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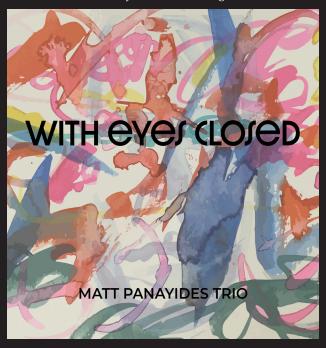
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Pacific Coast Jazz proudly presents

With Eyes Closed

the fourth album by guitarist Matt Panayides and his first trio recording.



Joined by Steve LaSpina on bass and Anthony Pinciotti on drums, Panayides brings new energy to compositions by modern jazz masters like Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, and Cedar Walton, alongside his arrangements of timeless standards such as "Moon River" and "I Fall in Love Too Easily." The acoustic sound, centered around Panayides' Victor Baker guitar, marks a departure from his prior effects-driven work, embracing resilience and renewal in every note.

This album captures the spontaneity and vibrancy of a live performance, with the trio delivering dynamic reinterpretations that honor the music's exploratory spirit. Across 11 tracks, the clean, resonant tone and seamless interplay offer listeners a journey through rich soundscapes that celebrate jazz's timeless essence while showcasing the trio's exceptional artistry.

"Panayides demonstrates imaginative compositions and fluid interplay, delivering a compelling trio performance." - <u>Jazz Journal</u>

"With expressive guitar work and emotional depth, Panayides crafts an album filled with rich, nuanced soundscapes." - <u>Dee Dee McNeil, Strings & Things</u>

"This recording is a vivid exploration of modern jazz, balancing its structure with masterful improvisation." - Musical Memoirs

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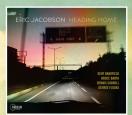
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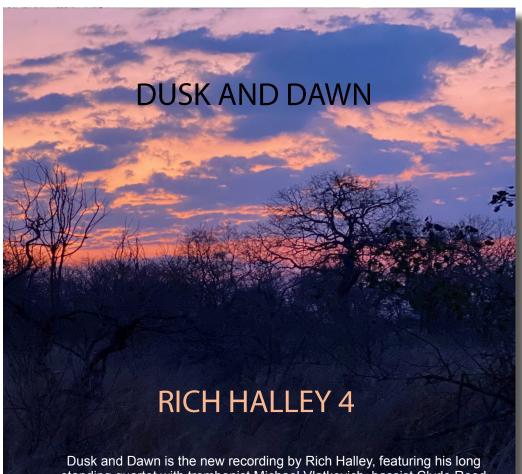
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Dusk and Dawn is the new recording by Rich Halley, featuring his long standing quartet with trombonist Michael Vlatkovich, bassist Clyde Reed and drummer Carson Halley. Recorded in Portland in November 2023, Dusk and Dawn is the seventh release by the Rich Halley 4, and features a combination of Halley compositions and spontaneous improvisations that showcase the depth and unique interaction of the group.

Rich Halley has released 26 recordings as a leader. Dusk and Dawn follows Halley's critically acclaimed recordings Fire Within and The Shape of Things (with Matthew Shipp), The Outlier, Creating Structure and Crossing the Passes.

"One of the major tenor saxophonists of our time." **Tom Hull, tomhull.com**

"Heartland American jazz of the very highest order."

Brian Morton, Point of Departure



SCANDINAVIAN IMPRESSIONS

Luboš Soukup

www.lubossoukun.com

Suite for a symphony orchestra and jazz ensemble, conducted by Bastien Stil (also known for working with Avishai Cohen, Wayne Shorter, and Lizz Wright), features the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Luboš Soukup (saxophone), David Dorůžka (guitar), Vít Křišťan (piano), Thommy Andersson (bass), Kamil Slezák (drums), and the brass section of the Concept Art Orchestra.

Renowned Czech-Danish saxophonist and composer Luboš Soukup has unveiled his new album, 'Scandinavian Impressions.' This ambitious release builds on the success of his earlier modern jazz albums, notably 'Through the Mirror' and 'Země' (which features guest performances by guitar superstar Lionel Loueke). The album is a deeply personal work that traces a journey and life, following the growth, learning, maturation, dreams, and aspirations of a young man living abroad for almost 15 years.

Excellent soloist and writing skills.

Angelo Leonardi, All About Jazz

Scandinavian Impressions are filled with a wealth of ideas and effort. The author's excellent playing, his emotive feel, and humble storytelling are probably Soukup's best calling cards as a saxophonist.

Tomáš S. Polívka, Czech Radio

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THE SPIRITUAL PATH TO FINDING YOUR VOICE

By: NORA MCCARTHY

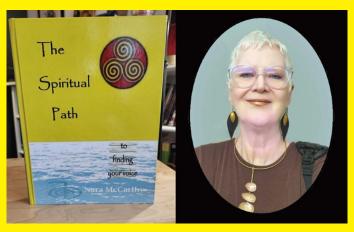
Creative Vocal Artist, Composer, Poet, Lyricist, Actor, Educator, Author

"My amazing teacher, Nora McCarthy once told me a phrase that shifted something inside me and thus, over time, changed my entire course in music. What the heart has the capacity to feel, can be translated into sound.' It's that simple, though not at all easy. Let this phrase sit with you a bit and hopefully it will stay with you as it did with me. Thank you Nora for giving me this precious gift, I will never forget it."

Varya Dominici, Singer, Songwriter, Poet

"What Nora McCarthy has gathered together here is a monumental achievement. It teaches us techniques and exercises, guides us in our thinking and meditating, inspires us, and even helps us find the core (or heart, or soul) of our genuine voice."

Christopher Hirschmann Brandt, Poet, Writer, Translator; Man of the Theatre,
College Professor, Lecturer, Fordham University



The book is dedicated to avant-garde and experimental artists who stay true to the art of singing, encouraging them to embrace their unique voices and creativity. *Nora McCarthy*

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NATURAL ARTEFACTS Signs and Symbols

Susanna Lindeborg p, elec Merje Kägu guit Per Anders Nilsson elec Thomas Jäderlund saxophones Anton Jonsson perc

LJCD5263



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There was a beautiful ballad of passing time and lost first love from a little-known 1962
Broadway musical. Now, acclaimed retro jazz vocalist Laura Ainsworth reintroduces it to the YouTube generation in a stunning new interpretation accompanied by sensitive animated visuals.

"Once Upon A Time" is the latest release from Laura Ainsworth's multi-award-winning fourth studio album, *You Asked For It.* Featuring great standards requested by fans in fresh, creative arrangements, including her smoldering reinvention of "Goldfinger", whose film noir video enjoyed worldwide airplay. With Brian Piper on piano, Chris McGuire on sax, Rodney Booth on trumpet, Noel Johnston on guitar, and warm, vinyl-like mastering by Grammy®-nominated engineer Jessica Thompson.

"Gifted with a sultry, swoon-inducing croon, Ainsworth can sing any words and command attention."

– AllAboutJazz.com

Once Upon A Time (Strouse/Adams)

By Laura Ainsworth



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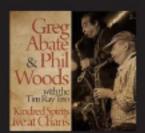


Discover You Asked For It and the entire magical musical catalog of Laura Ainsworth and listen happily ever after...

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Greg Abate

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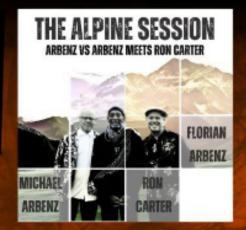




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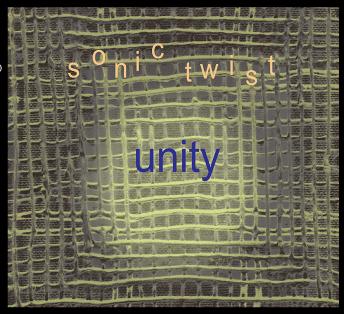
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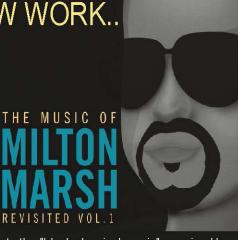
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might be the closest approximation to the "black classical music" promised by Rahsaan Roland Kirk and others in the 70s! Yet Marsh is definitely his own visionary here, too carving out a sound that's as powerful as it is individual, with a unique sound that has us sitting up and taking notice all over again. Musicians on the recordings include David Eure on Violin, Stanton Davis on trumpet, Kevin Harris on piano, Carlos Averhoff on tenor, and Keala Kaumehiwa on bass, with Marsh himself handling the Arrangements and Conducting his original compositions. Titles include: "Not Far From Home", "Great Expectations", "Dialogue", "Loving You", "By Design", "I Wonder Why I Care", and "Subtle Anomaly".

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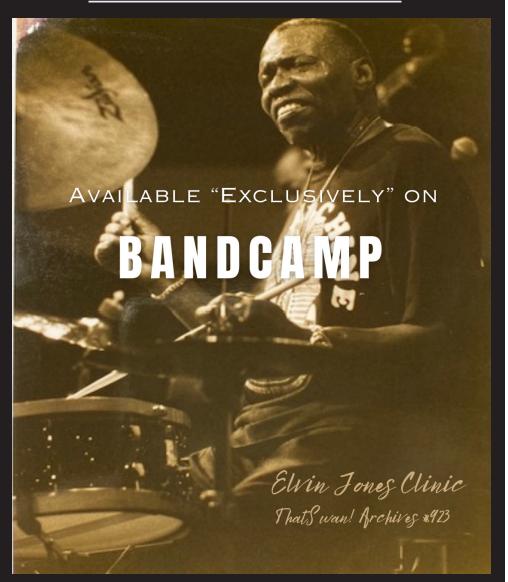
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"Bell's playing on C and alto flute is gorgeous, filled with light and air on the ballads, briskly inventive on her bop-tinged improvisations." Los Angeles Times

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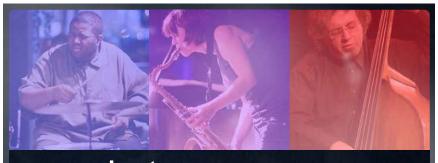






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This page is a symbolic break, what precedes is advertising, (free of editorial influence), what follows is editorial (free of advertising influence).

Contributors

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

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

Larry Hollis (Album/Book Reviews) is a devout zen baptist, retired saxoliner annotation and Cadence for over four decades. Flanked by his books, records and videos, he lives an insular life in his hometown of Oklahoma City.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Independent Journal of Creative Improvised Music

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

acc: accordion as: alto sax

bari s: baritone sax

b: bass

b cl: bass clarinet

bs: bass sax bsn: bassoon

cel: cello

cl: clarinet

cga: conga

cnt: cornet

d: drums

el: electric

elec: electronics

Eng hn: English horn

euph: euphonium

flgh: flugelhorn

flt: flute

Fr hn: French horn

g: guitar

hca: harmonica

kybd: keyboards

ldr: leader

ob: oboe

org: organ

perc: percussion

p: piano

pic: piccolo

rds: reeds

ss: soprano sax

sop: sopranino sax

synth: synthesizer

ts: tenor sax

tbn: trombone

tpt: trumpet

tba: tuba

v tbn: valve trombone

vib: vibraphone

vla: viola

vln: violin

vcl: vocal

xyl: xylophone



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FRONT COVER

Clockwise from upper left

Marshall Allen Ben Williams

Sasha Berliner Paolo Angel

Matthew Shipp Trio - Michael Bisio Newman Taylor Baker Skullcap (Janel Leppin, Anthony Pirog & Mike Kuhl) Sun Ra Arkestra

Inside This Issue

CADENCE MAGAZINE **EDITORIAL POLICY**

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

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

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REMEDY: HIPP HIPP HOORAY, CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL OF JUTT HIPP 8 TOM TEASLEY/DAVE BALLOU - LUNCH BREAK 8 ROB BROWN - WALKABOUT	A 6

