician, and Eric and I hit it off immediately to where we would spend almost every night in the basement of the Chapel of Wabash College,

which was where the music department was, in the Chapel. In the basement they had a grand piano and I set up my drums and we would go in there and play all night and just really improvise and play, just improvised music, and he would write things out on the spot, we just played free so, that my first real experience in playing Free Jazz. Eric turned me onto so much music that I had no idea was around...you know, he turned me onto, like, Wayne Shorter and 'Native Dancer', which is probably one of my favorite all time records ever, he turned me onto Albert Ayler, which I didn't have a clue when I heard what that was, I had never heard anything like it and at first I didn't know quite what to think...but, of course, I gradually became very fond of it. He turned me onto Lonnie Liston Smith, and, what's his name...the keyboard player and trumpet player...oh God... (sings 'Cold Duck Time')?

CAD: *Yeah "Swiss Movement" Les McCann and Eddie Harris....*

SH: Right, "Swiss Movement". Exactly...aw man that was great stuff. So we listened to Weather Report and that whole world of music, (Joe) Zawinal and Cannonball Adderly and you know John Coltrane Miles Davis... so my soul mate for music was Eric Johnson... Is Eric Johnson...he's still alive in New York.

He really turned me on and he and I had a trio here, the Eric Johnson Trio, and then we went through different bass players ultimately playing with a bass player named Kyle Jones who's a dear friend and lives in Bar Harbor, Maine. Kyle's father went to Wabash and Kyle was at Wabash and he played bass, so we had a trio plus we had another saxophone player named Andy Murduck and he was a great soprano saxophone player. (He was tragically killed in 1978 in a car accident). . So we played, in college, all sorts of parties and outdoors, and we played original music and we covered Weather Report and things like that.

CAD: *Wow...so playing from that (perspective) maybe you were more equipped because you were such a Beatles fan and you were playing Rock music already, I mean isn't Fusion simply Jazz melded with Rock...wasn't that the initial Fusion?*

SH: Very much so. It was a natural place for me to be because it blended both my interest in Rock early on and then also Jazz, so, I really loved Tony Williams...he was one of my heroes, I loved Al Foster, Alphonze Mouzon, Barry Altschul, those types of players really inspire me.

CAD: *Yeah, that's very interesting. I've probably seen you about five/six times at least over the years, various occasions...I know you were with Hall Russell for a long while...one of my first questions to you was about him. How did you come to be in that circle of a sudden, I mean, you were playing Dixie Land, you went to College...did you meet Hal when you were still attending University?*

SH: I did not meet Hal until I moved back up to Chicago when I graduated. I got married in 1979 and my wife and I moved to Chicago in '79. I was playing with a guitar player names Andre' Caporaso,

who lived in Elgin, close to where I grew up in St. Charles. Andre' was another soul mate of mine that really pushed the envelope musically. Together, we played a lot of duos, and played free, and we played a lot of his compositions and I had a chance to record with him on some of his records...So when Andre' was in town before he moved to Los Angeles, we were playing quite a bit. and somehow we had... I think it was Chuck Burdelik, that was the first one that I'd met when I found that he was playing with Hal Russell, I think it was through Andre' and Chuck somehow, maybe they met each other... Then I heard about Chuck Burdelik playing with Hal Russell at Fred Anderson's Place on Clark Street, so we visited. That was back in '79. So I went there out of curiosity because I really wanted to hear Chuck. I think I was going to talk to Chuck about maybe having him play with a project that I wanted to get involved with. When I met Chuck at the club I got to hear Hal for the first time, and I was just totally knocked out with what he was doing.

CAD: Was Hal playing drums?

SH: He was playing drums, vibes and the saxophone, he was playing everything by then...yeah trumpet, so he was a multi-instrumentalist. ...He would switch back and forth...he played a lot of drums and he also played vibes at the time.

CAD: So did that have an influence how Extraordinary Popular Delusions conducts their shows? I know Brian Sandstrom tells me 'in that group I play trumpet', and that you guys all switch it up and play different instruments.

SH: Yeah, I think Hal was very inspirational to Brian to show how being a multi-instrumentalist can give you so much more colour, you know, just being able to be creative with a different instrument. It's so important. And Brian has always picked up on that and has always played guitar since I've played with him, although I first met him as a bassist. But, yeah, absolutely. Brian picked up on that. So when I first met Hal at Fred Anderson's place, the Birdhouse, I went up to Hal, I introduced myself, and I told him I would really like to study the vibraphone with him. I had a place on Clybourn Avenue called the Hideaway when I first moved to Chicago with my wife. I was paying a 100 dollars a month for a little studio/practice place that would allow me to have my drums and vibes there. The Hal Russell NRG Ensemble would practice there as well as have their concerts there, and that was right there on Clybourn...

CAD: And that was your place?

SH: That was my place yes. So we had a chance to rehearse, that's where I did all my practicing, and I kept my vibes there all the time and my drums...so I started going there, once I met Hal, I had the Hideaway already, so I was trying to meet other musicians and put together different projects. I started studying with Hal once a week. I would drive out to his home out in Lyons and he would spend the first part of the lesson teaching me the cycle of fifths, the learning how to play Blues, and working on just the basics of harmony and

chord changes, and phrasing...learning tunes, so he really helped to encourage me to play lines... play what I hear in my head. So, after the first part of our lesson was over I would switch to drums and he would get on the saxophone and we would just play together. I was not in the band at the time, but maybe about six months later, after playing with him,, he invited me to join his band, so I joined his band in 1980.

CAD: *So what happened then with all of your other projects, were you still playing more commercially minded kind of music at this time? Rock and stuff like that?*

SH: Not so much. To be honest with you I wanted to...since I had a day job, I didn't feel like I wanted to spend my weekends playing music that really didn't inspire me much, I wanted to keep my weekends free to spend with my wife or to be able to do music I wanted to hear and be free to play in way more creative contexts, so I pretty much...I didn't do much jobbing, I did sometimes but I primarily kept playing with Hal and the NRG Ensemble and I played with Andre Caporaso where we would play together in various contexts. And I would play with other folks in town, but the NRG Ensemble was my main, you know, musical project.

CAD: *What happened after Hal passed?*

SH: He passed in September of 1992, suddenly, and at that point we wanted to stay together. Ken Vandermark agreed to come on as the fifth member of the band, and he came on very strongly. We changed our name to the

NRG Ensemble He was a good, really a perfect person to step in, with the loss of Hal, to bring in a fresh approach and still preserve the concept and what we were doing, but have his own compositions that he would contribute Wee all continued to write for the group, without Hal.

CAD: *So that is a living existing group today?*

SH: Yes it is.

CAD: *Now tell me about what I consider it's off-shoot Extraordinary Popular Delusions, tell me how you would say this group is different.*

SH: Well, for one thing Hal would always shy away from playing completely free music, because he would attend concerts and he would feel that playing completely free, it's music without a net, and it could sometimes just fail (laughs)...where you know it wasn't always as strong as...he felt that having compositional basis to work from gives you something to start with and then to go from there and to then encourage improvisation from that point. So he was always approaching it from starting with a composition, whether it be a simple verbal instruction, or) he used a description of tonal combinations, or (?), to more notative lines and combinations of instruments... never chord changes so much. Just more like compositions that had heads, versus Extraordinary Popular Delusions, that has always been approaching music from a completely free perspective with no pre-conceived melodies or plan to what we're playing But it's based on some of the same three of the four people that have been playing with

Hal Russell forever, like Mars Williams who was playing with Hal before I had ever played with Hal in 1980. Hal and Mars had a group called the Chemical Feast. The two of them made a recording on the Nessa label called Eftsoons, so they've had a longtime collaboration. But then Brian Sandstrom and I joined the band pretty much at the same time back in 1980. Hal always wanted to have two bass players, because too many times if he had one bass player and he didn't show up, then he's left without a bass player! (Laughing)

CAD: *OK, so what happens when you both show up... you get a double effect!*

SH: Yeah! So Hal always wanted to have two bass players. So Brian and Mars and I, as three quarters of Extraordinary Popular Delusions, came from a lot of history with Hal, and Jim Baker actually had a chance to play with Hal quite a bit as well when Jim would come to the Hideaway with Nicholas Tremulus. I remember them on one of my first early mailing lists, which they would come in and have some wine and cheese and come and listen to what we were doing. Then I started playing with Jim. So Jim knows Hal's music and he really was the one who kind of launched Extraordinary Popular Delusions and wanted to keep the same completely improvisational approach to the music and not necessarily bring in tunes or concepts.

CAD: *Now we're getting into dangerous territory because when you say completely free, I mean we all have the things that we know to do, or the moods and the approaches that we can evoke on our instrument, and so I've seen you guys play many times and it does seem to go by the mood and who's up to what and who wants to push it and who doesn't, but it is funny when we say completely free because you guys play together so often...it's a good thing these days to have a long term engagement... how long have you been at the Beat Kitchen?*

SH: It'll be three years in September.

CAD: *And before that you were at a place I'd seen you at the Hotti Biscotti how long were you there?*

SH: We were at Hottie Biscotti for five years, so this will be our eighth year playing on a weekly basis.

CAD: *And what's great about that is the continuity that you get to have...so in that sense how challenging is it, do you feel, to try to approach it as freely as possible with the great history that you guys have together?*

SH: Yeah that's a really good question, Jimmy. It's, to me, it's each day we show up and it's been a different week than the week before, and we're all experiencing our own lives and we come back to the table ready to play with, you know, one week behind us, and, it's true... we record every single week and if we were to record and compare a concert that we played, say, three years ago versus what we played two weeks ago or whatever, we might hear some commonality(?) of how the music can flow and how we can gel together...different...we try to mix it up as best we can knowing that the same people are there. We have, each of us have our own unique voices we like to think in anyway,

and sometimes you like to think about...at least the way I approach it, I think about...sometimes I'll be more of an aggressive you know like pushing the music to a certain place where I'm feeling where it needs to go or where I want it to go right now, other times I'll let the music start and just kind of jump in, so it's a kind of balance between what you hear and what other people are playing, and trying to find that spot of where it's just...you know the difference between real time and just giving it a chance to breathe a little bit...it's kind of hard to explain; words fall short for me to explain, but there's a certain place when you know things are happening where it just feels so natural and it's not forced, and I'm not trying to play anything that doesn't seem to fit, or I may be able to pick up something that Brian started playing on bass that just feels right on for me to play a certain thing along with that...sometimes in a completely different time signature, where, that's where Hal, I must tell you, that's where Hal's influence has been on me to where he would tell me many times, you know, 'don't listen to anybody else, don't follow the bass player' because he loved that sense of 'out of time' time. And so that whole approach has kind of stuck with me and trying to...each week it's a challenge, I'll be honest with you, when you think, you know, 'what are we going to do this week that's different than we just did'. (Laughing)

CAD: *Yeah sometimes I'll do a roll on the cymbal and I have to admit, it's like you say, you can't step in the same river twice, it's a different roll, it's a different air that's around it, and so in that sense it has its possibility, it has its potential.*

SH: Absolutely.

CAD: *After Hal passed and you kept the group going, I noticed also... what is your relationship with the organization Umbrella Music, are you one of the inspirers, this core of musicians I've been hearing about that helped form this organization?*

SH: My relationship with Umbrella Music is that I get the privilege of being asked to be part of various festivals. I've had the honor to play in different contexts with various musicians that come from Europe, so I consider myself lucky to be one of the drummers in town that gets asked to play (Laughs).

CAD: *Yeah, because I always wondered about that because I would see you cats: Jim, you, Mars, Brian and I always thought, well, I don't know if they are even members, but it's nice that they seem to be honored here, that the is some sense of legacy.*

SH: Yeah that's really what it is, and I'm not part of their organization or anything...I try to support it...between what they have going at the Hungry Brain, the Hideout, Elastic, and now at Constellation, it's just, there's so much going on in Chicago and Umbrella Music has been such a strong force and it's made, to be honest with you, when Extraordinary Popular Delusions has our weekly gig, we have the benefit of having people that are, like just last week, from France, that were in town playing for the East West Project... a couple of them came by to hear us play because they were still in town on a Monday night.

So the power of Umbrella Music has really been beneficial to me for sure, to be able to meet musicians from other countries and to be able to play with people that I would never necessarily have a chance to play without their creating that opportunity.

CAD: *And you are right, they are very powerful, I mean, from the other perspective, it seems it's also 'when you are out, you are out' you know what I mean? It's definitely an exclusive Organization that is doing its thing and one that gets great representation in the city. Who, by the way, was that nice guitar player from Switzerland that was a guest with Extraordinary Popular Delusions when I saw you last?*

SH: Oh yeah, his name is Sam Mosching. He's going to be here for about three years... he's got a visa for a few years, so yeah he sat in with us and he's quite an excellent guitarist.

CAD: *So here's another question. I notice that different groups have gotten to share the bill with Extraordinary Popular Delusions... at Hotti Biscotti, Jim Baker invited Renee' Baker and I to share the night and then recently at the Beat Kitchen I came in with New Jersey pianist Steve Cohn...is that a tradition, or is that Jim Baker's idea alone, or is that a concept that you guys as a group have, as 'Hey we need to continue this music, this kind of lineage'?*

SH: Well Jim is the one who would be making that decision, and we're all supportive of that. So, when Jim had you guys play, that was wonderful to hear you play with Steve and we encouraged that, so I think the group would like to see that happen more because it allows other musicians to come in and share the bill with us, as well as we can share the audience you know, you folks could bring in people that we might not bring in or vice versa. I think Jim, even though we were all in favor of it, Jim is the one that's behind that and he did that when we played at Hotti Biscotti...we had all sorts of people sitting in, typically for the second set, and we would play the first.

CAD: *That's not very common, especially nowadays, so that's pretty hip that you guys do that.*

SH: We gotta support each other Jimmy, absolutely, so I think we'd be interested in doing more of that.

CAD: *So what are the current activities of both Extraordinary Popular Delusions and NRG?*

SH: Well as far as Extraordinary Popular Delusions we just had Dave Zuchkowski come in and record us on two different nights at the Beat Kitchen. So we have in the can three sets of live music that we want to try to pour over and select certain improvisations from those nights and try to put a new record out. So that's the goal and it will be our third release. We're in the process of reviewing that music and finding a label that would be interested, and we're also hoping to get over to Europe again... we'd love to get back there and find a festival that would be interested in having us play, so that's the goal to get back over to Europe with Extraordinary Popular Delusions.

And then as far as NRG Ensemble we actually talked about getting back over to Europe again and we just did a concert featuring the

music of Sun Ra. We're hoping to get over to Europe again and we want to start writing, we've actually played more recently than we have in awhile, so we want to be able to play more frequently with that group. I'm hoping that'll happen, maybe one day if we're lucky because we have those Chicago music exchanges so maybe one day we'll be able to take part in that.

CAD: *Well man, I just remember, it was four/five years ago now, maybe more, that I came into the Hideout and I saw you playing a show there and I was just knocked by how much you were doing and how much you were not doing, and I just remember talking to you and you seemed surprised to have the attention, it was nice...you were a very nice cat, considering you're stature here in town, you know.*

SH: Aw thanks Jimmy! Well gosh, I mean, I love the music and I really appreciate your interest in the music... and what you do as a drummer... man I really dug what you did...I was hearing you play with Steve (Cohn) and the same back at you man, it's like what you do and what you don't do and the silences and the whole power of just space and playing notes right at the right time...it's like, it's cool man! It's a really cool approach, I was really into what you were doin'.

CAD: *Well thank you and, hey man, when you lug 'em up those stairs you gotta do something, right?*

SH: Laughing

CAD: *It's really been a pleasure talking with you Steve... How many years have you been playing drums professionally?*

SH: About forty-five.

CAD: *What advice would you give to a cat sayin' 'Man I really want to pick up the drums, I'd like to play.'*

SH: I'd say please do it and enjoy every minute of it man and just, yeah, drums are a blast to play, and it's something I hope to be able to do while my heart is still beating and I can move my limbs, you know... it keeps me young, it really does. And so these drummers that say they have a drum set in the attic or that they sold it, I always kind of think, don't do that (!) keep it in your living room...keep it set up and walk over and play...it's so revitalizing you know...

CAD: *What would you say as far as the vibes go, what is the division, is it equal, are you more of a drummer than a vibes player?*

SH: I would say I've really focused more on my drumming although I do play vibes and I still practice and I want to grow more on the vibraphone, but it just seems like right now the musical possibilities are more for me as a drummer. I picture myself playing more vibraphone as time goes on, as I have more time to spend on music I want to delve into that and start writing again, because I tend to write on the vibraphone, that's been my main vehicle to write...I see myself playing more vibes. The thing is, I have a full time job and to try to find time to do both, I just feel like right now I just really want to focus on drums.

CAD: *Has Walt Dickerson been an influence on you?*

SH: He has. Absolutely he has...I would say who I really think has

been, to be honest with you, I've always loved Milt Jackson and that sort of thing...I just loved the way he played..."Bags"...but yeah I loved Walt Dickerson, and Hal Russell was really a great vibraphone player... he really influenced me tremendously.

CAD: *Mike Staron told me about a documentary, I don't know if it's been made available, on Hal Russell. Are you aware of this film?*

SH: I don't know...It might have been the group with Weasel Walters and Mike Staron...that documentary is ...I can't speak about because I don't know, but I'd love to see it!!

CAD: *Mike is a unique person because many times when I've checked him out, mostly he does private like paying things, but then you can call him and he'll be available to play creatively, I'll tell him 'I mean this doesn't pay a dime, you'll be lucky if you get five bucks' and he'll say 'no, no it's alright, it's OK'. So there seems to be a certain fervor among the Hal Russell alumnus to play music and to really give a chance to the possibilities of what can be.*

SH: Yeah. Oh man!...I got a funny story to tell you about Mike Staron and Hal. I don't know if Mike ever told you this story...You know how I told you Hal always wanted to have two bass players?...because one wouldn't show up? So Mike Staron, and Mike's a great player, and I had a chance to play with Mike and Hal several times, like we played at the Jazz Showcase years ago with Mike as the bassist, and he was great. But Hal was reaching out to Mike about playing a concert and Hal unfortunately had a real bad stuttering problem and so Hal called Mike and Mike says "Hello" and Hal goes "hhhhHhHHhhhhh" and Mike's "Hello? Hello?" and Hal was trying to speak and he couldn't get the words out, and Mike finally couldn't figure who it was so he said "Fuck You" and hung up the phone and Hal called right back, and Mike says "Hello" and Hal said "fffff FFffff Ffff fffff ffFf Ff ffff FFFFFFFUck You!" (Laughing) You'll have to ask Mike about that story!

CAD: *That's great!... because the only Hal Russell I knew of was, to be honest with you, this recording that the drummer Rick Shandling gave to me, who also knew and played with Hal, and he gave me a recording of Hal at Newport with Joe Daly on saxophone and it was very cool because here's this guy I had never really checked out and it's like, Ok cool, and that's all I had of him and then later I got this electronics recording where he doesn't play any drums at all, so it's just fascinating to kind of fill in the gaps with what he was up to and who he was playing with....why, you know?*

SH: Yeah Yeah Yeah...that's cool Jimmy. Yeah that's interesting and that record at Newport is killer...it's such a great record.

CAD: *You mentioned all these drummers you were influenced by, when you met Hal was he still playing drums, he obviously wanted you to play drums, I mean you guys were switching off, was he much of an influence on you with his...what did you think of his drumming approach?*

SH: Oh his drumming approach, well you know he's a great BeBop

drummer for one and he would just have this great sense of time, number one, and a certain touch that was just...he just had a magical approach to the drums and he made it so effortless. He also... you know he and I were different because of my Rock background, I would tend to be a little bit more bass drum heavy where he would be more... lighter to the touch...less bass drum and more cymbal and ride and snare. But I loved his drumming, he really was inspiring, especially when I got to see him with other people like Mose Allison and he'd be more in a straight ahead context... he could just play, play the crap out of it, you know, he was great. (Laughs)

CAD: I get the range of music when I see you play, especially at the Beat Kitchen, and everyone is comfortable, and you just go through the moods, and one gets the feeling that there's more that you could have heard but, come back the next time, and you might hear it then...there's no great hurry it seems.

SH: Well, right, right. Exactly. Sometimes less is more, and it's just a matter of what's happening at the moment and what you feel inspired to play.

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REVIEWS OF CDS, LPS AND BOOKS

A collection from
Robert Rusch of
sometimes
disparate material
though generally relat-
ing to music
recordings or perfor-
mance.



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. 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.

Violin has made its mark stylistically in jazz as clearly as any other instrument.

Whether Swing players such as Joe Venuti and Stuff Smith or contemporary players like Billy Bang and Mark Feldman, the majority of leaders in the field have a distinct sound (as do most of the established violinists that fall in between those Jazz genres).

TOMOKO OMURA started playing violin in 2004, got a scholarship to Berkeley and on 5/9/08 recorded her first album, VISIONS [no label 747728 983528], a quartet [Victor Gould-keys, Dan Carpel- b, Jeffrey Fajardo-drm] date. Her seven originals [51:45] make it apparent she has a wide understanding of the scope of improvised violin as each tune is a tribute to one of her heroes (Ponty, Lockwood, Grappelli, Seifert, Feldman and Venuti). Her approach to the violin is what might be called traditional, in that it remains on note, as opposed to slash and burn. She exhibits a sure control and an uncompromising sense of swing and contemporary design (not fusion). This is an excellent recording at any stage of an improvising artist.

TOMOKO OMURA's next album was an April [9&10] 2013 recording called ROOTS [Inner Circle Music INCM 037cd]. This pays homage to her Japanese roots on 11 compositions[59:35]. Here we have a mixture of traditional and non-traditional music all of which is arranged by Omura. This strikes both an Eastern and Western accord and is quite a successful concept project with Will Graefe [gtr], Glenn Zaleski [keys], Noah Garabedian [b] and Colin Stranahan [drm]. Fine non-traditional jazz and again her control, technique and innate swing are all impressive.

TOMOKO OMURA's most recent release (2017), POST BOP GYPSIES, is a string trio [Alex Goodman-gtr, George DeLancey, b] date (recorded 2016?). Here Omura has put together 8 standards with 2 originals [57:33] on an album she designates as a bebop date.

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In hindsight, it seems apparent that Omura has a strong attraction to melody. Here, mixed in with jazz classics like Monk's "Four in One" and Denzil Best's "Wee" (etc) are tunes like "Smile", "Bachianas Brasileiras No.5 Aria" and "[The] Midnight Sun". This is a lovely album as the bow has a commanding presence and walks a tightrope between pretty jazz and pretty interesting jazz. I've played these 3 recordings repeatedly and while the music is easily accessible, it holds my attention. Omura puts a lot of thought into her albums and I look forward to hearing what's to come.

Those who enjoy the blend and harmony of 2 trombones should seek out the group HORNSTROM's [Tobias Wember, Klaus Heidenreich-tbns, Markus Braun-b, Silvio Morger-drm], DARK [Double Moon Records dmchr 71186]. Wember contributes 6 of the 8 originals [41:21]. A variety of moods is offered here and one should not be misled by the title Dark as the music is not dark but rather carefully constructed, highlighting trombones and rhythm. This is not a free wheeling project but still it projects a sense of rhythm and exploration and, yes, harmony.

Billed as the group DUMItRIO, GEORGE DUMITRIU [viola/vln/gtr] heads a string trio [Mattia Magatelli-b, Kristijan Krajncan-cello/drm] of another color on PROVERBE [Trytone 559-073]. This is a mixture of originals [56:48] credited to Dumitriu and instant compositions credited to Dumitriu. The doubling by the trio gives this music greater dimension, much of it built about repetitive sounds which give a foundation for improvisation from members of the trio. This is particularly effective on "Approval", where the drums build an effective solo off the repetitive bass. There is also some effective improv/interplay between drums, bass and violin. Less effective are the "Proverbs 1-4" with the addition of Cornelia Popa (voice) billed here as spoken Romanian proverbs but to me sounds like mumblings that go nowhere. Mixed bag with no clear direction.

Pianist LASZLO GARDONY has issued another solo piano album on Sunnyside Records [ssc 4029] this time called SERIOUS PLAY. I've always considered Gardony's work as serious but perhaps he considers this program of 7 improvs and 3 standards more profound than previous works. On the standards [Georgia, Naima, Over The Rainbow] there is a sober reading that compliments the compositions. In particular "Georgia On My Mind" is beautifully etched out with heavy emotion. The improvs are more percussive than melodic. This program at just 38:10 is over too soon.

Johnny Guarneri [1917-1985] was a hell of a piano player who spent many years in the Goodman and Shaw bands before mixing in with the NYC mainstream veterans then moving to the West Coast where at the end of his career he made some of his most robust recordings. MAGIC FINGERS [Solo Art sacd 172] is tribute to Guarneri by JIM TURNER [p]. 15 of the 17 tracks [54:31] collected here are compositions by Johnny Guarneri. Clarinetist Ron Hockett joins in on a cut recorded 9/23/16 while the rest of the CD was recorded 5/2/16. For me this tribute, while pleasant enough, is a bit polite and lacks the grit which marked much of Guarneri's best work.

ENRICO PIERANUNZI [p] appears on an equal billing trio with MADS VINDING [b] and ALEX RIEL [drm] for a live [11/11/97] recording from

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Copenhagen's Jazzhouse. Pieranunzi by this time had become a master of free associative playing of a theme. Here he chooses 7 themes [67:48] and does, as expected—an excellent job. On “Jitterbug Waltz” he free plays on the opening for a while before dropping into the familiar Waller theme. He contributes one original, “A Nameless Date”, which is new to his discography and as with other tunes he soon loses himself in its many configurations and reworking off the changes. Vinding and Riel are along for what feels like a solo exposition on a trio date.

BURTON GREENE [p] is now 80 and has been playing “free jazz” over 50 years. He's been an historically important part of the lineage in this music from the beginning of his professional life. That he is generally overlooked has always been a puzzlement to me. Some of the reasons I think are political and some can be seen/heard on his new 2 CD set, COMPENDIUM [Improvising Beings ib55]. This is a recent (?) collection of solo, duos and trios with Roberto Haliffi [drm], Stefan Raidl [b] and Tilo Baumheier [flt]. Some of the material was recorded live at the Bimhaus and the rest in studio. Burton is a free wheeling/associative fellow, who music/releases could often use some editing. And that is what this collection needs—editing. Presented here is the jazz Burton as opposed to the Klezmer Burton, the world/new age Burton or the electronic Burton. In other words he is an artist of many modes. There is some terrific music here mostly in duo with Haliffi. There are also self-indulgent parts; sections where Burton plays out simple lines that are reminiscent of a child hammering on a toy piano and also times when Burton is vocally “carrying on”, but the voice is obscured by the music, and times when the music is ahead of thought. There are 23 tracks [1:3111] here, mostly compositions by Greene, the rest by Monk, Johnny Coles, Pieranunzi, Metheny, Jackie [sic] Byard and others. There is enough here for one fine CD. Now with CDs one can re-program and cut out weaker material but how many will just get bogged down instead of seeking out some of Burton's finest recordings or just move on to a more in vogue artist? Burton has written some fine liners covering the entire program, but due to a poor font choice they are rather difficult to read.

Pianist SATOKO FUJII and trumpeter NATSUKI TAMURA have collaborated together on dozens of CDs. Their latest being KISARAGI [Libra Records 102-042], a 5/15/16 duo session. This is free improvisation and if that isn't your thing then read no further. It is still a puzzlement to me why I can connect with some improvisation while other improv dates leave me cold. Fujii's last two releases left me on the cold side—even so I would judge the dozens and dozens of CD these two have been involved in since 1992 as being very good, a few even excellent. Over 8 free improvs [48:21] these two start with a thread of sound and build on it to make cohesive statements. Tamura creates everything from kissing sounds to barnyard squeals while Fujii uses both the outside and inside of the piano. My only complaint is a distracting, annoying feedback like hum, through the last track which unfortunately runs 15:04.

It is fair to say, SATOKO FUJII [p] puts out a new, but different, release every few months. I've not found them all excellent partially because she sets the

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bar high, anything not equaling (her) past excellence tends to be discounted. Her latest, *ASPIRATION* [Libra Records 204-043] finds her once again in the company of trumpeter Natsuki Tamura. Free music here is tightly controlled and the quartet [Wadada Leo Smith-tpt, Ikue Mori-electronics] as a result builds up a great tension. I feel on most of the 6 tunes [62:45] the group may have started with a game plan or musical road map to lead them into the body of the improvisations. Of course it certainly is possible the group faced each other and instinctively found their spaces. There is very little of one soloist stepping on another's solo. This care also brings tension sometimes broken by Mori and her very judicial use of electronics. Those who were attracted to the kind of tension Bill Dixon could mount will find much to like in this very effective use of tension. Very little humor.

The duo of KENT CARTER, Steve Lacy's long time bassist, and SYLVAIN GUÉRINEAU [ts] is offered up on *COULEUR DE L'EXIL* [Improvising Beings ib61]. This is an excellent recording [4/20-21/16] of 5 improvs [54:34]. The success, among other things, is a result of the careful listening of both participants to each other and Carter's careful use of the bass both as a stringed instrument but also as a sounding board for taps hits and of course bowing. The interaction and exchange here is a beautiful thing, these are thinking artists-bravo.

ERIC PLAKS [p] and AQUILES NAVARRO [tpt/vocoder] have released a duo recording [12/18/16] called *WINDOWS TO THE WORLD BEYOND* [No Frills Music nfm 0014]. The CDR [49:24] consists of 2 originals and 2 improvs. I'm not familiar with the trumpeter but I've worked with Plaks (as a producer) and think of him as a great talent as both a musician and composer. On this recording there are moments of self conscious stiffness mainly on the openings and there is not a great sense of unity. Things happen best when the players go their separate ways and improvise. The vocoder is used on one track to little effect—ironically Plaks does some of his most powerful playing on this track. Joyous moments—but only moments.

ZITHER GODS [Improvising Beings ib5j] is a collection of 13 solo tracks [44:55] written and recorded by pianist ERIC ZINMAN [between 2011-2015] and much of this is compelling. There are times here when thing go thud as when Zinman resorts to vocal effects or when he seems more interested in various effects of noise makers that making a cogent musical effect. Not sure why a relatively young artist, sparsely documented on recording over the past 20 years is doing a collection of 5 years of material. Has something happened? Liner notes are of no help with insight about this relatively unknown musician and his music. A missed opportunity.

Pianist KEI AKAGI has produced *CONTRAST AND FORM* [Time & Style Records no number] an album of 9 of his compositions plus Wayne Shorter's "Limbo" [62:01]. Akagi plays with a light touch and insistence that brings to mind Mal Waldron with a touch of Paul Bley. Probably best known for his work with Airtō and Miles Davis' last grouping, Akagi shows none of that fusion approach here but is not shy about crediting these former band mates in his liners. The title track is broken into 3 parts, all of which Akagi and trio [Shunya Wakai-b, Tamaya Honda-drm] navigate with ease and display their

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talents nicely. Neither bop or free this is music that fits nicely between thought and form.

CHERRYCO [SteepleChase sccd31832] is the title of a delightful KIRK KNUFFKE [cornet] trio [Jay Anderson-b, Adam Nussbaum-drm] recording playing a dozen titles [63:31] by either Ornette Coleman or Don Cherry. Knuffke has a similar lyrical yet flat tone that marked Don Cherry's playing. This trio captures the playful bluesy joy that was endemic to so much of this music. Recorded February of 2016—this is music which will hold up well in future listens.

HAFFAH is a free jazz quartet [Christian Ferlaino-as, Herbert de Jonge-p, Renato Ferreira-b, Hans Houtman-drm] who I believe make their recorded debut on SENZA TITOLO [Evil Rabbit Records err 25]. While de Jonge and Houtman have played together as part of Luc Houthamp's quartet, I don't know the background of Ferreira and Ferlaino. This quartet plays together very well on the 10 improvs [41:23] here. With the improvisations averaging under 5 minutes, each member plays forcefully and with plenty of reserve while avoiding stepping on one another's toes. Even on a ballad there is a nice joining of sounds. Recorded 12/16 and well worth your attention.

From the outside EXIT TO NOW [Improvising Beings ib CD 62] XOL appears to be a HARRI SJÖSTROM [ss] and PETER BRÖTZMANN [reeds] joint recording but it isn't. The two do not play together—what it issued here are 2 different/ dates; a Sjöström session from 6/4/16 [49:12] and a Brötzmann set from 6/19/15 [57:39]. The common connection is the back-up trio [Guy Bettini-tp, Luca Pissavini-b, Francesco Miccolis-drm]. I'm not sure what XOL refers to; is it part of the title for the CD or perhaps for the back up trio? The trio is credited with composer rights along with the "leaders". The 16-page liner booklet has photos and art but no words. The titles of both sets, 2 for the Sjostrom CD and 5 for Brötzman's CD, all have the letters X and O in their titles. But I've wasted enough time trying to figure this out, better to just listen to the music. The Sjostrom session builds nicely and the quartet really gets down to jamming. The Brötzmann CD is loaded with high energy and as expected it's balls to the wall. The backup trio is very fine and never lags for energy on either date. Dense music—seasoned listeners should know what to expect.

You'll not know what to expect from MANNY ECHAZABAL's SHORT NOTICE [no label 888295 616386] release as this is his debut recording [Tal Cohen-p Dion Kerr-b David Chiverton-drm], and it is a strong one. Echazabal is a tenor saxophonist with a slightly gruff sound and plays in a post bop free bop genre and is not afraid to reach outside the structure and tempo. The reach is successful and he comfortably returns to structure of the established music. The 9 substantial tunes [50:44] here are all originals. In addition, Tal Cohen is a major voice, a strong 2 fisted pianist who advances the music passionately and is supported by the energy of Kerr and Chiverton. The togetherness of this quartet suggests rehearsal and familiarity. This is the complete package and it begs the question—where do they go from here? Stay in Miami and work the local scene or try to break through to a world over populated with talented jazz players? If they are fortunate, a label will pick them up and help give them the

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exposure and legitimacy of which they are worthy. Strong stuff.

JANE IRA BLOOM, arguably is one of improvising musics finest soprano sax players. She has issued an ambitious recording on her label, Outline Records; WILD LINES: IMPROVISING EMILY DICKINSON [otl 143]. This is a 2 CD set. Set one is made up of 15 tracks [61:48] of music with her quartet [Dawn Clement-p, Bobby Previte-drm, Mark Helias-b]. Set two is made up of the same compositions [55:46] and players but with Deborah Rush expertly reciting Dickinson. The disc's folder has the recording date of 4/1/17 which would indicate a remarkable chance that this was all recorded in one day. Not impossible but recording poetry is more problematic than just recording instrumentals in that a flubbed line is impossible to integrate. In addition everyone sounds fresh. The 15 tracks on each disc reprise the same titles all of which are Bloom originals with the exception of "It's Easy To Remember", both takes sans poetry. Both discs provide wonderful listening, this is not jazz 'n' poetry—it is jazz and poetry. If you think the two don't mix, get this and it will blow your mind. Two great composers.

Also a matter of poetry is PAT BATTSTONE's [p] THE VOICE OF ROBERT DESNOS [Bat's Tones Records no number]. Desnos was a French poet [1900-45] and participant of the Surrealist movement. His poems are free verse and full of anguish and packed with text. The 11 tracks on the CD presents Desnos' prose plus "Nature Boy" [66:22]. Behind the readings spoken by Antonella Chionna, Battstone improvises wistfully. "Nature Boy" is given an avant guard treatment. This is not a jazz CD but neither is it without thought and interest. Drummer JENS DÜPPE has issued an interesting recording in tribute to John Cage and a belief that music is freedom and everything is possible and that there is music in everything. DANCING BEAUTY [Personality Records pr 26] is a quartet [Frederik Köster-tp, Lars Duppler-p, Christian Ramond-b] date [2017?] with 9 Düppe originals [51:04]. Here they do everything from straight ahead jazz to 3:56 minutes on a piece called "Dancing Plastic Bag" which is Düppe playing with the sound of 2 plastic bags. Make of it what you wish; I am more inspired by the philosophy than the plastic bags. There is some fine jazz on this CD sparked by the stark Aaron Coplan-esq trumpet playing by Köster. A CD of possibilities.