Short Takes - Philadelphia

PHILADELPAHIA, PA- Darius Jones (as) was beaming at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 1/10 while revealing, "This is my first performance of the year. How'm I doing?" His trio (Chris Lightcap, b; Jason Nazary, d) covered music off his new recording - pieces spawned from reflections on his recovery from trauma with the help of therapy and the reclamation of his mental health. Jones has always played from his heart and this project finds him at his most raw and primal best. Opening with "We Outside," he asked, "Do you know what that means? We about to be outside again," making a cryptic reference to the incoming presidential handoff. "Another Kind of Forever" found Jones unleashing some contained caustic alto bursts as fellow altoist Bobby Zankel grinned while watching from a front row seat. "We Inside Now" was a slow tempo, luxurious ballad that, to my ears, had some Bobby Watson sex appeal. (To my disappointment, Jones seemed a bit stunned at the suggestion.) "Motherfuckin Roosevelt" was dedicated to his uncle who, "Put a saxophone in my hand when I was very young and in many ways, it saved my life." An encore of "No More My Lord," a lengthy prison song from the '30s ("You should really check out prison songs," Jones advised. "They were created by people.") Lightcap kept a steady sawing with his bow through the tune - amping up late intensity as the trio took it out near the ending for the most violent portion of the night as Jones blew multiphonic rays while Nazary percussioned forward...Washington, D.C.-based super couple Jenel Leppin (cel) and Anthony Pirog (el g) have been a dominant presence on the music scene there for over 20 years - comfortably working within Jazz, Rock and even Punk settings. Their trio Skullcap with Baltimore-based drummer Mike Kuhl at The Perch (Fire Museum Presents) on 1/18 followed an opening trio of Bryan Rogers (ts)/Matt Engle (b)/Ian McColm (d). Pirog had performed in town twice over the past year or so with the Messthetics and James Brandon Lewis (with another hit planned for April) but this was my first time experiencing Leppin. A talented singer, she stuck to her cello for this gig and displayed an intuitive sense of how to marry her sound with Pirog. Leppin's Classical training is undeniable, she's fierce on her instrument, and gets a huge sound that she augments with electronics. Pirog obviously likes things tastefully dirty and nasty. He commented post-performance that the trio plays with, "No genre in mind. We're coming at it from many different sides but we're not ignoring our Rock side." He was very pleased when a listener pointed out that they heard some Mahavishnu Orchestra in his work...Israeli-born, New York-based guitarist Yotam Silberstein is well versed in Bebop, the Blues and World music and he's played with the likes of Charles McPherson, Ron Carter and Matisyahu. His quartet at Chris' Jazz Cafe saved the best for last during their second set on 2/7 with a declarative rendition of (under-acclaimed pianist) Tommy Flanagan's "Eclypso." Backed by fellow Israeli Asaf Yuria (ts, ss) along with Alex Claffy (b) and Mark Whitfield II (d), Silberstein flashed his fleetest fingers of the set for a mesmerizing effect alongside Whitfield's rumbling drum beats, throwing in a quick "Jeepers Creepers" quote, all to the delight of the two star-struck young ladies seated at the front table. Claffy and Whitfield fielded a strong supportive unit while Yuria was professionally adept but not risk-taking. Other tunes covered included "They Say It's Wonderful," and "Stella by Starlight." After the leader announced the band without saying his own name, a listener yelled, "And you are?" To which Silberstein humbly replied, "I've been asking myself the same question!"...Alto saxophonist Gary Hassay considers the Black Squirrel Club as his

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Skullcap (Janel Leppin, Anthony Pirog & Mike Kuhl) at The Perch (Fire Museum Presents) on 1/18 Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Yotam Silberstein Quartet at Chris' Jazz Cafe 2/7 with Asaf Yuria (ts, ss), Alex Claffy (b) and Mark Whitfield II (d) Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Short Takes - Philadelphia



Gary Hassay & Steve Swell at the Black Squirrel Club on 2/18 Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Nik Bärtsch at the City Winery on 2/24 Photo credit $\, @ \,$ Ken Weiss



Hans Lüdemann's Atlantic 7 with Aly Keïta, Christian Thomé, Mark Feldman, Nick Dunston, Bobby Zankel, Tamara Lukesheva at Swarthmore College on 3/1 Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Matthew Shipp Trio at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 3/6 with Michael Bisio and Newman Taylor Baker Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Bill Nace at the Susan Alcorn Memorial Tribute by Fire Museum Presents on 3/7 at Atonement Fishtown Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Paolo Angeli at The Rotunda (Fire Museum Presents) on 3/11 Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Vijay Iyer Trio with Devon Gates and Jeremy Dutton at the Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz & Performing Arts on 3/15. Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Sasha Berliner and Ben Williams at Chris' Jazz Café on 3/15 Photo credit © Ken Weiss

favorite venue to play. He loves the wildly eclectic, scattered collection of salvaged goods on the walls and around the space and the general esthetic of the place. He was happy to be back with local drummer Tracy Lisk and special guest New York City based trombone heavyweight Steve Swell in tow at the club on 2/18. Apparently, someone left a window open during the day so the building was freezing, leaving the musicians to play in their coats. Thankfully, the hot, freely improvised music quickly took minds off the forming icicles. Hassay and Swell first played together a few months before in a large band so this was really the first time they were playing together in an intimate way. The two proved to be a natural fit – both being excellent listeners who leave plenty of space for others. Their second set commenced with Hassay ringing Tibetan bowls and then throat singing. In time, Swell began to finger the bell lock of his instrument, making an ongoing metallic sound, while Lisk bowed a tiny cymbal attached to a stick. The segment lurched in intensity once Swell began blowing sustained air into his horn while wobbling the slide, as Lisk drew a throbbing pulse on her floor tom. Hassay returned to his alto for colorations and the music twisted and deepened from there. This was a test of stamina for Hassay who has dealt with health issues recently. It was his first two-set gig in over 7 years but he held up well...Swiss pianist Nik Bärtsch returned to town on 2/24 at the beautiful upstairs loft of the City Winery with his Ronin project, an entity he's kept alive since its formation in 2001. At this time, the quartet consists of his childhood friend drummer Kasper Rast, Sha on alto sax and bass clarinet, and Jeremias Keller on electric bass. Bärtsch labels his pieces as modules and terms what he does as ritual groove music. In the past, he explained the fundamental concept of his musical thinking to be that music shows a close affinity to architecturally organized space and is governed by the principles of repetition and reduction as well as by interlocking rhythms. A piece of music can be entered, inhabited like a room. It moves forward and transforms through obsessive circular movements, superimposition of different meters and micro-interplay. The listener's attention is directed toward minimal variations and phrasing. The band becomes an integral organism - like an animal, a habitat, an urban space. Much of his thinking has been colored by his years of interest in Zen meditation. The set this night was a bit more Rock influenced than the last time I heard the group a number of years ago. Bärtsch travels with a soundman and a lighting tech in tow so there was ever changing (low) lighting that highlighted the rampant musical alterations involving contrasting rhythmic and melodic figures and grooves over complex time signatures. Bärtsch is adept at playing inside the piano to elicit a gauzy aural feel that makes his music so unique. Compositions covered were Modul's 66, 63,70-5A, 23, 17, 35, as well as a stunning Sha piece A that found the saxophonist laying down searing pulses of sound, twisting his neck in counterpoint to the beautiful reams of piano work...Swarthmore College welcomed back a former visiting professor, Hans Lüdemann, the prominent German Jazz pianist, to the school for a number of workshops and performances, culminating on 3/1 with the world premiere of his new work created for the college called Collisione Mondiale: Songs from Inner and Outer Space. For the one-time event, Lüdemann assembled the Atlantic 7, bringing together musicians of different disciplines from all around the world with whom he's had relationships with - violinist Mark Feldman (Chicago), bassist Nick

Dunston (Berlin by way of New York), saxophonist Bobby Zankel (Philadelphia), balafon master Aly Keïta (Ivory Coast), German drummer Christian Thomé, and Ukrainian singer Tamara Lukesheva. Lüdemann opened both sets with his long-standing Trio Ivoire (Keïta and Thomé), giving the audience a taste of his crackerjack group on "Hombori" and "Resurrection." The Atlantic 7 group made its debut on "Zwickmühlen," which opened with gentle violin and cymbal brushes before taking on a repeating exquisite melody by the whole band on top of Lukesheva's honeyed vocalizations. The leader introduced "Wüstenmaus" [which translates to desert mouse] as his song he performed with Feldman over 20-years ago, and how they fittingly saw a mouse in the dining hall earlier that day. It proved to be a lighthearted romp done by Feldman, Lüdemann, Keïta and Thomé, commencing with stellar balafon surges and rolling drum beats. This was followed by "Collisione Mondiale," which Lüdemann introduced with, "It would be nice to be in a (light mood all the time) but this next piece is a serious piece. In 2022, I wrote this when everything was tumbling down while I was in Rome during the pandemic. I never dreamed that things could get even worse" - in reference to the current world political situation. It was indeed a heavy work with brilliant layers of intriguing sound. "Monumenti" was birthed during his time spent in Rome and Istanbul. Lüdemann successfully captured the ancient feel of the cities in the composition beginning with pizzicato bass and later vocalizations that sounded straight out of an Eastern Orthodox Church. That piece segued into "Erdfarben" which presented Lukesheva using her voice to mirror Keita's balafon creations to the enjoyment of the listeners. Next came "No Moon," an excerpt from Lüdemann's Manhattan Mond opera. It's a wistful, dark tune that imagines the moon falling from the sky. The encore was an unexpected rendition of the iconic Sun Ra song "Space is the Place," which stayed true to the Songs from Inner and Outer Space motif. The tune was thick with fun and exploration as Zankel and Feldman worked outside the box, fully in their comfort zones, while Lukesheva's scatting and Keita's aggressive balafon runs made the familiar song exotic. Lüdemann was obviously having fun in the Sun Ra role. He had covered the tune once in the past during a solo show in Europe where he was asked to play 'space music.' I enjoyed the overheard comment from a listener behind me who said, "They played that last song with a twinkle in their eyes."...Matthew Shipp Trio at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 3/6 further demonstrated the creative mastery of Shipp as a pianist/leader on a unique path. His enduring rhythm section of Michael Bisio (b) and Newman Taylor Baker (d) brilliantly dealt with compression of sound, as well as space, as a unit after their many years as a working unit. Earlier in Shipp's career, he'd frequently hit on a standard tune from the American Songbook and fractionate it, but for this set he stuck to his own music. Bisio explained that they did not cover tunes per se from last year's trio album, they only alluded to them and improvised off of them. He also offered that they have been concentrating on dealing with space in their own way. At one point, it sounded like the trio had gotten into West Side Story but Bisio nixed that thought. Kudos to Shipp and his trio for continuing to explore and evolve...The sudden death of pedal steel virtuoso Susan Alcorn at the age of 71 struck many listeners and fellow musicians cruelly hard. In addition to being a virtuosic performer, she was warm-hearted with a beautiful soul and played frequently in the Philadelphia area, just a short drive from her Baltimore base. A memorial tribute with a varied

lineup of past Alcorn co-collaborators from Philly, Baltimore, DC and Brooklyn was lovingly arranged by Fire Museum Presents on 3/7 at Atonement Fishtown. Nomad War Machine (an avant-Metal grind duo of Julius Masri (d) and James Reichard (el g) provided thunderous drums and amplified guitar crushes, sounding like an advancing army of doom. Victor Vieira-Branco and Jair-Rôhm Parker Wells had never met before but the duo of Alcorn and Jair-Rohm performed for Fire Museum last year and for their planned return they had asked if they could perform as a trio with Vieira-Branco. No doubt that never to be trio would have been amazing because the set with Vieira-Branco and Parker Wells was superbly connected and symbiotic with none of the expected awkwardness of a typical first-time performance. Hopefully this pairing continues on. The most powerful set of the night followed with Bill Nace sitting center stage playing the Taishōgoto, the rarely heard Japanese instrument that is a cross between a guitar and a typewriter. He rapidly tapped at a button with one finger for perhaps the first ten minutes, conjuring a quiet drone full of shifting tones that rewarded careful listening. He looked locked in like he was channeling Alcorn, his heaving chest gave witness to the physical strain of the lengthy, repetitive movement. Suddenly, he amped up the sound, filling the large space with a crescendo of heavenly echoes. Singer-songwriter Rose Thomas Bannister and hubby Bob Bannister brought some of the Country/Folk element that Alcorn was also known for. Simone Baron and Toshi Makihara performed solos and duo next. Makihara was as mischievous and hyperactively inventive as always. Wearing a sharp, black boxer cap, he soloed on a metal can using a simple non-instrument to make a wealth of music. He finished by walking to the audience with two sticks with attached two large metal butterflies that he struck together and yelled, "Susan, Susan!" Soon he was joined by Baron on accordion for a cleverly fun "conversation." Baron followed with her own [long] impressive solo on piano and accordion. Sam Wenc closed out the tribute fittingly on pedal steel guitar doing variations on Alcorn's "And I Await the Resurrection of the Pedal Steel Guitar" before closing the tribute with a wild improv section brimming with sounds I'd never heard from pedal steel before. For those who knew Susan Alcorn and how special she was as a musician as well as a human being, this was a fitting send off – thank you Fire Museum Presents. The proceeds from the event were donated to Alcorn's husband, David Lobato, who was present for the tribute...Sardinian prepared guitar pioneer Paolo Angeli made his first trip to Philadelphia on 3/11 at The Rotunda (Fire Museum Presents) and what a success it turned out to be. A rousing standing ovation greeted his profound performance on his one-of-akind guitar creation and his raw but endearing singing. His performance combines Free Jazz, Folk, Flamenco, Baroque, Rock, Pop and Classic Sardinian music by way of his own incredible invented instrument – an 18-stringed hybrid of guitar, baritone, violoncello and drums. It's got lots of bells and whistles in the form of hammers, pedals, propellers, movable bridges, harp strings, sitar strings, kalimba and more, including the recent addition of tine-like projections that can be strummed or plucked to make eerie sounds. The tines were inspired by a photo of Sun Ra holding an object that had spindles coming out of it. Before starting his set, Angeli explained that he's a product of Northern Sardinia, its sea, and the nearby 12 islands that he loves to explore. When creating his music,

he imagines the feeling of sailing to one of the islands and the feeling of how the wind and the sea's movement determines his path and which island he will end up at. He feels that the same sense of chance and exploration comes out on stage for him by way of discovering the relationship between improvisation and compositions. He told me, "My way to play always is connected to this attitude. Like, to be free, and decide at the last-minute which direction you can arrive." He studied to be a boat captain as a young man and every day for years, he's worn the same type of shirt – a blue and white striped nautical tee - because of his fondness for the water. [He was wearing the same shirt when I saw him for the first time at the 2007 Vision Festival in New York City.] Angeli started his performance with an improvised section before undertaking a tune with vocals that he learned from his teacher – a typical song from the north side of Sardinia that he arranged as post-Rock meeting traditional music. Next came Federico García Lorca's "Jinete" ["Horses"] and "Ramas de Sueños." Later songs included plucking, bowing, the use of bows in both hands, a metal disc that was used against the strings or nestled on top of the strings, and singing. "Corsicana" was especially interesting. It's music from Corsica that was jacked up to sound like a mix of, "Tom Waits meeting with traditional music," Angeli noted. "It's like Tom Waits came to Sardinia to drink wine and play the music." Some throat singing came late on "Sulu." The finale, a traditional Sardinian song, "Canto In Re" [He explained it to be the most complex melody that is sung in Sardinia] was sung in Northern and Southern Sardinian dialect and ended with Angeli coming off the stage without his instrument to sing in his bare feet in front of the audience. His voice, neither deep nor powerful, was charmingly filled with emotion. He sings with a mix of joy and loss that comes off as a life lesson. He's aptly named "Angeli," a humble angel, a musical messenger from Sardinia ...Vijay Iyer has earned apt recognition for his piano/compositional skills – he's already garnered a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a United States Artists Fellowship, a Grammy nomination, and the Alpert Award in the Arts. Not bad for the age of 53. His trio with bassist Devon Gates and drummer Jeremy Dutton appeared at the Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz & Performing Arts on 3/15. The music, an intriguing mix of composition and improvisation, was delivered in a way that made it impossible to tell which was which. Iyer's playing was seriously dense for most of the set which angled through pensive portions as well as fabulous explosive peaks. Gates played with great joy and was in constant motion on her bass while Dutton often added crafty coloration that fit nicely with the leader's propulsive leanings. Iyer did a nicely fractured cover of Stevie Wonder's "Overjoyed," a song he's been doing recently in homage to Chick Corea following a loan to Iyer of the piano Corea used during his final live stream which featured the song. The tunes were not announced save for the finale of "Kite," Iyer's original piece written after the 2024 death of Palestinian poet Refaat Alareer...Sasha Berliner is one of the suddenly plentiful crop of young vibists on the scene. Her quintet (Taylor Eigsti, p; Alonzo Demetrius, tpt; Ben Williams, b; Jongkuk Kim, d) at Chris' Jazz Café on 3/15 packed a lot of highly acclaimed talent which served her well during their second set. Solos were eschewed in favor of sticking to the program of group interplay. Original pieces included "The Back Rooms" and "The Worst Person in the World," a piece Berliner explained as, "Although it sounds spiteful, it's named after a Norwegian film of the same title."

She also covered two well-known titles including a beautiful reharmonized arrangement of the Billy Strayhorn standard, "Upper Manhattan Medical Group," a song that was an essential part of her early Jazz education. She preceded the composition by saying, "This may or may not appeal to you because it sounds very different from the original...Our jobs as artists is to challenge." The band went on to modernize the popular composition before ending with an Ornette Coleman Blues ditty – "When Will the Blues Leave," further substantiating the 26-year-old leader's grasp of the wide track of trad-to-modern music...Angélique Kidjo, [full name- Angélique Kpasseloko Hinto Hounsinou Kandjo Manta Zogbin Kidjo] the Beninese-French singer-songwriter, actress, activist, was branded in 2007 by Time magazine as "Africa's premier diva," a moniker she continues to earn with her fierce stage presence, dazzling dance moves, arresting voice and fluency in multiple cultures and languages. Kidjo has cross-pollinated the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, Funk and Jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America. Her quintet [Etienne Stadwijk, keys; Chelton Grey, b; Marcos Lopez, perc; Joshua Keitt, d] at the Zellerbach Theatre (Penn Live Arts) on 3/22 was well-rehearsed and very supportive of their flamboyant leader. The set began with solo conga poundings before Kidjo walked on stage, beginning her singing out of view from the audience, for a dramatic opening. She was soon spinning in circles and moving across the stage, broadcasting that this was a presentation not only to be heard, but to be watched. She would later declare, "The rule when you come to my show, you have to bring your dancing." She could have added singing to her list of demands when she later prompted listeners to sing along on a few tunes. An early rendition of "Africa, One of a Kind" expounded on her ongoing relationship with her continent of origin with lyrics such as – "Because you are one of a kind, I'll always have you on my mind/Near or far, the others must be blind to not see how special you are." Prior to singing a Celia Cruz original, which she processed through an Afrobeat filter, she recalled a memory of seeing Cruz, the Queen of Salsa, as a young school kid, and how much she influenced her to be a performer/ band leader. She also drew from past recordings to include a cover of "Once in a Lifetime" from the Talking Heads' landmark 1980 album Remain in Light which was deeply influenced by music from West Africa, notably Fela Kuti's Afrobeat. Kidjo's version of the popular song bore little resemblance to the original, she altered the melody and included singing in languages from her home country. Kidjo also included a new song called "Joy" that was inspired by her mother who passed away 5 years ago. Her mother always expressed the need to have joy and be kind - often saying, "Kindness is a bulletproof vest – be kind," advice Kidjo has taken to heart, showering her audience with messages of love, courage, optimism and universal friendship in a warm and joyful way.

Ken Weiss

Marshall Allen- I've Never **Been A Hundred Before**

By Ken Weiss

Marshall Belford Allen (b. May 25, 1924, Louisville, KY) the legendary, longtime leader of the iconic Sun Ra Arkestra (since 1995) and 2025 NEA Jazz Master turned 100 the month prior to this extensive interview done on June 30, 2025, at his home - the famous "Sun Ra House" on Morton Street - a three-story rowhouse in Philadelphia's Germantown neighborhood which serves as the terrestrial headquarters of the Arkestra. Allen was accompanied by his son, Ronnie Boyd, who added his own occasional insights during the session.

Cadence: You turned 100 years old last month. What does passing the 100-year mark mean to you?

Marshall Allen: I don't know, a hundred? That's good. All I know is I've never been a hundred before [Laughs] so I'm starting a new page. I ain't worrying about nothing, I know what I have to do and I do it whether I like it or not. I'm not worrying about those things I used to worry about. There ain't nothing to worry about. I worry about my health but most of the time I feel good. I feel like I've always felt except I don't do as much work.

Cadence: To many who have followed your 80-year career of traveling the world, spreading the joyful music of Sun Ra and your own music, you've long been a national treasure. The fact that you are 100 years old and still performing at such a high level is downright fantastical and inspiring. Would you talk about keeping this going at age 100?

Allen: My brother Nathan was 103 when he passed.

Cadence: So you're not impressed with your age?

Allen: No, I feel alright. I still have the energy to play although I don't have all the energy to do all the painting and decorating [around the house that I used to]. That's what I've done on the side – paint, fix and decorate, and other housework like that. I don't do much of that now because when I get on the ladder I get a little [off]. I still do some areas where I don't have to get on the ladder. I've painted all nine of the radiators and I've got to do all of them again.

Cadence: When did you stop doing all the housework?

Allen: When I almost fell off the ladder.

Cadence: Once you hit 90 and beyond and kept touring, your age became a prominent entry into the articles written about you and the band. Do you think too much has been made of your age?

Allen: I still have my energy, and when you have your energy, it doesn't matter how old you are. If you still have your spirit, you get up and go. Yeah, it's too



Marshall Allen- Photo credit © Ken Weiss

much talk about my age. I don't feel too bad for a hundred. I still do the same things I've always done, just not as much of it.

Cadence: What advice do you have for the rest of us mere mortals regarding the secret of longevity?

Allen: It's from playing the music for my well-being so I can give something to the people. So when it comes to be that I don't do it for my well-being, then I'll have nothing to give to the people. My idea was to do the music, do the thing that you really feel and give it to the people who really need the music. So if it don't do me no good, why should I give it to you? You see? I had to turn my life around a little bit. I turned it around and said, 'I'm going into the music only' in order for my well-being to keep me happy and strong and working so that I can give something to others when I play. But when it gets to where I don't do nothing, I'll have nothing to give. You see? That must be doing something because I'm still playing, I still want to play. Everybody says don't do this, don't do that, but I can still [claps hands] get down the road yet. [Laughs]

Cadence: When did you turn your life around?

Allen: I did it when I buried myself into the music and really tried to get the spirit and not do what I knew because what I knew was the condition I was in. So I said, 'I don't know nothing, I'm gonna do things by the spirit because when you "know," you go in the box. Sun Ra used to say that and I didn't quite understand it but he was talking about the mirror and the spirit. So I said, 'Now what I have to do is learn what he's talking about' because you believe it or you don't believe it. I had to convince myself to try it, to do the music for my well-being. I wanted it to keep me strong and don't break down and don't do a lot of things that will take your energy and stuff away. So I stopped doing all these things that I was doing when I was young and turned around to the music for my well-being. That called for some discipline because you have to cast out a lot of stuff you're doing in life and concentrate there, like any profession. When you put your mind into what you do you're gonna get the benefits, and it's got to help you before you can give people anything. So the message I give is the music keeps my well-being so I'll give you some, and if you're really sincere about that, and listen to the music, it can heal many of the different things that bother people.

Cadence: Would you talk about what the listeners should be getting from the music?

Allen: They're getting my well-being and my interpretation of a better feeling when you hear music and different sounds that you don't usually hear. So, I'll give you my well-being, you see? Otherwise, I wouldn't play music. It keeps me alive and energetic; that's what the music's supposed to do. I had to cast out all the other things that I'd been doing and concentrate just on the music. Sounds, sound body, sound mind, that's what they always told me, so I said, 'I'm gonna use sound,' but I had to be sincere about it, it ain't no joke. So I took





Marshall Allen and Sun Ra Arkestra - Photo credit © Ken Weiss

the third floor up there [Points up the steps of the house] and all the activity down here is down [here] and I'm upstairs doing my music, getting my wellbeing and understanding the music and what it means. It's kept me right on through my nineties with no feeling of being old or tired.

Cadence: Talk about longevity in your family.

Allen: My father went away in his 90s. My mother went away in her 90s. My brother went away in his 100s.

Cadence: You also had 6 sisters?

Allen: Yeah, they're all gone except for one who is 89 and she's kind of fragile. At 89, I was rolling because of the music.

Cadence: You have this longevity in your family, have you lived your life with the expectancy of longevity?

Allen: No, I never thought about it, I didn't look at it that way. I'd say, 'I'm alright, I'm 80,' 'I'm 90, I'm alright,' and 'I'm 100, I'm still alright.' There's been some little bumps along the way. I hope I keep my brain straight and keep the music. I'm always doing the music because it's healing to me. I took the music and all the confusion in life went away, it don't matter. I don't worry about nothing. I used to be a clean freak – everything I'd clean – because my family was like that. If you dropped a dirty sock on the floor you wouldn't see it anymore. They'd wash it or throw it in the trash. Clean freaks - that's what I call it. [Laughs]

Cadence: We're doing this interview at your home – the "Sun Ra House? – and your son Ronnie is here. Would you talk about your children? How many do you have and what do they do?

Allen: [Looks at Ronnie and asks him to explain what he does] Ronnie Boyd: I'm in the pharmaceutical industry. I sell products that treat patients that have head and neck cancer. My product is a pegfilgrastim so patients that are receiving chemotherapy infusions, my drug comes after and increases their white blood cell count. I've been in corporate America for 20 years and married for 30 years with 3 beautiful children. My siblings from my father, there are 5 of us. The oldest is Rodney. The next is, we call him "Strob" but his name is David. The next is Tina and then me and the youngest is little Marshall. They do a variety of different tasks. Little Marshall works for the city of Philadelphia. Rodney is retired but one thing to note, he's a great pianist. He's picked up the skill of playing music similar to our father. He's an incredible pianist who lives in Chicago. I think he has played with bands when he was coming up but he doesn't play anymore like that.