HAL GALPER: LIVE AT THE COTA JAZZ FESTIVAL [Origin Records 82738] presents Galper's new quartet [Nathan Bellott-as, Dean Torrey-b, David Frazier-drm] which he calls The Youngbloods. Galper who is on the upslope to 80 and who was once a youngblood himself 60 years ago shows musically there is no generation gap with these youngsters (former students of Galper's at Purchase Conservatory). This gig [9/11/16] came about a year after they first played as a group and was part of a festival honoring the life of Phil Woods. And if you enjoy Woods you're going to love this CD. Bellott has Woods' pugnacious attack down and is a natural fit with Galper who was Woods' pianist for a decade. Galper is in top form revisiting some of the 3 originals plus "Goodbye" [57:24]. Torrey and Frazier are right on top of the program following in step with Galper's twisted turns. Galper has made a few top quality recordings that seem to have been overlooked in the shuffle. This CD is superior and belong with his best.

Tenor saxman Dan Bennett is obviously influenced by John Coltrane and his

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spiraling passion is the heavy feature on ANDY ADAMSON's FIRST LIGHT [Andros Records ar002]. Made up of 9 Adamson originals [48:05] that range from dense free bop to solid fusion-sounds. On the fusion track Adamson switches to some sort of electric gizmo and except that the piece goes nowhere is a great improvement over the usual moody electric piano. Joining Adamson and Bennett are Brennan Andes [b], Jonathan Taylor [cdm] and Ross Huff [tpt] and except for a certain genetic quality and the dreaded fade out—this is a strong outing. Adamson's first recording, A CRY FOR PEACE [Andros ar-101] is an undated quartet session [Dan Bennett-sax, Brennan Andes-b, Jonathan Taylor-drm] playing 8 Adamson originals [45:20]. Adamson writes with a dramatic verve, which fits well with Bennett's Gato Barbieri-like gruffness. A solid set if again, a bit generic.

ERNEST MCCARTY JR. [b] and JIMMIE SMITH [drm] set themselves a daunting task on A REUNION TRIBUTE TO ERROLL GARNER [Blujazz Records bj3452]. The cover of the CD has the leaders standing together holding a copy of Garner's 1971 recording, Gemini. I put on the CD figuring this was someone's lame concept, get a journeyman pianist to play the Gemini program and perhaps imitate Garner's unique style. Listening to the CD, I was thankful the pianist was not trying to imitate Garner's style and then I thought this pianist is strong and can play. At that point I looked at the liner notes for information as to who was the pianist, unlisted on either the front or back of the CD. The pianist was Geri Allen (!) who along with Noel Quintana [congas] fills out the quartet. The program of 9 standards [63:43] is made up of tunes Garner liked to reference but only a few are on the Gemini recording. Only on "Mambo Carmel" did memories of Garner's form suggest itself, perhaps because I only remember hearing it played by Garner. Recorded 7/27&28/16. McCarty is a warm bassist who last recorded, I believe, on the Gemini date and it has been a while since Smith has recorded. Interestingly, Allen's name is mentioned nowhere in the liners nor is she present in any of the numerous photos that grace the liners. Curious omission on an otherwise fine recording.

Bassist MIKE DOWNES has released ROOT STRUCTURE [Addo Records ajr 035]. This is a 8/15&16/16 date with a quartet [Ted Quinlan-gtr, Robi Botos-keys, Larnell Lewis-drm] featuring 10 Downes originals [51:15]. While there are some nice moments of counterpoint between guitar and piano, the most notable effect is the jackhammering from the drummer. Downes has written some fine compositions with an almost classical feel and even borrows from Chopin on one cut. Music best appreciated when the drummer tones it down a bit although there is some terrific energy created by the drummer. A mix of oil and water.

DON'T BLINK [OA2 Records 22145] is the name of the latest recording by the UNHINGED SEXTET [Vern Sielert-tpt/flg, Will Campbell-as, Matt Olson-ts, Michael Kocour-p, Jon Hamar-b, Dom Moio-drm]. Recorded 10/7&8/16, here are 8 originals [49:50] by different members of the group except Moio. This is a group playing ballads and hard driving hard bop with solid charts and harmonization much in the mold of the Jazz Messengers and that is their most distinguishing characteristic. They sound like they're into it and having fun. Use this as a blindfold test.

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MARK LANGFORD [ts/b.clt] has been an improvising musician since the 1970s and recently started his own label, Free Tone Records. The latest on Free Tone is ANGEL PAVEMENT [ftr 003] by the trio KONIK [Dominic Lash-b, Roger Telford-drm]. This is a post bop trio that performs as a trio in that there is an equanimity of space and while they play independently they present as a group. There are 6 original improvs [46:47] on the program and Langford features the bass clarinet and while I imagine he was influenced by Dolphy there is little sense of overt influence. His tone and attack on tenor is very similar to that of the bass clarinet in that he tends to seek the lower registers and wallow in the muck. A bit short in time but time well used.

Previous to this LANGFORD joined with PHIL GIBBS [gtr], PAUL ANSTEY [b] and BOB HELSON [drm] on a 10/21/13 and 12/2/13 date called FRINGE MUSIC [FreeTone Records 001]. The program here is 8 improvs [54:40] and the group sounds somewhat indecisive in what direction to go. The flow of the music seems to be set by Gibbs who has spent years with Paul Dunmall. Anstey keeps pretty much a regular bass pattern. Helson has worked with Langford since the beginning of both their careers in the 70s and here keeps up a percussive wall that encourages inspired emersion into free jazz. There are times when inspiration takes hold and that is exciting but it takes patience on the listeners part to hang in there. The times combustive releases happen best is when the lead comes from the bass and drums.

Free Tone Records 002 is a quintet [Gibbs-gtr, Anstey and Hugh Kirkbride-b, Roger Skerman-drm] from 1/22/16 called EXCHANGE. This CD is made up of 8 improvs [44:04] ranging in length from 1:39 to 11:39. It is in the nature of free music that works best when players are allowed to spread out, otherwise short pieces do little more than act as a spacer or an apéritif to the more involved pieces. The challenge is to limit the intro time and get to the meat of the music. Here the moments of inspiration taking over are of lesser degrees of inspiration than on Fringe Music but there is overall less hesitation and treading while waiting for direction. On one improv Gibbs gets out the wha wha effect on guitar and the sound covers contributions from the other musicians. It is the least effective of the improv pieces and afterwards I felt like saying, feel better now? There are some fade outs which may have been Free Tone's attempt at tightening performances and limit the treading. Free Tone is off to an interesting start and further issues hopefully will build from the past.

DANA FITZSIMONS [drm] is a lawyer and along with PATRICK ARTHUR [gtr] and CHRIS OTTS [ts] they make up THE cHEAP 3NSEMBLE [no label 700261 452791]. This is Fitzsimons debut jazz recording and while there is an ECM-ish quality one can admire the original approach. 3 of the 8 tracks [49:09] are originals by Otts or Arthur. The CD opens with Roberto Somoza's "Ithaca" and sets up a tension and melancholy that is sustained throughout. By the end of this program I'll admit to getting tired after holding my breath for long periods of time while waiting for something to "happen". Of special note is the reading of "Poor Butterfly", which is taken super largo and sustained on a tightrope tempo throughout. This is perhaps the finest version of this Hubbell & Golden tune I can remember.

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RENATO FERREIRA, on tenor or baritone sax leads the NATIVE ALIENS ENSEMBLE [Trytone records tt 559-074]. This 8 piece ensemble plays 9 Ferreira compositions [38:16] built around Brazilian pop music, none of which is familiar to me. While there are moments of exciting improvisation it is too subservient and truncated by the reliance on the thematic material, which by itself was often tedious. There are exceptions of course which makes the wait more frustrating. This suggested more than delivered.

Little need be said about COMPASSION [Resonance Records hcd-2030] a 6/22/70 recording of Coltrane music with DAVE LIEBMAN [ts/ss/recorder/flt] and JOE LOVANO [ts/autochrom/clt/flt]. This is pretty much a straight ahead date covering 6 Coltrane compositions [52:38] from a variety of periods from the more traditional to the more ethereal, all of it delightful and at times inspiring. The date ends with the title tune, one of Coltrane's later works [c1975], the lengthiest [17:27] track which digs in beautifully after a 4 minute drum intro [Billy Hart]. It is very true to the spirit of Trane's later work, unfortunately it ends in a fade—inexcusable! Rounding out the quintet are Phil Markowitz [p] and Ron McClure [b]. Included is a 24-page booklet with full background and interviews with those involved. Music, artists and label all have a solid track record, as I said, little need be said. Thank You.

MACIEJ FORTUNA [tpt] and Mack Goldsbury [ts/ss] have been collaborating internationally for many years, their latest being a 12/5/13 recording; ZOŚKA [Fortuna fm 020]. Joining on this Polish recording are bassist Erik Unsworth and drummer Frank Parker (not to be confused with the other drummer of the same name that was active in the 1930s). The concept here is to play traditional Polish folk themes. Mixed in with the 6 traditional themes are 4 Fortuna originals [48:20] all of which lend to the continuity of the project.

This is very pleasant music with lovely themes played with imagination, I only wish there were less emphasis on themes and more emphasis on stretching out and elimination of fades. That aside, as a concept this works very well—but as jazz? It is good but it could go further.

Multi-reedman LOUIS SCLAVIS sticks to clarinet and bass clarinet on Intuition Records' 11th edition of their European Jazz Legends series. LOIN DANS LES TERRES [intchr 71323] documents a 2/2/17 concert of Sclavis and quartet [Sarah Murcia-b, Christophe Lavergne-drm, Sylvain Rifflet-ts/clt] playing 7 Sclavis originals [55:38] plus an interview (in English) with Sclavis about the concert and his group. The interview is, as with the previous legends, quite interesting but this time I found the performance just average and not up to either Sclavis' finest or the series' finest. That said the bar was already set high on both accounts.

The 12th addition of European Legends is given over to guitarist FRED FRITH noted for his ability to use numerous gadgets for added guitar effects. Frith probably never met a sound maker that he did not like or at least consider using in performance. On STORYTELLING [Intuition intchr 71324] he is joined in live concert on 3/18/17 by Lotte Anker [sax] and Sam Dühsler [drm]. Anker, a Dane, has been involved with creative improvised music since the early 80s (as has Frith). Dühsler is a new name to me. The program of 5 improvs (+interview) [61:43] opens up with some vocal utterances from Frith

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that once put aside, Anker's sputtering reed work takes over. There are some sounds that I can't identify but are most likely from Frith's adapted guitar and are one with the spirit of the music. For me, largely because of the presence of Dühler, this is one of the more enjoyable Frith releases that I have heard. Frith often engages computers and minimalist sounds/music that for the most part miss my mark, but here he has my understanding, attention and appreciation. TOM KOHL is a bright, not light, 2 handed pianist who has issued a fine CD of 7 fairly complex compositions and 2 standards [50:50]. The standards [Indian Summer, Lover Man] are freshly handled and stay fresh after several listens. Joining Kohl are Jon Doty [drm] and Stephen Roane or Steve Laspina [b]. Recorded 5/5/12, 11/22/15 and 2/3/16 the time between recordings should not be viewed as anything musically negative but probably merely scheduling conflicts/difficulties that often beset independent artists and labels. The CD is called DANCES WITH THE SUN [no label 888295 497244] and besides the fine work from Kohl the rhythm gives nice support and features. An unexpected pleasure.

Another 2 handed pianist is CHRISTIAN RANNENBERG whose new CD is OLD SCHOOL BLUES PIANO STYLINGS [Acoustic Music Records best-nr. 319.1570.2]. Besides playing piano, Rannenberg also sings and does so with an integrity and timing which would not be out of place in Chicago. Included in the 18 tracks [71:45] here are originals as well as compositions by Lonnie Johnson, K.C.Douglas, Katie Webster, Mercy Dee Walton and Billie Holiday. "Pinetop Is In The House" is a terrific tribute to Pinetop Smith and Pinetop Perkins. This is, as the title says, old school blues piano and one would be hard pressed not to tap a foot while listening to it. Aiding on some tracks is Alex Lex [drm], Matthias Itzenplitz [gtr], Kai Strauss [e.gtr], Paul Palizzolo [hrm] Angela Brown [voc]. The 16-page enclosed booklet has Rannenberg's notes on each composition. Rannenberg offers up a broad range of blues and a wonderful program. Convincing.

THE CLARINET TRIO [Gebhard Ullmann- b.clt, Jürgen Kupke-clt, Michael Thieke-a.clt] is joined by Alexey Kruglov [as] on LIVE IN MOSCOW [Leo Records cd lr 781]. This recording of Ullmann's music [57:23] comes from an 11/5/13 concert at the Theatre School Of Dramatic Art. There is a good variety of sound over this concert much of it free within the context of the compositions which by themselves offer a variety of textures. The addition of the alto sax, by the well seasoned reedman Kruglov, works well and voices nicely with the trio. Squawks and dissonance blend with harmonics on music which often seems to go every way as if blasted by a music canon yet within its structure maintains a logic.

DAS KONDENSAT [WhyPlayJazz Records rs 036] is the eponymous title of the trio of Gebhard Ullmann [ts/ss/sampler], Oliver Potratz [b/analog effects] and Eric Schaefer [drm/synth]. I'm not a big fan of electronics in improvised music, with that stated, it is surprising that I did find much to appreciate in this recording [2/22 & 25/16] since electronics are the primary use for coloring and support on the 11 originals [40:02]. While all the artists have played with each other before, I believe this is the first recording as a trio. Ullmann is the old man here, making numerous recordings since the early 1980s,

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he has aligned himself with a number of groups who have shown staying (together) power over the years. As an improviser he can be counted on to fit in strong statements. Schaefer can be a relentless rhythm man and here it can be infectious. Potratz handles most of the electronics and to his credit is not overwhelming. When playing acoustically this trio can be very exciting with its fusion of sounds and I'll admit I prefer this mode to the electronic passages. There is no electricity, other than guitars, on TOMAS FUJIWARA's [drm] recent release, TRIPLE DOUBLE [Firehouse 12 Records fh12-04-01-026] but there is some electric playing. The title refers to Fujiwara assembling a double trio [Mary Halvorson and Brandon Seabrook-gtr, Taylor Ho Bynum and Ralph Alessi- cornet & tpt, Gerald Cleaver-drm] for the 10 tracks [58:28] on this 1/31 & 2/1 2017 recording. This is a bit of an all-star grouping and with good contrast. Two titles involve Alan Dawson, longtime Boston area drummer [1929-96], on one piece [Pocket Pass] a segment of a tape from one of Dawson's lessons is played followed by "For Alan", an almost 8 minute drum solo which fades over Dawson's words of wisdom, again from a lesson. The 2 drummers put up some mighty walls of percussion elsewhere on the program and the 2 horn players compliment each other. But on one cut [Hurry Home] which features the guitars the music falls flat. More than once, Fujiwara uses fades or an abrupt ending which is annoying and jarring and give the CD an unfinished feel. Beginnings and endings are important to the music's presentation and should be dealt with carefully.

At less than 10 years old, Losen Records is a relatively new company with an interesting eclectic set of releases, although not all of the issues are jazz. Among its new issues that should appeal to jazz fans is DAG ARNESEN's trio [Ole Marius Sandberg-b, Ivar Thormodsæter-drm] on PENTAGON TAPES [los 160-2]. The title does not reference anything other than the name of the building in Norway where it was recorded in September 2016. Born in 1950, Arnesen has pretty much been in the thick of Norwegian mainstream jazz since the 70s. The program here is a mixture of very fine originals and standards [59:23]. Arnesen is quite an original player and when turned loose sounds like no other (perhaps Ahmad Jamal was an early influence though I would not bet on it). He sounds very sure and perhaps has a classical background. His approach is bright (optimistic) and his playing and composition mainly utilize the right side of the piano. An evergreen trio and lovely to listen to.

A PIECE OF THE APPLE [Losen Records los-178-2] by the FRODE KJEKSTAD [gtr] quartet [Eric Alexander-ts, Mike LeDonne-org, Joe Farnsworth-drm], is a most enjoyable recording. On the one hand it is a great listening experience but on the other hand—there is nothing here I haven't heard before. That said the trio of Alexander, LeDonne and Farnsworth are spot on, on the funky vibe projected. These 3 are a group in themselves, Kjekstad is the unknown factor for me and a pleasant surprise. He handles ballads and uptempo with equal ability and that ability is impressive. The group glides through a group of nine standards and Kjekstad originals [67:41] with feeling, funk and occasional ferocity. Recorded 1/9/14—I wonder what the holdup was, but no matter, great music is timeless and this is timeless. Uh huh.

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JEREMY ROSE [as/b.clt] has produced an interesting (another word for when the reviewer does not “understand” something) in WITHIN & WITHOUT [Earshift Records ear 018]. Backed by Kurt Rosenwinkel [gtr], Jackson Harrison [p], Andreas Lang [b] and Tobias Backhaus [drm] on 10 originals [56:34] by Rose [9] and Harrison [1] they weave an enjoyable set of counter lines with and against each other. The harmonies are melodious but it is the counter point of the group which I find compelling. Rose has a bluesy tone, a bit like Ornette Coleman, but 3 generations removed. All members of the group contribute nicely with Rosenwinkel’s guitar which at times sounds like a theremin. Nice blues-ish pacing and good interplay make for rewarding repeats.

Double Moon Records has a series called Next Generation and volume 68 in the series puts the spotlight on KIRA LINN [bari/b.clt] and her Linnett [Nina Wenger-as/flt, Christopher Kunz-ts/ss, Lukas Grobmann-p, Victor Mang-b, Johannes Koch-drm] on NATURE [dmchr 71184]. The emphasis on this 12/16 date is on writing. Here, the 7 Linn originals [48:00] explore a variety of moods including some flowing lines reminiscent of west coast harmonies or Woody Herman sounds. There are also a number of solid if generic solos. This is a valuable series giving voice to new faces on the scene of which Kira Linn is certainly deserving. It’s my hope that Linn will get the opportunity to expand and exhibit her compositional skills.

GRANT STEWART [ts] has been on the scene for over 25 years. He got his first public exposure on Criss Cross Records. ROLL ON [Cellar Live Records cl 100616] is his trio [Paul Sikivie-b, Phil Stewart-drm] date [fall 2016?] of 9 non- originals [49:25]. Stewart pretty much blows relaxed in mid-range and reflects some of the nonchalance and reserve that marked Rollins’ work of the late 1950s (a point Morgan Childs’ liners also notes). He can blow uptempo and show considerable technique, as he does on “After You’ve Gone”, yet seemingly keeping his cool while hardly creating a sweat. The rhythm takes it all in stride and contribute to the intimacy of the performance. Understated pleasures.

For many years TARDO HAMMER has been Grant Stewart’s pianist and he also has a new CD out on Cellar Live Records. SWINGING ON A STAR [c 1010717] is a recording from 1/7/17 with Lee Hudson [b] and Steve Williams [drm] playing a 9 mostly familiar tunes [46:59]. The music flows easily and goes by quickly in mainstream fashion of which bop seems to have become after the Bud Powell generation. Nicely recorded this trio creates a relaxed grove and stays with(in) it.

There is a touch of Sonny Rollins from Mike Mullan [ts/as] as part of drummer BRUCE JACKSON’s quartet [Bob Himmelberger-p, Steve Varner-b] too short [28:16] CD, JUST LEFT OF CENTER [Southpaw Productions -spc002]. Everybody has their chance to shine over the 5 tracks which offer a variety of moods. Recorded between 12/8/15 and 1/28/16 this suggests a promotional sampler. More would have been nice, I believe this is Mike Mullan’s first release.

ONWARD [no label 888295 542685] by CHAD LEFKOWITZ-BROWN [ts] is an appropriate name for Lefkowitz-Brown’s first venture as a recorded

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leader. C L-B is a forceful up front player. The 5 originals and 4 standards [54:56] are a bit generic but it goes down nicely. I appreciate C L-B's decisiveness and directness, only on "All Of You" is he less than direct but after he skirts the theme he returns to his fast and forceful playing. C L-B shows a real command of his sax, has plenty of technique, more individualism would complete the package. Joining are Steve Feifke [p], Raviv Markovitz [b], Jimmy MacBride [drm], and for 2 tracks trumpeter Randy Brecker. One might think sax battle from the PAT LABARBERA [ts/ss] - KIRK MAC DONALD quartet [Adam Nussbaum-drm, Kieran Overs] on SILENT VOICES [Jazz Compass Records jc1027] but it is more of a harmonious pairing. The 12 tracks [68:53] by different members of the quartet often offer up a liturgical harmony but there is plenty of swing here as well. Missing is much of a feeling of warmth. This was recorded 7/2&3/16 and I believe after a tour, so perhaps they became too comfortable with each other as well as the music as there is a sense of rote conveyed to these ears from an otherwise fine performance. CHRIS PASIN and friends [Armen Donelian-p; Ira Coleman-b; Jeff Siegel-drm; Patricia Dalton Fennell-voc; Peter Einhorn-gtr; Rich Syracuse-b] in various combinations have put together a CD of Christmas music; BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE [Planet Arts Records 301714]. The 11 tracks [55:17] here are all familiar/traditional songs of the season featuring Pasin's burnished trumpet. Fennell, a new name for me, sings on a couple of tracks, and she has a warm voice with good articulation. Donelian contributes some fine solos. Overall this is warm and pretty straight ahead and it should appeal to traditionalists and jazz fans alike. One of the best seasonal CDs out, and I've heard hundreds.

Guitarist ROBERTO PIANCA and quintet [Dan Kinzelman-ts/clt, Glenn Zaleski-keys, Stefano Senni-b, Luis Candeias-drm] have issued SUB ROSA [Wide Ear Records wer 025]. The music here is wandering and spacious. Pianca's work is mindful of Bill Frisell in its economy of notes and brevity of ideas. There is a randomness of ideas over the 5 Pianca originals [47:12] but they push forward in a logic for the whole. It is the rhythm section that provides continuity.

SNORRE KIRK: DRUMMER & COMPOSER [Stunt Records studc17022] is music that could be classified as modern modern mainstream. As the title indicates Kirk has written the music and it is in a style of mainstream cum swing, and it is quite nice. Often understated it projects a sense of calm. Backed by a sextet [Klas Lindquist-as/clt, Jan Harbeck-ts, Tobias Wiklund-ctn, Magnus Wiklund-tbn, Magnus Hjorth-p, Lasse Morck-b]. If there is one overriding influence here it's Ellington. 9 tracks [40:55] including a prelude and postlude both short and perhaps a bit misleading as neither are indicative of the music in between. That aside, this is a pleasure.

Both the group name and title of the recording, 3 DIVAS is made up of Sherrie Maricle [drm], Jackie Warren [p] and Amy Shook[b] [3dcd-2017]. Recorded 8/1/16 the program is 7 standards [56:50]. This is yet another outgrowth of the Diva Jazz Orchestra of which Maricle is the founder. This is a pleasant enough jazz trio, most interesting is Warren who seems versed in a number of piano styles and approaches to keep things interesting.

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MELTON MUSTAFA [bari] leads The New Vision Sax Ensemble [James Lockhart-as, Jason Hainsworth-ts, Diron Holloway-ss/as/clt] in MUSICAL JOURNEY THROUGH TIME [Zaki Publ Records 888295 583558]. They credit the 29th Street Sax Quartet and World Sax Quartet as heavenly influences and the sax harmonic blend will be a familiar sound to anyone well versed in sax ensembles here and abroad. The NVSE is perhaps more commercial than those cited. The 9 tracks [43:24] are all standards and there is less solo improvisation within this group than their previous mentioned influences. The arrangements are very good and I suspect live shows are a mutually enjoyable affair for group and audience. Tunes include: “A Night In Tunisia”, “Won’t You Come Home Bill Bailey”, “I Feel Pretty” and a Scott Joplin medley and Porgy and Bess selections.

In the July 2016 Papatamus I wrote a bit about the Whammies [Drift Records], a quartet dedicated to the music of Steve Lacy. Here is another group giving a nod to Lacy. UWE OBERG [p] put together LACY POOL_2 around 2006 and they have now issued their second recording [Leo Records cd lr 792], a 3/17/16 recording. 8 of the 9 pieces [48:15] are Lacy compositions played by Oberg, Rudi Mahall [clt] and Michael Griener [drm]. Oberg contributes one original. The difference here is that often the piano takes the Lacy lead lines to shape the music but in a less angular fashion than Lacy. Lacy fans should find this particularly rewarding. Oberg’s liners are very informative.

MJ TERRITO [voc] presents an interesting concept on LADIES DAY [Jollie Mollie hmm 217]. This is an album of 14 compositions by contemporary jazz women. Pianist Linda Presgrave-p, bassist Iris Ornig and drummer Barbara Merjan make up the core trio augmented on a handful of tracks by Andrea Brachfeld [flt], Virginia Mayhew [ts] or Brandee Younger [harp]. I’m not thrilled by Territo’s singing, but she arranged and produced this CD and for that she deserves great credit. A few of these interesting 14 compositions [61:17] are well known, for instance, “In Your Own Sweet Way” (lyrics by Iola Brubeck), “You Gotta Pay The Band” or “I’m Shadowing You”. The majority are less known—if known at all which is a shame as the subjects and lyrics are very interesting. And without getting into a debate on gender politics, one cannot help but think the very reason they are so interesting and refreshing is because they are less known and from a female perspective, viva la différence. Territo has done a fine job of exposing the lyric content clearly and with conviction. This is a CD to seek out for content and concept; an excellent issue.

Producer Larry Klein had the idea of telling the life of Charlie Parker using Bird’s music [50:40] and featuring various vocalists [Madeleine Peyroux, Barbara Hannigan, Gregory Porter, Jeffrey Wright, Luciana Souza, Kurt Elling, Kandace Springs, Melody Gardot, Camille Bertault] to sing a variety of Parker tunes [Ornithology, Yardbird Suite, Moose The Mooche (retitled and with lyrics by David Baerwald) etc]. Back up Musicians include Donny McCaslin [ts], Ben Monder [gtr] and Craig Taborn [keys]. Unfortunately, THE PASSION OF CHARLIE PARKER [Impulse 602557441673] is less than the sum of the parts. Klein has chosen not to use bop for the music in favor of a crowded sound in a sort of spacey fusion setting. Other than touching on

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Parker's life and music I found the whole lacked continuity and while this is not the best work of the singers, as individual tracks there are high points. Jeffrey Wright has an interesting presentation on "So Long" (a retelling of K.C. Blues). Camille Bertault is the singer on "Au Privave" which is (re)titled "Apres Vous" and the lyrics/story are all sung in French which is lost on the listener who doesn't parlez-vous Francais. I wonder why Sheila Jordan does not appear on this as it seems with her background she would be a natural. A very interesting presentation which is more memorable than musically satisfying. Recorded at various dates in 2016.

Singer/song writer LAURA CAMPISI is a Sicilian by birth but now lives in New York. Her debut CD is DOUBLE MIRROR [no label 888295 578769] a 2017 (?) recording with backing from a double trio [Ameen Saleem -b, Gianluca Renzi -e.b, Greg Hutchinson-drm, Flavio Li Vigni-drm] on 13 tunes [50:48] (6 are Campisi originals). Campisi is a dramatic singer coaxing lyrics with whoops and hollers, a bit like Urszula Dudziak. She takes liberties with the music, "Nardis" is almost unrecognizable, but maintains musical interest and integrity. She brings along a series of guests for 6 of the tracks (1 guest apiece on 6 cuts). Guest Zach Brock's violin work is brilliant on "Love For Sale" and Martin Pantyrer's bari is impressive on "Here Where I Stand". A very interesting and notable release which would benefit from a lyric print out. There is a lyric print out with ALLEGRA LEVY's [voc] new CD, CITIES BETWEEN US [SteepleChase scdd 31827]. Recorded in 2016 the 11 tracks here [63:43] are all Levy originals except for "Yesterdays". Levy is a stylist, she has a very light mid-range voice and the band behind her [Kirk Knuffkent, Stephen Riley-ts, Carmen Staaf-p, Jay Anderson-b, Billy Drummond-drm] plays with the lightest of touches. Riley at times just lightly brushes the surface of the music, true also, but to a lesser extent, of the rest of the band. Levy is a gifted lyricist and she writes often light thoughts and observations but from a personal point of view. Vocal fans should seek this out as Levy fills a spot that is fresh and rewarding in the pantheon of vocalists. A carefully produced CD full of rewards.

KELLYE GRAY, who first recorded a vocal album in October 1989, has taken that album [Standards In Gray] and reissued it as part of a 2 CD set called RENDERING [Grr8 Records 0010]. The Rendering [3/15/15] CD also revisits some of the titles on the Standards In Gray album [Morning, How Long Has This Been Going On, Don't Explain, How Insensitive, Good Morning Heartache]. Also included are 3 different covers and 2 fine originals. She also brought into play where possible some of the original musicians [Sebastain Whittaker-drm. Warren Sneed-sax] from the earlier recording. Both dates are excellent and punctuated by Gray's dramatic voicing at times suggestive of Lena Horne, but obviously her own. For example, "Don't Explain" has no trace of Billie Holiday's cynicism and informs the listener of a different attitude and reaction. In comparing now with then—Gray is slightly more dramatic, but not always, and the recording is more natural and forward than the earlier date which also added reverb. The later recording was done live in front of invited friends and with no second takes. Also on the latter date trombonist Andre Hayward is added and it is a welcome addition. Kellye Gray

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was and is an impressive vocalist and it is my hope that a new recording will surface soon. Till then— this 101:36 minutes of pleasure will do nicely. The BLAZING FLAME QUINTET [Peter Evans-vln, Mark Langford-ts/b.clt, Julian Dale-b/cello, Anton Henley-drms] is a free improvising group which frames itself around the vocals of Steve Day [voice/perc] on THE SET LIST SHUFFLE [leo records cd lr 788]. Day's vocals are questionable as vocals more a whiney talk from I believe a predetermined text that often deals with topical or political subjects. Much of the voice audio is lost in the music. The text strikes me a pseudo profound. Day invites one to go to his website to read the lyrics which strikes me as a bit insulting to the CD buyer. Why not print them out or is that too conventional? The instrumentals offer some interest. Storyville Records added a couple of DAHL's to its catalogue specifically CARSTEN DAHL; THE JESTER [Exlibris Records exlcd 30187] and CHRISTINA DAHL; CHILDISH [Storyville 101 4306]. Carsten Dahl is a keyboard master who over the years has tried expanding the keyboards in jazz. For this date [5/26/16] he plays the harpsichord on 13 improvisations [43:37] on a composition he calls "The Jester" [#1-13]. Over the history of jazz, recording the harpsichord has been employed with limited success. This is not one I'd label successful. At times the music has an Asian sound. The instrument as played here is so dense there are moments it takes on the feel of an organ, it doesn't help that Dahl "sings" along in a Jarrett-like manner. Originally meant as a solo piano session, alas. Score one for self indulgence. Christina Dahl plays tenor sax that often goes into the bari or alto ranges. Here she is joined by a quartet [Niclas Knudsen-gtr, Jesper Lundgaard-el b/acc b, Esben Lillienkjold-drm]. Dahl is given to making great yawning declarative statements often followed by free flurries. Knudsen keeps the music moving forward and it often brings to mind some of the progressive rock jams of almost 50 years ago but there is no doubt that the 7 originals [57:36] on this 12/19-20/16 recording have the heart of jazz/improvised music. Carsten Dahl is back on MADS VINDING's STANDARDS [SteeleChase 1014307] a 2/16 live date with Margrete Grarup [voc]. and Niclas Campagnol [drm]. As the title suggests the program [51:55] is made up of [6] standards and a short free intro. Featured here are the up front vocals of Grarup, up front but with a warmth and tenderness. She does a dramatic intro to "Autumn Leaves" and this is fine follow up to her 2015 debut. The Vinding's group moves along without a glitch and the leader takes a happy solo on "Autumn Leaves".

GARTH ALPER [p] has made few recordings, his latest being STRATUS [no label 888295 564656], with Bob Nash[b], Michael Jenner [sax], Chris Munson [drm], Jeff George [gtr]. Alper works out of the University Of Louisiana and I suspect his group is also tied to the UoL as well. Only Bob Nash is a hold over from Alper's earlier recordings and he has a nice solo on Bud Powell's "Celia", which along with "It Could Happen To You" are the only 2 non-originals of the 9 cuts [45:19] here. What strikes me about Alper is not so much his piano work as his compositions which lay down memorably and offer plenty of improvisational space. One of the drawbacks of the abundance of releases, is fine compositions don't get a chance to percolate and

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become known. Even a fine tune like “Celia”, though recorded many times, is still relatively overlooked compositionally. An earlier recording [2013?], DEFLECTION [no label 884501 870139] is just Alper and trio [Bob Nash-b, Troy Breaux-drm] playing only [11] originals [50:17]. The originals here are not as luminesce, though pleasant enough, they don't have the body and depth of those found on Stratus. The hype sheet for this release details the whys-and-where-fors of the compositions and would have made nice liners.

One of the many things I've admired about SteepleChase Records over the decades is that they provide liner notes, that job is now handled by Neil Tesser. Among their latest releases is JOY-RIDING [sccd 31831] by the ANDY FUSCO [as] quintet [Walt Weiskopf-ts, Joel Weiskopf-p, Mike Karn-b, Jason Tiemann-drm]. There is an immediacy to this May 2016 session as the tempos are often almost free floating as both the sax players appear to rush or push the tempos on 4 standards and 5 originals [66:39]. I suppose this could have happened in mastering as it seems across the board. Whatever the reason this is a solid and swinging bop outing and the 2 sax players work very well together. Fusco seems not to have lost any drive from his days with Buddy Rich.

Pianist FRANÇOIS TUSQUES has been flirting with the avant guard since the 1960s and now has produced an ambitious 2 CD set, AVANT-DERNIERS BLUES on Improvising Beings Records [ib60]. This program is 24 blues in B flat and one blues in E flat [103:05]. Most of the blues are dedicated to painters, writers or musicians such as Mondriaan, James Baldwin, Jimmy Yancey, Monk and Billie Holiday etc. The tracks for the most part all run together kind of freely associative, now and then a few seconds of direct reference to the musician of dedication. It seems Tusques is playing 2 pianos, they both may be electric, one is housed for the bass lines. An interesting recording but which got tiresome before the end of a complete listen.

GABE EVENS [p] has issued a thoughtful trio [Lynn Seaton-b, Ed Soph-drm] release in THE WRONG WALTZ [no label 805996 869927]. This album of 10 originals [50:19] which at moments brings Herbie Nichols to mind in that at times there is an analytical feel to the music. Evens is affiliated with the University of Louisville. Academia seems to be a perching position for many a solid jazz artists and a refuge from the rat race all but a few are part of, scrambling as needed to exist. The downside to an academic gig is one's artistry becomes almost invisible. A prime example being Bill Dixon who even though established as a leader, in the post bop developments prior of the late 1960s, once he took a professorship he was almost invisible until the mid 1990s. On this release Evens displays a wide breath of piano technique and even on the more commercial approaches it is not without interest. Seaton and Soph give excellent support. Recorded 10/7/16

Evens' first release was a CDR recorded 6/10-12/97 called CONNECTION [no label, no number] and was recorded in his living room (nothing wrong with that) with John Brown [b] and Bobby Cohen [drm]. Made up of 8 originals and 3 standards [68:43] one of which is Ellington's “Pie Eye's Blues”, a tune Ellington recorded 3 times in 1959 and then seemed to drop it. A pleasant set but missing the sense of gravitas of The Wrong Waltz.

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Also from Evens is MOBIUS [no label 788037-0124-24]. This is a quartet [Ray Codrington-tpt, Don Gladstone-b, Bobby Cohen-drm] date [2000] and again there are 3 standards among the 12 tracks [68:11]. Here there is an assuredness of attack by the pianist. Added appeal for me is the presence of Ray Codrington who I remember from the JFK quintet back in the early 60s. Here he plays on half the tracks, his ideas are rich but his embouchure does not sound strong. As a whole CD this is rather uneven, reaching its nadir on “Freedom Jazz Dance” which just falls apart. It’s unfortunate because when Evens is on—he is very strong. On the other hand the quartets cover of “Smile” is very interesting. Imperfect but not without interest.

Next up for Evens a 2011 recording named STICKY BLUEBERRY FINGERS [no label no number]. This is solo over 13 tracks [49:05] all originals except for “No Moon At All” and “Green Dolphin Street”. Presented here is a far more intricate pianist full of twists and turns and shading and using a variety of musical types suggesting boogie woogie, Chicago blues and stomps, modern deconstructions and a suggestion of some baroque classicalism. I particularly enjoyed the standards as they offered a reference point and context and were most enjoyable. The artist here hardly sounds related to the pianist on Connection.