Cadence: Ronnie, you live in Florida but you come to Philadelphia often. Ronnie Boyd: I come up each month to take my father to his medical appointments, make sure he's doing okay and spend time with him. I talk to him about our family history, about life, about his well-being, my well-being. So there's a bound we've created over the years that we have. I make sure that if he needs something, that I'm on the front line delivering that. For example, I





Marshall Allen - Photo credit © Ken Weiss

just recently bought him another air conditioner for his room.

Cadence: Ronnie, would you say something about being the son of Marshall Allen, having such a famous father?

Ronnie Boyd: I think I see things differently. Yes, I think it's an honor to be able to have a father who has played music for so long, that has given his life to music, and, like he said earlier, how he is playing for his well-being, so when he plays for his well-being, we all benefit from that. I think it's kind of weird as his son, because I have to share him with the world. Usually when there's a father-son relationship, there's an intimacy but I had to realize that I'm sharing my dad with the world. But one thing is for sure, others can never love him like me as his son. The love that I have goes beyond what others might feel because there's a blood bond, there's a physical bond, an emotional bond, and at the end - that's my father. It's a weird dichotomy because he's my father. He's been doing what he's been doing for all these years, and I respect it, so I want to see to it that he continues to do it and do it in a healthy manner, but I have to share him with others. It's not always easy to do but I get to build my memories and moments with him. When I am around him it's him and I and nobody else interrupts that, which is nice.

Cadence: Marshall, when I interviewed you 10 years ago for Jazz Inside, I asked you to describe yourself and you answered with - "I'm just somebody who likes to play music. I found something that I wanted to do and I found a band that I liked and wanted to be in." Would you expand on that? Allen: You know, if you study and you're ready, if you find the [right place] and you expand yourself by having your own thing, that's the way it is. So you study hard and you get yourself together, but that [applies] to everybody. I stay at my post and I cast out a lot of other stuff that takes you away from it. It takes a lot of discipline to stay with the music. That was a big choice and one day I just said, 'I'm going that way,' and I just shut off half of the house in order to do it. Nobody comes up and bothers me. Do whatever you do downstairs; I'm upstairs with my music. I knew I needed to play more instruments to understand how to write for them. I try to play them; I don't play them too good but I play them to understand how they're played. I've got about 20 instruments up there. I've got oboe, piccolo, flutes, clarinet, contrabass clarinet, E-flat clarinet, and a bunch of keyboards. All of these things help me write what I want, what I feel, and I can give everybody parts. I've got trumpet, trombone, I've got all that stuff. I play on the piano and organ and I've got a little bass. I bought some drums over there. I play a little bit on every instrument so when I write for it, I can hear it. There's also the kora. I've always liked the kora and I have one. When I was in Paris, there were a lot of kora players and I always wanted to play it. I played with [Babatunde] Olatunji and then I learned to play Highlife music and all the African stuff.

Cadence: Your performing status changed during 2023. The grueling international touring schedule you'd done for so many years was halted due





Marshall Allen - Photo credit © Ken Weiss

to age considerations. How challenging had those extensive European tours become for you?

Allen: The thing about world tours, they're wonderful but if you do 25 or 30 performances in a row, hey man, it takes you out. In 2019, we played 30-someodd days of one-nighters. [Laughs] You see? And, man, you're traveling from one end of the country to another and back and forth and back and forth. [Whew] When I got back here in 2019, I was wiped out. I was so tired, getting no sleep, sleeping on the train, sleeping anywhere I could sleep because it was always traveling from one city to another. So that wore me down and then I slowed down a little bit since then.

Cadence: When did you cut down your touring?

Ronnie Boyd: It was in the fall of 2022 that we started slowing it down. We started realizing the fact that someone getting older like Marshall Allen can't be flying overseas and having a grueling schedule. So what I did was to put together an agenda explaining why it's not good for someone Marshall's age to be flying like that.

Allen: There you go again. If you feel like this, I don't care how old you are, you still do your work. If you feel good, there's no pressure, and that's the way it is. If I'm a 100, so? I feel just as good as I did when I was in my 70s and 80s. I get more energy and enthusiasm as I go along and the only thing now is I'm not slowing down, it's the people around me that think that when you get to 90 or 100, that you're out of it. That it's the end of the line but it's not really because you learn how to do work without giving out a lot of energy. When you're younger, you just throw energy in and go, but now I place my energy towards the right things and I don't wear myself out. I don't get bored either. Cadence: How difficult has it been emotionally to have the Arkestra go off to perform without you?

Allen: It did bother me but I thought I better listen to my doctor. He said slow down, which is alright. I have to slow down because I get tired. I've been doing this since I was 18 and never stopped. So now I stopped and I can do something else. I'll write some music. I've got ideas and I put them down. I'm here by myself and I've got all these instruments that I can play and write for. You know, you feel good when you accomplish something, when you write a composition.

Cadence: You remain the musical director of the Arkestra but longtime Arkestra member Knoel Scott is now conducting the band.

Allen: Yeah, I passed it to the next person. Like Sun Ra passed and John [Gilmore] took over, and then after John, there was nobody left that wanted to take over. All they wanted to do was take the stuff [some of the ephemera and collected items are missing], take all the stuff we done and distribute it and make money and do their thing. I said, 'No, I'll save everything,' that's why it looks so junky in here. I saved everything. No, I'm gonna carry on the music that Sun Ra spent a lifetime writing and dreaming and talking about. I'm gonna





Marshall Allen and Sun Ra Arkestra - Photo credit © Ken Weiss

try that and see if it helps me, and it did. It kept me out of trouble, it kept me from doing wrong things, from wearing myself out. It made me sincere about whatever I'm doing, do it, and then what I don't know, good. Then I get on the bandstand and follow the director. [Hums a tune] You see? All the vibrations of the day, to where I feel today because tomorrow, the music will be changed. The same song will be there but the parts will change because that's the way I feel today. Now, when the musicians change, that's when the work comes because they're in the square, because they 'know.' I don't want to hear what you know, I want to hear what you don't know. That's the feeling. Now, how you gonna tell a musician that? They're in the square playing good, it's not that they ain't playing, but it ain't creative. The creator gives you some music to create but use it properly by knowing how. So, I get on the bandstand but Knoel takes over. He's going along with the song but then I want to get along on it so I say, 'Listen, this is where I feel today,' which nobody knows if they don't watch the conductor. I'm going to create, it's the same song but different inside and different parts. It's about creating what you feel today. The only way to get a band to do that is to do what Sun Ra did with us with the old band. Every day, seven days a week, for years, in and out. And then all the things I want to do is in between that. So that's what I'm doing now, I don't mind stopping because when I come, I come with me and the spirit of today. It's not what you got in the square. So, you know this, good, play a little what you know and then do the spirit of the day. And then by me being here every day training them about the way I'm thinking, I give them expanded minds instead of being correct. Life ain't correct, not every day it's not. It's there, you adjust yourself and move on. So that's the way with the music. I play the music and I don't have to be nowhere. That's the way it is, that's the vibrations of the day. Cadence: How was it decided that Knoel Scott would be the one to step up and take over?

Allen: He's next in line so he takes over and he goes the way he thinks but I can still come in and go the way I think, too. And then it's not all in the square, it's done with what I know. Some of us don't know nothing – listen, be a part, and put your part in so I don't need to tell you what your part is. I don't need to write it down or nothing. You put your part in because that's the way you feel today. See, that's how you get something that's always a little different on the same song. Sun Ra would write you a part – you got your part, you come back tomorrow, you don't have no part. So you do all that studying, hoping you get your part and then he'd give your part to somebody else and give you another part. It was kind of mind-boggling, I'd say, 'I've been in all week, practicing since the last gig,' and then he gives it away to somebody else. [Laughs] You come today and play the arrangement, come tomorrow, the arrangement changed. You think you've got your part – uh-uh – that part is out, you've got another part. Or it could happen five minutes before you go on the show. He had a thing, five minutes before the show, he'd say, "Play this,

don't play that, which you know, I'm gonna play this new stuff." And then when it was time to hit, he'd say, "Go out there and play, open the show." He'd send one man out to blow his horn and open the show while we're back there getting a new part on the song. You'd be thinking, 'Goddam, I had my part down good but he don't want me to play it,' and then he changes it." When he did that, you could get a little frustrated so I had to change my thinking to I don't know nothing and that's good, I'll learn. It's easy to say that but when you have a whole bunch of people, they've got to be on the same page. Cadence: You've been playing music for over 80 years, is there a lot that you

don't know about music at this point?

Allen: Yeah, everything, I don't know nothing. That's what Sun Ra said – "You've got a nice sound and all that but you're not phrasing like I want you to. You can make the music come alive with the right diction and the right punctuations – ups, downs – all of that." He said, "You know this, I don't want to hear that." That means that you're really listening from your heart. He was trying to get you to do that because otherwise it didn't fit into his music. That was a real blow to your ego and everything else. [Laughs] One day I got so mad and so sad, I just played anything and he said, "Oh, that's good." I said, 'I'm gonna do everything wrong.' It wasn't wrong, it was what I felt and it fit. When playing something you know, you're gonna do it by the rules, so it's a square. So that's the way I've been built to dance after Sun Ra's gone. I couldn't do all the things he did but I want to keep his music alive and put some of me in it at the same time because he left room for something else. He played melodies and background and then there's room for creativity in his music. That's what I had to find out – the creativity part in his music

Cadence: Knoel Scott is not only brilliant on saxophone, flute and vocals, he's added an additional mesmerizing aspect to the Arkestra's performances throughout the years with his freakish athletic displays and leaps from hands to feet.

Allen: He's a good player but like I said, I had to bring him in here and change his thing to help me. Now it's his time, okay, I slowed down, now you take it. So he's doing his thing the way he thinks. When you take over this band, you've got to be creative.

Cadence: I've observed over the years how much music fills your existence. During quiet gaps of time off stage, you're always humming music and tapping your fingers to a beat. How have you balanced your music and your life? Allen: I'm humming different parts and you put them together like a jigsaw puzzle. Music is my life, that's all I do. I don't know nothing so I got the whole world to bring in. I don't know nothing. See, once I knew something, I was in the square, I couldn't get out of the square. It was just a spiral moving on down. I came out of the conservatory, I thought I knew everything and then I came to Sun Ra and he said, "No, that's not what I want. It's good, it's alright, but that's in the square. That's not what I want." You're gonna insult me?

[Laughs] How hard did I study to get that stuff right? And then he said, "No, that's alright but you've got to play from here." [Taps chest] "You've got to play what you don't know. The spirit of the day. You don't know when you walk out that door, but the spirit guides you." [One day] I was walking down the street, a plant fell off a house. I usually walk on the sidewalk everyday but that day I thought to walk in the street. There were no cars coming so I walked in the street and the plant fell on the sidewalk. That was something I didn't know but the spirit guided me. See? Little things like that and you can see what I'm talking about. So you play music like that too but you have to be listening. You can't be looking at some nice-looking woman. Keep your attention, you've got to be in it.

Cadence: You said there was a plant that fell on the sidewalk?

Allen: Yeah, something just told me to walk in the street. I said, 'Oh, that's something I didn't see.' And then I understood what Sun Ra was talking about – you do the right thing without thinking about doing it, you just do it. The spirit guided me off the sidewalk so I said, 'It does work!' You don't think about what you're doing, you just do what you do and you need to get the whole band thinking that way. When I walk out that door, I don't know nothing, but if you're open, the spirit will guide you. I can go out on the street, turn around, and go the other way and then all hell breaks loose where you were supposed to be going. [Laughs] And you say, 'Damn, I'm glad I came this way!' Those kinds of things you can't plan, you just do them when it comes.

Cadence: Anyone who's seen you play knows that you don't like performances to end. When it seems like the band is done playing you'll often start playing something on your own to keep the music going.

Allen: Yeah, boil and boil and boil!

Ronnie Boyd: Dad was performing with Kash Killion here in Philadelphia recently and Kash had stopped playing and it was pretty much over, but dad kept playing. He had the energy to keep going and the people were loving it. The audience wanted more and he kept playing his saxophone and his Casio. He kept playing because he's in that energy space to give to the people what's been given to him.

Allen: It's hard to find out but you find out and you just do it and you say, 'Oh, I did the right thing.'

Cadence: You end your performances by reciting "Hit That Jive, Jack!" Allen: Yeah, I say 'Hit that jive, Jack, put it in your pocket till I get back." So it's 'Hit that jive, Jack.' Bam! 'Put it in your pocket till I get back. Now I'm going outer space as fast as I can. Ain't got time to shake your hand.' [Claps his hands) Gone! That's all. [Laughs]

Cadence: Why do you do that?

Allen: It's a little thing. 'Hit that jive, Jack!' [Laughs] Sun Ra put that in there, he put all that stuff in there. It was like show band. You dance - you don't sit up there like symphony folks and just play your horn and just sit there. No, you

have to be a showman. You have to dance, you have to sing, you gotta move, and all of that. He had a band like that. Somebody would get up and dance and If they weren't a dancer, they'd do a dance that they knew or a dance they felt, and the whole band is moving. So it's a show and we have costumes.

Cadence: What's the history behind the colorful costumes the band always wears?

Allen: The first costumes we got were from the opera house. Eventually, Sun Ra began to make his own and we had dancers in the band that sewed and made costumes and came up with ideas. So, when you're watching, you've got something to look at. You've got people with different costumes and it's a show. We get up, we ain't just sitting there. You're moving constantly, it's a show band. He put all that stuff in there to play the music and it's quite a show. You look around and everybody's playing something different and dancing! [Laughs]

Cadence: I've noticed even at your performances outside of the Arkestra that you always perform in glittery outfits.

Allen: It's always a show.

Cadence: You're very open to playing in all different types of settings and with all different types of musicians.

Allen: Yea, I'll play with the amateurs and the professionals, whatever. I was in Scotland playing with kids and they were playing those horns good. I had to take them, make a band, and give a show. I used to do all of that kind of stuff. I tell people to focus and listen to what everybody is doing and put your part in there

Cadence: In your later years, you've turned to playing the Steiner EVI (electronic valve instrument) more often. What's the history behind your playing that instrument? How did you come to start playing it? Were you one of the first to use it?

Allen: When Steiner first came up with the instrument, they sent it to Italy to the Crumar company, an organ and keyboard company, to produce it. We were in Italy and Sun Ra saw we were gonna pass right by the Crumar company so Sun Ra went into the factory. They had these EVIs and they gave us seven of them. They had just come out. Everybody was enthused for a while and we were all playing them but as time went by, they got cast away except by me. I kept five of them. I liked them and kept on playing but everybody else didn't want to play them. They played their flutes and other stuff. [Laughs] I like it. Cadence: How do you see the EVI fitting into your music?

Allen: I don't know anything like that. When the spirit gets you, nobody can ask you how do you know this? You don't. The spirit tells you to do certain things and it comes out. It tells me to keep playing and I like it. I like it because it has seven octaves, like a piano, and I use it like that.

Cadence: For years you kept a red string around the bell of your alto saxophone to represent fire.

Allen: Yea to keep the fire burning. I put my banner on, I wrap it around the bell of my horn.

Cadence: Yes, in the past you told me the red string represented fire. Recently, you've been sporting a blue string on your horn. Why the change and what does the blue string represent?

Allen: Well, I've got different colors - I've got gold, red and blue.

Cadence: But it was always red that I saw around your horn for many years and now I see it's blue. Why the change and what does it represent?

Allen: Well, that was that horn. The red is my better horn. Each horn I give a ribbon around it of different colors. One's red, one's gold and one's blue. The blue doesn't represent something else, it's a different horn, and each one's got a different sound. I've got two altos left. One is a heavier sound and one has a light sound. I don't like the light sound for a band.

Cadence: You play with a very distinctive style on saxophone that is often explosive. It's been described by some as a "pyrotechnic" playing style. At times, you strum the saxophone keys like a guitar with a clawed hand which releases an explosion of sound. How did you develop that?

Allen: All these saxophone players I was around (when I was young) were professional. (Zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom) They'd be gone, boy. I mean, there was Don Byas and Coleman Hawkins, all them kind of people. They were SAXOPHONE players and they just scripted through that stuff and I said, 'Dag! How could they do that?' Charlie Parker and all them. I decided I'd play so fast till I could raise myself up like a whirlwind. So, I play until I get that feeling and then I go - [shouts wooooo] - raise up. [Laughs] It's just like putting a whirlwind thing on you and going up – like having air push under an umbrella and you go up with it.

Cadence: I've never seen anybody else play like you play, How did you come to play like you do?

Allen: That's what's in my head. It's just a way that you think and then you find a way of doing it. I used to cut up my fingers because they would get in the springs and the springs would cut my fingers. I was always having bleeding fingers. My hand was bloody until I got a better horn where the springs didn't stick up there, and then instead of pulling in, I pulled out, so that my fingers don't hit those springs anymore. Those springs were like needles, so now I pull back and then go across the keys. It's a style like going up in a balloon. I had that kind of thinking.

Cadence: That's what it feels like to you?

Allen: Yea, I feel like I'm gonna ease up out of the chair. I thought that if I played fast enough, I'd probably raise up out of my seat. [Laughs] I don't know if I do or not but I feel light.

Cadence: Have you had out-of-body experiences while playing? Allen: Yeah, I float through walls, that kind of stuff. Weird things happen. Once I was in the room in the back of the house and [other band members] were in the front room. They were in there talking and I went through the wall and

went into the front room and listened to the conversation. But I got scared and I came back out of that and I told them everything they were talking about and they looked at me. And then one time in New York, it went the same way. I went out through the wall and I got scared and I came back. I've had two or three of those experiences and they make you think differently. I was in control but I got scared that I'd get locked in. I got all the way through with my head (through the wall) that first time but I got scared and came back. But the next time, I went through the wall completely and listened to everything they were talking about and they said, "How'd you do that when you were in the back room?" I don't really know what that was.

Cadence: You served in the United States Army's 92nd Infantry Division (also known as the "Buffalo Soldiers") during WWII.

Allen: Yes, in 1942 they were looking for musicians for their 28-piece band and I could already play the clarinet a little bit so I joined the band as a way to get away from shooting somebody. That was down in Brownsville, Texas, just off the border. And then I had two weeks' trial to learn to play some of the marches. There happened to be a very good clarinet player in the band and he tutored me. I was playing fourth parts and fifth parts and I got into the band. We also formed a dance band and we played at officer clubs. The ("Buffalo Soldier") infantry went to Italy and they transferred the band to Fort Sam Houston headquarters, and from headquarters they sent us to 2nd Cavalry Division for a while, and then they changed us again to the infantry and we went to Mississippi and Kentucky and then from there we finally went overseas with 13 large ships full with troops. It was black at night out there in the sea and you'd see a big, bright light go "boom!" out in the dark and you'd know the submarines got another destroyer or troop ship. They didn't get us though. I was on the back with my life jacket on most of the time, just in case. [Laughs] We went into Le Havre (France) and that was all banged up too. I was in the service for seven years and finished in Germany. When I came out, I was in Austria drinking vodka with the Russian soldiers and acting crazy.

Cadence: How scary was that going over to war on the ship?

Allen: I tell you; I didn't go down in the hull. I didn't go down there, I wouldn't sleep. I stayed up on deck with my life jacket on most of the time. Yea, I wouldn't go down there and then have a torpedo hit that ship. Shoot, because I'd seen big blazes out there on the ocean when the submarines hit ships.

Cadence: Were you involved in any actual fighting?

Allen: No, we were a band. We were back with the prisoners of war and with the guys behind the lines, keeping the morale behind the line of fighting. I was over there when Patton got killed. We took care of prisoners of war and other stuff.

Cadence: You played in the 101st Infantry Division's band during the 1945 V-E Day [Victory in Europe Day] parade for President Eisenhower in Reims, France. What do you recall from that day? Did you see Eisenhower?

Allen: Yes, we were the only band in the parade. I've got a newspaper clipping

in an album upstairs which shows the band and the generals. It felt good to do that on V-E Day. The war was over, we were in the parade, the only band in it, in front of the generals – yeah, that felt good. [Laughs]

Cadence: After the war, you stayed in Europe for Classical clarinet study on the GI Bill at Paris' National Conservatory. While there, you had exposure to artists such as Don Byas, James Moody and Annie Ross who lived in the same hotel as you. Would you talk about your time spent with them?

Allen: I was playing in the officer's club and one of the lieutenant generals said, "I like the way you play. When are you getting out of the army?" I said, 'I got another year,' and he said, "Well, you come to Heidelberg next year and I'll see that you have all your papers straight for the GI Bill." When I got to my last week or two, I went to Heidelberg to the general and he said, "Sit down, have a drink." He got on the phone and said, "I want this man's papers processed before twelve o'clock," because twelve o'clock was lunch. I went through the process (swiftly), it usually took days to do. I had a three-day pass so I traveled around to where other musicians were and I had a go time. After that, I got my papers and I was [gone]. I trained in Paris and all the musicians and bands would come to Paris and play so I was right in the heart of where they all were – Duke Ellington and Count Basie. Eartha Kitt was there, she was running around with us for a while and then the next thing you know – she was over at the Lido with the big folks. [Laughs] I lived around the corner from the Lido where all the dancing girls were. I hung out with all the musicians that lived in the area because they had a hotel on the same street. James Moody was there. Don Byas was there and he was always inviting me to come over. He was going down to the South of France to play and I'd go down there and play too. We'd be there with Sidney Bechet We'd all be on the beach down there and they'd be showing off – "Who's the greatest? Who's in better shape?" I'd listen to Byas and Bechet, two old men, talking about who's the greatest and who's the strongest and all that. [Laughs] We were all laughing. They kind of took me under their wing and they would tell me all of their stories and I would listen. [Laughs]

Cadence: What do you recall of your interaction with Charlie Parker at a jam session in Paris?

Allen: He came in late with somebody carrying his horn. They didn't have the drummer there so I got on the drums and tried to do my Denzil Best at the jam session. Do you know Denzil Best? I did the brushes, you know, like "Big Sid" Catlett. I was no drummer but I could keep a beat. Charlie Parker came in there late. That place was almost ready to close and here he comes, but he still did hit the jam session.

Cadence: You played drums for Charlie Parker?

Allen: No, I wasn't no drummer, I was just filling in because the drummer wasn't there. That was just at the jam session. Another jam session was with Don Byas and Coleman Hawkins and a bunch of cats. There I had my horn sitting on my lap listening to them and they said, "Come on Red, play your

horn!" I couldn't play like they played but I tried. [Laughs]

Cadence: Is it true you played drums for Sidney Bechet one night in Paris? Allen: Sidney's drummer didn't show up so I had to do the rehearsal. I played the drums a little bit,+ doing the Denzil Best brush sweeps. [Laughs] The drummer finally came and then the concert was on. And then Sidney gave me his ring and his girlfriend and told me to watch them. He said, "Take my ring, take my girlfriend and watch her. Take care of her while I'm on stage." [Laughs] I was his bodyguard for his girlfriend.

Cadence: You returned to the States on a boat to New York with refugees with whom you got grouped in with. What's the story behind that?

Allen: It was the SS Nassau that made its maiden voyage out of Italy and it had 7,000 people on it. There were refugees on there with me because I came back after the war was over. I came back in the '50s. Yeah, they thought I was one of the refugees because I was playing with an Italian band on the ship after one of the musicians got seasick and I got the gig. They wanted me to go from New York to Nassau and I said, "No, I'm going from New York to Chicago. I'm going home." I turned that gig down and went on home but then they got me mixed up with the refugees and they sent me along with a ticket. And then, the next thing you know, the government said I owed them five hundred dollars. [Laughs] I paid them back but at the time they called me a refugee and they sent me home quick. I said, 'Oh, boy, I don't have to spend no money,' and then the next thing you know, I got a bill. [Laughs]

Cadence: You headed to Chicago where your mother lived and got a job. Allen: I was working in a camera company polishing camera lenses. First, they gave me the dirty job of cleaning the pit – the trough that runs around the area where they polished the glass with that old stinky stuff. Yeah, I did that, nobody wanted that job but I took it and I did a good job. I'd put my fingers over my nose, and then they put me over to polishing lenses. That was a good job for a while. I'd come to work with my horn, all dressed up with all the workers looking at me, after being up all night with Sun Ra. [Laughs] I'd be coming in late after I got through with Sun Ra - he'd keep you up all night long. I lost my job fooling around with Sun Ra after coming in late every day. I was out every night with Sun Ra and when the time came to fire someone, they fired me. I had my horn at work and instead of eating lunch, I'd go in the bathroom and practice my flute. At that time, I'd also be going around, buying all the records. That's when I bought Sun Ra's demos, and I heard that and I said, 'Oh!' Around that time, I had been promoted at work to diamond grinding but I wasn't in there long enough to learn anything but that was a good job and my pay went up. I did that a little bit and then I was fired because of coming in late all the time.

Cadence: When did you sleep?