Evens admits to going for a more commercial appeal on THE COSMIC RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ROARING TIGERS [University Of Malaya 728028 236767]. The 11 tracks [56:41] are all originals and on the funky side. Funky perhaps, but not the commercial trash usually associated with it. Some of this is excellent, wonderfully arranged and with humor—even a sense of Mingus. The sextet performs with verve and dynamism. The players [Patrick Terbrack-as, Erik Hargrove-drm, Marques Young-tbn, Greg Lyons-ts, Christy Smith-b] are, I believe are from the Pacific Northwest and were in the area of Kuala Lumpur where Evens at that time was living. Unusual backbeats and energy of this recording gets tiring and it is best to take this fun with listening breaks. Gabe Evens teams up with AARON HEDENSTROM [ss/as/ts] on THE LIVING ROOM SESSIONS [Shifting Paradigm Records sp-128], a 5/13&14/16 recording. The program of 10 tracks [56:41] is made up of 5 Evens’ originals and 5 by Hedenstrom and played by a quartet [Jack Helsley-b, MattYoung-drm]. Recorded in Evens’ living room, it comes full circle with Connection except as an artist, Evens has traveled many miles since that recording. The understanding, writes Hedenstrom, was to record focusing on feeling and interplay with less emphasis on technical precision, and there are some technical glitches here. Musically, this is fairly conservative, with Hedenstrom’s compositions nice enough. Hedenstrom, whose alto is quite Phil Woods-ish, really takes no chances. Evens comps, slyly at times, but on the Evens composition the writing is less conventional and has a mysterious quality. Hedenstrom’s alto again shines and seems more adventuresome occasionally following a line and only at the last moment extracting himself from its dead end.

Based on these 6 recordings made over a 20 year period, done without the glare of much publicity or critical scrutiny, Evens has allowed himself to be himself and in turn form an individual identity. Play yourself and grow.

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JOHN VANORE [tpt] put together a 16 piece group for **STOLEN MOMENTS**: celebrating the Music of Oliver Nelson [Acoustical Concepts ac-53]. Recorded 6/29&30/16, Vanore's goal was to reimagine music on the 9 tracks [49:24] presented here. Tracks include "Stolen Moments", "Blues And The Abstract Truth" and other compositions associated with Nelson. Many of the arrangements I find pretty close to the originals—good music then, good music now. Soloist are Steve Wilson [as/ss], Bob Mallach [ts], Mike Richmond [b]. Jim Ridl [p], Greg Kettinger [gtr] Dave Ballou [tpt], Danny Gottlieb [drm], Ryan Keberle [tbn] and Vanore. Good spirit and familiar. Ever since Benny Goodman took Bach to town in 1938 jazz artists have with some regularity found the classical repertoire a rich catalogue to investigate. The latest in this vein is **BILL CUNLIFFE**'s **BACH**analia [M Metro Records m1009]. Cunliffe has taken and arranged some Classical themes [Bach, Prokofiev, C.E.P. Bach, Falla], a couple of standards and an original and produced a wonderful and hip CD. Drawing from a pool of over 30 musicians the CD brings together dates from 8/14 through 12/29/16 in one coordinated program. Denise Donatelli's occasional wordless vocals bring to mind the Swingle Singers. Other soloists include Wayne Bergeron, Terell Stafford, Bill Reichenbach, Andy Martin, Brian Scanlon, Jeff Ellwood Adam Schroeder, Larry Koonse and many more.

THE BETTER ANGELS OF OUR NATURE [Truth Revolution Recording Collective Records trr 040] by the **BRIAN MCCARTHY** [as/ss] Nonet [Bill Mobley-tpt/flg, Daniel Smith-ts/ss, Stantawn Kendrick-ts, Cameron Macmanus-tbn, Andrew Gutauskas-bari, Matt Aronoff--b, Justin Kauflin-p, Zack Harmon-drm]. This is a hell of a production [70:13] in arrangements, writing and execution. This is a collection of Civil War songs [Battle Hymn Of The Republic, The Bonnie Blue Flag, Battle Cry of Freedom, Weeping, Sad And Lonely, I Wish I Was In Dixie's Land, Oh Freedom, All Quiet Along The Potomac To-Night] plus the title track by McCarthy. The title track is McCarthy's reimagining of Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural in music and is divided in three parts and like all the music on this CD it is voiced perfectly between ensemble, arrangement and soloists. "Dixie" opens as a dirge for half and then slips up tempo for the second half. A16-page liner booklet offers insights to the music. 19th century music with 21st century insights. Very nice. **MICA BETHEA** shows a Maynard Ferguson influence on "Hang Up Your Hang Ups" the opening track on **STAGE 'N STUDIO** [no label 888295 563925]. The Maynard influence is less pronounced elsewhere on this 2 CD set. The catch here is the CDs features the big band in 2 different settings: studio [57:12] and stage [64:10]. Both settings offer a mixture of Bethea originals and standards with six of the same tunes appearing on each CD. There is a similar line up of personnel on both sets and I spent a lot of time comparing tunes and soloists and I couldn't find an edge up for one location over the other. The fact is comparing became tedious with music turning to monster. I took a break and came back for a fresh listen with no self imposed assignment. Nice music—heavy on rhythm and harmonization, both sets where recorded at the University of North Florida and it has the feel of a university stage band. This is an excellent display of Bethea's writing and

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arranging talents.

As excellent as Studio 'N Stage is I found MICA BETHEA's first release [2/27/11], THE MICA BETHEA BIG BAND [no label 884501 615334] to be more fun. Fun because besides a CD (mix of 9 standards and originals) [62:20] there is also a DVD of the program. The DVD is nicely framed with tune titles and credits as well as soloist's name. Linda Cole, a highly emotive singer, is featured on "Angel Eyes" and "How High The Moon". While there are a number of fine soloists, the main soloist is tenor saxophonist John Ricci and he is a strong player. The DVD also has testimonials from friends and relatives present at the concert. Of course this is a case of friends of the court bearing witness but it is easy to get caught up in the enthusiasm as this is a talented fellow and a most enjoyable program. One cannot help ponder where he goes after leaving the cloistered walls of academia. A first rate production.

REDISCOVERED ELLINGTON [Zoho Records zm 201707] presents rare and mostly unheard Ellington works. Arranger RICH DEROSA leads the WDR Big Band with GARRY DIAL [p/arr] and DICK OATTS [ss/aa/ft/arr] on the 9 tracks [77:36]. Tunes that are indeed rare, some as far as I can tell have never been recorded and I will take the words in the 10-page liners that they are indeed Ellington compositions, though I think it is possible that "Love Came" is a Strayhorn work. Ellington fans, besides good big band music, will find much of interest here both to hear and study. There is no attempt to sound Ellington-ish, and although some references slip in, I doubt any one would recognize this as Ellington prior to knowing that connection but once knowing certainly one could hear connections in hindsight. It is interesting to imagine how Ellington and his band might play these tune. It is fortunate here no one tries to sound like Ellington et al. The liners give background info on the tunes. Well done and respectful.

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE [b] and his very credible big band have another outing on BRINGIN' IT [Mack Avenue mac1115]. This is a bright and lively band playing some originals and standards over 11 tracks [69:01] including "Sahara" and "Mr. Bojangles". Melissa Walker sings on 2 tracks and is a good contrast to the brightness that distinguishes this band. An under-recorded singer if ever there was one. The band is loaded with solid soloists including Freddie Hendrix, Ron Blake, Rodney Jones, Steve Wilson, Michael Dease to name a few. Although a less distinguished sound, this is a (Pop)ular band in the same manner that the Basie band was for the last 30 years he led it.

GEORGE FREEMAN [gtr] has been recording for 70 years and just issued 90 GOING ON AMAZING [Blujazz Records bj3445]. Title suggestion aside, this recording was made in the spring of 2005 when Freeman would have been 78. This is an unpretentious date and one might even guess it is the date of pianist Vince Willis, as he probably has near as much featured space as Freeman. The 11 tracks [63:49] here are a mixture of a few standards and originals and cover funky blues and relaxed swing. On "Bruz, George, Chico & Von", Willis sings—not a good idea. A pleasant recording with no distinguishing hallmarks. Completing the quartet are Jack Zara [b] and Kevin Patrick [drm].

BRIAN LANDRUS [bari/b. clt] is a big man with big vision, big ambitions

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and big accomplishments. His crowning achievement up this point is GENERATIONS [BlueLand Records blr 2017], a workout for his 25 piece orchestra the jewel of which is a 5 part work call “Jeru Concerto”. Recorded 1/475/17 all 12 tracks [59:27] are Landrus’ originals. Landrus writes candidly about each of the compositions regarding meaning and his reason for writing. The music moves nicely forward. The orchestrations rely on repeating riffs but hold one’s interest until conclusion. Soloists on the CD are Joe Locke [vbs], Igmarr Thomas [tpt], Mark Feldman [vln], Jamie Baum [flt], Tom Christensen [flt], Ralph Alessi [tpt] and of course Landrus. Co-produced by Landrus and Frank Carlberg this is writing that could and should be used as a template for student orchestras. Landrus has proven once more that he is an artist for any time, now how does he top this for next time?

RUNE KLAKEGG [p] leads the Scheen Jazzorkester and they have put together a fine CD called FJON [Losen Records los 153-2]. The orchestra consists of some 15 participants. If you’re wondering about the title the liners suggest it could mean light snow flurries, leaving non-sequiturs behind this is a beautifully crafted piece of music. The 6 originals and “Moon River” [53:54] play through like a suite. If you enjoy writing and seamless arranging this will more than please. Throw in the almost dozen solos that are woven into the arrangements and you have 50 plus minutes that flies by quickly. Klakegg has been part of the Norwegian scene since the 1970s and been a member of a number of groups but he has never lead a large group to my knowledge. “Moon River” is sung by Nina Gromstad and emerges from an arrangement that wonderfully integrates it into the tapestry that Klakegg has furnished: very cool. There is much going on here on many levels on the entire CD. If you appreciate fine arrangements then search out this recording, it will inspire you. Echoes of Thornhill and Evans.

BIG MAN ON CAMPUS [Flying House records fhr 050117cd] is the title of the Flying Horse Big Band, directed by JEFF RUPERT [ts]. This 5/12&13/16 recording features Harry Allen on tenor sax and he is the most featured of the soloists. Of the 12 compositions [66:33] 2 are Rupert originals and 6 are Allen originals. The Flying Horse label is part of the University of Central Florida but this band doesn’t have the whiz-bang ambience pretty common to University bands. Perhaps to accommodate Harry Allen the program is soft-ish but no less professional and no less enjoyable.

EE-YA-GI [Mama Records maa1053] is the title of HYESEON HONG’s [p] release of her jazz orchestra recording. The 7 originals here [51:02] present music that has traces of tradition Korean music (Eastern elements), some free playing within the written structure and in some instances music built off almost child-like melodies. The jazz orchestra features Rich Perry [ts] and Ingrid Jensen [tpt] other soloists are; Ron Wilkens [tbn], Ben Kono [as], Matt Panayides [gtr], Matt Vashlishan [ewi], Jeremy Powell [ts], Broc Hempen [p] and Andrew Hadro [bari]. Hong has produced a CD that overall is fresh, features some exceptional compositions and sounds like no other jazz orchestra that comes to mind. Recorded 3/14&15/16.

ALAN BROADBENT [p], Harvie S [b], Peter Erskine [drm] and the London Metropolitan Orchestra are all aboard on DEVELOPING STORY [Eden River Records err-cd-02]. The title piece is Broadbent’s opus in 3 movements, which

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the composer writes quite clearly about as part of the 16-liner booklet. There is little jazz content on this or the rest [If You Could See Me Now, Naima, Blue In Green, Lady In The Lake, Milestones, Children Of Lima] of the disc [65:32]. Little jazz content but wonderful orchestrations.

ALAN BROADBENT's collaboration with singer lyricist GEORGIA MANCIO on *SONGBOOK* [Roomspin Records 1923] is exquisite, a word I use carefully. Mancio is a soft singer and at times brings to mind Blossom Dearie but not as soft. Not all the 12 tracks [56:50] here are discernibly jazz but they are a pleasure. All the music is written by Broadbent, all the lyrics by Mancio and it is a perfect pairing and one from which standards grow, surely Dearie would have attached herself to them. Here is a combination which begs a second round of new standards. Mancio's articulation is perfect (a lyric printout is included in the 20-page liner booklet) and Broadbent dips and waves in knowing perfection with the singer. This is the sixth release for Mancio on Roomspin Records. Her first release is out of print. Her second [2006/7], *TRAPEZE* [Roomspin Records 46] has no originals but includes standards and tunes by Tadd Dameron, Stanley Turrentine, David Bowie and Tommy Turrentine. Backed by a small group [Gareth Lockrane-flt, John Pearce-p, Dave Green-b, Dave Ohm-drm, Anselmo Netto-perc] this recording is more overtly jazz and has its pleasures but not the unity and consistency of Songbook. Next up is *SILHOUETTE* [Roomspin 2412] recorded 2009/10, it is a variety of players on various tracks including previous bandmates Ohm, Pearce, Lockrane, plus addition players Julie Walkington [b], Tim Laphorn [p], Gregor Riddell [cello], Dave Colton [gtr] and on two tracks Ian Shaw [voc]. Here Mancio adds lyrics to 8 of the 11 tracks [55:06]. Four of the tunes are by Laphorn—the rest By Pat Metheny, Tom Waits, Antonio Jobim, Kate Williams and Comden and Green. At one point on this record Mancio sounds remarkably like Anita O'day. The backing is fine as is the singing but as with Songbook the lyrics add mystery and luster to this date. A nice addition on 2 tracks is vocalist Ian Shaw, one of the best performers around and still relatively unknown on this side of the Atlantic. *COME RAIN OR COME SHINE* [Roomspin 41] is a trio session with NIGEL PRICE [gtr] and Julie Walkington [b]. The 10 standards [47:40] here offer an intimate setting and Mancio sings appropriately. Recorded "live" in studio [2012/13]. Mancio as is her fashion keeps her voice soft and low-key even on tunes that are often handled with gusto or shouted. Again, I detect some Anita O'day characteristics particularly in her scattng. There are no original lyrics on this program, not unusual on a program of standards, still I wonder if she did not yet have great confidence in her talent as lyricist. Of course I'm coming at this from hindsight, spoiled by the pleasures of Songbook. Then again she may not have built up the repertoire in 2013 as she would with Broadbent.

ReVoice is a festival founded by Mancio in 2010 to present established and emerging musical talents. Some of those performances are presented on *LIVE AT REVOICE!* [Roomspin Records 1942]. There are 12 tunes [60:37] and each track presents Mancio in duet with various performers such as Liane Carroll, Nikki Iles, James Pearson, Ian Shaw etc., playing various instruments from piano, bass, guitar and even accordion. "Sugar" which is also on

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Trapeze, is reprised here and taken in a very different direction, and nicely so. These recordings date from 10/16/12-10/16/14 and include 2 Mancio originals, which not surprisingly are highlights. This brings me back to Mancio's latest, Songbook, the capper of a recording career which only started in 2004. What treasures lie ahead?

DOUYÉ is the only name this singer goes by, other singers now known by their first name, Ella, Aretha, Carmen etc. got to be known by their first name after they established their talent. Perhaps Douyé is trying to sidestep that stage. So far she has professional work in R&B and now at her late father's urging she has decided to be a jazz singer. Not the first time tired pop/rock singers have tried to legitimize their artistic standing by putting out 1 or 2 CDs of commercial jazz(ish) or big band music. Credits on DADDY SAID SO [Good Note Records gn3865-2] is her first "jazz" record and credits on the CD include wardrobe, makeup, and hair... yeah right. If you detect some skepticism on my part you'd be correct. First, I perused the 20-page liner booklet, each page adorned by a picture of Douyé in a different fashion statement along with personnel on one of the 14 jazz standards. Back up comes from a pool that includes Ron Carter, Kenny Barron, Russell Malone, Kim Richmond (or Ron, Kenny, Russell and Kim if you prefer) and many others. And so what about the music you ask? Surprise, Surprise this is not a bad recording, She sings in a subdued voice rarely showing much range but her style works well with the material which includes; "But Beautiful", "Lush life", "Mood Indigo", "In A Sentimental Mood", "Sophisticated Lady", and others. I had diminished expectations for this, but it is not without its pleasures. Will we ever hear from her again?

JOHN DOKES has been singing with the George Gee band since the 1990s. On FOREVER REASONS [Rondette Records rj1018] he steps out on his own, singing 9 standards and 1 original [41:03] to little effect. Dokes plays little range and resonance so instead I'll accent the positive—the band. Dokes has a small contingent backing him and prominent among them is trombonist David Gibson. Gibson's fills and solos are strong and hard to ignore, he also provides some of the arrangements on the program. Others present are Steve Einerson [p], Alex Claffy [b] and Lawrence Leathers [drm]. No producer is credited.

Over the decades, FRED HERSCH has made hundreds of beautiful recordings. He made his first recording as a member of a group conducted by Ran Blake's group in 1975. Hersch's latest is {OPEN BOOK} [Palmetto Records pm 2186], a solo recording from 11/1/16 and 4/1-3/17. Hersch writes in his liners that when at the piano an attitude of see what happens with no safety net is an effective way to approach improvisation. This program [56:47] of 3 originals and 4 standards illuminates a harder and more expansive pianist. Ironically, I find his playing closer to the drama and abstractness of Ran Blake than Bill Evans who he is often compared to. Hersch fans take note and enjoy. Fans of the theatre should find especially interesting a recording from 1980 of a Backers' Audition of BARNUM [Harbinger Records had 3301]. This is presented by CY COLEMAN [p/music] and MICHAEL STEWART [lyricist] in an informal living room setting. In a 12 minute ad-lib introduction Stewart

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runs through what a Backers' Audition is and why their audition is not technically a Backers' audition. There are 15 tunes [56:59] including some that didn't make the final production. Even though going back to the early 50s, Coleman had/has a solid background in jazz, the jazz content is nil. The entertainment, however, is high and in fact, I enjoyed it more than I ever enjoyed the formal production of Barnum. The insight provided during the conversational intros on the disc as well as the 14-page liner booklet gives more details on the production and the difficulties that come with a production on this scale. An excellent issue which should be of interest to theater aficionados.

Aficionados of Maurice Ravel who don't mind a bit of overt jazz thrown in the mix should find interest in VEIN PLAYS RAVEL [Double Moon Records dmchr 71179]. Vein is (and has been for over 10 years) the trio of Michael Arbenz [p], Thomas Lähns [b] and Florian Arbenz [drm] and the music lends itself to jazz and is often quite beautiful. Now I anticipate readers wondering... Yes, "Bolero" is one of the 8 tracks [58:04]. "Bolero" and "Mouvement de Menuet" have added horns, the most featured is Andy Sheppard [ts/ss]. "Bolero" has an undeniably attractive melody line but here suffers the same laboring effect that I find the traditional adaption does. As with the original, stick around for the climatic fanfares and you will be sold, ready to hear it again.

Since at least the 1960s jazz artists have used bible text or original text to sing the praises of supernatural beings. To date the most successful remains Ellington's Sacred Concerts from the 1970s. In that regard, SUITE JUBILATION [JSQ Records jsq-006] by JOHNNY SUMMERS [tpt/voc] presents a particular joy similar to the joy projected in Ellington's Sacred Concerts. Recorded between May 2016 and March 2017 the Suite is in 11 sections/tunes plus a 15 second blank track to separate a hidden/uncredited track; "His Eye Is On The Sparrow". The Suite itself is punctuated by a number of solos including those by guests trombonist Vincent Gardner and vocalist Dee Daniels. The main unit is made up of a 19-piece jazz orchestra and a 33-voice choir and the music covers a wide genre of jazz styles. It is all very impressive and if you have enjoyed the Ellington works you will enjoy this as well, it is that good. You owe it to yourself to find this, no matter your religious leanings or non-leanings. Based on the work here, Johnny Summers appears to be a huge talent whether playing trumpet or composing.

The SAN FRANCISCO STRING TRIO [Mads Tolling-vln, Mimi Fox-gtrs, Jeff Denson-b/voc] has produced MAY I INTRODUCE TO YOU [Ridgeway Records rrcd 006] celebrating the 50th anniversary of the release of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band recording. This is not some commercial run through of familiar music. The 12 tracks [61:59] are arranged by different members of the trio and is done so in a manner that offers a fresh look at the material. They opens with a very engaging version of "When I'm 64". Tolling is the most prominent voice, he has a light feathery touch that fits this hearty but good natured music. Fox digs in and out with some fine acoustic guitar solos and she and Denson stay busy supporting; there really is nowhere to hide in this trio and nothing to hide from. There are 3 vocal tracks—an

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acquired taste. Recorded 9/18&19/16 and 1/11/17 this would be a good CD to introduce to folks who are neither jazz nor Beatles fans.

IM HELLEN [Hat [Now]Art Records 201] presents the string trio of HARALD KIMMIG [vln], ALFRED ZIMMERLIN [cello] and DANIEL STUDER [b]. This is a free improvising trio out of the “Derek Bailey tradition” which means silence and pointillism are factors in the 9 improvs [45:28] presented on the 7/11&12/15 recording. It is not all bits and pieces and suspended sound as there are times of long form improvisation and it is those instances that I find most satisfying as these 3 instruments, in particular, can pitch themselves well at each other. Interesting liners by Andy Hamilton dealing with the philosophy of perfection or imperfection of art.

Guitarists RICHARD SMITH and FRANCESCO BUZZURRO have been playing duos together since about 2005 and now have it refined to a relaxed interplay. They have recently issued 2 recordings of their work together: HEART OF THE EMIGRANTS [no label no number] and ONE WORLD, TWO GUITARS [no label no number]. Judging by the lack of matrix or labels these may have been manufactured only for bandstand sales; they are touring California in September. These recordings are not jazz and have an affinity with some of Joe Pass’ late work. Both releases have 10 tracks. Emigrants is a bit more easy listening while One World is closer to jazz as it covers compositions by Corea, Wonder, Metheny, Hancock, and Zawinul. There is improvising on both CDs but who is soloing when and on which tunes is not indicated. Guitar magic over jazz magic.

Bassist /composer BRUCE GERTZ has a new release out on OpenMindJazz Records [010]. BLUE CUBE is an undated set with Jerry Bergonzi [sax], Tim Ray [p] and George Schuller [drm] playing a program [59:32] of mostly Gertz originals. Of the 8 tunes only the title tune is by Bergonzi. On the basis of this recording it is interesting to compare compositional styles. Bergonzi has written a fine melodic tune in “Blue Cube”. Gertz’ compositions are less traditional but more open to encourage risk and adventure with tempo changes and jumps in the line. This is a top quartet and Bergonzi’s slightly sour sax is in very good voice. This is as good in the genre as anything issued being issued by the major labels.

REISSUES AND HISTORICAL ISSUES

It is hard to believe it has been 50 years since LESTER BOWIE’s NUMBERS 1&2 [Nessa Records ncd-1] was recorded [8/11&25/67]. This anniversary edition reissues what was originally issued, without any of the outtakes from the sessions (assuming there were outtakes). A member of the AEC, Bowie played an important role early on in advancing Improvising music in the Chicago scene, I find this particular reissue offers historical importance more so than artistic brilliance. Joining Bowie are the often original cast of characters [Roscoe Mitchell -reeds, Joseph Jarman -reeds, Malachi Favors-b] all of whom make use of little noise makers along with various shouts and mutters. There is some fine music here but there are also sections that are sophomoric and silly. Ya pays yer money and takes your chances.

A TRIBUTE TO BIX BEIDERBECKE [Act Records 9826-2] is a 2 CD

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set. One cd presents 10 familiar well worn vintage recordings [30:19] from the 1920s featuring Bix and His Gang or with Frank Trumbauer or the Jean Goldkette bands. Beiderbecke did not live very long [1903-1931] and unfortunately he died before his genius could be fully exploited through recording and because of his recording with commercial bands there are hundreds of cases of it sounds like bix but we don't know for certain, leading us to speculate, when personnel was not carefully recorded, if it is Bix. Bix is next in line to Buddy Bolden on the scale of legend. Bolden, Bix, Denard, Bird, Dolphy are just some of the folks of jazz legend. The 10 reissues all have very clean transfers and ends with "In A Mist", a Bix composition he recorded solo on piano. Since 1927 this tune has been recorded over 100 times right up to the present and has become of a touch stone in the same way "Giant Steps" is to saxophonists. The other CD in this set is a tribute to Bix by ECHOES OF SPRING [Bernard Lhotzky-p, Chris Hopkins-as, Colin Dawson-tpt/cor, Oliver Mewes-drm] a group that's been around since the late 90s. On this recording [8/1-3/16] the band is augmented on many of the titles by others guest performers. Many of the compositions of the 14 titles can also be found on the reissue disc but there is very little similarity in this groups mainstamers to the traditional sides. Any complete jazz collection must have some Bix in it. 2 CDs both very wonderful listening.

WILD BILL DAVISON [1906-90] was also a legendary trumpeter and the subject of many tales involving his carrying on with booze, cigarettes, women and also noted for his range of emotions. When he died in 1990 trad/dixieland lost a shining light. THE DANISH SESSIONS, 1973-1978 [Storyville 1088621] contains music from the Storyville catalogue recorded between 1973 and 1978 issued here on 4 CDs. The title is a bit misleading as it includes sides from the 50s and 60s as well. I started to do a discographical search on this material and gave up trying to figure what was re-issued and what may have not been previously issued. Although, I do believe all the material has been previously issued. The 56 tracks here are not inclusive of all Davison's recordings on Storyville. Davison was a remarkably consistent artist over the decades as these recordings show, and the only thin dated here is the audio which runs from slightly muddy on the 1950 sides to wonderfully clear on the later sides. The earlier material comes from air checks with the Condon mob. Enclosed in the box is a 24-page booklet with tales of Davison and discographical info. The fifth disc in this collection is a DVD of a Goodyear show from late 1961 with Condon, Wild Bill, Hucko, Cutshall, Drootin and Joe Williams (the bassist not the singer). Intros are given by Condon in front of a very formal looking band—all in white tuxedos. My only complaint is Storyville could have easily put over an hour more music on this, as with the exception of disc one which is 74:34 all the other discs are 50 minutes or less. The liner booklet has a very enjoyable essay on Davison by Henrik Wolsgaard-Iversen. Good look at Davidson with vintage Condon, the 1970s and with Davison with strings.

Serving as an umbrella label, Jazzology continues with its very credible reissue program with DANNY STILES 5: IN TANDEM [Progressive Records pcd 7175]. This was Stiles' first led recording after many years as a solid

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utility player. This date [6/18&19/74], the first of 3 for Harry Lims' Famous Door label was with a whiz-bang quintet [Milt Hinton-b, Bobby Rosengarden-drm, Derek Smith-p, Bill Watrous-tbn]. The rules seem to have been "play hard and fast" as you might expect alongside Watrous, his current employer. There are the original 6 tracks plus 3 alternates [53:13]. Stiles on trumpet and flugel horn, holds his own though at times it is more technique than subtlety. This recording and 2 others for Famous Door were the only 3 sessions he led before committing suicide in 1998. It's a jazz life.

Also from Jazzology comes GEORGE LEWIS AND HIS NEW ORLEANS STOMPERS 1943 [American Music Records amcd-100/101]. This is magnificent music. Recorded by Bill Russell in N.O. 5/16/43 this and Buck Johnson's rediscovery and recording a year earlier helped ignite the trad uprising that hit jazz fans and which indirectly helped lead to greater interest in Chicago and New York jazz. Joining Lewis on the 25 tracks [98:24] here are Lawrence Marrero [bjo], Kid Howard [tpt], Chester Zardis [b], Edgar Mosley [drm] and Lewis' long time partner Jim Robinson [tbn]. This is seminal jazz and if you don't have the Mosaic set or some other reissues then get this and add an essential to a well rounded jazz collection. I often think of these recordings as pre-jazz, as we have been accustomed to think about it in recorded history as 1917 with the ODJB and what follows. Lewis went on to make hundreds of recordings and toured the world several times while influencing other New Orleans "primitive" clarinetists. The 12-page accompanying booklet includes illuminating notes by Bill Russell in a letter and diary entries. The transfers are offered in fine sound and complete a reissue of great importance.

BGO Records has reissued 3 of BOBBY HUTCHERSON's recordings [bgocd 1290]. These recordings: Highway One [May/June 1978], Conception [3/15&16/79], Un Poco Loco [1979] were made for Columbia between Hutchinson's contracts with Blue Note Records. This is another side of the great vibes player; commercial. The first 2 issues one might suspect executive producer George Butler's hand in it as he seems never to have found a solid artist he could not water down. The enclosed 24-page booklet had excellent recap of Hutchinson's life by Charles Waring who writes as friend of the court but is fair. These recordings have had very limited reissue and I suspect this may be the only time these sides get reissued.

Avid has issued LAVERN BAKER: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [amsc 1258] made up of reissues of Atlantic recordings [LaVern-10/9/56, LaVern Baker-12/21/55-10/19/56, Sings Bessie Smith-1/58, Blues Ballads-1959]. Baker's herky jerky vocals were an important part of Atlantic's long play move into R&B, along with artists like Ray Charles and Clyde Mcphatter. LaVern's delivery was not a subtle and her jumpy singing style was distinct as was Sam the Man Taylor's honking sax breaks. Among the then studio players were Teddy Charles, George Barnes, Panama Francis, Budd Johnson, Dick Hyman, etc. On the Bessie Smith sides she is backed by many of the Basie band who more than once made themselves available to the Atlantic studios. The Bessie Smith date is of most interest for Jazz content and Baker is better equipped for a Bessie Smith tribute than some later attempts by others.

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DAKOTA STATON: FIVE CLASSIC ALBUMS [Avid Records asmc 1259] reissues 5 of the first 7 of Staton's Capitol recordings [Late Late Show-1957, Dynamic-1958, More Than The Most-1959, Crazy He Calls Me-1954/58, Time To Swing-1959]. Staton hit it big for Capitol with Late, Late Show and it build a following that kept her with Capitol until the early 60s. A stylist with a coy voice she was a credible jazz vocalist. I can't help wonder had she been signed by a more hard core jazz label she might have become one of the jazz vocalists. That aside, these are very nice sides with Dynamic being particularly solid with the feature of Sweets Edison and an unknown jazz group under the leadership of Sid Feller. One of the problems with Capitol here, and elsewhere on the label, tracks are often under 2 minutes. On Time To Swing, Staton is backed by a band that affords Phil Woods some distinctive solos. Lest one thinks I'm a fool for Stanton on Crazy He Calls Me she does one of the worst versions of "How High The Moon" that comes to mind.

HORACE SILVER: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [Avid Records amsc 1260] presents 4 of the better Blue Note recordings [6 Pieces Of Silver-11/10/56, Further Explorations-1/13/58, The Stylings Of Silver-5/8/57, Finger Poppin' -1/31/59]. The best Silver recording was Quintet Vol. 1 originally on Blue Note LP [1518]. As with many recordings from the Blue Note catalogue, Silver's sides have been reissued in many forms. It's great music no matter what reissued format.

Less well known but a contemporary of Silver is **ELMO HOPE** [1923-67]. **FIVE CLASSIC ALBUMS** [Avid Records amsc1256] offers a nice and not always easy to find sampling of this bop pianist. One can hear the influence of Bud Powell but he doesn't have the piano runs of Powell and his writing is closer to Monk. These 5 reissues bring together; New Faces-6/18/53, Quintet-5/9/54, Informal Jazz-5/7/56 and Here's Hope and High Hope both from 12/12/61. If you're missing Hope in your collection—this is a good item to study. The 5/7/56 date is particularly strong with classic spots for John Coltrane, Hank Mobley and Don Byrd and for a couple of Hope compositions [Weeja, On It]. There are over 2 dozen Hope originals on this set, one, "Carving The Rock", is co-credited with Sonny Rollins, though never recorded by Rollins. The 5/9/54 quintet sides have on them a trumpeter named Freeman Lee, a new name to me and according to The Lord Discography, he only made a handful of sessions in the 50s. His playing on this date is limited and unimpressive. There is however much to enjoy on this set of Hope.

During his long life, Pianist **HANK JONES** made over 100 leadership dates, a large percentage made in Japan. **FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** [Avid Records amsc 1253] brings together Urbanity [9/53 & 10/47], The Trio [8/4/55], The Trio With Guests [1955/56], Plus the Flute of Bobby Jaspar [8/21/56]. This material has had numerous reissues before but still there is interest here. The 1947 material, Jones' first studio date, shows a pianist greatly influenced by Art Tatum which is what attracted Norman Granz to put him on Clef Records. The four 1953 quartet sides have guitarist Johnny Smith which is always a treat. The remainder of this set is material recorded for Savoy. Polite jazz.

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VINYL

I suspect there are more recordings featuring TUBBY HAYES that have been issued after his death [1935-73] than before. I'm sure today he is greatly more appreciated than when he was alive. For all that we are the beneficiary. Proof positive is MODES AND BLUES [Gearbox Records rsgb 1013]. This was recorded 2/8/64 at Ronnie Scott's where Hayes had a weekly residency for over 2 years and from where much of Hayes' live recordings come. Joining him is his regular quintet [Jimmy Deuchar-tpt, Terry Shannon-p, Freddy Logan-b, Allan Ganley] and like Hayes they are in great shape as they plow through the record long title piece [Part 1 & 2][33:24], plus a few seconds of their theme and announcements. Hayes leads it off after a brief flute intro, jumping into a robust and extended tenor solo. His playing is muscular, just skirting the modal and touching on "Impressions". Side 2 picks up a fine Deuchar solo, maintaining the spirit and heat handed off by Hayes. One can feel the adrenalin and excitement from the quintet. This was an exciting moment which at the end, according to the recording engineer, Les Tompkins, Hayes asked did you get all that? A telling remark musicians often make when they feel magic has happened. It did.

OMDREJNINGER [ILK Records ilk 267lp] is a 2 record set [62:05] of CHRISTIAN SKJØDT's sound engineering and MARK SOLBORG's guitar. Joining for most of the recording is Axel Dörner [tpt], Ingar Zach [perc], Jakob Kullberg [cello], Michael Rexen [voice] and Bjorn Heebøll [drm]. This sound engineering could be described as 3D for the ears and might best be appreciated with head phones and visual motion Rorschach tests. Each record contains a performance of Omdrejninger. Sides A&B are the most intense and playful, C&D have more discernible vocals/voice. It would be interesting had one LP been issued prior to electronic processing and the other LP issued after. If issued that way one could better appreciate the processing role. LP A&B was recorded 7/7/15, sides C&D were recorded 11/1/14, both performances were recorded live. A CD of this is also available (# 5706274 0008449).

HELLO MR. SCHIMMEL [Gearbox Records gb1538] documents a few minutes in SUN RA's life. The title comes from a short [4:53] piece Ra played on a Schimmel piano while visiting interviewer Jez Nelson's radio show in England on June 7th, 1990. This is a 7 inch 33 1/3 LP. Side 1 is "The Schimmel Impromptu" with all the Ra in-between notes and harmonies. On side 2 there is a 12:09 minute interview between Sun Ra and Jez Nelson. It is par for the course of Ra's cosmic reasoning and double talk. When referred by Nelson as a "man", Ra corrects him and says he is an angel and does not want to be associated with man. Angel, perhaps, but I've known him to be violent. Sense and non-sense.

THE REVEREND EDDIE BONES [Gearbox Records gb 1536] is a 7 inch 45 rpm of music from COOPER-MOORE [AKA Gene Ashton] and ED PETERSEN [gtr]. Side A is "Ain't No Grave" [4:55] and has the quality of a field recording of a spiritual. Side B is "On Easter Morn He Rose" [3:23] and also has a spiritual quality about it. Both compositions are credited to Cooper-Moore and Petersen. Others aboard this undated recording are Jerry Navarro [b], Freddy Holm [lap steel], Kira Small and Marcia Ware [background vocals] and Chris Bridges [effects].

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BOOKS

Editions Lenka Lente of France has published 2 rather fascinating books: THELONIOUS MONK AB C-BOOK compiled by JACQUES PONZIO [124 pp inc. photos unpriced 9791094 601143] and LISTENING [172 pp with photos unpriced 9791094 601051]. Both of these books are soft cover and I believe have limited print runs so if interested contact your good dealer ASAP. The Monk book is a series of remarks not necessarily by Monk or about Monk. Subjects are arranged alphabetically from “activism” to “wrong notes” and is bi-lingual, with English on one side and French on the facing page. To the left of the each set of text are initials of the person credited with the remark, un-initialed remarks are attributed to Monk. For instance: SL “just because you’re not a drummer, doesn’t mean you don’t have to keep time”. The SL is for Steve Lacy. There is a lot of truth and humor in the kind of short hand speech practiced by many musicians. The photographs are not all familiar to me and a photo of 2 pages from Steve Lacy’s notebook is quite interesting. The book is also indexed as is Listening.