Allen: When I went home after work and then we had rehearsal in the evening. And then I had to take flute lessons, which I took with the flute player out of

the Chicago Symphony. He had a shop where he taught kids and he told me if I taught them saxophone, he'd give me flute lessons afterwards. So, I got free flute lessons but no pay for working with the kids.

Cadence: Was your plan to be a professional musician at the time you came back to Chicago after the service?

Allen: No, I had to get a job and then I also didn't know anybody. I did jam sessions all over the place in different little clubs. Then I got me a little band with vibes and a bass and drums and we played dances and little clubs. I wasn't making no money but I had a band. And then I met Sun Ra and that was it – got hooked with that.

Cadence: Marshall, do you want to take a break?

Allen: No, are you tired? [Everyone laughs]

Cadence: It's well documented that you heard a Sun Ra recording in Joe Segel's record store in Chicago and met up with Sun Ra at his nearby home shortly afterwards.

Allen: I heard the record with "Super Blonde" (released 1956) on it. Man, I heard that, boy, and I thought, 'Dag!' I asked Joe Segel about the band and he said they rehearsed in a ballroom during the day right up on the South Side where I lived – about 6 blocks from me. So, I went and found them. I went into the building and Sun Ra was in the ballroom, sitting down, writing stuff, and the band was rehearsing. I came in there with my little saxophone and he looked at me [Laughs] like, "Oh, here comes a rookie." And then he made me late for work the next day. The next thing you know, I got my notice and then I had to go and get another job. I started doing portraits. My sister worked for artists and she offered me to come to work with her because they wanted somebody to (sit for portrait modeling). I made a little money that way and then my mother put me out. [Laughs] "You've got to leave and get a job!" She put my stuff out through the door and I took my stuff and went over to my girlfriend's house but I couldn't stay there long so I was floating for a minute. I went back home eventually when she wasn't mad no more. [Laughs]

Cadence: What was that first meeting with Sun Ra like?

Allen: He was sitting there writing and then I had to follow him around. He said, "I'm going next door to eat," and then after he ate, he went over to where Jug (Gene Ammons) was playing. By then it was 4 AM and I had to go home and be at work by 8, so I didn't get much sleep.

Cadence: When you met Sun Ra for that first time did you feel anything special about his presence? Did you feel a spiritual connection or anything out of the ordinary?

Allen: No, I heard the record, that's all I needed to do. I said, 'That band, I want to be in it!' Sun Ra was a master of his trade. There are people that seem to know things, that know about everything, and you listen to them. You wonder if you believe it, and then it comes true. He was telling us about the future and you wonder, 'How he know all about that?' You have your doubts,

and yet, things happened just like he said. He said, "Now, we'll make this band for the 21st century," and it was 29 years that we had to wait for the 21st century! [Laughs] I was in the band 29 years before the 21st century. [Laughs] He was right, and we had to learn, we had to rehearse and rehearse, that's the way it was. He was accurate. I didn't believe half of it. I didn't believe everything but everything came true. Yeah, it's all good stuff. It took discipline, I had to learn about that. It wasn't so easy to learn that unless you really wanted it but I had to learn that if I wanted to survive and if I wanted to carry on his work. I had to remember things, remember the combinations and stuff. I had to remember that stuff. I was always around (him) so I remembered enough to carry on and add little things to it.

Cadence: What do you think is most misunderstood about Sun Ra today? Allen: I don't know. He was a person that knew how to deal with people. And you couldn't fool him about nothing, and yet he wasn't an angel, but he was. He'd have some Grand-Dad [Old Grand-Dad bourbon whiskey] that he'd have in his room and we used to go up there and [makes a drinking motion and gulps!] take a sip. [Laughs] Then we'd hear – "Somebody's been in my bottle!" [Laughs] He knew and we'd go, Ugh oh.' But he just had a knack for people. I never met nobody like him. He was always talking about discipline and this and that, and quit wasting your time, and all that stuff. I didn't like it but I had to do it. I didn't like being restricted all the time. I'd try to sneak out and I'd hear, "Wait, come here a minute." I'd think, 'Oh, God,' and he'd say, "I'll play this and you can go on about your business," and then I'd be there all night playing that stuff. I'd be mad – 'There goes my night!' [Laughs] Oh, forget it!' But he knew what I needed and I got it. I needed some control and discipline to do my work. I was lacking in that because I had been free all my life, free to go which way I wanted. Yea, he did me some good - I stopped making all that crazy stuff.

Cadence: How do you share that discipline with the current members of the

Allen: Oh, it's like anything else. You've got to have discipline as a doctor. You live with it and address yourself and keep steppin'. Sometimes you don't want to go to the office, and go through all that stuff, but you do it. It's no different from professional jobs. Whatever you do, you do it, but sometimes you'd like to be doing something else, but you have to stand your ground unless you can't. Like now, this house is all messed up and I am in no physical shape to fix it like before when I'd be up there painting everything. It wouldn't be dirty like this. Cadence: So who was going into Sun Ra's bottle?

Allen: Everybody was sneaking to get a drink, who knows? [Laughs] I'd say, 'I didn't bother it, not me.'

Cadence: I've never told you the Sun Ra story I have. As you know, I was the primary care doctor for (Arkestra saxophonist) John Gilmore at the end of his life when he was too weak to leave this house. In order to get his medical

background information, I spoke with his previous doctor who had also been Sun Ra's doctor. That doctor told me the first time he met Sun Ra was at the hospital's intensive care unit. Sun Ra didn't have a doctor there so he got assigned to this doctor who said, "I went to meet him and I saw his name posted as Sun Ra outside the room. I thought that was very odd. Then I met him and he had purple and red facial hair and claimed to be from Saturn. I went outside to order a psychiatric consult when another internist came up to me all excited and said, "Do you know who you are seeing? You have Sun Ra!" And he explained Sun Ra to me and I canceled the consultation." He thought Sun Ra was insane at first.

Allen: [Laughs] Oh, boy, you'd either believe it or not. You were always on the edge saying, 'What?' Yeah, but you couldn't fool him. Boy, he was sharp, that's just a gift some people have. That imagination, the magic carpet, and he'd be writing all those songs and poems and stuff.

Cadence: Magic carpet?

Allen: He'd put music to what he was talking about. All that stuff he'd be talking about is in the music. That was his idea of the world, not my idea of things as they are.

Cadence: A lot of what he was talking about was really his way of dealing with racism, right?

Allen: All of it.

Cadence: This wasn't a fair world so he put himself somewhere else. Was that something he spoke about?

Allen: He spoke about everything. There is nothing you can think of that he didn't hit. He was just a person that you might run into once in a lifetime. He was just a natural, it was natural for him. He'd read you like a book - know your weakness, know what to do, and know your potential. Because he wouldn't keep a lot of people around but he'd keep (some people around that you couldn't understand why). We'd ask, 'What do you got him here for?' But he had something that Sun Ra could use. Because he had some nutty people around, boy. Some crazy people and some bad people and he had them all under control. Even the bad guys were under control. That's another kind of person that can do that, you know? And he got the best out of everybody. I don't care who you were, he'd get the best out of you and he'd find something that he can use from you. That's why he was always talking about discipline. Nobody had discipline - which was right - everybody was free. [Laughs] At least they thought they were.

Cadence: Are there any Sun Ra teachings or compositional techniques that you are just starting to understand or those that took years for you to know what he was intending?

Allen: I've seen a lot of people with techniques of music and playing and you wonder how they do that. It just looks like everything flows right over whatever they do. Sun Ra was like that. He'd hit a chord; you don't know what it is. It's sound. He'd play some stuff and it was boggling. And he'd play a

rhythm against rhythm, 5 against 3, or against all odd numbers, and boom! - it would come out. I never met nobody like him – that's why I stayed with him so long. There wasn't nobody like him that I've met in my life.

Cadence: What do you think Sun Ra would have had to say about the COVID-19 pandemic?

Allen: We already knew something was coming because he said so, like the plagues and all that. We'd already been informed. His thing was informing us of the future – the things that would happen -something would come along and wipe folks out. It was hard to believe until you see it with your own eyes. He talked about things coming along to punish folks and you either believed him or vou didn't.

Cadence: Charles Mingus told his musicians he was looking to create a kind of "organized chaos" on the bandstand when they played his compositions. Is that a similar goal for the Arkestra?

Allen: Chaos, yeah, because in the future you're gonna have chaos. Now, you'll be prepared if you already experienced chaos and move out of it. He didn't call it that but there's plenty of chaos now and as you go. He already told us about that, whether you believe it or not. Like I said, you believe some things and then some things come true and some things you wait on and it comes later. See? But he wasn't crazy but damn, what kind of man is this? He was a teacher if you listened. You'd be better off for knowing what's happening. You take some of his stuff and you wonder about it and then turn around 7 and it happens. Sun Ra was talking about transmolecularing himself to another planet and then I'm thinking about me going through the walls. Now, who gonna believe me and who gonna believe him? So I accept that he went to all the planets, maybe he did. I went through the wall and everybody's looking at me like I'm crazy. There's some things that I don't know that happened to people so I wouldn't say, 'No, you didn't go nowhere' because I don't know. They don't believe me when I say I went through the walls but when I went and told them everything they were talking about, then they wondered, "How do you know that?" I said, 'I was right there looking at it.' I just quit talking about it because they didn't believe me but still, they wondered how I knew what happened. I got scared twice when I went through them walls. I was scared, boy – 'Oh, Lord, I'm gonna be locked out before the hole closed.'

Cadence: The Arkestra is still playing Sun Ra's compositions. He left a massive amount of work behind. How many of his compositions have yet to be performed?

Allen: I have never in my life seen one person have so much music that he wrote. Stacks! They haven't played all them tunes. I've got so many tunes up there, you'd be surprised. There may be 500 to a thousand yet to be performed. I'm telling you, man, he's someone that affected my whole life. That man and the way he thought. He'd tell me to sit down and play something he just wrote and I'd look at it and say, 'What is that?'

Cadence: What's going to become with the music that's not been used yet? Allen: It's upstairs. The band's never gonna play all his music. He's got some finger-busters up there and mind-wailers. They're something else. And then I forget, as the years go by, the combinations he used. You'd get one song here and he'd put another song in there and it would work.

Cadence: Any idea how many pieces he wrote?

Allen: He'd write them like he'd write a letter. I'd say, Damn!' I had my little 10, 15, 20 tunes, I thought I was doing something until I looked at him and he had a stack like that.

Cadence: What do his original compositions look like? Are they fully notated? Allen: They're notated. When people write, they write differently. He liked me because I used to do copy work. If somebody brought me the score, I'd print it up because I had a good hand for note writing. My notes would be nice and clean. I used to do that, I'm a copyist. I copied different scores for different people to make a few dollars. I did that for Count Basie once after Sun Ra wrote music for him. Count Basie had a 15-20-piece band and I had to copy all that stuff for his band. And then his band went out there and Count Basie took the music and didn't even play it after I had worked day and night, handwriting all the parts for his band. That sucker got up there and didn't play it [Laughs] so we took it and played it ourselves.

Cadence: Count Basie paid you to do that? Allen: No, I was doing that for Sun Ra. Cadence: Oh, Sun Ra would pay you for that?

Allen: No, he wasn't gonna pay you! [Laughs]

Cadence: You've been actively working on Sun Ra's music. Allen: I work on his music, there's always spots in his music to create

something. He left space in his music.

Cadence: What exactly have you been doing with his pieces?

Allen: I'm writing out 16 parts for his music. I'll sit up there and do that. I've got Noel trying to do that. I ain't doing nothing right now.

Cadence: How meaningful is it to you that Sun Ra's music continues to live on to the next century?

Allen: That's right, like I said, in my life I've never met nobody like that, that had so much music and so many ideas. That's why I stayed all this time – without money or nothing.

Cadence: How meaningful is it to you that Marshall Allen's music continues to live on?

Allen: I've been writing my melodies and ideas for years. [Allen could not be pinned down for an answer]

Cadence: The Jazz Detective label just released previously unreleased Sun Ra music – Sun Ra at the Showcase: Live in Chicago (1976-1977). It's two live sets that include you. What strikes you about that recording when you listen to it today?

Allen: I made so many recordings; I don't remember all this stuff. Sunny did this 7 days a week, now how you gonna remember all of that? Seven days a week he had you rehearsing, and had you playing your parts, playing somebody else's because they're not here, and then he'd change it. So he got you working and all that's up in your head, you can't keep up with him. 1976? I don't remember back then. [Laughs] I remember the day we had this big band. He had to start from 4 people and make 25 to 100-piece band and then had to train them, so we were busy all the time.

Cadence: The Arkestra under your leadership has started releasing new recordings. Swirling came out in 2020 as the first new Sun Ra Arkestra album in over 20 years. Why did it take so long to put out new music?

Allen: "Swirling" is mine, that's from my book. Sun Ra has so much music, why am I gonna put mine out there? He had so much music that needed to be played, I don't need to write nothing. If I do, I just put it in my book. I've got my own book for when I think of melodies, I put them in my book. Sun Ra's got so much music and some of it's never been played. And then the combinations he'd fit with it – it's mind-boggling.

Cadence: How did it feel to have the Arkestra receive its first-ever Grammy nomination with Swirling?

Allen: That's nice, I'm glad to get some kind of recognition for the recording. The flattery was alright, I'm cool with somebody liking it but, you know, I'm not overboard, I've gotten out of that stuff.

Cadence: Living Sky came out in 2022 and includes a number of your own compositions.

Allen: I've got two on there. I've got 50-60-70-80 tunes and every now and then I'll put one or two on a record.

Cadence: The Arkestra has lost a number of members over the last few years including Danny Ray Thompson, Charles Davis and Juini Booth. How are new members located?

Allen: Well, we've got some new people, you've heard 'em. They're good musicians and they want to (be here). I never go out recruiting nobody much, if the creator sends somebody by here that wants to do this. I never go hunting folks, sometimes somebody shows up and they want to be in the band.

Cadence: Are new members given any kind of indoctrination as far as the teachings of Sun Ra?

Allen: You come in here and the music tells the story – can you play it? If you do – wonderful. And do you want to do this kind of discipline? We rehearse all the time. So that's it, if you want to rehearse, then you'll learn it.

Cadence: The Arkestra's practice schedule was intense back in Sun Ra's day. What is the band's current practice status?

Allen: Since Sun Ra's been gone, that's all I've been doing. You wear down, you've gotta take a break. The house is so bad, nobody wants to come so we've got another way of doing it – sending the music to each individual and they

practice it. You have to keep steppin. They don't come here now, that's why all this stuff is dirty, because nobody uses it until I clean it up more.

Cadence: There's a lot of stuff in the house.

Allen: Everybody who comes, brings something and leaves it. Now what you gonna do? People leave stuff here and then you go year in and year out and the next thing you know, you've got a pile of stuff that people have left. But it ought to be about the music – a place where you can rehearse and play it, and a place where you can study it and nobody's gonna bother you.

Cadence: The good news is that the house got listed as a historical landmark in 2022 so it now has protected status.

Allen: Yeah, but they take their time. They said they were gonna put out the plaque but we're still waiting. It's a slow process. I know the story -they wait for you to leave the planet before they do something and then what good is it gonna do you? You've gone on to another world and then someone else will reap the harvest. I'll just pass away before they do something. I guess that's what they're waiting on, everybody else is like that. When [people are] gone then there's the great house of whoever died. I ain't worrying about that, I've got the music keeping me alive, and I'm just gonna keep steppin' as long as I've got the energy and the will, and while it's doing me some good, but in the meantime, you've got all these things just nappin at you – breaking you down. You've got all of that. I've got these little things just gnawing me. You think I'm gonna give [up]? No, right on steppin' as long as I can keep on steppin'.

Cadence: This house was one of two that your father originally owned until he "sold" it to Sun Ra for one dollar.

Allen: Well, of course, nobody else wanted the place and he didn't need it – he had 3 or 4 more houses. I said this is a good place for Sun Ra - he's the one doing all the work – all the writing. He needed to get out of New York and all that crazy life and come down here where you go to bed at night [Laughs] and you can sit up all night and write.

Cadence: What's the legal status of the house today?

Allen: [The Sun Ra estate] has the deed for the house but they don't want it and I've told them to give it back to me and they're slowing around with that. Ain't nothing to do but just give me the house back and then I'll carry on the work. I ain't worried about it though. They're still collecting the royalties; they get their share of money. I got out of money hungry. I ain't got no money – I'm poor. All the stuff I've done – I still ain't got no money. You see? So what can you do? I'm glad I got my music. I'm glad I stayed with the music, otherwise, forget it. What else is there? I don't have no money, and then if I had some, what am I gonna do with it?

Cadence: When's the last time you took a vacation?

Allen: Vacation? I haven't heard that in a long time. Vacation? I don't get no vacations. I go all over the world, I run all over all these places. What do I need with a vacation? I'm on vacation when I'm out working. I'm out in different

places, different languages, different people. A vacation don't mean nothin'. Where am I gonna vacation to?

Cadence: What are your interests outside of music?

Allen: I like to watch people build things. I used to do that in New York a lot. And then I like to do some of that too – build something, fix something. But now, I'm kind of out of it because I'm not doing nothin'. I watch TV. I've quit watching the movies. I just turn on CNN and leave it. I go to sleep with it on and wake up with it on.

Cadence: You're a political person?

Allen: No, I don't think about all that stuff. I know what they're doing. The same old thing – ain't nothin' changed – [it's] the same old people. I just have something on to keep my attention. And then I listen to my music. Sometimes I don't have the TV at all.

Cadence: The final questions are from other artists:

Miguel Zenon (saxophone) asked: "Mr. Allen: How do you stay inspired and challenged after such a long and accomplished career?"

Allen: I told you – if you have some discipline and use the music it keeps your wellbeing. I'm talking about that. It's not music for money or women or fame – it's music for my wellbeing – and I have to believe that. And then it has to show that the music is healing. It will heal you from many things. It's enlightening, I'm singing about enlightenment. I'm singing the same thing that I'm playing. The lyrics are in the song. I want to keep my wellbeing. I ain't thinking about my age. Do I feel good? Yes. Do I feel old? No. I feel tired, I do like any normal folk but I don't get depressed. Depressed for what? I ain't got nothin', never had nothin'. You live, you eat, you practice, you dream, all of that. No pressure. Pressure is when there's fussin' and hollerin' and shootin' and killing and all that nutty stuff. I don't get none of that. I don't want none of that in my music. Odean Pope (saxophone) said: "Marshall, you are one of the greatest minds this country has produced. Thank you so much for so many years of moving this incredible art form forward. Where does the inspiration come from to play chord structures like you do? Do you realize the impact that your music and spiritual concepts have on the world?. Grace and gratitude to you."

Allen: I'm playing the music for my well-being, and when you're playing something for your well-being, you're going in it. You're not skipping around; you're not showing off. You don't care about all of that. You ain't trying to please nobody, you're trying to heal yourself. It's you first and then you can give somebody something. You see? I don't care about who can play better or what they doing. I don't care, I'm trying to play from my [slaps his heart area] and not this [points to his head] because that'll mess me up for years. I'm trying to find the spirit of things – it's simple.

Bobby Zankel (saxophone) said, "I want to tell you how much I've loved your playing, your mastery of the saxophone and of the beautiful traditional language created by such elders as Johnny Hodges and Willie Smith, and the

way you extended that tradition, particularly on your feature of "Prelude to a Kiss." "Around 2003 I had the great fortune of driving you up to New York to rehearse with Cecil Taylor's ensemble for a gig up in Boston. We had a wonderful rehearsal but the gig ended up being cancelled the day before. Unfortunately, it never happened again. I want to know if you enjoyed rehearsing with Cecil and what your impression of that was?"

Allen: Cecil Taylor, I gotta say, is the consummate, and he got his code. I had to have somebody else help me with the code.

Cadence: The code?

Allen: Yeah, if you don't know what his code is you need to get help to follow it so I had someone help to follow along with what he's doing because Cecil was so busy playing so much stuff. He's sitting down at the piano going [Makes sound of pounding keys] and then I'm supposed to come in and I said, 'Where am I supposed to come in?' [Laughs] And then what note? So, I needed the code to his music. Bobby Zankel had it down and he was sittin' by me so he helped me to go with the stuff. It's like when someone played with Sun Ra, they don't know how Sun Ra plays unless somebody is there to help them.

Cadence: Did you enjoy rehearsing with Cecil Taylor?

Allen: I enjoy rehearsing with anybody. I'm not no hard to please, if you're playing something and you want to play it - good. I don't mind.

Bobby Zankel also said, "What was the relationship that you had to Pharoah Sanders when Pharoah played with the Arkestra in the early '60s? Pharoah went into the band around the same time that he made his first recording which came out on ESP where he's playing very beautifully but playing stuff just on the horn. He's not playing what we call 'off the horn' or playing multiphonics or talking in tongues on the horn. I heard a recording that you did in '64 with Paul Bley [Barrage, ESP], especially on the alternate take, where you were playing some really remarkable, really advanced things that implied where you were going with the horn and also where Pharoah went with the horn and I'm wondering if you and Pharoah used to practice together or if you felt that Pharoah was listening to what you were doing. I know you are so unpretentious and such a beautiful person that you wouldn't make yourself bigger than you were but it's my long-distance guess that you really influenced Pharoah."

Allen: Pharoah had big ears and he practiced with the band. If you were practicing something, he'd get it.

Cadence: Zankel is implying that you influenced Sander's playing. Allen: Maybe, if somebody is using some of your stuff, it's an influence. That's like if you hear some stuff and you want to play it, then you put it in your repertoire. John [Gilmore], me, and Pat [Patrick], and all the others used to play, and you could take even more out of that playing. Everybody does that. You can take something but pop it up in your way.

Craig Harris (trombone) asked: "The way you use your knuckles on the

saxophone, is it hard on the instrument or is your technique so smooth it rolls off the keys?"

Allen: That's what I was telling you before. I used to do it one way and I was hittin' them needles and I had to change. If I wanted to get the speed, I had to do it without pressure. So, I'd lighten up instead of putting pressure on 'em. I had been putting a lot of pressure on 'em. I was bending keys and wearing 'em out until I lightened up. And it's a multi-sound sound.

Cadence: How long did it take to get that technique down?

Allen: It comes naturally after you get through banging up your fingers the wrong way – you change. I was tired of tearing up my fingers, now I only tear up my fingernails.

Cadence: You still do?

Allen: Yeah, I'm always doing that to my fingernails so I'm always trying to get them down so I don't hit them. I lighten up the pressure so they don't break off like they used to.

Roscoe Mitchell (multi-instrument) asked: "How do you do what you do?" Allen: That's the way I think – chaos.

Cadence: You said chaos?

Allen: Yeah, I use everything. I use this! I use that! You get a different sound from everything and you can use different angles.

Andrew Cyrille (drums) said: "Regards Marshall, I hear about you often and I hope we see each other sometime soon. I've played with the Arkestra a few times. Would you talk about the time you and I played together with some of the other horn and drummer Sun Ra musicians in Babatunde Olatunji's Drums of Passion band?"

Allen: Yeah, I remember Olatunji. I played the bell, my flute and the alto. We played Highlife music from Nigeria which is singing songs and dancing. I did a recording with him. Olatunji was a good cat, beautiful.

Andrew Cyrille also asked: "What do you recall from the time that the Sun Ra Arkestra played that bar mitzvah at Art D'Lugoff's Village Gate? I sat in and the whole hand wore suits!"

Allen: Whatever, we got through it. [Laughs] He's remembering things that I didn't remember. I've done so many things I can't remember all of them.

Cadence: Any final words you want to give to the people?

Allen: Yeah, just keep on listening and you'll see what happens. Just get the spirit and it may do you some good. You live longer, you feel better longer and you go about your life better. Some music makes you feel different and I'm doing it for my well-being and I can give you some for yours.

SHAREL CASSITY, GRATITUDE,

SUNNYSIDE COMMUNICATIONS 1750.

MAGNETISM(*) / SMILE / STICK UP!/ GRATITUDE / SUSPECT(*) / KENNY'S OUEST / THE PROMISE /IN THE SPIRIT.

Cassity, as, cl; Cyrus Chestnut, p; Christian McBride, b; Lewis Nash,d; Michael Dease, tbn(*); Terell Stafford,tpt(*). 5/8/2023.Brooklyn, NY.

Last night I dreamt of talking to the great Mose Allison. It was in Kansas City in front of the Blues Emporium where his trio was booked. Details of the conversation are hazy after all these years but what stuck in my memory was how humble and down home this musical hero was in his southern manner. Having known Sharel since her early Okie time until now those same attributes are still there. The other main gift is her unwavering dedication to her craft. Like Mose she's into it for love not specifically fame or money. It's unknown exactly when she was bitten by the jazz bug but it's unquestionably obvious it's stinger is still embedded in her psyche. Androids don't dream of electric sheep and AI hasn't solved the mystery of the blues. For the sixth outing solely under her leadership she's gathered an old friends rhythm team along with a pair of top-shelf windmen for an romp through five original scripts (the burning "Magnetism" the complex title tune for the undervalued Jimmy Heath, the heartfelt "Promise" a rare clarinet kiss to her son Richard Jr., along with "Kenny's Quest" & "In The Spirit" dedicated to fellow reed masters Garrett and Redman respectively. Usually a ballad, the Chaplin staple is taken at a medium lope while two charts "Stick Up!(not to be confused with the Bobby Hutcherson tune) and "Suspect" were supplied by Sharel's spouse, Most selections feature statements from all members with plenty of tart, sometimes almost Jackie McLean acidic altoing from the leader. Remember what Longfellow once said "We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done. Don't miss this one.