Listening is a diary account by URS LEIMGRUBER, JACQUES DEMIERRE and BARRE PHILLIPS of a tour that took place from 3/7/15 to 12/11/15 around Europe and the USA. The text is in the language of each artist and I neither read French or Swiss, leaving me only able to understand Barre Phillips’ entries. Unfortunately Phillips’ touring was halted 2 thirds of the way as he suffered a heart attack, so a number of entries deal with his recuperation. It is interesting how Phillips deals with his health and how he relates the uninspiring and unglamorous world of traveling, food and accommodations. A world made tolerable in exchange for those music released endorphins. I only wish I was trilingual as it would be interesting to read any views on traveling in Europe compared to the USA. A valuable piece of documentation.

Robert D. Rusch
edited by Kara D. Rusch

Book Look

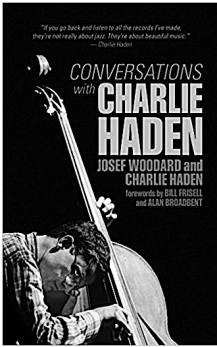
THE
ORIGINAL
BLUES: THE
EMERGENCE
OF THE
BLUES IN
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
VAUDEVILLE
BY LYNN
ABBOTT AND
DOUG SEROFF
UNIVERSITY
OF MISSISSIPPI
PRESS



This is the final volume in the trilogy (Out Of Sight: The Rise of African American Popular Music and Ragged But Right: Black Traveling Shows, "Coon Songs" and the Dark Pathway to Blues and Jazz) in Black Popular Entertainment up to the mid-twenties. Scholars Abbott and Seroff have done extensive and meticulous research as presented in the seventy pages of notes followed by four pages of bibliography, an eighteen page General Index and short Song and Theater indexes. Like their previous writings, the authors lay out a wealth of cleanly scripted information in five chapters and two interludes. The only former knowledge this reader held is covered in Chapter Four: The Rise of the Blues Queens; Female Blues Pioneers in Southern Vaudeville but was enlightened by names like the more obscure Virginia Liston, Laura Smith, Ora Criswell and Estelle Harris. Readers wanting further coverage in this area are directed to the article "Investigating The Death Of Bessie Smith" in issue #250 of Living Blues magazine. It would be redundant to heap more praise on this treasure trove than it has already warranted. Those seeking to broaden their Black Music spectrum need look no further.

Larry Hollis

Book Look



AUTHOR: JOSEF WOODARD AND CHARLIE HADEN
TITLE: CONVERSATIONS WITH CHARLIE HADEN
PUBLISHER: SILMAN-JAMES PRESS

This writer only got to hear and meet master bassist Charlie Haden several years ago when he appeared at a local venue with Old & New Dreams. I had just popped a Roswell Rudd album on the turntable platter of the in-house sound system when he approached and asked “Is that Ros?” When I answered in the affirmative we began a short intermission talk and I found him to be as natural and down home as I had already heard through the grapevine.

Still on a personal note, my introduction to the oral history format came during junior high school after reading the late Nat Hentoff’s “Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya” but it was probably around way before that time. *Conversations With Charlie Haden* by Josef Woodard & Charlie Haden, (235 pages, paperback, \$19.95) is very much in that tradition only devoted to one subject. After four paragraphs of acknowledgments, two forwards by Bill Frisell and Alan Broadbent respectively and an introduction from Woodard there are seventeen separate interviews dating from 1988 to 2008 covering a wide range of subject matter. All are presented in the question and response form with the former being in darker type than the latter. Readers of all tastes will find something of interest in these pages but this reviewer was particularly drawn to the chapters on Miles Davis and Ginger Baker. The mention of the former sitting in with the legendary Ornette Coleman Quartet is the stuff that dreams are made of. All aspects of Hadens career are covered here with Woodard proving to be an adept interviewer. This should appeal not only to bass players but other musicians and music lovers in general. Recommended.

Larry Hollis

Book Look



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

DVD Critique



ARTHUR LIPNER TALKING STICKS DVD

FEATURING ARTHUR
LIPNER, MIKE MAINIERI,
GARY BURTON,
BERNARD WOMA, VIDA
CHENOWETH

Living Arts productions 2016

This is a documentary about the development of mallet instruments, primarily the vibraphone and marimba, featuring Arthur Lipner, with commentary and short clips from other players. I have not heard of Lipner before, but I must admit to enjoying his work, especially the Brazilian influenced music. But primarily this documentary is about the instruments and their roles in music. We learn about different aspects of the instruments and get to see different ways of manufacturing marimbas, from the Musser factory to a home industry in Chiapas, Mexico, where we learn that a specific approach to the music exists there due the confluence of Mayan natives mixing with African slaves. Lipner is featured in a variety of contexts, from straight ahead jazz playing to performing a classical piece of his with the Brazilian national Orchestra. And much of the film is about him and how he came to play these instruments. We also get to hear from Vida Chenoweth, the first classical marimba soloist. A number of comments from different players mention the rarity of these instruments and how the general public is really not very aware of their existence. Originally, the marimba was used primarily as a rhythm instrument and later developed into a melody instrument. One of the Mexican marimbas has a very strong bass sound which is used for rhythm while the higher octaves can be used for melody playing. We also get to see various techniques used, especially with regard to four mallet playing. Very informative, especially for non-percussionists, who will get a wider perspective on these instruments. As a mallet player myself, I have mixed feelings about this video. On the one hand I did find it informative and enjoyable. But I would have liked to see different players, especially vibists that I really like. But it is too easy to criticize something for what it is not. In short, this is a valuable addition to percussion literature.

Bernie Koenig

DVD Critique

GUNTER HAMPEL DVD

NO INFORMATION

Gunter Hampel, kybd, vib, b clt.

Unknown drummer, vocalist and dancers.

This DVD came in a small envelope addressed to Cadence directly from Gunter Hampel. As soon as I saw his name I looked forward to it as I am a huge fan of his. I recently reviewed a DVD of a performance with a large ensemble with dancers. This is just Hampel on keyboards and vibes, a drummer and a vocalist. The DVD opens with Hampel at the keyboard, a drummer next to him, a woman with a veil standing at a mic, and five people on the floor. As soon as the music starts the dancers start moving.

The dances take various forms, from one, two three four and all five dancers in different combinations. The music also changes as the dances change. We get some very dense keyboard playing with drum accompaniment, to lighter playing to bluesy vibe playing to drum solos. The dancing appears to be choreographed, but there may be some room for improvisation, and the music sounds the same way, basically composed with some room for improvisation.

The dancing is clearly modern and very gymnastic in places, but very flowing in others. IN some respects it reminded me of something that Merce Cunningham might have done. If I may go on a personal tangent, I am a huge fan of John Cage, and when in New York in the 60s I used to attend all the Cage and Cunningham concerts. But I am primarily a jazz player. So I came up with a piece I have performed on occasion called, "John Cage Doesn't Like Jazz, But He Oughta". This piece brought that back. If Cage had composed in a jazz manner, this could have been a Cage-Cunningham collaboration.

The last segment has Hampel on bass clarinet working the vocalist. In some of the phrasing they are in unison, which supports the idea that the music is composed. The piece is filmed with one camera which moves around, and the stage has various colored lights, creating a minimal but still visually interesting performance. Hampel announces the names of everyone at the end but I could not make it out.

For anyone interested in modern dance, especially to jazz music, and for Gunter Hampel fans, this DVD is a must.

Bernie Koenig

Artist Profile/Review

PROFILE REVIEW

Name: Anthony Braxton

Instrument: Woodwinds, Piano, Composition

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois

Recommended Albums: *Three Compositions of New Jazz*, For Alto, Creative Orchestra Music 1976, *For Four Orchestras*, Ensemble (Victoriaville) 1988.

Bio: Anthony Braxton is one of America's musical icons whose unique innovations have inspired an entire generation of creative musicians. His work as a musician has earned him a MacArthur Genius Award while his compositional output dwarfs some of the world's finest composers. His mysterious approach to composition has made him a curious figure and a cultural gem in American music.

Anthony Braxton was born on June 4, 1945 in Chicago, Illinois. Braxton began his musical studies in his youth and attended the Chicago School of Music from 1959-1963. He went on to study philosophy and composition at Roosevelt University and eventually joined the Army. Braxton was discharged in 1966 and returned to Chicago where he began his relationship with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, or AACM. It was here that Braxton began his close connection with Wadada Leo Smith, Leroy Jenkins, and Muhal Richard Abrams. In 1968, the Delmark label released the first two albums featuring Braxton. His introduction came as a saxophonist on Abrams's 10-member ensemble recording titled, "Levels and Degrees of Light." The second was Braxton's pivotal *Three Compositions of New Jazz*, featuring the aforementioned quartet of musicians. The album featured one composition by Smith and two by Braxton, introducing the recorded world to Braxton's compositional style. Unlike many of his later compositions that only contain opus-numbers for titles, Braxton named these early works with a series of numbers and letters. His first two recorded compositions were retroactively given the opus numbers 6D and 6E. In 1969, Braxton recorded perhaps his most famous album: *For Alto*. The album featured eight pieces of solo saxophone. It contains no overdubbing and represents one of the most essential recordings in the Braxton oeuvre. After living and recording in Paris for a brief time, Braxton joined Chick Corea's short-lived group known as Circle. A handful of live recordings would be released years after the group's disbanding.

The 1970s were a fruitful period for Braxton that found him expanding his compositional output, intensifying his association with the avant-garde community, as well as participating in a few one-off recordings with mainstream jazz musicians such as Dave Brubeck, Woody Shaw, and Dave Holland. Braxton also released 35 albums under his own name in the 1970s, including his critically acclaimed *Creative Orchestra Music* (1976) and 1978's *For Four Orchestras*. Braxton discontinued his recording work as a sideman in the 1980s, but his own discographic output as a leader presently numbers over 150 albums.

As an educator, Braxton began his career in 1985 at Mills College. He subsequently took a teaching position at Wesleyan University in the 1990s that he held until his retirement in 2013. Braxton's compositional style has been described as highly theoretical often using drawings, extensive performance notes, and esoteric improvisational vehicles. His *Triaxium Writings and Composition Notes* are eight volumes that describe his process.

Today Braxton leads a non-profit called the Tri-Centric Foundation that seeks to

Artist Profile/Review

promote his legacy by cultivating the next generation of creative musicians. It also serves as an educational organization that specializes in some of Braxton's compositional styles: Digital Curtain Wall Music, Echo Echo Mirror House, Falling River Music, and Ghost Trance Music. Braxton's many honors include the 1991 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 1994 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2013 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, and a 2014 NEA Jazz Master Award.

Dustin Mallory

ANTHONY BRAXTON
QUARTET (WARSAW) 2012
FORTUNE 0020-005
COMPOSITION 363B+ 70:05

Anthony Braxton, as, ts; Erica Dicker, vln; James Fei, as; Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet.
October 16, 2012; Warsaw, Poland.

In the words of Anthony Braxton, "I know I'm African-American and I know I play the saxophone, but I'm not a jazz musician. I'm not a classical musician, either. My music is like my life: It's in between these areas." For anyone familiar with Braxton's extensive catalog of works, they will know that this statement is right on the money. There are some Braxton works that really swing, and others where you would swear it is classical music. However, these labels never really seem to fit the holistic accumulation of a Braxton composition. His "Composition 363B+," is no different. Recorded live in Warsaw during The Ad Libitum Festival, this recording displays the extensive talents of Braxton's Diamond Curtain Wall Quartet. "Composition 363B+" airs on the side of experimental, even for Braxton, but still highlights a somewhat traditional chamber music setting. The group mixes the sound of their instruments with the electronic sounds of SuperCollider programming software. The electronic sounds have been designed in the software by Braxton to provide a distinct and reactive electronic experience. The musicians are asked to simultaneously respond to the electronic sounds as well as the drawings and suggestive notations provided by the composer.

The ensemble is actually quite phenomenal in their presentation and exhibit highly-musical sensitivity during their performance. In any improvisation-based art form, the composer relies heavily on the talents of the individuals in the group. This quartet not only displays some of the finest American musicians, but it also features a band that is very in-tune with Braxton's style and performance practice. In fact, Taylor Ho Bynum and James Fei both serve as board members of the Tri-Centric Foundation, Braxton's non-profit organization. Since his retirement in 2013, Braxton has largely focused his attention toward Tri-Centric, which seeks to preserve Braxton's legacy while concurrently providing a place for creative artists to explore their visions. Erica Dicker also serves as the concertmaster of the Trillium/Tri-Centric Foundation Orchestra besides her duties with the Grand Rapids Symphony. Individually, each of these musicians leads a fantastic career as a professional musician and/or academic. However, taken together, the Diamond Curtain Wall Quartet is a gifted and intuitive ensemble. Their fascinating performance here proves that they are definitive interpreters of Braxton's work.

Dustin Mallory

Artist Profile/Review



Anthony Braxton in 2017, Photo Credit: Ken Weiss

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.

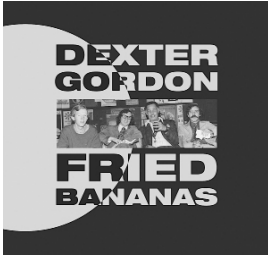
Mezei (vla, kaval), Svetlana Novakovic (ft), Maja Radovanlija (g). August 12, 2005, Novi Sad, Serbia.

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; Sivataj; We Were Watching the Rain; Bot; Nad/Reed; Underflow.

Jason Bivins

Reissues on LP



DEXTER GORDON, FRIED BANANAS.

GEARBOX GB1535.

FRIED BANANAS / THE
PANTHER / BODY AND SOUL.

36:15.

Gordon, ts; Rein De
Graaff,p; Henk Haverhoek,b;
Eric Ineke,d. 11/3/1972.

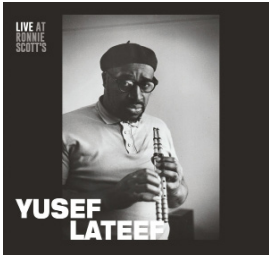
Holland

TWO NEW GEARBOX LP RELEASES

Let's face it, Dexter Gordon was a piece of work. Not only was he the coolest character to ever wrap his lips around a saxophone reed, he was arguably the link between the swing and bop idioms tenor-wise. When Long Tall Dexter started filling up his golden pipe one could anticipate an evening of jazz bliss. And that was exactly what was in store for the audience at Heemskerck Societiet Progress in the Netherlands when Gordon and his Dutch rhythm trio recorded these three tracks just now seeing release. The numbers heard are a pair of originals from the saxman and a true classic. The title tune was recorded many times by the tall one (twice in the company of Woody Shaw in 1976 at the Village Gate & Village Vanguard) and seems to be loosely based on the 1944 composition "It Could Happen To You" by Van Heusen/Burke. It receives an almost 15 minute rundown with solos from top to bottom. Dex takes multiple choruses while De Graaff edits his time in the solo spotlight but makes a strong statement. At almost the same length, "The Panther" comes from the Prestige album of the same name and is a modified boogaloo of sorts with the leader preaching over the top of a vamped bass line with two short flutter-tongue spells and a quote from "Pop Goes The Weasel". Rein takes second honors again and gets into a funky Bobby Timmons vein with block chords a la Red Garland before Dexter takes over to return to the head. The most recorded jazz standard of all time Johnny Green's "Body And Soul" ends the platter with Gordon exhibiting his balladic prowess with the verse before the chorus and deft improvising over the key-changing channel with dazzling harmonic dexterity (pardon the pun). Unfortunately the tape spool ran out right before the entrance to the piano spot but what is captured was invaluable. With comments in Maxine Gordon's liner annotation from De Graaff and Ineke this, without a doubt, is a most worthy addition to the sax giant's recorded legacy.

Larry Hollis

Reissues on LP



YUSEF LATEEF, LIVE AT RONNIE SCOTT'S,

GEARBOX R5GB1008.

ANGEL EYES / BLUES FOR THE
ORIENT / SONG OF DELILAH /
LAST NIGHT BLUES / YUSEF'S
MOOD. 41:31.

Lateef, ts, flt, shenai, xun;
Stan Tracey,p; Rick Laird,b; Bill
Eyden,d. 1/15/1966. London.

A point of professional pride among many musicians is the ability to play an instrument other than their principal one. This is commonly known as “to double” and can sometimes lead to lucrative commercial employment in recording studios. The late Yusef Lateef could have made a comfortable living playing jingles or movie soundtracks but he chose to travel the path of an independent creative artist. This unreleased record catches him fairly early in his career with a crack English threesome consisting of the well-know Tracey and Laird along with the lesser known trapster Eyden at the still-operating Ronnie Scott's club. Side one opens with the most recognized Matt Dennis song “Angel Eyes” with a minimum of backing from the pick-up trio. Yusef's heavily-vibratoed flute investigates the changes and on the last verse swoops down into the lower register with vocal overtones before switching to the shenai, a tubular, double reed derivative of the oboe with a much more nasal tone for one of his most known numbers “Blues For The Orient”. That is followed by the other non-original a cover of Victor Young's “Song Of Delilah” which was part of an Oscar-nominated score and has been recorded by many jazz artists. It features Lateef on the egg-shaped flute called the xun. The multi-instrumentalist first waxed it for his 1957 Savoy issue Jazz and the Sounds of Nature. The flip side of the record will probably hold the most interest for jazzophiles; it contains two titles spotlighting the flute and tenor sax respectively. Unlike mainstream flautists like Buddy Collette, Frank Wess or Hubert Laws, Lateef was identified with the more vocalized players such as Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Jeremy Steig. This trait is evident on “Last Night Blues” so named as it was the final evening of the gig. The principal stirs the pot speaking in the dialect of the mother- form preparing the patrons for the robust finale on booting Detroit tenor that has both the house band and the crowd perspiring. This is a welcome addition to the late music icon's discography.

Larry Hollis

Box Set CD Review

WILLEM BREUKER KOLLEKTIEF OUT OF THE BOX BVHAAST 12016

Disc 1: Big Chunks: Driebergen-Zeist / Amsterdam Rhapsody Overture / New Pillars In The Field Of Art / Women's Voting Rights / Pakkepapen 1 / Duke Edward - Misrere / Amsterdamed Thoroughfare / Hawa Hawa. 75:51.

Disc 2: Songs And More: Sur L'Autoroute / Deining / To Be With Louis P. / Concertino No. 5 In F Minor: Adagio - Da Cappella / Accordeon Freeze In Three Parts: A - B Hupple - C / The Joy Of Dance In 190 Measures / Lonely Woman I / Lonely Woman II / Song For Alex / Honger, Dorst, Delirium / Remarkable Girl / Night And Day / Song Of Mandalay / Potsdamer Stomp. 71:19.

Disc 3: Plays And Movies: Maagdenhuis 1969 / Commune . Ouverture "Oog Am Oog, Tand Om Tand / De Spaanse Vlieg / Lied Van Het Verdrongen Meisje / Mijn Hart Is Troebel / Draaiorgel Psalm 122 / Reisefeber / Velocity Tchicai / On Animal Locomotion / De Geile Beer / La Valse De La Bourgeoisie / L'Industriel Danse / Anna / Minimal Kollektief Dance / Muziek Voor Johnny Meijer / The City / Bookmaker's Office On 122nd Street / The Cicero Funeral Chapel / Finale: Deze Kant op, Dames. 68:04.

Disc 4: Heibel / Fuss: Heibel Om Een... / Niemandletje / Vooruit Dan Maar / Met De Geit / Met Goede Beukdoelingen / Zien Wij De Toekomst / Val Vertrouwen - Bolero / Forty Five Steps / I Gave All My Love To You / Bah Three, Part 2 / Finale Hamburg / Marche Funebre. 64:17.

Disc 5: Strings: Zaanse Pegels: The Skeptic - Retsch - Zaanse Pegels - Congratulations Cigar - Worry Lines / Spanish Wells / Rhapsody In Blue / Fidget / Aggie's Sewing Machine Song / Sensemaya / Dance Of The Tumblers. 74:38.

Disc 6: Umea 1978: Conditione Niente, Pts. I - III / Waddenzee Suite / Hunneswing / PLO Mars / Antelope Cobbler, Pt. 1 - Pt. II - Brass Quartet / Hullie & Zullie: Pt. I - Pt. II - Florida. 53:02.

Disc 7 Angouleme 1980: Pale Fire / Flat Jungle / Big Busy Band / La Marche / La Defense / Sentimental Journey / Bobbert / Flessenlied - Oh You Beautiful Doll / Song Of Mandalay / Potsdamer Stomp. 75:31.

Disc 8: Faust I: The Archangel And The Devil / The Village Party / The People Be Faust For A Cure Against The Plague / Faust Calls Mephisto / He Pact With The Devil / Death Or Youth / Mephisto's And Faust's Journey / The Ducal Wedding Party / Faust's Homesickness / Faust Meets Gretchen. 52:07.

Disc 9: Faust II: A Present For Gretchen / Aunt Marthe / The Visit To Aunt Marthe / The Love Potion / Declarations Of Love / At Gretchen's Window / Mephisto's Scheme / The Murder Of Valentin / Gretchen In The Pillory / Gretchen Turned Away In The Freezing Cold / Faust Comes To Gretchen's Rescue / Gretchen's Final Hour / The Stake. 54:27.

Disc 10: Happy End I: Husse II / Steaming / Waddenzee / Klerelijer / To Remain: Nork - Hoddel - Snevel - Mikkell Gnoer - Dalf - Lokk - Happs - Barst - Ontegen / J'Attends Un Navire / Antelope Cobbler / Hallo Hallo. 54:33

Disc 11: Happy End II: Moonbathed / Duet From "La Plagiata" / Hapsap / Unforgettable Moments / Ric-O-Chet / Brief Aan Vera / Bob's Gallery. 51:59.

Box Set CD Review

Dutch composer / group leader / reed player Willem Breuker was in it for the long haul. Perhaps it didn't seem that way when, in the late 1960s he was considered a firebrand and one of the players who was going to bring down the world of jazz. Those types never hang around very long. In 1967, pianist / composer Misha Mengelberg, percussionist extraordinaire Han Bennink and Breuker formed Instant Composer's Pool (I.C.P.) and set about undermining traditional concert venues, releasing self-produced recordings and generally doing what they wanted to do. But with three strong-minded personalities such as these, the ties eventually soured over musical disagreements. Mengelberg and Bennink continued on with I.C.P. and Breuker (who was far more concerned with composition) formed his own label (BVHaast) and group, (The Willem Breuker Kollektief). The Kollektief's name first appeared on the B side of a 1974 LP *Twenty Minutes In The Life Of Bill Moons* with a scrappy, anarchic performance of a suite, "De Achterlijke Klokkenmaker" (The Simple-Minded Clockmaker).

The Kollektief fell together fairly quickly and by its conclusion in 2012 it still counted four players who had been there from the beginning: trombonist Bernard Hunnekink, bassist Arjen Gorter, drummer Rob Verdurmen and saxophonist Maarten Van Norden. Other long-term members included pianist Henk De Jonge (from 1980) and trumpeters Andy Altenfelder (from 1981) and Boy Raaijmakers (1975-2004). The Kollektief had its highs and lows. Early concerts were energetic, rowdy but as the band developed they got very tight and seemed a perfect mixture of precision and freedom. Their concerts were laced with humor and slapstick. Breuker kept feeding them compositions: his own, unique arrangements of jazz and pop standards and classical pieces. However, as the 90s came, the compositions became more highly arranged and the humor became more forced (almost as if they did it because it was expected). The musicianship was still at a high level (Breuker brought in some excellent new players, including saxophonist Alex Coke, trombonist Nico Nijholt and violinist Lorre Lynn Trytten) but that spontaneous spark that this band imbued in its live performances seem to be missing. But ca. 2000, with the addition of some new younger players (including trombonist Andy Bruce and saxophonist / harmonica player Hermine Derloo and trumpeter George Pancras) the group seemed to find its form again. This later edition of the Kollektief became one of its finest and it lasted for over ten years, until the band came to its logical conclusion in 2012.

All of this history (excepting the more tedious moments) is captured in a new retrospective 11 CD boxed set, *Out Of The Box*. It highlights Breuker and his band, as well as his film music, larger assemblages and collaborations. The set was put together by Arjen Gorter and Bernard Hunnekink, both of whom saw and heard it all. Some of the music has been previously available on recordings, others are previously unreleased. The recordings have been remastered and the sound is superb throughout.

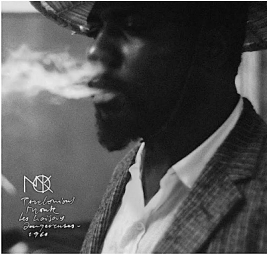
The discs are ordered conceptually. *Big Chunks* is a cherry picked selection of mostly longer performances (only 2 pieces are less than 9 minutes) by various editions of the Kollektief and it shows them in a favorable light. "New Pillars In The Field

Box Set CD Review

Of Art", a live concert favorite, is heard in a stellar rendition from 1993. Breuker's homage to Duke Ellington "Duke Edward" is a wonderful take on the Jungle Band of the 20s. Songs And More is a mish-mash collection of originals and arrangements, vocal and instrumental. It includes two of Breuker's best arrangements of other's pieces: a reworking of Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" and a kaleidoscopic 12 minute epic version of Cole Porter's "Night And Day". Plays And Movies is the most diverse disc of the set with various pieces done for the theatre and film. It has the widest span of dates, from 1970 to 1998 and it reflects the widest range of music. But it's also unmistakably music by Willem Breuker. Strings is surprisingly one of the most successful discs in the set. It contains "Spanish Wells", a piece that sounds like a homage to one of Breuker's musical "heroes", Ennio Morricone. The liners note that its inspiration comes from where it was composed, the island of Spanish Wells in the Bahamas, where Breuker was vacationing. But it sounds like it could accompany a western. It also contains a five part suite "Zaanse Pegels", composed to celebrate an award Breuker received from the Zaanse Foundation. In 2003, Breuker was commissioned to write the music for a restored version of F. W. Murnau's 1926 silent classic Faust. It's atypical music for a silent film but entirely appropriate in that a) it's typical Breuker music and b) it reflects the Weimar zeitgeist under which the movie was made and that always attracted Breuker. He has re-arranged many Kurt Weill pieces as well. The music for Faust has never been released on disc but is now featured here in its entirety on two discs and it's listenable as a through-composed piece separate from the movie. Two excellent concerts are preserved: Umea, 1978, (Sweden) is a wonderful snapshot of the early Kollektief (with pianist Leo Cuyper and trombonist Willem van Manen) in its prime. Angouleme 1980, is another rousing set from two years later. It consists of edited highlights of the concert but it plays well and it was a good energy concert. The final two discs of the set are Happy End I & II. Before his passing in 2010, Breuker stipulated that the group members could use the name Willem Breuker Kollektief until 2012 when it was to be retired. The group (along with singers Loes Luca and Peter Balhuis) spent that final year touring a tribute to Breuker, pulling classics out of the book including "Streaming" and "Waddenzee" (which go back to 1976), "Bob's Gallery", "To Remain". I caught the American leg of the tour (without the singers) and was surprised at how non-nostalgic the performance was. They played with such energy and enthusiasm. The performances preserved on these discs are from the last two concerts by the Kollektief (December, 2012) and it still retains that energy and enthusiasm. Out Of The Box is well-packaged, comes with a nice, spiral bound book with essays, pictures and discographical information. As a summation of Breuker's period from 1974 onwards it fills the bill nicely. Is there anything worthwhile left out? Of course... a lot... Breuker was quite prolific and high points could probably extend the set to twice its length. But what is here are superb examples of Breuker's music and his various editions of the Kollektief.

Robert Iannapolo

LP Review



**THELONIOUS MONK.
LES LIAISONS
DANGEREUSES 1960,
SAM RECORDS / SAGA
NO # LISTED.**

RECORD ONE: RHYTHM-A-
NING / CREPUSCULE WITH
NELLIE / SIX IN ONE /WELL.
YOU NEEDN'T / PANNONICA
(SOLO) / PANNONICA (SOLO)
/ PANNONICA (QUARTET)
.BA-LUE BOLIVAR BA-LUES-
ARE / LIGHT BLUE / BYE AND
BYE 41:41.

RECORD TWO: RHYTHM=A-
NING (ALTERNATE) /
CREPUSCULE WITH NELLIE
(TAKE ONE) / PANNONICA
(45 MASTER) / LIGHT BLUE
(45 MASTER) / WELL, YOU
NEEDN'T (UNEDITED) / LIGHT
BLUE (MAKING OF). 49:27.

Collective personnel" Monk,
p; Charlie Rouse, Barney
Wilens, ts; Sam Jones, b; Art
Taylor, d. 7/27/59. NYC.

Like many of my post-war peers the music of Thelonious Sphere Monk was an acquired taste to me. While the majority of pianist during the late forties and fifties wanted to grow up to be Art Tatum or Bud Powells the cat-in-the-hat went his iconoclastic way toward legendary status. Finally in the early sixties the Monk bug infected me for life and yours truly had the pleasure of checking him out almost weekly at Big Apple clubs (& even Carnegie Hall) while in the Navy stationed at New London. So this two-LP boxed set was like a visit from an old friend.

While the success of this session doesn't lie in the pianist's quirky compositions, which except for two titles are well-worn in the Monk canon the main attraction that infuses it all with freshness is the personnel involved. Of course there's old standby Rouse who is in exceptional form throughout with several jar-dropping excursions but second tenorist Wilens is definitely a wild card who plays a limited secondary role. Then there's the always dependable Sam Jones who is usually associated with Louis Hayes and never a Monk regular. Drummer Art Taylor was in the midst of shedding his Blakey influences and the extended sampling of him working out a unique rhythmic twist an almost fifteen minute rehearsal of "Light Blue". No matter whether in solo piano, quartet or quintet renditions this is what Bob Rusch proclaimed as "terrific" in his review of the compact disc edition last issue. I agree wholeheartedly.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

(1) MICK ROSSI 160
INNOVA 954
CHROME / ALBI NO. 1 / 12
NO. 2 / ALBI NO. 2 / DOLL
FEE / 12 NO. 1 / FLUNK
NO. 2 / EURO /
DMITRI / 4 AND 5 /
CHINASKI / FLUNK NO. 1
/ MEDS / DRONE / OGRE
DUDE. 44:54.
Rossi, p, prepared p,
faisa, harmonium,
d, perc, glockenspiel,
guzheng, mbira, sampler,
dog toy. July 2014,
January 2015, Brooklyn,
NY.

(2) ANHINGA
QUIET LIFE MOTEL /
DAVID SCHULMAN
NO LABEL OR NUMBER
AUTOMATIC (FEATURING
TILLERY) / ANHINGA / ELEVEN
FLIGHTS OF AIR / CHICAGO
GYPSY /
THE CALL / 8TH
STREET NOCTURNE / HECHO
A MANO / FIVE LIVES /
SEASON OF NO REGRETS /
MR WEBSTER REMEMBERS
/ OHIO / JESSYE NORMAN
SINGS BRAHMS AT THE FIVE
SPOT / HOME (FEATURING
TILLERY) / FAREWELL SIR
CHARLES. 44:53.

Mick Rossi composed and produced the music on (1), which was based upon his score for the documentary film "Albi's Oboe" by musician/filmmaker Matt Dine. Rossi uses piano and percussion along with numerous electronic sounds to create senses of urgency (as in "Chrome" and other tracks), action (as in "4 and 5" and others), and reflection (as in "Chinaski" and others), perhaps depicting events in the film. Rossi frequently combines the multiplicity of his instruments and electronic effects to generate layers of sound, with innovative harmonies and rhythms further characterizing these relatively short tracks (average length of three minutes). The last two cuts, "Drone" and "Ogre Dude," ramp up the drama in part by employing significant dynamic contrast including big-time crescendos in the percussion instruments.

Don Lerman

(2) presents music written by David Schulman, who performs on mandolin, violin, and other sounds with accompaniment on various tracks as indicated above. The fourteen selections are short musical vignettes (average length just over three minutes) consisting of repeated rhythmic grooves or patterns often with mandolin or violin leads and string backgrounds. "Jesse Norman Sings Brahms at the Five Spot" possesses a fine theme which is well developed, with "The Call" and "8th Street Nocturne" among the other evocative short pieces.

David Schulman, vln, mandolin, hand perc, field recording, whistling; Tillery, voc, tpt (1, 13, 14); Eddie Eatmon, b (2, 9, 13, 14); Felix Blume, field recordings (3, 7, 9, 10); Drums Michael Caskey (13), Felix Contreras (7), Rutger Miller (1). No location or date.

Don Lerman

New Issues

(1) DAVID FRIESEN &
GLEN MOORE
BACTRIAN
ORIGIN 82704

STILL WATERS / FREE PLAY /
HOE DOWN / SOFT AS SILK /
5 CARAVAN / RETURN / SEAM
LINE /
TIME AND TIME AGAIN/
BRILLIANT HEART / SUMMER
TIME / KONTRAST / THE
BACTRIAN. 60:41.

Friesen, Himage bass, p;
Moore, acoustic bass, p,
March 25, 2015, Osnabruck,
Germany.

(2) ERNEST DAWKINS
NEW HORIZONS
ENSEMBLE
TRANSIENT TAKES
NO LABEL

DAWKNESS / AND THE
LIGHT / INFINITE WISDOM
OF THE SCIENCE OF
SOUND /
SIMULTANEOUS
REALITIES OF A PARALLEL
UNIVERSE / SOUTH SIDE
BREAKDOWN /
TRANSIENT SOUNDS /
MONKNESS AND THE
ETHOS / SONNY &
ORNETTE .V & E / E & V.

71:19.
Dawkins, ts, as; Isaiah
Spencer, d; Junius Paul, b;
Vijay Iyer, p. January 21,
2016, Chicago.

David Friesen and Glen Moore, who previously recorded as a duo in 1977 and 1983, present their third duo recording on (1), one marked by wide-ranging original music. On the adventuresome side are "Free Play" and "Kontrast," with Moore on piano joining Friesen on bass in a modernist and/or free jazz mode, and "Bactrian," in which electronic effects augment the bass duo to create a stark surface-of-the-moon mood piece. On the more traditional side are Friesen's comely waltz "Still Waters" and Moore's spirited "Hoe Down," both bass duos, as are distinctive versions of "Caravan" and "Summer Time."

Friesen moves to solo piano for his "Time and Time Again/ Brilliant Heart," a reflective piece with rich modern harmonies. Throughout this varied program and in either instrumentation, the collective and individual wisdom and musicianship of these two eminent bassists from the Pacific Northwest comes through.

Saxophonist Ernest Dawkins and his New Horizons Ensemble add pianist Vijay Iyer to the lineup for this recent recording (2) of varied and adventuresome music. The opening two numbers, "Dawkness" and "And the Light," feature an initial intense theme composed by Dawkins leading to free improvisation on a minor tonality first by Dawkins and then pianist Iyer. Dawkins also penned "South Side Breakdown," a simple minor line in straight ahead time that yields productive efforts from all members of the group. Dawkins, long an active leader in the Chicago music scene and founder of the Live the Spirit Residency after school jazz education program, labels the music of his ensemble as spontaneously composed, which on this album takes both reflective ("Infinite Wisdom") and frenetic ("Transient Sounds" and "Simultaneous Realities") forms. A brighter mood on "Sonny and Ornette" contains thoughtful playing by both Dawkins and Iyer on a Sonny Rollins/calypso styled line. The final two cuts display more transparent interaction and some of the most focused playing of the set from Dawkins and Iyer in duo form.

Don Lerman

New Issues

(1) BILLY MINTZ UGLY BEAUTIFUL

THIRTEENTH NOTE

SIDE I ANGELS / VIETNAM

/ DIT / FLIGHT / FLIGHT

(BALLAD) / CANNONBALL /

SHMEAR / DIT (ALTERNATE

TAKE) / UMBA. SIDE II TUMBA

DIRGE / LOVE AND BEAUTY

/ UGLY BEAUTIFUL / RELENT

/ RETRIBUTION / AFTER

RETRIBUTION / CANNONBALL

(EXTENDED). 1:33:11.

John Gross, ts; Tony Malaby,

ts, ss; Roberta Picket, p, Fender

Rhodes, Nord keyboard,

Hammond B3; Hilliard

Greene, b; Billy Mintz, d, perc;

Anton Denner, as, ss, ts (4).

2015, Paramus, NJ.

(2) VALENTIN CLASTRIER / STEVEN KAMPERMAN FABULOSERIES

HOME RECORDS

ET LA ROUE DE LA VIE

(2016) / FABULO 1

ETHERIQUE / VIELL'MANIA

/ FABULO 2 BUCOLIQUE

/ HOSTILE ET SAUVAGE /

11, 5 / PARADISDESIRATS /

CYCLOTONIQUE / FABULO 3

GYMNOPEDIQUE / SAMSARA

/ FABULO 4 ORPHIQUE /

TOUT VA BIEN / FABULO 5

BACHIQUE / ROUAGES. 45:35

Clastrier, el, acoustic hurdy-

gurdy; Kamperman, as, clar,

ss. November 2015, Foxhol,

Netherlands.

Composer/drummer Billy Mintz sets an adventure-some course for (1), a 2-CD set recorded in December of 2015 that features interesting and unusual music and top-notch performances by everyone in his quintet. Substantial musical development and multiple textures may be heard on several extended cuts (with four tracks over ten minutes and nine over eight minutes) such as "Shmear" and "Ugly Beautiful." Mintz frequently has tenors John Gross and Tony Malaby playing slightly offset parallel lines, giving an eerie flavor to "Angels" and "Relent." Gross and Malaby are also top rate soloists, going inside and outside the harmonic framework on "Cannonball" and contributing to the exotic feeling of "Tumba" (with Malaby on soprano on the latter). Pianist Roberta Picket is another superior soloist, excelling in different idioms ranging from the frantic pace of "Shmear," to the bluesy organ sounds of "Cannonball," and to the classical romantic sounds of "Love and Beauty." A change of pace in the largely modernist program is "Flight," a swinging piece that brings to mind Coltrane's "Lazy Bird" and which includes an outstanding saxophone soli (Anton Denner added to the section for the soli) and excellent solos all around. Mintz on drums and Hilliard Greene on bass join Picket in successfully anchoring this challenging and musically rewarding set.

The creative duo of Valentin Clastrier and Steven Kamperman provides a unique listening experience on (2). Clastrier plays the hurdy-gurdy, an instrument which can produce sounds akin to a violin or accordion as well as drone (long held) tones. Together with Kamperman on reeds, the two present music characterized by impressive ensemble playing and improvisation often in the free jazz mode. The longest cut (just over seven minutes), "Viell'mania," contains pedal tones leading to complex and elliptical melody lines, followed at the 5 minute mark by improvisation from Kamperman on soprano sax with references to the underlying composition. The five "Fabulo" selections are short pieces (each under two minutes) which present and/or portray airiness, boisterous wildlife sounds, short staccato sounds, fanciful prancing, and soaring/braying sounds. The writing, four compositions by Clastrier and one from Kamperman with the rest jointly composed, is quite interesting and provides an ample framework for the superior musicianship and interaction of Clastrier and Kamperman.

Don Lerman

New Issues

(1) TERELL STAFFORD FORGIVE AND FORGET

HHM 2035

NO, NO, NO (THAT AIN'T THE WAY IT GO) / A TWO-PER TO FILL / FORGIVE AND FORGET / THE OWL EXPRESS / THE TINT TRAIN / PLEASE REST MY SOUL / NO, NO, NO (THAT AIN'T THE WAY IT GO) TAKE 2 / THE OWL LOCAL (NO PASSENGERS!) / SOME MANY SECOND CHANCES.

67:14.

Stafford, tpt; Tim Warfield, ts; Kevin Hays, p; Greg Williams, b; Rodney Green, d January 4, 2016, Brooklyn, NY.

(2) AKUA DIXON AKUA'S DANCE

48103

I DREAM A DREAM / DIZZY'S SMILE / IF MY HEART COULD SPEAK TO YOU / ORION'S GAIT / AKUA'S DANCE / THROW IT AWAY / AFRIKA! AFRIKA! / THE SWEETEST TABOO / I'M GONNA TELL GOD ALL OF MY TROUBLES / DON'T STOP. 55:07.

Dixon, baritone vln, cel, vcl; Freddie Bryant, g (1, 2, 5, 6, 8-10); Kenny Davis, b (1, 2, 5, 6, 8-10); Victor Lewis, d; Russell Malone, g (3, 4, 7); Ron Carter, B (3, 4, 7). No location or date.

The music of Herb Harris is showcased on (1), the second recording in the HHM label's Jazz Masters Unlimited Series. Harris is a saxophonist who has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Marcus Roberts and Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra, but it is his writing, which is both innovative and deeply rooted in the jazz tradition, that is on display here. His seven jazz compositions for this date suggest influences from Ellington to Monk, and his arrangements make creative use of the front line horns, here embodied by trumpeter Terell Stafford and tenor saxophonist Tim Warfield. Trumpet and tenor are voiced using counter-melodies, parallel lines, and sharp harmonies under the pen of Harris. Harris's writing also assigns interesting roles to the rhythm section, who partner with the horns on the striking melody of "The Owl Express," generate a 9/8 latin flavor on "No, No, No," and establish a sauntering pace on "The Tint Train." Stafford plays brilliantly throughout, and is especially expressive on Harris's two excellent ballads, "Forgive and Forget" and "Please Rest My Soul." Warfield is also uniformly strong on tenor, soloing at a relaxed pace on "A Two-Per to Fill" and igniting the solo section on "The Owl Express." The Ellington-influenced closer "Some Many Second Chances" is shaped by outstanding comping and soloing from pianist Kevin Hays.

Cellist Akua Dixon's writing and playing are presented on (2), with fine accompaniment on the majority of program by Freddie Bryant on guitar, Kenny Davis on bass, and Victor Lewis on drums. Dixon, who founded the improvising string quartet Indigo in the 1970s and who was a founding member of the Max Roach Double Quartet in the 1980s, demonstrates the wide breadth of her writing and performing experience on this recording, which features her lyrical playing on baritone violin on six of her original compositions and four other selections. The original pieces are of varied moods, as characterized by the mysterious groove of "I Dream a Dream," the buoyant bebop-styled "Dizzy's Smile," and the hopeful-natured waltz "Orion's Gait." The spiritual "I'm Gonna Tell God All of My Troubles" was arranged by guitarist Bryant, who provided outstanding solos on this and other selections. Ron Carter and Russell Malone

New Issues



(3) ABDULLAH IBRAHIM ANCIENT AFRICA

SACKVILLE SK 3049
ANCIENT AFRICA / THE
ALOE AND THE WILD ROSE
/ CHERRY/BRA JOE FROM
KILIMANJARO / KHOTSO.
63:08.

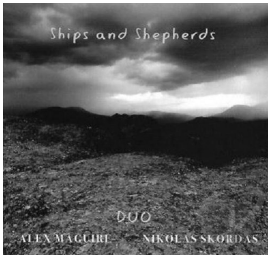
Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar
Brand), p, bamboo flt/spoken
word. Toronto, February 18,
1973.

join Dixon for three selections, including Aziza Miller's fine ballad "If My Heart Could Speak to You," and Dixon's "Africa, Africa," with some inspired classical playing by Dixon on cello and Carter and later excellent solos by both Carter and Malone.

Abdullah Ibrahim recorded the four extensive cuts on (3) in Toronto in 1973. They were done under his original name, Dollar Brand, and released under the title "Sangoma" on the Sackville label, an album that is not readily available except perhaps from record collectors. So it is good that Sackville, in association with Delmark, is re-releasing this music and making it available to listeners. The two longest cuts, each over twenty minutes, are "Ancient Africa" and "Cherry," both invigorating musical constructions which are energetically and imaginatively developed. "The Aloe and the Wild Rose" is an intriguing Monk-like melody containing hints of Ellington, a medium ballad that runs about 13 minutes. A fourth previously unreleased selection, "Khotso," features Ibrahim on bamboo flute, accompanied by some humming later in the nine-minute cut, adding harmony to the flute. Interspersed within this piece are sage spoken comments such as "The music you hear is only the sound of your inner ear." While recorded over 40 years ago, the legendary South African pianist's music retains its vibrancy and does not sound dated in the least.

Don Lerman

New Issues



ALEX MAGUIRE, NIKOLAS SKORDAS SHIPS AND SHEPHERDS

SLAM 582

CD 1 ANCHORITES/
COSMIC SOURCES/ WILD
FLOWER/ PORTRAIT OF
A SAINT/ POLIPHEMOS/
ATHOS/ TWILIGHT AT
ATOPED 44:40

CD 2 `AGROTHERION/
PATHWAY/ LABYRINTH/
LOGISMS OF MIND/
THREE FINGERS/
OLYMPUS/ SHIPS AND
SHEPHERDS 48:10

Alex Maguire, p; Nikolas
Skordas, ss, ts, gaida, flts,
bells, whistles with guests
Don Stavrinos, tpt flgh,
Stathis Diamantidis bass
on Labyrinth 22 & 23
November 2016 Athens
Greece

CD 1 starts off with bagpipes and piano. I haven't heard jazz bagpipes since I saw Rufus Harley back in the 80s. There is an old joke about what constitutes a proper gentleman. The answer is someone who can play the pipes but doesn't. In this case I really enjoyed that track.

Skordas is quite adept on all horns. On Poliphemos he really goes all out, learning from of the really exuberant free players. Maguire's piano is always with Skordas and I really like many of his solo spots. He plays with both hands and uses the whole keyboard. His accompaniment playing reminds me of Willie Ruff of the old Mitchell-Ruff duo. While clearly improvising there is definitely a classical sense to his playing. And he really shows off his lyricism on "Twilight", his solo track.

The real departure is Labyrinth with the guest performers. It starts off eerily with growling trumpet sounds and low bass sounds before Skordas comes in on soprano. He stays out front for a while. Then we get Stavrinos and Diamantidis working in, with some accompaniment from Maguire and Skordas. Stavrinos' playing reminds me a bit of Bill Dixon.

On "Logisms" Skordas goes wild on soprano while Maguire gently chords but also hits a very high key constantly creating a steady pulse.

I basically like this duo very much but I must admit my ears had enough by track 5 of the second CD. A bit too much high note soprano and a lot of the same types of musical figures started to take its toll on me.

Some really great playing. I really like Maguire and would like to hear him in another setting.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

BOHEMIAN TRIO OKONKOLO

INNOVA 956

TARDE EN LA LISA/ PUSH
GIFT/ IMPROMPTU NO!

FOR GERSHWIN/ BOHEMIA
(RECUERDOS DE INFANCIA)/

PRELUDE NO 5 FROM

INVISIBLE DRUMMER/-

--PUNTO CUBANO DE

DOMINGO/ HIROSHIMA/

PASSACAILLE FROM

PIANO TRIO IN A MINOR

(RAVEL)/ OKONKOLO (TRIO

CONCERTANTE 61:03

Orlando Alonso p; Yves

Dharamraj, cel; Yosvany Terry

as and perc Charleston

South Carolina 2016

This is my kind of record: Classically trained musicians taking classical pieces and improvising on them. The integrity of the classical pieces is maintained while the improvisations swing. Two of the musicians are Cuban and one can hear some nice syncopation in the improvised sections.

The combination of sax, cello and piano provide a nice chamber feel and also gives the musicians room to open up. In the notes Terry and Alonso talked about forming a trio with a drummer, but decided against it when they teamed up with Dharamraj. The cello anchors the other two but leaves things more open. And me as a drummer, agreeing with this. Ha. But the group works.

There is some percussion at the beginning of the last track but the piano and cello pick up and maintain the rhythm which certainly has a Cuban feel to it.

A really nice mix of classical, Cuban and jazz musics with a swinging chamber music feel.

Bernie Koenig

DANA JESSEN CARVE

INNOVA 910

OF AN IMPLACABLE

SUBTRACTION/ CARVE

WITHOUT REED/ POINTS

AGAINST FIELDS, TOMBEAU

DE BERNARD PARMEGIANT/

CARVE WITH REED/

FIREFLIES IN WINTER/ CARVE

ONLY REED/ CADENZA &

DEGRADATIONS/ CARVE

POSTLUDE 48:40

Dana Jessen bsn elec Oberlin

Ohio, September 11,12, 17, 24

2015 and May 31 2016

This is basically a classical record with improvisation. And, of course, improvisation has long been a part of Classical music. Some of the greatest composers were also great improvisers as were many of the great soloists. The CD is structured with first having a composition for bassoon and electronics followed by an improvisation. The use of electronics reminds me a great deal of the experimental music from the 1960s and 70s. I hear bursts of sounds like Stockhausen and voicelike effects sounding like Berio.

The compositions are interesting as is the contrast between the bassoon and the electronics. The improvisations on the bassoon are really interesting and I wish they had been longer, especially the one with only the reed. Jessen's use of the different aspects of the horn are creative. I like how she uses only a reed, and only a horn without the reed.

A really interesting CD, especially for people who like contemporary classical music.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

DIMITAR LIOLEV EASTERN SHADOWS

SLAM 581

FOUR TALKERS/ DAY ONE/
FILOPOPOLIS/ NEW SONG/
STILL WONDERING/ NIGHT
HOPE/ AT THIS MOMENT/

JAZZ ME/ EASTERN SHADOWS

50:43

Dimitar Liolev as; Martin

Tashev, tpt, flgh, voc;

Massimiliano Rolff, bass;

Dimitar Semov, d 31 May,

2015, Sofia Bulgaria

DON MESSINA DEDICATED TO....

CADENCE JAZZ RECORDS

1261

AN OSCAR FOR PETTIFORD/
(ITS ALWAYS)SUNNY IN

DALLAS/ EMBRACEABLE

YOU/ DOUBLE-STOPPING

RED/ A SUITE FOR THOMAS

C. SCOTT 111/ THE DEAN'S

LIST/ MICHAEL: THE ODYSSEY/
THREE FLIGHTS UP/ BLUES

FOR JF/ IN MOTION/ UNCLE

VINNIE/ BANDMATES/
REMINDS ME OF YOU/ ONE

FOR FATS NAVARRO/ A GHOST

OF A CHANCE 65:10

Don Messina bass March 2016

Track 15 2012 no place given

This is a very nice old-fashioned—1960s—sounding record. The opening track is a bit of free improvisation but the rest of the CD is comprised of composed tunes. There are a couple of tunes with a Latin beat but most are straight ahead. Liolev and Tashev take most of the solo space. Liolev likes to mix chordal patterns with lots big flurries of notes while Tashev is more melodic, and very mellow on flugelhorn.

On Filopopolis both Rolff and Samev get some solo space and later Samev gets to trade fours. To make the CD more interesting, they should have had more solo space. I really like Rolff's big sound and Samev's dark vibrato on his cymbals. He is also very good putting in accents in the melody lines.

The last piece sounds like an improvisation as well with Tashev doing some vocalizing. This piece is abstract and adds a nice touch to the rest of the CD.

Some really good solid playing but nothing new.

Bernie Koenig

I am a huge fan of the bass. Charles Mingus is one of my musical heroes and of all the favorite bassists listed by Messina, Mingus is not among them. While all the bassists he mentions, from Blanton and Pettiford, and Walter page to Dave Holland and NHOP are excellent players, there is no mention of Pops Foster, John Kirby, or Sirone. And after listening to this CD I see why. His playing is straightforward. Tempos are usually clear and his playing stays within those lines. There little show of real virtuosity in terms of getting all over the instrument. But to his credit, there is some solid playing throughout.

Perhaps this CD should be judged more on Messina's composing ability, as some of the pieces are quite interesting.

Most of the CD sounds as if Messina was playing solos on tunes and the other musicians were taken out of the recording.

I left the CD play as background music and it worked at that level. Very rarely did anything on the CD make me perk up my ears, with Blues for JF being an exception.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



JASON KAO HWANG SING HOUSE

EUONYMUS RECORDS 03
NO SUCH THING/ DREAM
WALK/ WHEN WHAT COULD/
INSCRIBE 49:24

Jason Kao Hwang, vln. vla;
Andrew Drury, d; Ken Filiano,
bass; Chris Forbes, p; Steve
Swell, tbn November 5 and 6
2015 Union City, NJ

NICK MAZZARELLA, TOMEKA REID SIGNALING

NESSA 39
BLUES FOR JULIUS AND
ABDUL/ SIGNALING/ LIKE
SO MANY DROPS OF
WATER/ INTERSTICES/ THE
ANCESTORS
SPEAK/ TOPOGRAPHIES/
REDISCOVERY OF AN AGE/
LET IT BE KNOWN/ INVOKING
A SPIRIT 40:15

Nick Mazzarella, as; Tomeka
Reid cel April 17, 2015,
Chicago

The musicians just jump here and get going. Great energy. Then things go through all kinds of changes. The four compositions are all by Hwang and are interesting. The way he changes tempos and uses the ensemble I am reminded of Mingus, which is a good thing. I also hear classical influences in the compositions as well. I am familiar with Filiano and Swell and they perform excellently here, as do all the players. I hear a bit of Cecil Taylor in Forbes' playing, and I think I hear some Billy Bang in Hwang's playing. I really enjoy his accompanying playing. There is a marvelous section in "Inscribe" in a slow tempo which coasts along, and then the whole ensemble jumps in with complex riff climaxing with a drum solo. This structure is found throughout the CD but this particular one stood out for me. Drury also turns in some fine solo work, though on occasion a little more space would have been nice.

On a more general note, the ensemble playing is excellent and the rhythm section really supports the soloists. In short a really enjoyable record which will stand up to many playings. Highly recommended.

Bernie Koenig

Lovely duos with nicely contrasting instruments: A high alto and a low cello. Mazzarella plays with no vibrato, getting a clean but often piercing sound, which contrasts nicely with Reid's cello. And what makes for good duets is how the players interact. Much of the CD sounds Mazzarella takes the lead and Reid follows with accompaniments, but every so often they develop some real equal interplay, often hitting the same notes an octave apart creating some very nice harmonies. Another aspect of their interplay is how mozzarella may start a piece, but then Reid will develop it in a different direction. Since I love thinking of free jazz as a form of conversation it is as if mozzarella says something and Reid, yes, but. A concept I love. A real strength of this CD is that most of the pieces are quite short: have your say and stop. But in a couple of places the players get to stretch out a bit and develop their ideas. My one complaint is that in a couple of places I felt that Reid's cello was too far in the background. But that is a minor criticism of a really nice recording.

Bernie Koenig

New and Reissues



1) JOSEPH BOWIE, OLIVER LAKE LIVE AT 'A SPACE' 1976

SACKVILLE 2010
ZAKI/ ORANGE
BUTTERFLIES/ AFTER
ASSISTANCE/ UNIVERSAL
JUSTICE/ A SPACE RONTOTO
47:21

Joseph Bowie, tbn; Oliver
Lake as, flute Toronto April
10, 11 1976

2) RIGHT UP ON FEATURING THE FLUX QUARTET

PASSIN THRU 41236
HEY NOW HEY/ 5 SISTERS/
2016/ DISAMBIGUATE/
RIGHT UP ON/ SPONGE/
EINSTEIN 100! 69:29

Oliver Lake as; Tom Chiu
vln; Conrad Harris, vln; Max
mandel, vla; Felix Fan cel
May 28, 29, 2016 Bklyn NY

1) is a reissue of an old Sackville lp which I still own. I must admit to being a big fan of Oliver Lake and own a bunch of his records including the World saxophone Quartet. I only got to see him live a couple of times in Toronto back in the 70s and 80s. This is a duet with Joseph Bowie and the contrast between sax and or flute and trombone is great. I remember loving this record when I bought back in 1977 or so and it holds up extremely well. Lake is at his exuberant best. As well as making those energetic runs he can also play melodically. His flute work "Orange" is great and the interplay with Bowie is a real standout. And "Justice" is a Lake solo piece where he lets out all the stops. And Bowie is also at his best, using the horn in interesting ways getting all kinds of growls, but also some nice melodic lines as well. It is great to see this record available again.

2) is not Charlie Parker with Strings. It is not even Max Roach's double quartet, but more like Oliver Lake meets Bartok. Lake composed all the music and it reflects his playing. There are some nice melodic lines and lots of dissonance. 2016 is full of dissonant strings, much like the year.

Most of the CD though, is just the quartet. Lake wrote music for them which includes sections for the string players to improvise. Since I am not familiar with the music I found it difficult to tell which were the written sections and which were the improvised sections. And that is a good thing since the music becomes seamless. And it also means that the string players are all excellent improvisers. This is a CD for classical music lovers, string quartet loves, and lovers of all forms of improvised music.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

**PIPO LIONNI,
SERGIO CORBINI,
STEFANO
FRANCESGHINI
ACTIONREACTION 1
SLAM 583**

AR1/AR2/AR3/AR4/AR5/AR6/
AR7 49:30

**PIPO LIONNI, SPACKKNIFE
PAINTING SOUNDS.**

p; Sergio Corbini, synth, elec;
Stefano Franceschini ss, bs,
elec Chianti Italy 2016

**SZILARD MEZEI, JON
HEMMERSAM
FLOATING ORANGE**

FLOATING ORANGE SUITE,
PART 1/ FLOATING ORANGE
SUITE PART 2/ FLOATING
THE JAMES MARSHALL
HUMAN ARTS TRIO
ILLUMINATION

FREEDONIA MUSIC 36

U CITY BLUES/ UNTITLED/
LIFE LIGHT/ INDIA 64:37

James Marshall, ss,as,ts,
ft; FrankMicheaux, d; Jay
Zelenka, perc, whistles;

ON track 4 James Marshall,
nadaswarum, as; Alan Suits,
nadaswarum, tavil, Tibetan
Copper trumpet, brass

cymbals, Micheal Castro,
nadaswarum, brass cymbals,

Frank Micheaux d; Jay

Zelenka perc, penny whistles,
cymbals, Rick Saffron voc

March 1978 and track 4 in
mid 70s Missouri Orange

Suite, part 3/ The River/
Deep/ Floating/ Epilogue

61:38

I really enjoyed this CD. I found it fun. And it sounds to me that the players were enjoying themselves. I also love the titles of the pieces. I must admit most titles are meaningless. Give me Opus 1 rather than Diane or some such any day. There is so much program music out there but if the listener doesn't know the program, the titles are meaningless. But, a title can set up expectations in a listener to give some guidance as to what to listen for. Anyway, back to the music. We get various sounds—I assume some of those sounds are from the spackknife and some are from electronics. The music goes back and forth between bursts of sounds and some nice melodic lines by Corbini and Franceschini with background noises by Lionni and Corbini.

I really like the sounds made by Franceschini and I would have liked to hear more of his playing. Corbini's piano is also very nice and he uses the synthesizer more for sound effects than for sustained playing.

This CD is for anyone who enjoys electronic sounds and interesting combinations of those sounds with piano and sax.

Bernie Koenig

This is a nice quiet record featuring some very nice interplay between the two musicians.

The main piece is the title song which is a three part suite. I am not sure of the continuity between sections but I enjoyed the interplay between the viola and guitar. The Mezei would play high melody lines on the viola with great chordal accompaniment on the guitar by Hemmersam.

The River utilizes bass which, if one wants to take the title seriously, creates a strong current under Hemmersam's guitar. And Deep, which does not let me feel like I am under water, nonetheless has some really excellent interplay between bass and guitar. The lightness of Hemmersam's touch contrasts nicely with Mezei's heavy sound on the bass.

This would be a great contrast to the Oliver Lake with the Flux Quartet. I must play them together.

In short a really interesting record, especially for string players.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



THE JAMES MARSHALL HUMAN ARTS TRIO ILLUMINATION

FREEDONIA MUSIC 36

U CITY BLUES/ UNTITLED/
LIFE LIGHT/ INDIA 64:37

James Marshall, ss,as,ts,
flt; FrankMicheaux, d; Jay
Zelenka, perc, whistles;

ON track 4 James Marshall,
nadaswarum, as; Alan Suits,
nadaswarum, tavil, Tibetan

Copper trumpet, brass
cymbals, Micheal Castro,

nadaswarum, brass cymbals,
Frank Micheaux d; Jay
Zelenka perc, penny whistles,
cymbals, Rick Saffron voc

March 1978 and track 4 in
mid 70s Missouri

I hope these musicians were having fun. It sure sounds like it. It is the kind of set-up that I would enjoy playing in. The first three tracks feature Marshall on various horns, where he begins with a short line and then improvises over the percussion. He is both very melodic and also capable of long multi note runs. In a couple of places it sounded like his horn was electronically enhanced, creating some echo effects.

The use of the birdwhistle and other percussion instruments sounds like fun and Zelenka makes it work. And Micheaux does a very good job of supporting Marshall.

“Light” goes on for a long time. In one place I thought it was going to end but the percussion kept playing and Marshall then re-entered with a different horn. This happens twice, making a kind of triple piece, which often happens in free improvisation settings. Also this piece takes up about half of the CD.

I have only two small complaints: In places I wish Micheaux would have been a bit busier, and that he would have left some space in his solo on “Blues” But these are minor comments.

“India” is a whole different thing. Nadaswarum is an Indian double reed instrument like an oboe, and a tavil is a double-headed barrel drum. We get great horn playing, including some tenor sax, with some very heavy percussion underneath, with lots and lots of cymbals.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



**BUFFALO JAZZ
OCTET,
PAUSALIVE,
CADENCE JAZZ
RECORDS 1262.**
SCULPTURED / TRAFFIC.
TACTIC / HOMEPAGE /
SECOND THE MOTIAN /
WHAT ARE THE 39 STEPS?
/ VAMPIRES / TRACHEAL
RUBIC. 59:24,
Kelly Buchege, as, ts;
Nelson Rivera, ss, ts, perc;
Steve Baczkowski, bari s;
Tim Clarke, tpt; Phil Sims,
tbn, euph, perc; Michael
McNeill, p; Brian DeJesus,
b, perc; John Bacon, d;
Brendan Fitzgerald, cond,
5/12 \$ 13/2016, Buffalo,
New York.

While the city of Buffalo is perhaps best known for its brutal winters it has also produced an impressive amount of hot jazzers like Bobby Militello, Jim Hall, Sam Noto, Don Menza, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Mel Lewis and Grover Washington, Jr., among others, The personnel listed on the cover of Pausalive are not as well-known as those listed above but they all maybe should be. Made up of local musicians and educators their short bios are told in the booklet notes by drummer Bacon who is also responsible for three titles of the material performed. Conductor Fitzgerald and band member McNeill are credited with two each.

The result of a pair of concerts that took place at the Pausa Arthouse which has no connection with the PAUSA record label of years ago, the sounds experienced on those two nights were as diverse as the people performing them. After some contrapuntal mayhem there was a suggestion of one of Gerry Mulligan's larger groups playing fifties west coast cool on the opener "Sculptured" and those that follow show a skillful blend of inside/outside proclivities. Baritone saxman Baczkowskil is notably provocative on several cuts especially when he switches to his modified didgeridoo. A musical soundscape colored with multiple hues and a ringing endorsement of the healthy state of the jazz arts in the Queen City.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

BILLY FLYNN, LONESOME HIGHWAY, DELMARK 850.

GOOD NAVIGATOR / IF IT
WASN'T FOR THE BLUES /
SMALL TOWN / LONESOME
HIGHWAY / THE "IN" CROWD
/ NEVER HAD A CHANCE /
WAITING GAME / HOLD ON /
THE LUCKY KIND / JACKSON
STREET / LONG LONG TIME
/ THE RIGHT TRACK / YOU
ARE MY LOVER / I FEEL
'UM / BLUES EXPRESS /
SUFFERIN' WITH THE BLUES /
CHRISTMAS BLUES. 70:40.
Collective personnel: Flynn,
vcls, g, hca, perc; Roosevelt
Purifoy, p, org, el p; E.G.
McDaniel, b; Andrew "Blaze"
Thomas, d; Doug Corcoran,
tp; Christopher Neal,
ts; Deitra Farr, vcl; Dave
Katzman, rhy g; Flynn, Dick
Shurman, Steve Wagner,
bg vcls 10/12 & 13/2016.
Chicago.

LINSEY ALEXANDER, TWO CATS, DELMARK 851.

I'M NOT YOUR PROBLEM /
WHERE DID YOU TAKE YOUR
CLOTHES OFF LAST NIGHT /
THAT AIN'T RIGHT / WHY
I SING THE BLUES / TWO
CATS / FACEBOOK WOMAN
/ USER / I'M IN LOVE WITH A
WOMAN / 'TIL I KISSED YOU
/ HOW COULD YOU DO ME
LIKE YOU DONE
ME / REEFER AND BLOW
/ THINKING ABOUT ME /
STARTING MONDAY / COMB
OVER
BLUES / KISS REVISITED.
67:16.

It's doubtful many musicians currently working in the Windy City have the hefty resume of singing guitarist Billy Flynn. The veteran player has a plethora of credits all tallied up inside of the cd booklet.

He's also a talented songwriter as verified by all of the scripts (save for the oldie "The In Crowd") springing from his pen. There's a nice variety of tunes present; the wah-wah inflected "Small Town" with effective harp ride, guest Deitra Farr's secondary vocals on "Good Navigator" and harmony on the loping "Hold On", the popping cover of the Ramsey Lewis hit and the sax-filled "I Feel ;Um". Another solid sender from the always dependable Delmark label.

Larry Hollis

For his third Delmark outing, Windy City staple Linsey Alexander expands his stylistic base with an ear-catching mix of ten self-penned and five co-written songs covering a wide program. Ably backed by some of the cream of Chi-town's players his gravelly voice and stinging guitar delve into almost every aspect of Black music save for Hip Hop and Gospel, as even some of the ballads sport a shade of the latter. Instant favorites include the ironic "Reefer & Blow", several titles filled with puns and thinly disguised barbs and the sly dig at the Liar In Chief on "Comb Over Blues". "Why I Sing The Blues" should not be confused with the Riley King classic. All in all, an exemplary straight-ahead program of contemporary Chicago blues as only Delmark can deliver them.

Collective personnel: Alexander, vcl, g; Anthony Palmer, Breezy Rodio, g; Roosevelt Purifoy, p, org, el p; EG McDaniel, b; Bryant Parker, James Wilson, d; Kenny Anderson tpt; Hank Ford, ts; Norman Palm, tbn; Paul Hanover, hca, J. Parker, guest on unlisted inst. 1/30&31/2/9/2017, Chicago.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

DOMINIC MILLER SILENT LIGHT

ECM 2518

WHAT YOU DIDN'T SAY/
URBAN WALTZ/ WATER/
BADEN/ EN PASSANT/
ANGEL/ CHAOS THEORY/
FIELDS OF GOLD/ TISANE/
VALIUM/ LE PONT 41:04

Dominic Miller, g, elec
bass; Miles Bould, d, perc;
no place or date given

Julia Hulsmann Trio Sooner and Later ECM



JULIA HULSMANN TRIO SOONER AND LATER

ECM 2547

FROM AFAR/ THATPUJAI/
YOU & YOU/ BIZ
JOLUKYUK/ ALL I NEED/
THE POET (FOR ALL)/
OFFEN/ J.J./ SOON/
LATER/ DER MOND
49:32

Julia Hulsmann, p; Marc
Muelbauer, bass; Heinrich
Kobberling, d Sept 2016
Oslo

Another very quiet record. Very nice, soft acoustic guitar with very quiet and subtle percussion accompaniment. One track, Chaos Theory, had a louder harder sound with full drum set. And this track stood out. Some of the tunes had a familiarity to them in that they reminded me of other tunes, but they were still original. Miller's playing is mostly melodic lines but he also uses some chord playing. The tracks are relatively short so there is no repetitive playing, just some nice soloing on the tunes. Bould's accompaniment is very nice. Sometimes he is more felt than heard. My only negative comment is that after a while the tunes started to sound a bit alike, but the important part of a record like this is the improvisation, which is fine. To his credit, Miller does try to mix things up a bit with a few different rhythms.

Bernie Koenig

This is a very quiet recording. The playing is very quiet and airy. Hulsmann leaves lots of space between notes and phrases. I call this introspective playing. While she doesn't sound quite like Bill Evans, I am reminded of some his playing, in which he does some of the same things. She seems to be concerned with harmonies rather than single lines. She does some very nice chordal work, which is something I like. The tracks are relatively short, which gives her a little time to develop the ideas in the pieces and then move on. There is virtually no solo space for the other members of the trio, though Muelbauer gets a couple of short spots, but they provide excellent support. I especially like Kobberling's brushwork on The Poet.

One description that comes to mind about record is simplistically deceptive. The music sounds very straightforward but in fact is more complex than it seems at first and will hold up over many playings.

I am not sure what else to say except that this is a really good piano trio album which is going to stay in my collection.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



MICHIEL BRAAM, GLOOMY SUNDAY

BMC 237

OPUS ESPRESSO / Q1 /
THE MAN I LOVE / PIT
STOP BALL AD / ELIZA /
OPUS WALK / GLOOMY
SUNDAY / OPUS SEARCH
/ MEMORIES OF YOU /
CUBA, NORTH RHINE
WESTPHALIA. 43:02.

Michiel Braam - p.
12/9/2015, Budapest,
Hungary.

While there had been solo piano albums before the 70s, they were few and far between. But with the early 70s release of Cecil Taylor's *Indent*, Chick Corea's *Piano Improvisations* and Keith Jarrett's *Facing You*, all within a short span of each other, it seemed to herald a new viability to the concept. And with the (relatively) huge success of Jarrett's 3 LP set, *Koln Concert*, it seemed to assure a steady stream of solo piano albums that has continued to this day. And that is a good thing. It allows the listener to evaluate a pianist on her/his own terms in harmonic conception, handling of rhythm, orchestration and technique. And it gives the pianist room to explore her/his muse unfettered.

Michiel Braam is a pianist who's made his mark on the Dutch jazz scene over the past 30 years with his superb large group *Bik Bent Braam* and his piano trio *Trio Braam De Joode Vatcher*. The first release under his own name was *Oeps*, a solo piano recording from 1989. He released a second disc of solo piano in 2005, *Michiel vs. Braam*. A third album of solo piano, live recorded at Budapest's *Opus Jazz Club*, *Gloomy Sunday* has just been released and brings us up to date on what he is doing these days.

Gloomy Sunday is presented as a continuous 43 minute suite with Braam segueing seamlessly from free improv that collide into originals and well-worn standards refreshingly interpreted. This contrasts to the two previous solo sets, the first of which was all improvisation and the second which interpreted compositions he'd written for large ensembles refashioned as solo pieces. Here the music unfolds in an almost stream of consciousness fashion and nothing sounds forced. Although clearly a modernist, he pays homage to the complete history of jazz piano. A delicate "Man I Love" gradually morphs into "Pit Stop Ball Ad" via a boogie pattern. A high-velocity "Memories Of You" is filled with all manner of sweeps up and down the keyboard. It's a complete and very satisfying program that makes *Gloomy Sunday* well worth investigating. If one doesn't have any music by Braam, this could be a good place to start.

Robert Iannapolo

New Issues

SATOKO FUJII INVISIBLE HAND

CORTEZ SOUND 0001 /
0002

THOUGHT / INCREASE /
INVISIBLE HAND / FLOATING
/ HAYASE / I KNOW YOU
DON'T KNOW / SPRING
STORM / INORI / GREEN CAB
/ GEN HIMMEL. 88:28.

Satoko Fujii - p. 4/28/2016,
Mito, Japan.

RON STABINSKY FREE FOR ONE

HOT CUP 151

...AFTER IT'S OVER / 31 /
VIRAL INFECTION / GONE
SONG / FOR REEL / NOT
LONG NOW - LONG NOW
/ RAPTURE / ONCE, BUT
AGAIN... 44:37.

Ron Stabinsky - p. 1/9/2015,
Yonkers, NY.

KEITH JARRETT MULTITUDE OF ANGELS

ECM 2500-2503

CD 1: Modena, Pt. 1 /
Modena, Pt. 2 / Encore:

Danny Boy // CD 2: Ferrara,
Pt. 1 / Ferrara, Pt. 2 / Ferrara

Encore // CD 3: Torino, Pt. 1 /
Torino Pt. 2 // CD 4: Genova,

Pt. 1 / Genova, Pt. 2 / Genova,
Encore 1 / Genova Encore 2:

Over The Rainbow. 297:19.

Keith Jarrett - p; 10/23/96,

Modena, Italy; 10/25/96,

Ferrara, Italy; 10/28/96,

Torino, Italy; 10/30/96,

Genova, Italy.

Pianist Satoko Fujii would get my vote for busiest jazz musician of the last 25 years. She has recorded on nearly 80 albums, most as either leader or co-leader with her husband, trumpeter Natsuki Tamura. In addition to her pianism, she is a composer, arranger (whose services has been tapped by others such as German saxophonist Gebhard Ullmann) and bandleader. Her groups have ranged from trios to sextets and three different big bands. It's a truly mind-boggling discography that will reward listeners of challenging music for years to come. Perhaps the one area that she has not fully explored is the area of solo piano. Her first official release *Something About Water* was a solo album in part but mostly featured duets with her mentor, pianist Paul Bley. Her first solo piano album was 1996's *Indication*. Two others followed and *Invisible Hand* is only her fourth solo piano album in a oeuvre of over 80 albums. It's a double disc set so she may be making up for lost time vis-à-vis solo piano.

The first set is comprised entirely of improvisations. One can hear her feeling out the piano at the beginning, familiarizing herself with the instruments ins and outs. By the title track, she has become one with the instrument reaching inside the piano for some delicate string work. High point of the set is "Floating" that is dominated by lovely prepared piano gamelan-like textures. The set concludes with the rhythmically charged "Hayase". The second set is more composition-based. "I Know You Don't Know" sounds like a tribute to Bley with its long arcing lines and the way she'll let a phrase hang in the air for a lengthy interval before proceeding. It's a beautiful performance. "Inori" is an improvisation that starts inside the piano before moving to the keyboard for an unusual sequence of walking bass that keeps getting disrupted by Taylor-ian bursts. The album concludes with one of her best compositions "Gen Himmel". It was the title track from her 2013 solo piano album with a superb version also found on her *Shiki* by her New York Orchestra. Here it provides a perfect conclusion to a satisfying program of solo piano music.

In this solo piano roundup Ron Stabinsky is the new kid on the block. His first recorded appearance was in 2012

New Issues

on the expanded septet lineup of *Mostly Other People Do The Killing*. He played the Bill Evans role on Blue the band's notorious reworking of Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue* and is now a comfortably ensconced member of the group. He's subsequently appeared on discs by trumpeter Peter Evans (ex-MOPDtK), a duet with saxophonist Jack Wright and a recording with baritone saxophonist Charles Evans.

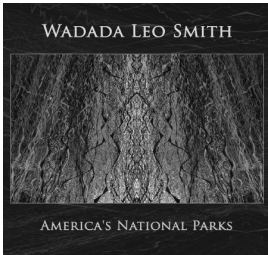
The first release under his own name is *Free For One*, a solo piano session. Stabinsky is a two-fisted pianist who runs free reign over the keyboard. His harmonies can be dense, almost expressionistic with thick full chords. The opening moments of "Gone Song" is a good demonstration of this. But it's not all somber seriousness. After all, he did humorously title his album *Free For One* and he starts the album with a track titled "...After It's Over". Each track has a distinct character. The opener begins with pensive chords that gradually mutate an abstract ballad reminiscent of Paul Bley. At the other end of the spectrum, the brief (clocks in at a little over a minute) "For Reel" is full of swoops and crashes up and down the keyboard. There's a good, nervous energy that permeates this set. But also evident is that Stabinsky has a strong sense of melody as the album's opener and closer clearly demonstrate. For a first release, this is an impressive disc and makes this listener look forward to what's coming. Lastly, we come to one of the most well-know progenitors of the solo piano album / concert, Keith Jarrett. The series of mostly improvised solo piano albums he released on ECM, starting with *Facing You* were wildly popular. It was just one facet of his music but it captured the public's ears and became his one of his most successful projects. In the late 90s, he suddenly removed himself from public performance due to a debilitating bout of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. But he learned to manage the disease and returned to performance at the turn of the century and has successfully resumed his career. But the epic solo performances recorded on this set have become a thing of the past.

Multitude Of Angels is a four CD set of performances recorded while doing a short tour of Italy in 1996, shortly before his temporary retirement from performance. It consists of four complete concerts, each lasting roughly 75 minutes. The surprising thing is these performances indicate no duress or diminution of his powers both technically and improvisationally. The all develop slowly and organically, a hallmark of Jarrett's best solo piano concerts. There's nothing new or surprising in these sets. Long time listeners to his solo concerts will know what to expect. Even the encores were ones he used before. But Jarret's high level of musicianship and the avenues of exploration he goes down can still maintain interest after 25 years of solo concerts. And it also maintains interest with the circumstances surrounding the post-performance, his last for several years. Fans of Jarrett's solo performances will rejoice in the release of these historic artifacts and will revel in the almost 5 hours of previously unreleased performances.

But I will give a recommendation for the first three discs in the overview. All are pianists of superb abilities who deserve to be better known. One couldn't go wrong with picking up any one of them.

Robert Iannapolo

New Issues



WADADA LEO SMITH AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

CUNEIFORM 430/431

NEW ORLEANS: THE
NATIONAL CULTURE PARK
USA 1718 / EILEEN JACKSON
SOUTHERN, 1920-2002: A
LITERARY NATIONAL PARK
/ YELLOWSTONE4: THE
FIRST NATIONAL PARK AND
THE SPIRIT OF AMERICA
– THE MOUNTAINS, SUPER-
VOLCANO CALDERA AND
ITS ECOSYSTEM, 1872 / THE
MISSISSIPPI RIVER: DARK
AND DEEP DREAM FLOW
THE RIVER / SEQUOIA / KINDS
CANYON NATIONAL PARKS:
THE GIANT FOREST, GREAT
CANYON, CLIFFS, PEAKS,
WATERFALLS AND VAVE
SYSETSMN, 1890 / YOSEMITE:
THE GLACIERS, THE FALLS,
THE WELLS, AND THE VALLEY
OF GOODWILL, 1890. 96:36.
Wadada Leo Smith – tpt;
Anthony Davis – p; Ashley
Walters – cel; John Lindberg
– b; Pheeroan akLaff – d.
5/5/2016, New Haven, CT.

It's always gratifying when one's musical heroes have a long life and a catalogue that broadcasts quality throughout. But the late period renaissance is particularly good to see. Multi-instrumentalist / composer Sam Rivers is a case in point. The albums he made in his 70s and 80s were vibrant and several are essential to his discography. The same case could be made for soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy.

A similar renaissance has been happening with trumpeter / composer / bandleader Wadada Leo Smith. Since turning 70 in 2011, Smith has released (at least) a dozen recordings, several of which have been among the best of his oeuvre. Smith's 2012 release *Ten Freedom Summers*, a four and a half hour suite scored for his working group, the Golden Quintet and a chamber orchestra, was in contention for the Pulitzer Prize. But, of course, those who have been following Smith since his beginnings in the AACM in Chicago back in the 60s have known he was a special and creative musician all along. A look at his discography finds essential albums in each decade that stand with the best in jazz and improvised music that was being released at the time.

While not quite having the scope of *Ten Freedom Summers*, Smith's latest suite, *America's National Parks* is among his best work. It's scored for a revamped version of his Golden Quartet that includes pianist Anthony Davis, bassist John Lindberg and drummer Pheeroan akLaff, all of whom have worked with Smith on and off since the mid 1970s. Making it a quintet is cellist Ashley Walters who adds a new texture to the midrange and is a strong contrapuntal voice blending nicely with Smith's trumpet.

Smith's concept of "national parks" is personal and worth noting. While several of the recognized parks are represented (Yellowstone, Sequoia, Yosemite), he also has written pieces for several that aren't on the official lists. As Smith explains in the liner notes, "My focus is on the spiritual and psychological dimensions of the idea of setting aside reserves for common property of the American citizens..." With this in mind, Smith composed three movements that he views as national parks. Two are physical places: "New Orleans: The National Culture Park" "The Mississippi River: Dark And Deep Dreams Flow

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The River". The third is in homage to a person: "Eileen Jackson Southern, 1920-2002: A Literary National Park". Southern was an African-American musicologist who wrote extensively on the music of black Americans.

Musically, Smith also works against expectations. This isn't music of grandeur, with sweeping programmatic vistas. It's an interior music, attempting to deal with interior meditations one feels in reflecting on national parks. Smith's trumpet is the dominant voice but each player is given extended improvisatory sections where they can insert themselves into the music.

Smith makes full use of the ensemble in unique combinations. The opening of "Eileen Southern..." is scored for piano, cello and bass and is a lovely delicate section. Smith's entry (at about 1 minute) with a beautifully shaded passage is stunning. His playing during this section gives the spirit of the Miles Davis / Gil Evans collaborations, with a fraction of the instrumentation and a more abstract sense of melody. The opener, "New Orleans...." lurches forward with the bass and drums giving the music a slow, staggered forward momentum. It propels the music for much of the movement's 21 minutes. There are stretches of suspension but the Lindberg - akLaff duo eventually emerge out of these passages to move the music inexorably forward. The suite's most effective movement is "The Mississippi River" which Smith describes as "a dumping place for black bodies by hostile forces in Mississippi". There's a tension that permeates the movement with stark, somber chords from Davis' piano and effective passages for Walters' cello and Linberg's bass. The tension is confronted head on midway through the movement when a stark rhythm emerges with powerful drumming and an ostinato motif played by Davis, Walters and Lindberg as Smith blows haunting lines above. This eventually dissolves into a free jazz section that defiantly explodes giving the music a much-needed catharsis. At over a half an hour the movement keeps developing and mutating throughout and is the apex of the suite.

There's so much to absorb in this suite that it takes several listens to break through. The music is unique and uniquely Smith's. And the Golden Quintet plays superbly throughout. This is definitely one for the ages.

Robert Iannapolo

New Issues

ANDREW
CYRILLE
QUARTET
THE
DECLARATION
OF MUSICAL
INDEPENDENCE
ECM 2430
COLTRANE
TIME / KADDISH
/ SANCTUARY /
SAY / DAZZLING
(PERCHORDALLY
YOURS) /HERKY
JERKY / BEGIN /
MANFRED / SONG
FOR ANDREW NO. 1.
45:32.

Andrew Cyrille –
d, perc; Bill Frisell – g;
Richard Teitelbaum
– synth, p; Ben Street
– b. 7/2014, Brooklyn,
NY.

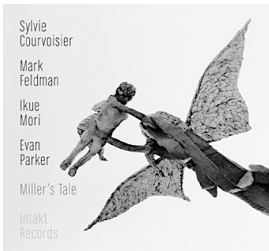
Drummer Andrew Cyrille has been moving music forward since he emerged in the early 1960s. His first association was as the drummer in vibes player Walt Dickerson's group. By the middle of the decade he had hooked up with Cecil Taylor and Jimmy Lyons to form what may have been the perfect edition of the Cecil Taylor Unit. By the middle of the 70s, he had left the Unit and formed his own ensemble Maono (one of saxophonist David S. Ware's earliest associations). In 1997, he formed Trio 3 with saxophonist Oliver Lake and bassist Reggie Workman, a group that is still going strong 20 years later. Intermixed with all of this activity, Cyrille has been open to all forms of collaboration from working with international ensembles to work with the European avant-garde, with Carla Bley and art rock bands to straight ahead jazz ensembles and many, many others. Cyrille is truly a drummer for all seasons and he shows no signs of slowing down at the age of 77.

For his latest release, *The Declaration Of Musical Independence*, Cyrille has assembled an interesting quartet: synthesizer player and pianist Richard Teitelbaum (with whom Cyrille recorded a duet album in 1997), guitarist Bill Frisell and bassist Ben Street. One might cock an eyebrow at the presence of Frisell but think back to Cyrille's past collaborations and it's not so surprising at all. What's interesting is that Frisell seems to be really reaching beyond the familiar and comfortable. There's no Americana here. But there are slashing aggressive chords, beautiful shimmering lines (check out his playing Street's lovely "Say") and washes of feedback. He actually sounds unfettered. Street's bass is strong and anchors the music as well as providing a counter voice to Frisell. Best of all is Teitelbaum's presence. He's a subtle force lurking in the back of the music, adding the right tone and texture. On Frisell's "Kaddish", he inserts a subtle electronic wash that floats behind Frisell's mournful lines. Surprisingly his sole composition "Herky Jerky" is a light-hearted piece that lives up to its title. Also, it's the only track where he plays piano. Behind it all is Cyrille who paints himself as more of a texturalist than he usually does. That's not to say he doesn't drive and propel the music, he does. The opener "Coltrane Time" (a Coltrane composition never recorded, given to Cyrille by drummer Rashid Ali) takes care of all that in the beginning. But Cyrille is always conscious of the group he's assembled and he knows this music is at its strongest when all four voices are present and heard. And all four voices are interacting in unique ways. Cyrille has assembled a remarkable group and he exploits it to the fullest.

Both of these albums indicate that Smith and Cyrille still have some strong music to make in the future. I can't wait to hear it.

Robert Iannapolo

New Issues



**COURVOISIER /
FELDMAN / MORI /
PARKER
MILLER'S TALE**
INTAKT 270

DEATH OF A SALESMAN /
A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE
/ THE AMERICAN DREAM
/ UP FROM PARADISE /
RIDING AN A SMILE AND A
SHOESHINE / PLAYING FOR
TIME / THE REASON WHY
/ NOTHING'S PLANNED / A
FOUNTAIN PEN.

Sylvie Courvoisier - p; Mark
Feldman - vln; Evan Parker -
ts, ss; Ikue Mori - electronics.
9/21/2015, Yonkers, NY.

**CORE TRIO
THE CORE TRIO
LIVE FEATURING
MATTHEW SHIPP**
EVIL RABBIT 23

Set 1 / Set 2. 65:37.
Seth Paynter - ts; Thomas
Helton - b; Joe Hertenstein
- d. Matthew Shipp - p.
11/22/2014, Houston, TX.

The approaches to free improvisations are many and varied. It's not the screaming monolithic caterwaul that its detractors like to characterize it as. There are many, varied approaches to the music. Below are two worthwhile recent recordings that demonstrate two different ways musicians approach free improvisation. The quartet assembled by Evan Parker to play on one night of his residency at the Stone in New York City in 2014, is truly an international group. Parker is British, pianist Sylvie Courvoisier is Swiss born. electronics master Ikue Mori was born in Japan and violinist Feldman in America. But they all speak the same musical language: free improvisation. (OK, they also all speak English but that's another matter.) The residency was such a success that a year later the quartet gathered again, this time to play at Roulette. Miller's Tale is a collection of improvisations recorded on an afternoon the day before that performance. The album is dedicated to playwright Arthur Miller and each title is a reference to a title or a phrase from one of his plays. The assembly of Miller's Tale has an unusual structure. The first part of the album consists of quartet tracks (tracks 1-4) and the second half, various group duets. The full group tracks are free improvisations of the highest order. The recorded sound is excellent. Each instrumentalist's distinct and individual style is brought out in this recording. Each of the players uses the full range of their instruments. Parker's use of extended range technique is legendary and although he tends to use it less these days, it's still recognizably Evan Parker. Courvoisier prepares her piano in such a way that it can sound like a percussion instrument or electronic. Feldman's violin can sound full-bodied with bold sweeping lines but he can also issue forth ghostly harmonics that transform the sound of his instrument. Mori's electronic set up has a unique range of sound that gives the music a further dimension. Each of the four group tracks sound complete in and of themselves with natural endings. If there is editing, it is extremely well done. The opener "Death Of A Salesman" starts with Feldman heralding their arrival with a barrage of taut scratchy phrases and proceeds from there. By the track's halfway mark all four have blended

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into a unified voice almost breathing as one organism. It's a beautiful moment that carries through to the end. While most of the quartet tracks run to the 6-8 minute range, "The American Dream", the longest at 13 1/2 minutes, is the most satisfying. It takes its time in development and goes through several different stages to make it a complete performance involving full length development. The conclusion finds Mori issuing subtle blips that fade into the ether is a most satisfying ending. The duos give the listener a glimpse into each player. They tend to be short (only one is over 5 minutes) and to the point. "The Reason Why" has Feldman and Parker engaging in a duet of spiraling lines, sometime converging into one voice but throughout, they match perfectly in tone and texture. But the concluding "A Fountain Pen" is the most unique track on the album. It's between Courvoisier and Mori. As Courvoisier plays contemplative chords, Mori backs her with subtle tinkling bell-like sounds (reflecting Mori's percussive avatar) and subtle background drones. It's a brief but fitting conclusion to a superb album of free improvisation.

The Core Trio has been an ongoing improvising unit since 2004. Based in Houston they consisted of saxophonist Seth Paynter, bassist Thomas Helton and original drummer Richard Cholakian. Cholakian left the group after their first recording, a collaboration with pianist Robert Boston. He was replaced by Joe Hertenstein and they've been going strong ever since. They self-released several records, including an earlier collaboration with pianist Matthew Shipp. They've been playing in New York and have also collaborated with trombonist Steve Swell. But back home, they've been keeping the flame of free improvisation burning brightly.

Live Featuring Matthew Shipp is a second recording with the pianist. Shipp has his own vision and has carved several distinctive niches in his own output. But he always seems game for collaborations with others and it's nice to see him work with this ensemble. They seem eminently suited to each other and this disc demonstrates that strongly. It consists of two unedited improvisations, the first lasting approximately 31 minutes, the second 35 minutes. The first springs from an opening bass solo that gradually accrues energy. Soon Shipp jumps in with a web of knotty chords and Hertenstein joins in for a piano trio section that continues to the five minute mark. The energy builds to a pitch before dissipating, Shipp plays a few chords and Paynter enters at the five minute mark. These are clearly musicians attuned to each other. They know when to lay back and when to jump in. During the second improv, after a particularly heated section, around 13 minute mark there is an abrupt group stop. Shipp plays a delicate, gauzy piano figure joined by Helton playing arco which evolves into an extended quiet section. That speaks to the high level group interaction. But it also demonstrates how they know that expressing themselves softly can be as effective as a full bore charge. Both sets are characterized by these principles.

It's clear the Core Trio has developed a refined group approach free improvisation that can easily incorporate guests as well have them go on their own merry way as a trio. Houston is lucky to have them. And Holland's Evil Rabbit label was smart in releasing this.

Robert Iannapolo

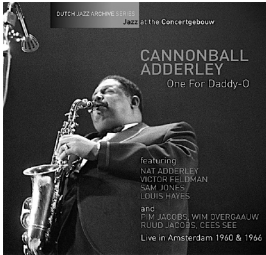
LP Review

TUBBY HAYES
LP REVIEW
TUBBY HAYES
QUINTET,
MODES AND
BLUES: 8TH
FEBRUARY
1964,
GEARBOX
RECORDS 1013,
MODES AND
BLUES (PART ONE)
/ MODES AND
BLUES (PART TWO).
33:32.
HAYES, TS; JIMMY
DEUCHAR, TPT;
TERRY SHANNON,
P; FREDDY
LOGAN, B; ALLAN
GANLEY, D. 2/8/64.
LONDON, UK.

Many years ago during my wayward youth my adolescent eyes encountered many fascinations, among them comic books with the EC logo, model cars that quickly became customized hot rods and records, first 78 rpm then 45s. An offshoot of the latter was an almost hypnotic power produced by the sight of a jukebox. These gleaming machines held sonic treasures of untold richness and the spinning platters each had their own special allure. One of my favorites of the time was the two-part forty-five which doubled my listening pleasure long before the advent of the long-player 33 & 1/3. Some early example of this format was drummer Cozy Cole's "Topsy Pt. 1&2" or "Honky Tonk Parts One and Two" by the Bill Doggett combo featuring Clifford Scott and Billy Butler. Now from the fine Gearbox label out of England comes this 12-inch, 33&1/3 EP of the great Tubby Hayes leading his combo on a live date from Ronnie Scott's club in the mid-sixties. Although not designated as a two-parter this could easily fit into that category as it is one continuous performance of a single composition. At this point in time Hayes was supposedly enthralled by John Coltrane and the framework here is in the model of his "Impressions" or "So What" by Miles Davis. Tubbs eschews the middle eastern touches and these ears detect no overt Trane strain of influence. After a brief upright bass/ flute dominated intro a tenor & trumpet ensemble preamble the whole rhythmic trio kicks in with a minimalist unison head from the horns before the leader takes off on an extended solo that covers the remainder of the A side. Side two starts with applause for Tubbs and a drumkit punch introducing Jimmy Deuchar's brassy yet melodic trumpeting. Other than fellow reedman Ronnie Scott, he was the most sympathetic frontline partner to stand next to the tenorman. His compact solo statement is followed by Shannon's faint piano ride over Ganley's "Philly Joe" rim shots. Logan's sturdy bass walks it some for a while a la Leroy Vinnegar as the drummer switches to brushes. This leads to trades between the horns and Ganley before all re-enter with the theme to take it home. As with other vinyl releases from Gearbox the production here is first-rate with period photographs and liner annotation from Hayes scholar Simon Spillett who reports that Tubbs asked the engineer Les Tomkins "Did You Get All That?". We can be grateful that he did. Recommended.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



**CANNONBALL
ADDERLEY,
ONE FOR
DADDY-O,
NEDERLANDS
JAZZ ARCHIEF 1602.
EXODUS / ONE FOR
DADDY-O / BOHEMIA
AFTER DARK/ BLUES(*)/
WORK SONG(*) STELLA
BY STARLIGHT(*)/ TUNE-
UP(*) . 68:37.**

Adderley, as (all tracks);
Nat Adderley, cnt; Victor
Feldman, p; Sam Jones, b;
Louis Hayes, d; Pim Jacobs,
p(*); Wim Overgaauw, g(*);
Ruud Jacobs, b(*); Cee
See, d(*).

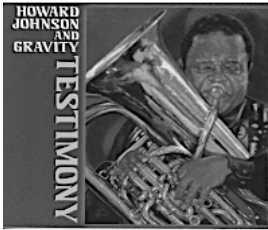
11/19/1960. 6/3/1966(*).
Both Amsterdam.

It was during the decade of the sixties that Julian Adderley hit his stride. After gaining a high profile as a sideman with the Miles Davis sextet he achieved a modicum of popularity with a string of excellent albums for the Riverside label. The first three selections heard here are with his quintet of the time on Saturday, November 19, 1960 Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The sterling rhythmic threesome of Feldman, Jones & Hayes click like a precision Swiss time-piece under the leaders alto and brother Nat's brass. The credits claim he was performing on his usual cornet but the three booklet photos picture him playing a full sized trumpet. The combo kicks with the under-rated Victor Feldman's Exodus, followed by Nat's title tune from his brothers Blue Note platter, then the first big hit "This Here" from former pianist Bobby Timmons before closing out with Oscar Pettiford's jazz standard which features trapster Hayes. While this short set is ear-worthy it is the next four numbers that are a real find.

Captured six years later on Friday, June Third, it finds the altoist at Theatre Bellevue with a quartet from the Continent. Their credentials are explained in the accompanying booklet and they are more than up to the task. There are several highlights herein including a rare chance to hear Adderley stretch out on some stone, down blues along with a "Work Song" workout and a hot version of Miles' "Tune Up". But it is Cannonball's rhapsodic take of the ballad "Stella By Starlight" which is worth the price of purchase alone. If you are an Adderley completist (like yours truly) you owe yourself this album from the stellar Dutch Archive Edition Series.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



**HOWARD JOHNSON
& GRAVITY,
TESTIMONY,
TUSCARORA RECORDS
17-001.**

TESTIMONY(#) / WORKING
HARD FOR THE JONESES(*)
/ FLY WITH THE WIND /
NATURAL
WOMAN / HIGH PRIEST(#) /
LITTLE BLACK LUCILLE(#) /
EVOLUTION(#) / WAY BACK
HOME(#). 53:37.

Johnson, BBb tba, F tba, bari
s, pny wh; Velvet Brown,
F tba; Dave Bargerion, Eb
tba; Earl McIntyre, Eb
tba; Joseph Daley, BBb tba;
Bob Stewart, CC tuba; Carlton
Homes, p; Melissa Slocum,
b; Buddy
Williams, d; Nedra Johnson,
vcl(*); CJ Wright, Butch
Watson, Mem Nahadr, bg
vcl(*); Joe Exley, CC
tba (#). No dates given. NYC,
NY.

There is no question about it, Howard Johnson is the ultimate utility-man. As a certified master of the bottom-end instruments his eclectic appearances on a variety of recordings. My introduction to his talents first came from a 1963 double lp by Taj Mahal which my friend Jesse Ed Davis (who was in the band at the time) turned me onto. Later he showed up backing the Band (aka The Hawks) in the Last Waltz video. There were other sideman show-ups before he blew me completely away with the initial Gravity disc followed not long after by Right Now! Many of the same personnel return for his third outing, Bob Stewart, Earl McIntyre, Joe Daley & Dave Bargerion. The latter first came into view as a member of Blood, Sweat & Teats. Like previous volumes the tune selection is top heavy with outside material with only a pair of Johnson originals in the title number and "Little Black Lucille" which features the pennywhistle and pristine piano of Homes. "Working Hard For The Joneses" is the sole vocal heard. Written by the lead singer Nedra Johnson it is catchy enough to merit airplay by some deejays if any had the gonads. Elsewhere there are savory renditions of writings from Carole King, Bob Neloms, the Jazz Crusaders and a pair of McCoy Tyner charts. These sounds will probably be revelatory to many music buffs.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



While Chicago might have been Old Blue Eye's kind of town in song it has been a major center for the blues for a longer period of time. That it is remains a vital fount for that native art form is no better exemplified than in the blues output of the dependable Delmark label. For six issues under that imprint the group called Mississippi Heat continues to show how "the blues roll on". At first glance I thought the title of their latest (1) might be a nod to Mem Shannon, the former cab-driving bluesman from the Big Easy. But alas, come to find out (via the liner annotation) it was named for the Hi-De- Ho Man, Cab Calloway. As with most releases from this combo there's a heady mix of blue-hued songs mostly from leader LaCocoue with tasteful contributions from Sax Gordon on a handful of tracks and Dave Spector on a minorish track along with others. As usual; singer Inetta Visor is the glue that holds it all together. Great contemporary blues.

Larry Hollis

1) MISSISSIPPI HEAT,
CAB DRIVING MAN,
DELMARK DE848.
CUPID BOUND / CAB DRIVING
MAN / THAT LATE NIGHT
STUFF / FLOWERS ON MY
TOMBSTONE / ICY BLUE / THE
LAST GO ROUND / LIFE IS
TOO SHORT / DON'T MESS UP
A GOOD THING / ROSALIE /
LUCK OF THE DRAW / M AMA
KAILA / MUSIC IS MY LIFE
/ LONELY EYES / SMOOTH
OPERATOR / CAN'T GET ME
NO TRACTION / HEY PIPO!.
67:00.

Collective personnel: Pierre
LaCocoue, hca; bldlr; Inetta
Visor, vcl, tam; Michael
Dotson, vcl, g; Giles
Corey, vcl, g; Brian Quinn,
b; Ricky Nelson, Terrance
Williams, d; Kenny Smith,
Chris "Hambone"
Cameron, p, org, clv; Sumito
Ariyo, Dave Spector, g; Ruben
Alvarez, perc; Sax Gordon, rs,
bari s. 4/18 &
19/2016. Chicago. IL.

New Issues



2) SHARON LEWIS AND TEXAS FIRE, GROWN ASS WOMAN, DELMARK DE849.

CAN'T DO IT LIKE WE DO
/ HELL YEAH! / CHICAGO
WOMAN / THEY'RE LYING /
DON'T TRY
TO JUDGE ME / OLD MAN'S
BABY / GROWN ASS WOMAN
/ WALK WITH ME / FREEDOM /
CALL HOME / HOME FREE
BLUES / HIGH ROAD / WHY
I SING THE BLUES / SOUL
SHINE.
57:17.

Collective personnel:

Lewis, vcl; Steve Bramer, g;
Roosevelt Purifoy, p, org;
Andre Howard, b; Tony
Dale; d. Joanna Conner, g;
Sugar blue, Steve Bell, hca;
Ari Seder, b; Kenny Anderson,
tpt; Hank Ford, ts;
Jerry DiMuzio, bari s. 5/17 &
18/2016. Chicago, IL.

Traveling across country to the Lone Star state we find the sophomore title from songstress Sharon Lewis and her band Texas Fire shows more growth and maturity. The latter is most noticeable in the song sculpting from Ms. Lewis who penned several strong statements concerning the distaff side of the blues. Her voice is forceful and when she throws in an occasional growl, reminds this listener of the great Koko Taylor but is not as consistently gruff overall. There is also a major plus in her working band is guitarist Steve Bramer who scripted a half-dozen of the selections leaving only two covers at the end of the program. Kudos to Joanna Conner who slides up a storm on two cuts as does harpman Sugar Blue on a pair. The three piece horn section handles Kenny Anderson's simple but effective charts with aplomb. Like most Delmark blues dates this one reeks of authenticity.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



THE THREE SOUNDS, GROOVIN' HARD.

RESONANCE 2029.

GIRL TALK(c) THE NIGHT HAS
A THOUSAND EYES(c) / BLUE
GENES(a) / THE SHADOW
OF YOUR SMILE(c) / RAT
DOWN FRONT(a) / YOURS IS
MY HEART ALONE(c) / A.M.
BLUES(b)/BLUESSETTE(a) /
CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA(a) /
THE BOOGALOO(b).
Gene Harris, p; Andy
Simpkins, b; Bill Dowdy(a),
Kalil Madi(b), Carl Burnett, (c),
d. 1964-1968. Seattle,
WA.

When they formed in 1956 (originally as the Four Sounds) the piano trio scene offered some stiff competition from the likes of Oscar Peterson, Ahmad Jamal, Erroll Garner, Ramsey Lewis and a host of other threesomes. By 1958, when they signed with Alfred Lion for the famed Blue Note label they were the Three Sounds and from then until mid-1962 they were regulars in the late Rudy Van Gelder's studio and giving Jimmy Smith a run for his money as the most popular act in the Blue Note stable.

These ten performances spring from a quartet of gigs spanning the four years from 1964 to 1968 with Harris and Simpkins on all tracks. The rotating personnel are the drummers; Bill Dowdy was the first and he appears on four cuts including what, to these ears, is one of two highlights of the set, a rhapsodic version of the late Toots Thielemans' "Bluesette". It was never done in a studio rendition. A native of Cleveland, Kalil Madi provides the timekeeping on two numbers whose titles are self-describing. He replaced Dowdy for the Vibrations album. Last by not least by any means is Carl Burnett who shows up on fours selections among which is the second highlight "Theme From The Sandpiper" better known as "The Shadow Of Your Smile" for the only version by the trio. Burnett went on to join Freddie Hubbard and a rewarding career. As with the bulk of their line the folks at Resonance have produced a first-rate issue that every jazzer should appreciate.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



**MAX NAGL
ENSEMBLE
LIVE AT PORGY &
BESS VOL 2
RUDE NOISES 024**

ANSAGE/ PARKGARAGE/
BLASS/ ROPELLER/ DIE
GELBE STRASSE/ CHROMA/
NASENBLUTEN/ BAROKER
BARHOCKER/ 9 IN 1/
VANTAHRE 46:07

Pamela Stickney, vln; Joanna
Lewis, vln; Rene Harvey-Nagl,
vln; Clemens Salesny, as.
Ts, clt; Max Nagl, as, bs, clt;
Daniel Riegler, tbn; Clemens
Wenger, kybd; Rapael
Preuschi, bass; Herbert Picker,
d Jan 31, 2016, Vienna

A very old-fashioned sounding big little band. A nice horn section with an interesting use of strings. The CD opens with some high-energy fusion and settles down nicely. A lot of the tunes sound like old pop songs from then 30s and 40s. The rhythms are largely loose fusion, very danceable.

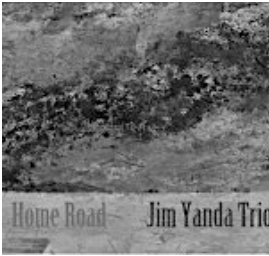
The ensemble writing is very good. Some very interesting use of the strings. Some of the violin solos sounded like a soprano voice. The main solo work is carried out by the horns. Some very sweet alto and trombone playing.

Many of the arrangements, and the alto sound, reminded me a lot of The Duke. Not that he would have played in a fusion mode, but the melody writing and arrangements, to my ears, sound very much influenced by Ellington. There are also a couple of nice dissonant spots that I quite liked.

The crowd certainly enjoyed the performance.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



**JIM YANDA TRIO,
HOME ROAD,
CORNER STORE JAZZ
0113/0114.**

CD 1: MY SHIP /
IN-SOURCE / COUNTRY
MOTHER / SUNDOG
/ GHOSTHOOD. CD

2: EARTH WAY /
CONSECRATION /
DAYLUDE / HOME ROAD
/ OFF THE STAIRS /
BILULIOUS.

Yanda, g; Drew Gress, b;
Phil Haynes, d. 6/10-11/14,
Paramus, NJ.

Guitarist Jim Yanda seems to be one of those musicians who go along for years impressing everyone who hears him live but remains unknown to the world at large. That's at least partially because he's just now releasing his first CDs in a 30-plus year career, one, recorded back in the 80s, called *Regional Cookin'* and this one, *Home Road*, done in 2014.

Yanda is a polished player with psychedelic and Southern rock influences in his playing as well as traces of Jim Hall. The beauty he can conjure picking single notes shows on the first track, "My Ship" in his lustrous picking of the theme before his accomplished band mates, Drew Gress and Phil Haynes, join in and the piece glides into a slippery blues.

The music remains on a high level throughout. "In-Source" is more quicksilver blues, "Country Mother" has Yanda flying and digging in like Larry Coryell over Gress' bubbling bass and Haynes' crisp drumming. "Sundog" has a slower tempo and ascending eastern scales and brings in a heavier psychedelic feel that continues in "Ghosthood" with woozy slide guitar and ghostly cymbal beats that lead into bent, glowing guitar notes gliding over choppy Mideastern rhythms.

The second CD has more springy, up-tempo jazz stomping in "Earth Way" and "Off The Stairs"; a relaxed soulful shuffle in "Consecration" and slow, reflective balladry on "Daylude" and "Home Road". Jim Yanda is a wonderful guitarist and he fits together beautifully with Gress and Haynes. His style is liquid and goes from slow and tarry to blazing fast instantly. He combines Coryell's looseness with Hall's precise tone in a unique burning style. The world hasn't known about him up till now but hopefully now it will.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues



CHICAGO/LONDON
UNDERGROUND,
A NIGHT WALKING
THROUGH MIRRORS,
CUNEIFORM 428.
A NIGHT SPENT WALKING
THROUGH MIRRORS /
SOMETHING MUST HAPPEN /
BOSS REDUX / MYSTERIES OF
EMANATING LIGHT. 79:53.
Rob Mazurek, cnt, sampler,
elec, vcl; Chad Taylor, d,
mbira, elec; Alexander
Hawkins, p; John Edwards, b.
4/21/16, London, England.

One of Rob Mazurek's longest standing groups is his Chicago Underground Duo with drummer Chad Taylor. On this disc, they are in London joining forces with two of the top British free improv players, bassist John Edwards and pianist Alexander Hawkins. The addition of two more voices gives the music a fuller feel. The opening title track has some of Mazurek's electronic coloration but mostly it's a rambunctious tussle between the four players. Edwards' thick, choppy bass and Hawkins' cascades of hammering piano thrash about with Mazurek's staccato cornet and Taylor's percussive storms before it all slows to an eerie quiet with muted horn and ghostly thudding sounds. On "Something Must Happen" Hawkins ushers in a storm of busy piano notes over a cloud of static before the bass chugs in and Mazurek starts playing clear, strong melody that continues even as the other instruments subside. "Bass Redux" starts with an electronic riff and fast drumming which leads to a turbulent Latin rhythm. Mazurek's cornet drives hard and Hawkins takes over with a dizzying maelstrom of chords before Mazurek swoops back in on a shattering high note and somehow quotes "It Might As Well Be Spring". "Emanating Light" begins with a ponding drum solo. Then rubbery bass and electronic pings lead to a long succession of staccato notes from the ensemble before Mazurek's cornet emerges playing forlorn, squashed figures like Bill Dixon. The addition of Edwards and Hawkins give gravity and power to this music. Mazurek and Taylor can be impressive on their own but this is a heady collision of talented improvising musicians that is full of unpredictable beauty.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues

THREE HARPS TUNING FORKS & ELECTRONICS

ZEENA PARKINS

ZEENA PARKINS, THREE HARPS TUNING FORKS & ELECTRONICS,

GOOD CHILD 0006.

MUTED / DETERMINED /
MOUSE / TUNING FORKS*
/ DRUMMING / CODA.

Parkins, processing; Nuiko
Wadden, Kristen Theriault,
Megan Conley, hrp; Ikue
Mori, elec*. 2013-15,
Brooklyn, NY.

The rather clinical title of this CD makes it sound more forbidding than it is. This is actually very approachable music that Zeena Parkins originally composed for a dance score and reworked here for multiple harp players.

The sound of the harps is distorted by placing ribbons, mallets, metal bolts and other objects on certain strings. This creates a wide variety of sounds outside of the usual angelic harp strumming. "Muted" has passages of skipping and running notes that surge and overlap like a Philip Glass composition. "Determined" mixes the instruments into a tangle of noise with high, arcing plucks echoing above the scrum. Bright folkish melodies emerge briefly but then get overtaken by ringing hums. On "Mouse" deep, sliding notes and scraping sounds turn into a choppy gallop. "Tuning Forks" indeed features the ringing sound of tuning forks extended and decorated with electronic crackle by Ikue Mori, sounds that build into harmonies which resemble the drone of an organ. On the finale "Drumming" a closed loop of prickly dancing harps becomes warped and ominous through processing before it gives way to a burst of what sounds like furious hand drumming.

Zeena Parkins distorts and chops the sound of the harps like a musical fun house mirror. Her experiments are fascinating to hear.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues

DOUG
MACDONALD,
A SALURE TO THE
JAZZ COMPOSERS
– JAZZ
MARATHON 2,
BLUJAZZ 3446.
CD 1: OUR DELIGHT
/ 'ROUND MIDNIGHT
/ STROLLIN' / CON
ALMA / CONFIRMATION
/ DAAHOUD. CD 2:
ELLINGTON MEDLEY:
JUST SQUEEZE
ME-WHAT AM I HERE
FOR-SOPHISTICATED
LADY-COTTONTAIL /
BOSSA DON / BLUE
CAPERS / WHISPER NOT
/ SHINY STOCKINGS /
SONNYMOON FOR TWO.
TT=132:12.
COLLECTIVE PERSONNEL:
MACDONALD, G;
LANNY MORGAN,
AS, PETE CHRISTLIEB,
RICKY WOODARD,
TS; CARL SAUNDERS,
BOB SUMMERS, TPT;
LINDA SMALL, TB;
JOHN CAMPBELL, JOSH
NELSON, P; JIM HUGHART,
JOHN B. WILLIAMS, B;
PAUL KRIEBICH, ROY
MCCURDY, D. 9/27/16,
REDONDO BEACH, CA.

This is a live recording of several West Coast jazz musicians performing the work of several venerable jazz composers round robin style, with different combinations of players on each piece.

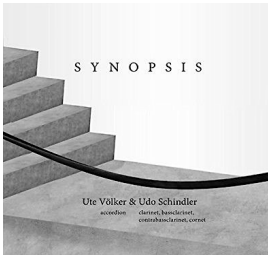
The tunes and their composers are mostly very well-known and the arrangements are largely conventional. The fun in this set comes from the musicians' excellent playing. Ricky Woodard has a lustrous tenor solo on "Round Midnight" and Pete Christlieb takes a leisurely, soulful blast on Horace Silver's "Strollin'" contrasted by Bob Summers' cool trumpet. A bright treatment of Clifford Brown's "Daahoud" has both tenor players sailing and Summers again excelling.

There's a four song Ellington medley for tenor, trombone and the rhythm section that allows Jim Hughart to take a nice bouncy bass solo on "Just Squeeze Me" and also gives fine solo spots to Christlieb, Doug MacDonald, Linda Small, John Campbell and Roy McCurdy.

MacDonald is the leader of the project and a joyous presence throughout. He's miked closely enough that you hear his crisp comping but he never overwhelms the front line and he also takes several easy-swinging, attractive solos like his mercurial picking on "Whisper Not" and his clean bluesy and bouncy lines on "Shiny Stockings". MacDonald also contributes one original piece to the set, a bossa nova called "Bossa Don" which gives him a chance to stretch out in his solo and provides a space for lovely pealing trumpet by Carl Saunders. All the horns play together on a few tracks like "Shiny Stockings" and "Our Delight", trading solos and giving the show the informal, everybody-have-fun air of a Jazz At The Philharmonic concert without any of the competitiveness. This is a relaxed, enjoyable session full of good, unpretentious mainstream jazz.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues



**UTE VOLKER & UDO
SCHINDLER
SYNOPSIS
VALVE 437**

SYNOPSIS 1/ SYNOPSIS 2/
SYNOPSIS 3/ SYNOPSIS 4/
SYNOPSIS 5? SYNOPSIS 6/
SYNOPSIS 7 57:18

Ute Volker acc; Udo Schindler
clt, bass clt, contrabass clt, cnt
Munich, August 8, 2014

I was really looking forward to this CD. I haven't heard an accordion in jazz since the work of Pauline Oliveros. And I was not disappointed. The CD is a really good example of two people having ongoing musical conversations. I love the titles, which just reflect that and don't try to bring other meaning into the music. The tracks are nicely delineated. Every time I heard a significant change in the conversation, the track changed, unlike so many other duo recordings.

Volker uses his accordion very effectively, whether it is playing a melodic lead, supporting Schindler, or interplaying with him. Schindler uses his instruments well also, getting some very nice vocal effects from the lower horns. On Synapse 5 Schindler uses the cornet in a similar fashion as his other horns, but it is in a higher register. At times I think he is just trying to talk through his horns.

The CD is fairly quiet, except for the final track where Schindler lets his clarinet go, just like two people who have known each other for a long time sit down to discuss a bunch of things, from serious world issues to day-to-day chatter.

I really enjoyed this CD.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



CHARLIE SEPULVEDA & THE TURNAROUND, MR. EP – A TRIBUTE TO EDDIE PALMIERI, HIGHNOTE 7302.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME
1* / CHARLIE'S WHOLE
TONE BLUES* / BOMBA
PA' CARMEN@ / MR. EP+ /
BESAME MUCHO+** / PEER
MAGIC+ / SI TU SABES+*** /
MR. JAZZ@ / VARIATIONS ON
A THEME 2*. 46:09.

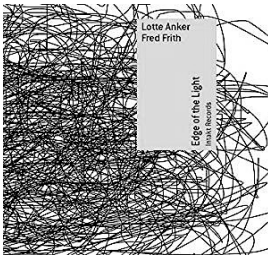
Sepulveda, tpt; Eddie
Palmieri*, Bienvenido Dinzey+,
Eduardo Zayas@, p; Norberto
Ortiz, ts; Gabriel Rodriguez, b;
Raul Maldonado, d; Gadwin
Vargas, cga; Felipe Fournier,
vib; Yarimar Denisse**,
Sietenueve***, vcl. San Juan,
Puerto Rico.

The title explains everything. This is trumpeter Charlie Sepulveda's tribute to his one-time boss, Latin Jazz icon Eddie Palmieri, a session as wild and rocking as Palmieri's own music. The man himself does short, dramatic solos at the beginning and end of the CD and also plays with the band on "Charlie's Whole Tone Blues", doing a characteristically stabbing and darting solo.

There is much else on display besides Palmieri. The entire set is full of slinky rhythms and agitated melodies. "Bomba Pa' Carmen" is a gorgeous, sensual melody that Sepulveda, pianist Eduardo Zayas and vibraphonist Felipe Fournier erratically dance through. Yarimar Denisse does a sultry vocal on "Besame Mucho" leading to dreamy electric piano by Bienvenido Dinzey that recalls Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage". "Mr. EP" is a hot, soulful boogaloo tipping in the direction of "Watermelon Man" with nasty, biting solos by Dinzey, the leader and tenor player Norberto Ortiz. "Peer Magic" is a fast, sweaty number that features the horns swarming in unison while "Si Tu Sabes" has a rapper expounding in Spanish over cool muted trumpet and a simmering beat. "Mr. Jazz" is bonafide hard-swinging jazz with Latin decoration. The horn players swing and spray, the vibes dance and the piano and congas rock back and forth. This CD is a notable example of the variety and power of Latin Jazz. Even without the Palmieri connection this would be a marvelous set.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues



**LOTTE ANKER AND
FRED FRITH
EDGE OF THE
LIGHT
INTAKT CD-237**

ANCHOR POINT/ RUN
DON'T HIDE/ REASONABLY
AVAILABLE CONTROL
MEASURES/ THE MOUNTAIN
IS AS QUIET AS THE ETERNAL
PAST/ NON-PRECISION
APPROACH PROCEDURE/
THEIR BREAKS INTO AN EMPTY
HOUSE/ THE SAME DIRT/
HALLUCINATING ANGELS
57:05

Lotte Anker, saxophones;
Fred Frith, el. g.
July 11, 2010;
Copenhagen, Denmark.

The aptly titled “Edge of the Light” showcases a series of exploratory duets between Danish saxophonist Lotte Anker and English guitarist Fred Frith. Even though this album may seem like just another listing in the long discographies of both musicians, it is a must-own for the contemporary improvisation junkie. Both of these musicians have built colossal reputations to supplement dizzying performance schedules. Between Anker’s fantastic trio work with Craig Taborn and Gerald Cleaver and Frith’s global solo career, it’s a wonder that these two were able to find the time to make this record. Nevertheless, the listeners are the beneficiaries of this great collaboration. The music, as you can imagine, is very experimental and doesn’t adhere to traditional forms or formulas. In fact, both musicians have a reputation for their work with pioneers like John Zorn, Andrew Cyrille, and Tim Berne to name a few. They have both been regular collaborators with Swiss pianist Sylvie Courvoisier and have created some fantastic work alongside her as well. Due to their mutual musical affections, it isn’t surprising that they mesh well together. Both musicians explore extended techniques and build (mostly) short soundscapes. Pieces like “Non-precision Approach Procedure” reconnoiter the physical capabilities of their instruments with frantic speed and rhythmic virtuosity. “Reasonably Available Control Measures” extends the listener’s audio palate to tonal dimensions thought impossible on those two instruments. In fact, the duo’s sound weaves such a web at one point that the accumulation almost sounds like a theremin. Frith’s loops, scoops, and distortions find an agreeable existence alongside Anker’s howls, growls, and screams. The duo is also planning some live dates for 2016-17 with the possible addition of a drummer. Stay tuned!

Dustin Mallory

New Issues

GRENCsó OPEN COLLECTIVE FLAT/SÍKVIDÉK BMC CD-205

BRANDED/ IVAN'S
CHILDHOOD/ SUGAR FREE/
SLOW STREET/ INDIAN IN
HORTOBÁGY/ DAWN CARESS/
IN THE CSINÁLOSI FOREST/
WINDING FAREWELL
55:35

István Grensó, ts, b cl, flt;
Máté Pozsár, p; Róbert Benkő,
b; Szilveszter Miklós, d, perc.
November 30, 2012;
Budapest, Hungary.

PAUL DIETRICH QUINTET WE ALWAYS GET THERE BLUJAZZ BJ-3417

DUNES/ HOUSE ON
WILLARD/ 12:48/ CURRENTS/
CONSTRUCTS/ UNRAVEL/
IMPULSE (INTERLUDE)/
THOUGHT/ DRIVE SAFE
60:39

Paul Dietrich, tpt, flgh;
Dustin Laurenzi, ts; Paul
Bedal, p, kybd; Tim Ipsen, b;
Andrew Green, d.
December 10-11, 2013;
Chicago, Illinois.

As a veteran of the Hungarian jazz scene, woodwind musician István Grensó has returned with an album that features his Open Collective. This band has been performing in one context or another for a number of decades. The band's experience shows in this album's very mature take on open improvisation. Right from the start, Grensó displays his superb tone and melodic intellect. The driving back-beat of "Branded" gradually gives way to some avant-garde explorations of style. The playful romp that is "Ivan's Childhood," features a child-like melody that develops into a spirited dance. "Sugar-free" begins with some exceptional piano from Benkő that is reminiscent of 1960s McCoy Tyner. Later, the piano moves into a much freer and chromatic improvisation. Grensó's sound carries the listener through pieces like "In the Csinálosi Forest." His tone and range of melodic invention really stands out against the rhythmic discovery of the band. Not only is this album splendid, but the compositions and improvisations display a very unique ensemble in action. It is a beauty that should receive wide-spread praise.

Dustin Mallory

The young Paul Dietrich has gone from gradually cutting a space out for himself in the Midwest to becoming one of the Chicago's busiest performers. We Always Get There presents Dietrich's small-group compositions in a standard quintet format. The first observation is the album's polished presentation alongside the nuanced nature of the musicians. The music contains everything from minimalist melodies ("House on Willard" and "Constructs") to Blue Note-era post-bop ("Dunes"). There is even a fantastic arrangement of Bjork's "Unravel." That tune finds Paul Bedal switching to the Rhodes while the horn players explore some exotic counterpoint. The overall highlight of the album is the exceptionally well-crafted compositions. Dietrich's ear for harmonic shading and intriguing chord-voicings is matchless. He also displays a proclivity for gathering an exceptional group of musicians together.

Saxophonist Dustin Laurenzi gives some fantastic solos throughout the entire album. Look for his debut album at the end of 2016, as he is a rising star in his own right.

Dustin Mallory

New Issues



TATVAMASI
PARTS OF THE
ENTIRETY
CUNEIFORM RECORDS
RUNE-371

UNSETTLED CYCLISTS
PELTON/ COLLAPSE OF
TIME/ RHUBANABARB/
SHAPE SUGGESTION/ AN
ECCENTRIC INTROVERT IN A
STUDY FILLED WITH BROKEN
MIRRORS/ ASTROEPOS/ BUY
2, TAKE 3
62:37

Grzegorz Lesiak, g; Tomasz
Piątek, ts; Lukasz Downar, b;
Krzysztof Redas, d.
February 11-13, 2013;
Warsaw, Poland.

Anybody that has followed my reviews over the past few years knows that I've been raving about the music coming out of Poland and lamenting the fact that few Americans know about it. This album is no exception. In the band's own words: "the music of Tatvamasi reveals hidden depths of the Polish soul." The ensemble's sound oozes prog-rock but is clearly rooted in the study of jazz as well. The album kicks off with a grooving, rhythmic riff that propels "Unsettled Cyclists Peloton." It almost sounds like Moon Hooch meets Phish, until Piątek's solo thrusts the listener into his maze of exceptional licks. Piątek's tremendous solos and exceptional sound is a highlighting feature of the album. His playing is as good as or better than most mainstream saxophonists. The album also displays hints of funk on tunes like "Rhubanabarb," complete with wah-wah guitar. There is even a nice folk/jam influence that shows up from time to time on each track. The album was recorded in the studio, but it was performed live. The production value is pretty great and each musician gets fantastic sound, especially Redas' drum sound and cymbal control (check out "Shape Suggestions"). The heavy electric bass grooves and ostinatos of Downar suggest more of rock/funk influence than the other musicians, which gives fresh life to the music. Lesiak's compositions are pretty interesting and deliver an alternative way to approach this instrumentation. The overall effect creates an intriguing sonority that is worth the price of admission alone.

Dustin Mallory

New Issues



MAZOLEWSKI GONZÁLEZ QUINTET SHAMAN FORTUNE 0004-004

SUITE/ ASTIGMATIC/
THE MATTER AT HAND/
SZTANDER/ HYMN FOR
JULIUS HEMPHILL/ PUSHING
THE CAR
59:15

Wojtek Mazolewski, b, vcl;
Dennis González, tpt, cornet,
vcl; Joanna Duda, p; Marek
Pospieszalski, ts, a cl; Jerzy
Rogiewicz, d, perc.
November 18, 2010; Warsaw,
Poland.

The shaman: the person with access and influence in the spiritual world. It's an apt title for this highly spiritual and investigative album from For Tune Records. Before we head into the nuts and bolts of this album, let's first recognize the multi-hemispheric reputation For Tune Records is gaining for introducing the globe to the exemplary groups recording in Warsaw. This album is another of these fantastic recordings. The Mazolewski González Quintet is a gathering of individuals who each have music careers in their own right, but have assembled together as a band of experimental journeyers. The album's opening, "Suite," begins with a series of free sounds. Words and noises become single tones from Pospieszalski's woodwind. Gradually Mazolewski's bass mixes riffs with Rogiewicz's drums and shakers. The whole accumulation then gives way to the surprisingly melodic voice of González's trumpet. González provides the melodic anchor throughout the entire album that really gives this unrestricted music a remarkable character. Duda doesn't make her presence felt until "The Matter At Hand," but she does so with passion. Her angular melodies and teasingly short phrases mix with her mature sense of pianistic touch. Duda's chords on "Sztander" are equally noteworthy and provide great support for the horns. Outside of the fantastic improvisations, the most remarkable composition on the album is probably "Hymn for Julius Hemphill." Written for the founder of the World Saxophone Quartet, the harmonic underpinning provides a solid base for the melodic counterpoint to flow over. The final piece, "Pushing the Car," begins with a free introduction before Mazolewski and Duda present a playful romp that is gradually passed among the musicians. The romp descends back in and out of chaos, but always seems to re-emerge. Finally, Mazolewski leaves a bass harmonic hanging in space as the punctuation on one of the better albums I've heard this year.

Dustin Mallory

New Issues

THE AWAKENING ORCHESTRA VOLUME 1: THIS IS NOT THE ANSWER

INNOVA 889

PRELUDE & FANFARE:

THE PROPHET/

MYXOMATOSIS/ THE

WORDS, THEY FAIL

TO COME/ ALONE

TOGETHER/ PROTEST/

YOU STILL BELIEVE IN

ME/ THIS IS NOT THE

ANSWER/ MURDERER/

HI-LILI, HI-LO

106:05

Kyle Saulnier, cond.

Soloists: Nathan

Hetherington, vcl;

Samuel Ryder, ts;

Andrew Gutauskas,

bari s; Michael

Boscarino, tbn; Michael

McAllister, g; Felipe

Salles, ts, bari s; Seth

Fruiterman, vcl; David

DeJesus, as; Rob

Mosher, ss; Nadje

Noordhuis, tpt, flgh;

James Shipp, vib; Philip

Dizack, tpt.

Ensemble: Daniel

Urness, Seneca Black,

Matthew Musselman,

Benjamin Griffin, Max

Seigel, Aaron Kotler,

Joshua Paris, Will Clark.

November 10-11,

2012; New Haven,

Connecticut.

One hesitates to use the term “third-stream” when describing that in-between music that runs the gamut of style. The term may fit The Awakening Orchestra, but it simultaneously erodes a description of musical depth that this group displays. Led by composer/arranger/conductor Kyle Saulnier, The Awakening Orchestra’s first major recording presents a double disc release of more than 100 minutes of stunning music. The 20-piece orchestra is a hybrid group with a jazz big-band instrumentation at its core. Their sound is a little less easy to define. It exists in that space between Charles Mingus, Carla Bley, and Maria Schneider. There is also plenty of influence from the worlds of classical and Hollywood music. The opening piece, “Prelude & Fanfare: The Prophet,” kicks the album off with a melodic fragment from a saxophone that is artistically shaded by vibraphone and muted trumpet. The resonance gives way to a drum beat that sets the groove for the rest of the piece. Almost reminiscent of crime jazz and other 1960s movie music (except funkier), the piece could easily fit into a Marlon Brando movie. Saulnier’s more serious compositional chops are displayed on “The Words, They Fail to Come.” The piece begins slowly as a duet between the baritone saxophone and piano as the other musicians gradually fade in. The pauses in each phrase provide a powerful contrast with the brass’s authoritative entrances. The piece also features exceptional solo work from Gutauskas and Boscarino. The second disc begins with an orchestration of Brahms’ “Intermezzo Op. 118, No. 2.” Not only is it a fantastic arrangement, but it is clear that Saulnier has assembled an exceptional group of musicians. Saulnier doesn’t take any shortcuts in his arrangements, but the musicians rise to the challenge of its difficulty. The second disc also takes on a more nuanced and mellower feel than the exciting nature of the first disc. It contains the four-movement title track “This Is Not the Answer.” In it, Saulnier’s compositional paintbrush is his colorful use of orchestration. Pairing flute and muted trumpet to present melodies alongside harmonies shared by piano, trombone, and tenor saxophone make for some spectacular moments. Recorded in New Haven in 2012, this is easily one of the best large ensemble albums recorded in recent memory. Look for The Awakening Orchestra’s sophomore album to be released at the end of 2016.

Dustin Mallory

New Issues

QUINSIN
NACHOFF,
FLUX,
MYTHOLOGY
0012.

TIGHTROPE /
COMPLIMENTARY
OPPOSITES / MIND'S
EAR I / MIND'S EAR II /
ASTRAL ECHO POEM /
TILTED. 51:52.

Nachoff, ts; David
Binney, as; Matt
Mitchell, p, el p, org,
moog rogue; Kenny
Wolleson, d, timpani,
tubular bells, perc;
Christine Duncan, ther-
emin. 2/15/12, 5/7/12.

JIM SNIDERO,
MD66,
SAVANT 2156.
MD66 /
RECURSION / FREE
BEAUTY / UNIFIED /
WHO WE'VE KNOWN /
UN4SCENE / BLUE IN
GREEN / PURGE. 52:26.

Snidero, as; Alex
Sipiagin, tpt; Andy
Laverne, p; Ugonna
Okegwo, b; Rudy
Royston, d. 4/22/16,
Brooklyn, NY.

Quinsin Nachoff is a Canadian saxophonist and composer with interesting ideas. On this CD he puts an accomplished quartet through tricky compositions that place advanced and intricate musicianship against a faint backdrop of electronics. "Complimentary Opposites" has Matt Mitchell's electric piano darting and clanging between the long, singing saxophone lines of Nachoff and David Binney before the piece shifts to a more groove-based section that features Mitchell's nagging acoustic piano and Kenny Wolleson's deft, clattering drums. "Mind's Ear I" combines the fast-switching melodies of a Steve Coleman tune with the melancholy sax sound of Wayne Shorter while "Astral Echo Poem" puts the saxes and electric piano together in a humorously ponderous way that recalls the music of British bassist Hugh Hopper. On "Tilted" Wolleson works up an actual backbeat that serves as a launching pad for the piano and saxes to spiral off into space. Nachoff has a way of incorporating acoustic and electric sounds that gives him a unique voice. He is a talent worth noticing for the future.

Jerome Wilson

The "MD66" in this CD's title stands for Miles Davis in 1966, meaning this is yet another disc that gets its inspiration from Davis' fabled mid-60's quintet. However Jim Snidero does not emulate the actual sound of that old group. Instead its influence is felt in the freedom and adventure of the playing. Rudy Royston's drums provide a slippery energy for the rest of the band to play off while Snidero and Alex Sipiagin attack the melodies in unison and play off each other on their solos. Snidero's soulful rippling through the abstract, hazy rhythms of "Free Beauty" makes a fine contrast to Sipiagin's lush yet ghostly sound. The title track has a pounding drive to it with Royston crashing away like Tony Williams and "Who We've Known" is a sophisticated and soulful tune with subdued horn work and an elegant piano solo by Andy Laverne. An actual Davis tune even shows up in the set, the classic "Blue In Green". That selection provides Snidero a chance to do his loveliest playing of the session over Laverne's delicate piano.

Jim Snidero is one of those steady musicians who don't get a lot of attention but quietly and steadily put out quality music year after year. This is another well-conceived and executed set from him.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues

ANTHONY BRANKER & IMAGINE, BEAUTY WITHIN, ORIGIN 82719.

JOY / BEAUTY WITHIN /
LOVING DAY (JUNE 12)
/ PRELUDE TO WISDOM
(FABIAN'S IMPROVISATION)
/ (WE ARE) WHAT WE ARE
NOT YET / MANY ROADS
BENEATH THE SKY / GRACE
/ PEOPLE EVERYWHERE /
(GOD'S) WISDOM. 56:16.

Branker, comp, musical
director; Ralph Bowen, ts,
ss; Pete McCann, g; Fabian
Almazan, p; Linda Oh, b; Rudy
Royston, d. 4/29/16, Brooklyn,
NY.

1) ERWIN HELFER, LAST CALL, THE SIRENS 5024.

Make Me A Pallet On The
Floor / DC Boogie / St. James
Infirmary / St. Louis Blues* /
Pennies from Heaven / Bright
Lights, Big City+ / I Almost
Lost My Mind / The Rocky
Mountain Blues* / The Fives /
Four O'clock Blues / Operator
Blues** / Trouble In Mind**
/ Make Me A Pallet On The
Floor**/ A conversation with
Erwin. 58:51.

Helfer, p; Ardella Williams*,
Katherine Davis+, Estelle
"Mama" Yancey**, vcl; John
Brumbach, ts; Odie Payne
Jr., d; Truck Parham, b.
1957, 1979, 7/24/14, 4/8/15,
9/19/15, 10/12/15, 3/14/16.

Composer Anthony Branker does not actually play on his releases. Instead he writes all the music and conducts the ensemble. His groups play compelling modern jazz with space, mystery and a sense of spirituality that is reflected in the titles. "Many Roads Beneath The Sky" has Ralph Bowen's tenor sax and Pete McCann's guitar sighing along the contours of an undulating theme while "People Everywhere" has a brittle, angular construction out of Steve Coleman's music.

Pianist Fabian Almazan plays with an attractive, gentle tone which particularly suits the nebulous, uneasy feel of "Grace". "Loving Day" is a stormy tune that spotlights Bowen's hard-edged tenor while "Beauty Within" itself begins with a meander by Linda Oh's gorgeous, deep bass before leading into beautiful declarative statements by the rest of the band over Rudy Royston's rolling, melodic drums. "God's Wisdom" is one of the few pieces that sounds overtly religious with Almazan heading into gospel on the piano and Bowen's tenor soaring joyously towards Heaven. For the most part Anthony Branker's music is not blatantly religious but it does have a serenity and beauty that makes it uplifting.

Jerome Wilson

The Chicago blues piano tradition lives on in these two recordings by two long-time second generation masters of the form. 80-year old Erwin Helfer does a more wistful and nostalgic take on the blues on his disc. His playing is relaxed and elegant as he dissects ancient tunes like "St. James Infirmary" and "Make Me A Pallet". His interpolation of "After Hours" into "I Almost Lost My Mind" is particularly nice. When he plays fast he makes elaborate constructions out of basic boogies like "The Fives" and "DC Boogie". Most of the CD is Helfer solo but he gets help sometimes. Ardella Williams sings lowdown and gritty on "St. Louis Blues" and "Rocky Mountain Blues" while Katherine Davis comes off superbly sassy on "Bright Lights". John Brumbach contributes an enthusiastic tenor sax to all three tracks. There are also three tracks from 1957 and 1979 of Helfer accompanying a classic blues singer, Estelle "Mama" Yancey" who sounds in really salty form. All this establishes Helfer's bonafides as one of the great living elders of Chicago piano.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues

2) BARRELHOUSE CHUCK, REMEMBERING THE MASTERS,

THE SIRENS 5025.

HOMAGE TO PINETOP
PERKINS / HOW MUCH
MORE / KEEP ON DRINKING
/ I FORGOT TO REMEMBER /
SHE'S GOT A THING GOIN' ON
/ VICKSBURG BLUES* / I JUST
KEEP ON DRINKING / DOUBLE
D BOOGIE / STRAIGHT
ALKY BLUES / HOW ABOUT
ME+ / HOW LONG, HOW
LONG BLUES / STOCKYARD
BLUES / CHICAGO BLUES /
CHUCKABILLY BOOGIE. 42:12.

Barrelhouse Chuck, p (except
6 & 10), el p, vcl; Billy Flynn,
el g, ac g, mnd; Lluís Colona*,
Scott Grube+, p. 4/8/15,
1/29/16, 3/15/16.

VARIOUS ARTISTS, LIFT ME UP: CHICAGO GOSPEL KEYBOARD MASTERS,

THE SIRENS 5023.

SWING DOWN CHARIOT /
WITHOUT GOD I COULD
DO NOTHING / WALK WITH
ME LORD / I AM REDEEMED
/ I'LL SAY YES TO THE
LORD / FROM OUT OF
NOWHERE / MEET ME AT THE
JUDGEMENT DAY / PRAY
FOR ME / I'LL FLY AWAY /
HOLY HOLY MEDLEY / HE'S
MY EVERYTHING / WHAT A
FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS /
I'LL OVERCOME SOMEDAY /
THE LORD IS BLESSING ME.

Barrelhouse Chuck is a generation younger than Helfer but he's another long time Chicago piano player. His influences include Sunnyland Slim, Little Brother Montgomery and Leroy Carr and his style of blues is more driving and up-tempo with guitarist Billy Flynn often at his side firing off Chuck Berry licks. Chuck does his own singing which is an acquired taste but it does reach a sort of shouted soulful purity on "Straight Alky Blues" and "Vicksburg Blues". For a change of pace, he even sings Irving Berlin's "How About Me" in cute ragtime fashion with Flynn on acoustic guitar. Barrelhouse Chuck definitely knows to keep the raucous "drinking blues" tradition alive.

Jerome Wilson

Though it's one of the precursors to jazz and soul, gospel music is its own distinct genre and gospel piano can produce a glorious sound, whether slow and majestic or full of prancing, finger-jamming chords. This CD is the third in a series by The Sirens label that spotlights various gospel artists in the Chicago area and it shows the variety of the form.

There's a little bit of everything here, piano solos, piano and organ duets and hymns with vocals. The piano-organ team of Eric Thomas and Terry Moore stomp furiously on "Swing Down Chariot" and Elsa Harris slyly injects a bit of soul into her boisterous cascades on "Walk With Me Lord" around Richard Gibbs' slippery organ. There's wild piano and organ playing by the combination of Moore and Gibbs on "I'll Say Yes To The Lord" and a swaying "Judgement Day" has Moore playing both instruments.

There are a couple of solo piano features with Bryant Jones sounding mischievous on "I'll Fly Away" and Eric Thomas coming on very solemn on a medley of "Holy Holy Holy" and "This Is My Father's World". Richard Gibbs gets a shivery organ solo on "I'll Overcome Someday" with chilling, sacred energy while Lavelle Lacy rocks out on "The Lord Is Blessing Me".

The vocal tracks are mostly dominated by the singers but you can still appreciate the blending of Harris' dramatic piano and Dorothy Robertson's swooping voice on "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" and Lacy's

New Issues

Collective personnel: Curtis Fondren, d; Donald Gay, vcl, tamb; Gregory Gay, tamb; Richard Gibbs, p, org, b; Elsa Harris, Lavelle Lacy, p; Bryant Jones, p, org, vcl; Terry Moore, Eric Thomas, p, org; DeAndre Patterson, Dorothy Robertson, vcl.
8/20/15, 10/13/15.

CHERYL FISHER, QUIETLY THERE, OA2 22133.

QUIETLY THERE / LET
THERE BE LOVE / IT
AMAZES ME / FLOWERS IN
THE SINK / I NEVER WENT
AWAY / YOU'RE LOOKING
AT ME / HE NEVER
MENTIONED LOVE / YOU
GO TO MY HEAD / SOME
OTHER TIME / YOU TAUGHT
MY HEART TO SING / I'M
IN LOVE / HERE'S TO LIFE.
54:59.

Fisher, vcl; Eric Allison, rds;
John Toomey, p, kbds; John
Stowell, g; Jeff Johnson,
b; John Bishop, d; Burnis
Stubbs, perc; Bob Tildesley,
tpt, flgh. 5/24-25/15,
Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

impish prancing around DeAndre Patterson's heavy sound on "From Out Of Nowhere".

You can hear the kinship to a lot of jazz in this music even though improvisation is at a minimum and there are a lot of moments that still catch the ear whether or not you're a believer.

Jerome Wilson

Cheryl Fisher's voice exudes mature subtlety. Her sound is sensitive and well-formed and she's adept in making what she sings sound convincing in the manner of one of her mentors, Shirley Horn. Her instrumental support changes from track to track here. John Stowell provides deep electric guitar buzz to the tumbling "Flowers In The Sink" and a light-fingered acoustic bossa nova sound on "He Never Mentioned Love". His acoustic work on "Some Other Time" is also a real highlight. Meanwhile Stowell and pianist John Toomey buoy the classy swing of "Let There Be Love" nicely with flute and trumpet also making fun statements.

Fisher herself is excellent to hear whether on the warm Brazilian rhythms of "Quietly There" and "Never Mentioned Love", the lilting sadness of "I Never Went Away" or the wistful swing of "You're Looking At Me". She has a great talent for song interpretation.

Jerome Wilson

MATT LAVELLE'S 12 HOUSES, SOLIDARITY, UNSEEN RAIN 9945.

Solidarity / Brooklyn Mountain / Knee Braces / Cherry Swing / Moonflower Interlude / Faith.

Lavelle, cnt, flgh, a cl, cond; Lee Odom, ss, cl; Charles Waters, as, cl;; Ras Moshe Burnett, ss, ts, fl, bells; Tim Stocker, bari s, b cl; Mary Cherney, fl, pic; Claire de Brunner, bsn; Chris Forbes, p; Laura Ortman, vln; Gil Salinger, clo; Anders Nillson, g; Jack DeSalvo, bjo, mandola; John Pietaro, vib, perc; Francois Grillot, b; Ryan Sawyer, d; Anais Maviel, vcl. 11/14, Brooklyn, NY.

New Issues

Matt Lavelle's *12 Houses* is a large ensemble with a swarming sound that hearkens to massed energy projects of the 60s' like John Coltrane's *Ascension* album.

"Solidarity" has a massive singsong sound that serves as the backdrop to a furious tenor solo by Ras Moshe Burnett and a keening cello and flute duet. "Brooklyn Mountain" starts out as a slow, writhing mass before Burnett and pianist Chris Forbes break out for a wriggling excursion into Cecil Taylor country. "Knee Braces" has a warmer, more low-key swarming sound allowing Laura Ortman space for a searing violin feature and "Cherry Swing" gets a nice funky groove underway with the leader's buzzing cornet and Anais Maviel's voice out front. "Moonflower Interlude" is a short bassoon solo that leads into the closing "Faith", a slow and attractive theme that features Maviel leading the band and Forbes crashing piano chords like McCoy Tyner. It eventually turns into a bluesy dance led by piano, banjo and handclaps that could be the soundtrack to Sun Ra's Arkestra going into one of their high stepping gossellish promenades.

Matt Lavelle's compositions don't rely on intricate melody like several other large scale modern bandleaders but his musicians can blow furiously and he can put together attractive spaces for them to do their things. Jerome Wilson

ABBNEY LINCOLN, LOVE HAVING YOU AROUND, HIGHNOTE 7297.

TALKIN' TO THE SUN / LOVE HAVING YOU AROUND / WHEN MALINDY SINGS / LITTLE GIRL BLUE / DRIVA MAN / LIVING ROOM / RAINBOW / THROW IT AWAY / AFRICA* / CLOSING REMARKS. 53:55. Lincoln, vcl; Phil Wright, p; James Leary, Art Washington*, b; Doug Sides, d. 3/80, San Francisco, CA

This is a continuation of what was heard on 2015's *Sophisticated Abbey*, a second disc of Abbey Lincoln live at San Francisco's Keystone Korner in 1980. This is from the period when Lincoln had almost no real profile or record label in America but she's in great voice and her trio back her well.

The highlight of the disc is the title track, a sexy, funky take on Stevie Wonder's "Love Having You Around" with the trio of Phil Wright, James Leary and Doug Sides working a steamy groove beneath Lincoln's exuberant singing. Beyond that, there's one standard, a tender rendition of "Little Girl Blue", and a bunch of tunes she partially or fully wrote. Her time with ex-husband Max Roach contributes a grooving version of "Living Room", a sorrowful "Driva' Man" with the drums sounding like a whip crack and Oscar Brown Jr.'s "When Malindy Sings" done with new but still pointed lyrics. There's also an unusually slow and thoughtful version of one of Lincoln's most enduring songs, "Throw It Away" and a gritty take on "John Coltrane's Africa" where the raw force of Lincoln's singing really comes through. This is another welcome taste of a great singer we should never forget. Abbey Lincoln sounded like no one else and she's in powerhouse form here.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues

Unreleased Art: Volume 9

Art Pepper & Warne Marsh
at Donte's, April 26, 1974



ART PEPPER/ WARNE MARSH, AT DONTE'S, APRIL 26, 1974: UNRELEASED ART VOL. 9,

WIDOW'S TASTE
APM16001.

DISC ONE: ALL THE
THINGS YOU ARE / WHAT'S
NEW? / DONNA LEE / BAND
INTROS / WALKIN'(+). 58:44.

DISC TWO: OVER THE
RAINBOW / LOVER COME
BACK TO ME / GOOD BAIT /
HERE'S THAT RAINY DAY /
RHYTHM-A-NING. 60:03.

DISC THREE: BROADWAY
/ YARDBIRD SUITE / 'ROUND
MIDNIGHT / CHEROKEE(*)/
GOOD NIGHT COMMENTS.
57:22.

Pepper, as, ss(+); Marsh, ts;
Mark Levine, p; John Heard,
b; Lew Malin, d; Bill Mays,p(+).
4/26/74. N. Hollywood, CA.

3 CD BOX SET REVIEW

Those seasoned jazz listeners that are conversant with the career of Warne Marsh will know that the majority of his recorded encounters with another alto saxophonist were with Lee Konitz. Both employed an intellectual approach in their playing styles that complemented one another. Sometimes it was as though they could have switched horns without much notice. Of course, the musicianship on these studio albums was impeccable but the excitement level usually remained constant yet on a high level much like William F. Buckley talking to himself.

The electricity present on these three platters is much more pronounced. First of all, Art Pepper and Warne Marsh were no strangers to one another. They had played together several times before and the mixture of Pepper's raging fire with the mentholated coolness of Marsh makes for a more amenable yin and yang. Secondly, this is an in-concert recording which often times makes for a more animated reaction from the participants, sort of a warts & all situation. A scan of the material that comprises the song selection confirms the jam-like format in that there are no originals present. Plus the information provided in the booklet notes that Marsh was a sub for trumpeter Jack Sheldon and a pickup rhythm section of local professionals hired by the club owner.

The initial disc contains two acknowledged standards and a pair of jazz derived titles in that order.

The Kern/Hammerstein evergreen is taken up with solos by all (except the trapset) and an extended tag while "What's New?" is rendered very slow (as was AP's preference) with both reeds on the free intro and following chorus into Marsh's ride with Art after the piano statement throwing in some short altissimo beeps before both horns return on the channel and final chorus. Unison saxes are heard over the "Donna Lee" riff based on the chords of "Back Home In Indiana" taken at a smart clip. Once again, Warne goes first then the leader who ruffles some Bird feathers in his own sweet way before some fours with the drums before heading out. Veteran players Levine and Heard along with the relative unknown Lew Malin in a brief introduction before

New Issues

heading into the blues in the key of F “Walkin’”. Pepper leaps out of the gate on the seldom-utilized soprano getting a nasal tone slightly reminiscent of Yusef Lateef preceding Marsh’s fairly edited solo. Pianist Levine displays some tasty block chording on his outing.

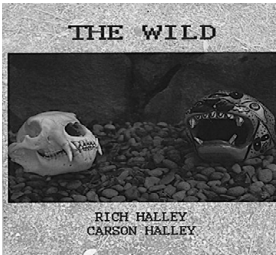
One of the alto icon’s signature songs opens Disc Two. He waxed the timeless “Over The Rainbow” many times yet always found something new to say in it. Like some of Roberta Flack’s balladic work it is set almost painfully slow with the alto and tenor making their mark in some collective interplay after individual solos. Sweet! “Lover Come Back To Me” penned in 1928 is the oldest script essayed at a galloping tempo with neat turns from the soloists. Another traditional jazz standby since it was composed by the almost-forgotten Tadd Dameron, “Good Bait” allows the principals to roam over some “rhythm changes” before swapping four bar exchanges with one another then Malin’s popping kit. This is one of those lines that stays in one’s head long after the sounds fade away. The third standard heard here is another belt-buckle polisher, “Here’s That Rainy Day” with creamy saxophonics from both protagonists. Dream-inducing stuff. The tape reel flaps free before the final ending of Monk’s “Rhythm-A-Ning” but we still get almost a dozen minutes of the quintet hard blowing in b-flat over the familiar foundation laid by Gershwin then so deftly personalized by the Cat in the Hat.

Another well-worn melody “Broadway” has long been a favorite among jazzers of all styles. It would be difficult for this writer to recall a version of it he didn’t care for and here’s another one. Hard swinging to the max. The other of the two Parker charts presented is “Yardbird Suite” supposedly written during Bird’s adolescence with the original title “What Price Love?”. Another “I Got Rhythm” contrafact this is a lark for both hornmen as it’s by one of Pepper’s main idols and Marsh had no doubt performed it numerous times with Supersax. Sounds like they had big fun on this one. The second Monk number is his classic “Round Midnight” which gets a twisty-curlly treatment due to its heavily contrapuntal handling. The perfect soundtrack for a black and white film noir flick. What better way to end things up than with a spirited rendition of Ray Noble’s 1938 jam session favorite “Cherokee” with the gifted Bill Mays taking over the piano bench. Taken at a slightly slower pace than was the norm, it still has that hairy channel that made it the “Giant Steps” of its time but at close to twenty minutes in length these pros handle it easily. Art’s closing remarks end this remarkable evening.

With attractive graphics, loving annotation by Pepper’s widow Laurie and clean remastering by Wayne Peet this one just barely missed my Best Of 2016 by a couple of weeks.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



RICH HALLEY, CARSON HALLEY THE WILD

PINE EAGLE RECORDS
010

WILD LANDS/ PROGENITOR/
FLAT PLANE OF THE SKY/
THE STROLL/ CURSORIAL/
THE OLD WAYS/ FROM
MEMORY/ THE RECON/
SNAKE EYES/ NOTES FROM
THE WILD LANDS 59:35

Rich Halley, ts, wood flt;
Carson Halley d Portland
Oregon, June 27 and August

27

Drums and sax! My favorite combination. One that I do a great deal. So I was really looking forward to this father and son team. And there is a lot to like on this CD. The two are really in sync and play well together. There is a lot of high energy playing as well. But things started to get repetitive by track 8.

So first, the good points. Rich Halley's tenor is full and energetic. I hear a combination of influences from the 60s to the 80s, but he manages to find his own voice.

There was only one track on flute and I wish there had been more. Lovely, delicate playing. The wood flute reminds me of Japanese flute music.

Carson is an energetic drummer who gets into a pattern and works around that, reacting to Rich's playing.

And for some criticism. Too many of the tracks were at the same basic tempo and same level of energy. There is track "Flat Plane" which was slow and where Carson used brushes very nicely.

And in a number of places where Carson was given solo space he tended to just continue what he was playing behind Rich. Whether that was the plan, I do not know, but I wanted to see if Carson could actually construct a solo, which he comes close to doing on "Notes."

For their next outing, some tempo variations and more flute playing would be welcome.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

KNUTDUT MEN
DUNNO



BMC

KNUTDUT MEN DUNNO

BMC RECORDS 236

KUKOTE/ THE DEPTHS OF

THE SOULS-LELEKBUVAR/

TANGA/ DOGMATIS-

TANUGY/ OLD YORUBA-

YORUBACSI/ WATER

DIVINING A-VIZKERESOA/

WATER DIVINING

B-VIZKERESO B 46:23

Bela Agoston ts; Akos

Muranyi, as/ Csaba Pengo,

bass; Peter Harsagyi d.

Budapest, 28 December 2015

and 19 January 2016

SIX-IN-ONE SUBJECTS AND STRUCTURES

SLAM 2102

SUBJECTS/ STRUCTURES/
NOTHING IS PRETTY 71:48

Paul Dunmall, ts; Bruce

Coates, ss, sop, as; Corey

Mwamba, vib, recorder; Walt

Shaw, perc,

elec; Seth Bennett bass; Mark

Sanders, d, perc Aug 15

2015 Derby, UK

This is a very pleasant, very old-fashioned sounding CD. Right out of the 60s. The tunes are nice, often using a blues structure. The solos by Agoston and Muranyi are always right on and the rhythm team offers great support.

I do wish Pengo and Harsagyi had some solo space, given their great support work. As a drummer I enjoyed Harsagyi's accompaniments. He was busy but not intrusive.

Not sure what else to say. This is for lovers of old sounding music with a fresh touch.

Bernie Koenig

I am quite familiar with Paul Dunmall's work having reviewed two CDs of his in the past. Both of those CDs were duos, Here he is part of a large ensemble.

This CD is an excellent example of a largish group improvising. There are solos, duos and group improvs, all at a very high level of musicianship. I enjoyed all of the players. As a drummer I would have liked a bit more involvement from Sanders, but that is a personal preference. Mwamba's vibes stood out in a couple of ways for me, especially his fragmented phrasing, which is something I like to do as well.

The long pieces have their highs and lows, and quiet spots, like most long improvisations. There is always the issue of who solos next, or is it time to stop. On a couple of occasions I had to check the CD player to see if the track was over. But that is common to such playing. Being in the audience and seeing how the musicians interact would solve that problem.

In short, a perfectly good example of free improvisation.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

DAVE SOLDIER THE EIGHTH HOUR OF AMDUAT

MULANA 035

MISTRESS PRAYER/
SATISFYING HER LORD &
MYSTERIOUS CAVERNS/
TOWER'S PRAYER/
NETHERWORLD CAVERN/
TOMB OF THE GODS/
BARCAROLLE/ KNIVES AT
WAR/ MOURNING & SHE
WHO ANNIHILATES THE
IGNORANT CAVERNS/
RA CALLS THE RAMS/
ENVELOPES HER IMAGES
& UNITING DARKNESS
CAVERNS/ REMOVING HER
BA-SOULS/ RA DANCES
WITH RAMS/ GREAT OF
TORCHES/ DAWN MARCH

58:37

Sahoko Sato Timpone,
mezzo; Marshall Allen, sax &
electronic valve instrument;

Rebecca Cherry, vln; Dan

Blacksburg, tbn; Nick Millevoi,

g; Michael Winograd, C cl;

Enrique Rivera-Matos, tba;

Adam Vidiksis, conductor;

Akhmed Manedov, vln; Olivia

Gusmano, vla; Carolina

Diazgronados, cel; Dani Bash,

harp; Anthony di Bartolo,

perc; Thomas Kolakowski,

perc; Dave Soldier, water

bowls, elec CHoor: Chace

Simmonds-Frith, Natasha

Thweat, Sophie Laruelle,

Xiaoming Tian, Eugene

Sirotkine, Alicia Waller,

Melinda Learned, Sahoko

Sato Timpone. No recording

information

This is an opera for mezzo, choir, improvising soloists and electronics and is based on a text from 15th century B.C.E. in the time of Tutmose 111. It is a story of Sun Ra and his companions on the underworld river. The music is eclectic, using various jazz and classical styles., with some jazz solo work. The primary soloists are Marshall Allen, in the role of Sun Ra, Rebecca Cherry, Dan Blacksberg and Nick Millevoi.

I enjoy mixing styles and going back and forth between styles. In this sense the piece works well. It would have been nice to know the details of the story but all I could find on the composer's website was the text of three of the songs. Knowing the full story may have made some of the switches in style and mood more understandable. But since I believe that the music must stand on its own, I just tried to listen and appreciate the music.

There is lots of drama in the music, and lots of peaceful sections as well. I really enjoyed the choir sections. They provided a nice change from some of the instrumental sections. The accompanying sounds to some of the solos are quite interesting in their own, especially those behind some of Allen's solos.

A definite must for people who are into contemporary opera and/or eclectic music.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

ANDREW DURKIN

BREATH OF FIRE

DAVID VALDEZ
TIM WILLCOX
ANDREW JONES
RYAN MEAGHER
TODD BISHOP



ANDREW DURKIN,
BREATH OF FIRE,
PJCE 028.

FLOWER GUN SONG /
BREATH OF FIRE / BREGA
/ PSYCHOPOMP STOMP /
THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE / MY
ONE AND ONLY VICE / ROCK,
PAPER, SCISSORS, TEAR GAS /
VENA CAVA. 36:44.

Durkin, p; David Valdez,
as; Tim Willcox, ts; Ryan
Meagher, g; Andrew Jones, b;
Todd Bishop, d. 2012-2016,
Portland, OR.

Andrew Durkin is one of those musicians whose concept of jazz draws from many things. On this CD he shows a kinship to groups like The Bad Plus who often use rock rhythms to underpin the flow of the lead instruments.

“Flower Gun Song” starts out with two saxophonists working a funky variation on Dizzy Gillespie’s “Manteca” riff over nagging piano while “Breath Of Fire” is a jumpy mix of prog rock, classical and Latin rhythms. “Psychopomp Stomp” and “Spiral Staircase” mix driving melodies with incongruous motifs from the classical and ska worlds in a tongue-in-cheek fashion and “My One And Only Vice” puts together New Orleans second line grooves with hip hop beats.

“Rock, Paper” has a bubbly, repeating riff and allows guitarist Ryan Meagher one of his few chances to solo. The closing “Vena Cava” takes things at a slower pace. Saxophonist Tim Willcox and bassist Andrew Jones start out together at an amiable lope before the others join in. Durkin takes a jaunty rock- flavored solo, the saxes wind along and everything comes to a big climax with the saxes burrowing against measured piano chords. This is distinctive, well-conceived music where every instrument fits into the overall picture and the Beatles sound as big an influence as any jazz artist. If you like what Brad Mehldau and the Bad Plus do, this should strike you as fun.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues



**MARY FOSTER
CONKLIN
PHOTOGRAPHS**
MOCK TURTLE 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

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.

David 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

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

This 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

The 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

(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, ft; 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 in roles that were likely done by the Duke on the original

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,

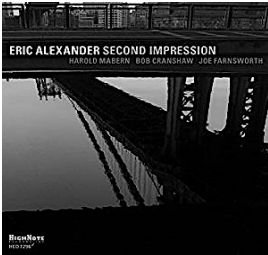
recordings. Of course, the core of this suite consists of its the unmatched Ellington/Strayhorn musical constructions and melodies, two examples being "The Single Petal of a Rose" strikingly performed by Neumeister on solo trombone, and the beautiful "Le Sucrier Velours," featuring the three horns and 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



**ERIC
ALEXANDER,
SECOND
IMPRESSION,
HIGHNOTE 7296.**

SECOND IMPRESSION
/ SO MANY STARS / BLUES
FOR MO / JENNIE'S DANCE
/ SECRET LOVE / T-BONE
STEAK / FENZY / EVERYTHING
HAPPENS TO ME / FULL
HOUSE. 54:51.

Alexander, ts; Harold
Mabern, p, el p; Bob
Cranshaw, b; Joe Farnsworth,
d. 3/14/2016, Brooklyn, NY.

Throughout his recording career tenor saxophonist Alexander has always striven to keep things fresh. From his early work on Delmark into a succession of labels, both import and domestic, like Criss Cross, Venus and Milestone to his continuing association with the Highnote company he has mixed it up from his basic quartet configuration. That unit is present on his latest release yet with two subtle differences; the use of a pair of electric instruments, the electric bass guitar and the electric piano on three tracks. Cranshaw has been Sonny Rollins' first choice on bass for many years now but with the sax icon off the scene currently due to 9/11-induced illness it was thoughtful of Eric to hire the bass ace for his latest studio session. It is this writer's opinion that he and Steve Swallow are the greatest electric players out there. Of course Mabern is a longtime associate of the leaders and is no stranger to the electrified model but the bulk of his discography is on the acoustic keyboard. The electric works fine on a funky number like the Farnsworth penned "Jennie's Dance" but to these lobes it sounds out-of-place on the swinging rundown of the standard "Secret Love" that would have been vastly improved by the 88 model. Other than that there are no problems present. One tune that particularly struck this writer was Jimmy Smith's blues "T-Bone Steak" which this writer spent mucho coins in the jukebox at my college student union back in the day. Another excellent addition to the impressive discography of one Eric Alexander.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



TOM HARRELL, SOMETHING GOLD, SOMETHING BLUE, HIGHNOTE 7289.

CIRCUIT / TRAVELIN' /
TRANCES / DELTA OF THE
NILE(*) / KEEP ON GOIN' /
VIEW /BODY AND SOUL /
SOUND IMAGE / VEHICLE.
61:35.

Harrell, tpt, flgh; Ambrose
Akinmusire, tpt; Charles
Altura, g; Ugonna Okegwo,
b; Johnathan Blake, d; Omer
Avital, oud(*). 8/29&30/2015.
Hoboken,NJ.

It must be admitted upfront that I haven't been an admirer of trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire. His 2011 Blue Note debut, while widely hyped, was a huge disappointment to me. Surprisingly his sideman appearances struck a more responsive chord, like pianist Danny Grissett's Form from 2009 on Criss Cross. Since the keyboardist has a resume that includes work with Tom Harrell it's easy to speculate there might be a connection there. As a Harrell fan since his Phil Woods days it was a no-brainer that his latest album would immediately be a must-have. Gone is the piano and saxophone replaced by another trumpet and guitar. The last mentioned instrument is a welcome change and Charles Altura is a real find. Whether soloing or adding coloration his presence is a definite plus. Akinmusire does a nice job also especially on the lone non-original, the certified classic "Body And Soul" where his inner action with the leader is as one. On the whole this is a rather laidback affair, not high note (pardon the pun) pyrotechnics or multi-noted exhibitionism just a nice subdued date that proves to be a perfect early morning listen. Recommended even though there are no liner notes.

Larry Hollis

New Issues



**SIMON NABATOV
TRIO
PICKING ORDER
LEO 765**

FILL IN THE BLANKS/
ARIA/ PICKING ORDER/
GROWING A SOUL PATCH/
TURNING POINT/ IT'S A
GIVEN/ CHRYSTAL CLEAR
63:131

Simon Nabatov, p; Stefan
Schonegg, bass; Dominik
Mahnig, d May 9 2015
Cologne

**JOSCHA OETZ
PERFECTOMAT**

KLAENG RECORDS 645
PERFECT GREY/ MAS
MAJOR/ CARAL/ CHA CHU/
QUINUA EN LA ESQUINA/
THE HAPPY TRUTH/ EL
FUNAMBULO/ EASTERN
PRESENCE 48: 54

Joscha Oeth, bass; Niels Klein,
ts; Simon Nabatov, p; Laura
Robles, cajon, bongo; Bodek
Janke, d. Johannes Lauer
quijada on 1 and tbn on 2 &
6. Koln, June 21 2013

Here we have what I would call a post bop trio. There is some nice melodic playing as well as some serious dissonant playing. The first track takes up about one third of the whole CD and reminds me, in a way, of the opening movements of a classical concerto, where all the basic themes are heard. This track does indeed fill in the blanks as it pretty much shows what to listen for in the rest of the CD. The piece seems to move in sections, from melodic to dissonant, from fast to slow, from in time to out of time, like so many longer free pieces. I kept checking the CD player to see what track was playing. This is not a criticism, just an observation on this style of playing. Something I have been involved in myself. The remaining tracks are largely in time, with some free moments. Nabatov dominates the CD with excellent support from Schonegg and Mahnig. My favorite tracks are Aria and Pecking Order which show some real stylish playing by all three with some nice time feels. I really like the syncopated feel in Aria. For all listeners who like good two-fisted piano playing, mixed with some very nice melodic playing.

Bernie Koenig

A somewhat old-fashioned bop record with some very nice South American rhythms added. From the sparse notes I gather the musicians are from Germany but have been influenced by the rhythms of Peru, where Oetz lived from 2005 to 2011, where he met Laura Robles. Thus the rhythms are not as forward as they are in Cuban music. But, for all the jazz playing, this is still dance music. And while I don't know the specific steps to these rhythms, I was still moving on the floor making up steps as I went. The main solo work is handled by Klein and Nabatov, and they do a fine job. Klein has a nice light tone and Nabatov plays some nice syncopated lines adding octave playing often heard in Cuban music. "Happy Truth" is a nice ballad with interesting trombone work by Lauer, which contrasts nicely with Klein's sax. No surprises here but some very nice playing.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



THE MICROSCOPIC SEPTET, BEEN UP SO LONG IT LOOKS LIKE DOWN TO ME – THE MICROSCOPIC PLAY THE BLUES, CUNEIFORM 425.

CAT TOYS / BLUES CUBISTICO
/ DARK BLUE / DON'T MIND
IF I DO / MIGRAINE BLUES
/ PJ IN THE 60S / WHEN IT'S
GETTING DARK / SIMPLE-
MINDED BLUES / AFTER YOU,
JOEL / 12 ANGRY BIRDS /
QUIZZICAL / SILENT NIGHT
/ I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO CRY.
62:09.

Philip Johnston, ss; Don
Davis, as, Mike Hashim, ts;
Dave Sewelson, bari s; Joel
Forrester, p; Dave Hofstra,
b; Richard Dworkin, d. 5/24-
25/16, Paramus, NJ.

This is the Microscopic Septet's official "blues" album. It also contains a version of "Silent Night". Given this group's penchant for leavening their jazz with off-center humor, that juxtaposition isn't too surprising.

This CD covers a myriad of bluesy jazz styles. There's 20's based sax hiccupping and repetition on "Blues Cubistico", jump blues to a Charleston beat on "Don't Mind If I Do", and fiery 60's style screaming on "PJ In The 60s" that resolves into classic swing. "When It's Getting Dark" is a circular quasi-twist rhythm that comes off like Henry Mancini rearranging the Batman theme.

On "After You, Joel" pianist Joel Forrester creeps along with eccentric Monkish playing as the saxes spin around. "Dark Blue" has wandering stride piano leading to a gorgeous bit of old school tenor honking by Michael Hashim, "12 Angry Birds" is practically a counter melody to Ellington's "The Mooche" and "Quizzical" is dancing, two-beat Monk. And yes, in this setting even "Silent Night" makes a good blues, with Forrester playing a slightly sinister version of the song that leads into blues variations by the full band and eventually a wailing solo by Philip Johnston.

The Microscopic Septet's sense of humor enlivens their music and makes them very distinctive. This goulash of modernized old blues ideas is something no one else could have pulled off and is one of their most fun achievements.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues



ROSCOE MITCHELL
with YUGANAUT,
FOUR WAYS,
NESSA 38.
DOUBLE HELIX /
IMPROVISATIONS NO. 1-3
/ CARDS FOR YUGANAUT
NOS. 1-3 / FOUR WAYS FOR
YUGANAUT AND ROSCOE
MITCHELL / SON WARSHIP.

62:28.

Mitchell, fl, ss, as; Stephen
Rush, elec, el p, tb, euph,
double ocarina, slide whistle,
melodica, recorder, balloon;
Tom Abbs, b, cel, vln, tba,
didgeridoo; Geoff Mann, d,
cnt, bjo.

The venerated Roscoe Mitchell, who always seems open to new collaborations, joins forces here with a Michigan trio for a session of through composed works and improvisations.

The pieces written by the members of Yuganaut all have a discernible logic. Tom Abbs' "Double Helix" is a sour, slowly snaking line traced by Mitchell's soprano sax and Stephen Rush's trombone. Rush's "Four Ways" has alto and electric piano slowly meandering then rushing at a breakneck tempo while the bass and drums roll along underneath. Geoff Mann's "Son Warship" is an otherworldly clash of violin, banjo, synthesizer and saxophone that buzzes and drones like a raga.

The three pieces listed as improvisations are prickly feeling out sessions. On the first Mitchell's soprano tears against harsh stabs of melodica and electric piano. Tuba and alto battle on the second and the third is a shivery racket of drum clatter and electronic droning.

Mitchell's three card pieces are also full of improvisational daring. Number one is an ominous thicket of flute, trombone and bowed bass that turns into a theme for tuba, alto and Moog. Two has arco bass, drums and various horns woven through with dissonant electric piano notes as in some of Paul Bley's electronic experiments. Three is highlighted by a beeping Moog synthesizer counterpointing Mitchell's sax and Abbs' eloquent arco bass.

Rosecoe Mitchell's forceful yet calm presence centers Yuganaut's unique sound world, giving this music a gravity and emotion that might not be there otherwise. This is a great reminder of how Mitchell always searches for new avenues to explore sound.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND, THE GREAT UN-AMERICAN SONG BOOK, VOLUME I & II, CUNEIFORM 435/436.

CD 1: Good Morning, Good Morning / Open Up Said the World at the Door / We Love You / Eleanor Rigby / Definitely Maybe / As You Said / Larks' Tongues in Aspic, Part Two / 21st Century Schizoid Man / Send Your Son to Die / Edward, The Mad Shirt Grinder. CD 2: America – American Idiot / Beggars' Farm / Bitches Crystal / Wreck of the Hesperus / Diamond Dust / The Low Spark of High Heeled Boys / Fire / The Tourist / Don't Bother Me – Nardis – Don't Bother Me (reprise) / I Wanna Be Your Man / Good Night. TT = 111:28.

Palermo, cond, arr, as; Barbara Cifelli, baris, Eb cl; Matt Ingman, btb; Charley Gordon, tb; Ronnie Buttacavoli, John Bailey, Steve Jankowski, tpt; Katie Jacoby, el vln; Clifford Lyons, as, cl; Phil Chester, as, fl, pic, ss; Bill Straub, ts, fl, cl; Ben Kono, ts, fl, ob; Michael Boschen, tb; Roy Marchica, d; Paul Adamy, el b; Bob Quaranta, p; Ted Kooshian, el kybd; Bruce McDaniel, el g, vcl. 4/18/16-10/10/16, Pound Ridge, NY, Hamburg, Germany.

On several previous CDs for the Cuneiform label, Ed Palermo and his big band have specialized in adapting the music of Frank Zappa. This time he shifts his focus to British rock songs of the Sixties and Seventies. This is not any lightweight trawl through a few classic rock standards either. Palermo digs deeply into this music with the fervor of a true British rock devotee. It's one thing to cover the Beatles and Stones but when you do Blodwyn Pig and the Move you obviously know your stuff.

Palermo takes most of his songs from the late Sixties to early Seventies period when British rock was getting more complex and experimental, providing more substance for a big band to play with. Some tunes, like King Crimson's "Larks' Tongues In Aspic" with its savage power chords or Cream's "As You Said" with its swirling strings, sound pretty faithful to the originals. Others are seriously rearranged. "Eleanor Rigby" starts with organ and horns doing a folk dance before Katie Jacoby's electric violin hops on the familiar melody at double speed. Elsewhere Jacoby, one of the consistent stars of the CD, trades yearning solos with Phil Chester's soprano sax on Jeff Beck's "Definitely Maybe" while King Crimson's jazz-rock classic "21st Century Schizoid Man" is expanded with a long alto solo.

There are all sorts of wild stream-of-consciousness juxtapositions in these arrangements. The Nice's "America", itself a mashup of Bernstein and Dvorak, is stitched together ingeniously with Green Day's "American Idiot". The Stones' hammering "We Love You" interpolates a bit of the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows". Probably the most audacious combination is Miles Davis' "Nardis" being dropped into the middle of the Beatles' "Don't Bother Me".

These CDs are full of fun surprises like that. Traffic, Jethro Tull, Emerson, Lake and Palmer and Radiohead all get the treatment in Palermo's wild arrangements and several members of the band like Jacoby, Chester, pianist Bob Quaranta and guitarist and vocalist Bruce McDaniel all stand out. This is music that should delight any classic rock fan and is entertaining even if you don't know most of the original songs.

Jerome Wilson

New Issues



**STEPHAN CRUMP,
INGRID LAUBROCK,
CORY SMYTHE
PLANKTONIC
FINALES
INTAKT 285**

WITH EYES PEELED/ TONES
FOR CLIMBING PLANTS/
SINEW MODULATIONS/
THROUGH THE FOREST/
A HOUSE ALONE/ THREE-
PANEL/ SUBMERGED
(PERSONAL) EFFECTS/ PULSE
MEMORY/ BITE BRIGHT
SUNLIGHT/ AS IF IN ITS
THROAT/ INSCRIBED IN
TREES 53:22

Stephan Crump, bass; Ingrid
Laubrock, ts, as; Cory Smythe
p Yonkers, NY August 13
2015

This is a very nice, mostly quiet, except for “Sunlight”, introspective record. I really enjoyed it. Most of the tempos are slow so the musicians get to both dig in to the pieces and also leave lots of space, a combination I like a lot.

The interplay between all three is great. Maybe because of the slower tempi, they all have time to really listen to what the others are playing.

Laubrock shows off some great chops. On “Sinew” I heard some very Dolphy like phrases, and elsewhere she gets the 80s post Coltrane phrasing down. But mostly she is herself.

Smythe provides lots of big chords as well as delicate accompaniment and Crump provides rock solid support. He really comes through with some exceptional playing on “Forest” and great arco work “Throat.”

The CD ends with a very open piece. Laubrock really gets lyrical here, with excellent playing from Crump and Smythe.

A really enjoyable record.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues



OGUZ BUYUKBERBER
AND SIMON
NABATOV
WOBBLY STRATA
TRYTONE 067

CROSS PLAY AVERTED/
CALM WATERS/ ASKED
AND UNANSWERED/
SMUDGES/ WOBBLY STRATA/
ATEMPOUSE 43:01

Oguz Buyukberber clt,
bass clt; Simon Nabatov, p
Cologne, Oct 24, 2014

This is my kind of record. A great duo really listening to each other and working off each other. Lots of dissonance but also some very nice melodic lines. The CD opens with some nice tonal clusters and open spaces. That grabbed me right away. Then the interplay got me. I hear lots of Cecil Taylor in Nabatov's playing, but I also hear Webern. Buyukberbers's clarinet playing is definitely classically trained, but he is a nice loose player. I love the tonal jumps he does with the bass clarinet. Has he been listening to Braxton? I don't really hear a direct influence, but the approach has similarities.

Usually in a free jazz record there is one long track that has its highs and lows, and spaces. Here we get six short tracks but some of the tracks do that as well. I occasionally had to look to see what track was playing because of the changes in tempo or mood. This is not a bad thing, but just a bit unusual.

In the last track we get some nice percussive sounds from the piano. Not quite John Cage, but I wonder if cage's influence is in the background. Cage, of course, was not a jazz fan as it was very much a performer's music, but I have long claimed that because of the improvisatory aspects of jazz he should have liked it. In short, a really nice record which will stand up to many listenings.

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

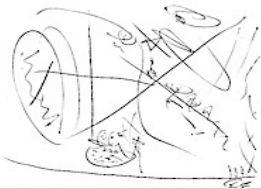
FMR 403

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



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

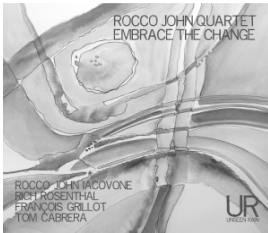
UNDER THE AB TREE / BLUE
KEY / MILONGA / KIWI
FLOWER (DEDICATED TO
IRENE) / GOLD WOOD /
BUSES CHASING PIGEONS
/ EGGE / CITRUS VILLAGE
(DEDICATED TO MIKI). 44:27.

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); Garett Grow

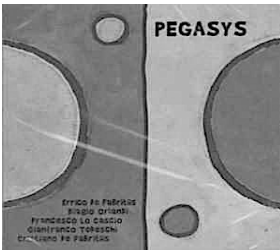
(kybd); Maxwell Gualtieri (g).

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

Obituaries

- ADOLF GEORG KRAPPROTH (trombone) died on March 3, 2017. He was 89.
- AL JARREAU, singer died on February 12, 2017. He was 76.
- ALLAN HOLDSWORTH (guitarist with Soft Machine, Gong, and U.K.) died on April 15, 2017. He was 70.
- ALPHONSE MOUZON, drummer, died on December 25, 2016.
- ALVIN STEWART (trumpet) died in Sarasota, FL on 10/17/16. He was 89.
- ANN SNEED died on April 21, 2017. She was 87.
- ARNOLD "SPIDER" RONDINELLI died on July 10, 2017. He was 82.
- ARTHUR BLYTHE, (saxophone) died on March 27, 2017. He was 76.
- AVO UVEZIAN (Armenian-American jazz pianist and cigar manufacturer) died on March 24, 2017. He was 91.
- BEA WAIN, vocals, died on August 19, 2017. She was 100.
- BENNETT MORGAN (jazz agent) died on May 31, 2017. He was 84.
- 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.
- BILL TOLE (trombone) died on May 20, 2017. He was 79.
- BOB KRASNOW, associated with Elektra Records, died. He was 82.
- BRUCE DEMOLL [sax] died on 10/12/16 in Vienna, WV. He was 86.
- BRUCE HAMPTON died on stage during the final moments of a benefit concert honoring his 70th birthday at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta on May 1, 2017. He was 70.
- BUCK HILL (saxophone) died on March 29, 2017. He was 90.
- 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 LOEB, guitarist, composer, died on July 31. He was 61.
- CHUCK STEWART, photographer, died on January 20, 2017. He was 89.
- CLEM MOORMAN, piano, died on July 21, 2017. He was 100.
- CLYDE STUBBLEFIELD, the 'Funky Drummer' for James Brown, died. He was 73.
- CRAIG JOHNSON (producer) died on May 20, 2017. He was 88.
- DAISY SWEENEY, piano, died on August 11, 2017. She was 97.
- DAVID BOB ERDOS (producer/owner for Stomp Off Records) died on March 25, 2017. He was 86.
- DAVID MELTZER (poet and musician) died on December 31. He was 79.
- DELMAR BROWN (piano) died on April 1, 2017. He was 63.
- DONALD ROBERT HUNSTEIN (photographer) died on March 18, 2017. He was 88.
- DOLORES FERDINAND MARSALIS, matriarch of one of New Orleans' great musical families died on July 18, 2017. She was 80 years old.

Obituaries

ED BERGER, historian, died. He was 67.

EDDIE DIEHL, guitar, died on June 20, 2017.

EDGAR CHASE (trumpet) died on 11/22/16. He was 88.

FOSTER DEHAVEN died in Madison, WI on 8/11/16. He was 85.

GERARD TERRONES (jazz producer) died around March 18, 2017. He was 76.

GERI ALLEN (pianist) died on June 27, 2017. She was 60.

GIRSEL JAVAKHISHVILI died on 12/4/16. He was 35.

GRANVILLE WILLIAM "MICKEY" ROKER (drummer) died on May 22, 2017. He was 84.

HANS CARLING (trumpet) died in Sweden. He was 75.

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

HERB HARDEST (sax and trumpet) died on 12/3/16 in Las Vegas. He was 91.

HOD O'BRIEN [p] died on 11/20/16. He was 80.

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

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

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

JANET SEIDEL died on August 8, 2017. She was 62.

JOE THOMAS, sax, died on July 26, 2017. He was 84.

KATHRYN BAILEY (pianist and composer) died in December, 2016. She was 86.

KAY STARR [voc] died on 11/3/16. She was 94.

KEN ALDCROFT, guitarist, composer, improviser, educator and community organizer died of a heart attack on Saturday, September 17. He was 46.

LARRY BOWEN (trumpet) died on March 31, 2017. He was 53.

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.

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

LINDA HOPKINS, (actress and singer) died on April 10, 2017. She was 92.

LONNIE BROOKS (blues musician) died on April 1, 2017. He was 83.

LYNN BOHEMIAN (percussion) died on March 17, 2017. She was 54.

MANFRED KRUG [voc] died in Germany. He was 79.

MIC GILLETTE [trp/tbn/yubs] died on 1/17/16 of a heart attack. He was 64.

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

MINGO JONES (bass) died on March 3, 2017. He was 88.

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

Obituaries

MOSE ALLISON [p/voc] died 11/15/16 in Hilton Head SC. He was 89.

NATALIE LAMB aka NATALIE PAINE [voc] died on 10/7/16. She was 83.

PAUL OLIVER, writer, died on August 15, 2017. He was 90.

PAULINE OLIVEROS died in 2016.

PHIL COHRAN (trumpet) died on June 28, 2017. He was 90.

RAYMOND ALVIN CHAMBERLAIN (guitarist and bassist) died on April 12, 2017. He was 87.

ROY FISHER, (poet and jazz pianist) died on March 20, 2017. He was 86.

RUDY LAWLESS, (drummer) died on February 21, 2017. He was 84.

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

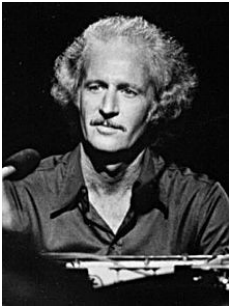
THARA MEMORY (trumpet) died on June 17, 2017. He was 68.

THEO ZWICKY jazz researcher died around 12/1/16. He was 89.

TOM MCCLUNG (pianist) died on May 14, 2017. He was 60.

WILLIAM PIERCE [p] died of heart failure on October 16, 2016. He was 80.

VICTOR BAILEY, bass, died on November 11, 2016. He was 56 years old.



MOSE ALLISON IN 1975



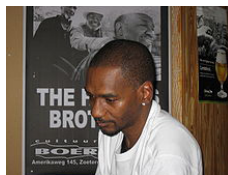
PAULINE OLIVEROS IN 2010



LARRY CORYELL IN 1979



GERI ALLEN IN 2008



VICTOR BALLEY IN 2008



CHARLES BOB SHAW IN 1976



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