Larry Hollis

RODNEY JORDAN, MEMPHIS BLUE,

BME 1004.

THE STORM WILL PASS/ MINORITY/ ESCAPATORIA/ HARGROVE/ MEMPHIS BLUE/ AUTUMN LEAVES/ SMALL PORTION/ THE ART OF BLAKEY. 50:24.

Jordan, b; Melvin Jones, tpt, flgh; Mark Sterbank, ts; Louis Heriveaux, p; Quentin E. Baxter,d. 11/15-17/2020. Charleston, SC.

It's sort of amazing how having played music in the home of the blues only once (years ago at the Cotton Carnival) how the places ambiance has stuck with me all these following years. It is apparent listening to this debut disc it dwells deep in Rodney Jordan's soul. He has surrounded himself with four fellow southerners who acquit themselves very well. The opening tune was penned by the other Memphian Jones whose bright and brassy tone made this writer recall the under-appreciated Bobby Bryant. He comes close to stealing the solo show several times here. Tenorist Sterbank burns with a more subdued intensity while the keyboard of Heriveaux atop Baxter's strudy kit holds everything together. Next is one of the three non-originals, "Minority" by the forgotten altoist Gigi Gryce taken up and hot wit spots from all save the traps. His writings (including Nica's Tempo, Social Call, Blue Lights, etc.) warrant further exploration. The other outside originals are "Small Portion" by the much-missed Mulgrew Miller and a barely recognizable "Autumn Leaves". The leaders big bull is heard on the Roy Hargrove salute, the medium Escapatoria", the Bu dedication where Baxter finally gets to shine and the title selection where Jordan takes his most extended solo. With this impressive first time out Rodney Jordan and his associates answer the guery posed on Blonde On Blonde by the former Robert Zimmerman. "Oh Mama Could This Really The End?" Hopefully No Way. Larry Hollis

DAVE STRYKER WITH STRINGS GOES TO THE MOVIES

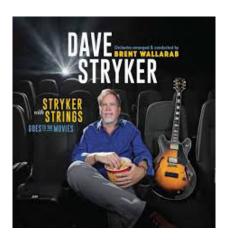
STRIKE ZONE 8827

IN YOUR EYES / CINEMA PARADISO (Main Theme) /YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE / TAXI DRIVER (Main Title) /THEME FROM SHAFT / CAVATINA / FLIRTIBIRD / LOW KEY LIGHTLY / MOONGLOW / DREAMSVILLE / EDELWEISS. 62:40.

Stryker, g; Xavier Davis, p, el p; Jeremy Allen, b; McClenty Hunter, d. Mark Buselli, Jeff Conrad, tpt, flgh; Greg Ward, as,ss; Jim Pugh,Tim Coffman, Jeff Parker, Andrew Danforth, tbn; Richard Dole, b tbn; Sara Caswell (ConcertMaster), Michelle Black, Joseph Ohkubo, Rachel Patrick, Anna Czernik, Bryson Karrar, Noelle Trecik Gosling, Tricia Bonner, Marisa Votapek, Sage Park, Sarah Cook, Sophie Buselli, vln; Kathy Hershberger, Derek Reeves, Alex Hoberty, vla; Yoonhae Swanson, Stephen Hawkey, cel, Brent Wallarab, arr, cond,

Stringmaster Stryker must be unaware of author F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous "No Second Acts" quote as this is his second endeavor with a string section. And what a project it is, employing a cast almost near an old C.B. DeMille epic. This is all held together by a core quartet containing pianist Davis, the bass of Allen & McClenty Hunter's traps with the thoughtful scores of Brent Wallarab wrapped around eleven charts from films fully described in the booklet notes of David Brent Johnson. Speak- ing of the attractive booklet enclosed there are informative descriptions of the sources from whence this music was obtained. In addition to the Stryker players are select soloing from flugelhornist Mark Buselli, violin virtuoso Sara Caswell, big band vet Jim Pugh and up&coming altoist Greg Ward. Many highlights with my only gripe being the non-inclusion of the counter melody in "Moonglow". Chalk up another concept classic from the ever-resourceful Dave Stryker.

Larry Hollis



FREDDIE HUBBARD, ON FIRE

RESONANCE 2073.

DISC ONE: CRSIS / UP JUMPED SPRING / ECHOES OF BLUE / TRUE COLORS /

BREAKING POINT, 65:16.

DISC TWO: BYE BYE BLACKBIRD / SUMMERTIME / BREAKING POINT. 47:54.

Hubbard, tpt, flgh; Bennie Maupin, ts; Kenny Barron, p; Herbie Lewis, b; Freddie Waits, d.

4/10/1967. Bronx, NY.

What more is there left unsaid about the inimitable Freddie Hubbard? This writer can personally attest to fact he was one of the nicest artists he ever met. It's surprising he didn't have a severe case of writer's cramp after signing all of the lps that were laid in his lap. So it went before the second set one snowy December night in OKC. Subtitled Live from the Blue Morocco this late sixties double is appearing for the first time in conjunction with another single disc headlined by fellow trumpeter Kenny Dorham also previously unreleased. The Blue Morocco club was unknown to me before these issues but are thankfully detailed in the over thirty page accompanying booklet. From it one learned that the co-owner Sylvia Robinson (Vanderpool) was none other than the voice heard on the 1957 hit "Love Is Strange" with the semi-forgotten Mickey Baker.

As was the normal with Hubbard-led combos, the band here is superlative filled with future big names and sterling sidemen. All should be recognizable to seasoned Cadence folks. Freddie always fronted super-duper bands but this has to rate as one of his finest. Kenny Barron has a long and distinguished career and multi-instrumentalist Maupin lists an admirable resume. He and traps ace Waits were former roomies and they constantly lock in. Fresh off duties with the late Les McCann you know bassist Lewis can swing his socks off. On page 13 of the inner booklet are separate photos of Maupin & Barron from the mid-sixties that are a real hoot.

There is little need to chronicle the setlists as all are sketched in the aforementioned booklet by John Koenig son of Lester Koenig founder of the Contemporary label. All of the numbers have appeared on previous Hubbard issues and all are lengthy except for the second version of the break song "Breaking Point" which clocks in at a tad over seven minutes. There's some extremely tasteful Harmon mute work on Blackbird and it's an easy call to say he lives up to the album's title." Up Jumped Spring" is worth an admission fee alone. With printed commentary from Eddie Henderson, Charles Tolliver, Jeremy Pelt, Kenny Barron, Bennie Maupin and others this attractive double disk package should fly off the racks. Highly recommended.

Larry Hollis

Reviews from Abe Goldstien from the website www.papatamusredux.com. Go to the website for more great album reviews

THE EMPRESS: SQUARE ONE PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON MARCH 19, 2025 CELLAR MUSIC (RELEASED MARCH 21, 2025)

Fresh on the heels of the third release from Artemis, an all-female quintet, comes Square One, the debut release from The Empress, a sextet led by four women saxophonists. Alto saxophonist Pureum Jin organized the band to honor jazz icons like Charlie Parker and John Coltrane while providing a platform for women instrumentalists. To achieve her first goal, The Empress works through eleven tunes, including classics from Cedar Walton, John Coltrane, Benny Golson and Oliver Nelson. To achieve her second goal, Jin is joined by alto player Erena Terakubo, tenor player Chelsea Baratz and baritone player Lauren Sevian. "Instant Composure," a tune written by Michael Lutzeier, who Jin worked for in the early 2010s, sets the stage for a session of blistering tempi and nimble solos. The four saxophonists, accompanied by Steve Ash on piano, Joey Ranieri on bass and Pete Van Nostrand on drums, achieve a big band sound on this up tempo swinger. The driving tempos continue to dominate the session on tunes such as "Caravan," "But Not For Me" and "Bolivia." Things slow down on Jin's arrangement of "Everything Happens To Me," as she soars over the sax section. On many of the tunes, such as "But Not For Me" their unison playing is reminiscent of the Four Brothers. At other time, like on the opening of Lutzeier's "Reminiscing," they sound like the World Saxophone Quartet. Jin's arrangements give everyone an opportunity to shine, including members of the rhythm section. The Empress may be trying to prove a point about women musicians, as they tend to take most of the tunes, with the exception of "Everything Happens To Me," "Mr. Syms" and "Yearnin" at breakneck speeds with a succession of energized solos. Considering that Square One was released during Women's History Month, The Empress could have made a stronger statement with an all-female rhythm section and tunes written by women composers. Maybe next time!

BOTTOM LINE: You've heard of "The Four Brothers." Square One introduces you to the sound of "The "Four Sisters — saxophonists Lauren Sevian, Pureum Jin, Erena Terakubo and Chelsea Baratz — as they work through a set of timeless jazz classics. The torrid tempi and exuberant solos, however, diminish the pure beauty of some of the tunes and their exquisite playing.

JON BENTLEY: GO AHEAD! PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON MARCH 17, 2025 CELLAR MUSIC (RELEASED MARCH 21, 2025)

Jon Bentley's Go Ahead! took me back in time; a time when the jazz section of record stores and the catalogues of record companies added a new category to their offerings — soul jazz. Although he was born at the tail end of that trend, this is the music Vancouver-based tenor saxophonist Jon Bentley embraces on Go Ahead! The common denominator between five originals and compositions from Wayne Shorter, Brad Mehldau, Duke Ellington and Paul Simon is the straight ahead and swinging style that defined soul jazz. It's the soulful sound of Bentley's sax, the bluesy guitar of Tristan Paxton, the trills and thrills of organist Chris Gestrin and the strong and steady rhythms of drummer Joe Poole. The set has all the markings of classic soul jazz records. It starts with the Latin-infused boogaloo sound of Bentley's "Balcony Jogger," with "in the soul jazz tradition" solos from all. The quartet gives a pop tune feel to Brad Mehldau's "Don't Be Sad" that showcases Paxton's exuberant playing. Paul Simon's "Still Crazy After All These Years" is delivered as a classic soul jazz ballad, while Duke Ellington's "The Feeling of Jazz" gets the classic slow blues treatment. Bentley's originals, which range from the march like rhythm of "Go Ahead" to the up-tempo swagger of "Trane's Terrain" are pure soul jazz. Like other recent Cellar Jazz label releases, Jon Bentley's Go Ahead !will not change the trajectory of jazz, but it will transport you to the soulful, bluesy, funky, straight ahead and swinging sounds of soul jazz. Enjoy the trip!

BOTTOM LINE: If Go Ahead! came out during the heyday of soul jazz, it would just be one more generic soul jazz release. The fact that Jon Bentley and his quartet have captured that sound in 2025 with a combination of original compositions and works from Wayne Shorter, Brad Mehldau, Paul Simon and Duke Ellington makes Go Ahead! special.

3 COHENS/WDR BIG BAND: INTERACTION

PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON MARCH 13, 2025 **ANZIC (RELEASED MARCH 14, 2025)**

Interaction is an appropriate name for the new recording from the 3 Cohens and the WDR Big Band. There is the intuitive interaction

between the three Cohen siblings — Anat on clarinet, Avishai on trumpet and Yuval on soprano sax. There is the international interaction between these three Israeli-born jazz musicians and a big band based in Koln, Germany. Then there is interaction between the soloists and big band as they navigate a set of seven varied charts arranged by pianist Oded Lev-Ari. The interactions begin with Avishai's "Shufla de Shufla" (Aramaic for best of the best), a hardswinging showcase for the individual and collective voices of the Cohens. At one point it captures the exuberance of Charles' Mingus' "Haitian Fight Song." Yuval's "Catch of the Day" is another up-tempo number providing opportunities for Anat, Avishai and Yuval to play with the rhythm section as well as soaring over the cushion provided by the band. Although "Tiger Rag" opens with a bass solo and the band playing a melody reminiscent of "Tradition" (from Fiddler on the Roof), it quickly transforms into pure Dixieland fun with Anat's buttery tone, Avaishai's fiery blasts and Yuval's swirls and sweeps, a classic old school drum solo and a collective improvisation ending. The swinging takes a back seat on Avishai's "Naked Truth, Part 2," an introspective and hypnotic piece in the Miles Davis/Gill Evans vein. The Middle Eastern prayer mood of Lev Ari's "Trills & Thrills" is overcome when Avishai's electronic trumpet effects and a heavy beat transform it into something less than prayer-like. Anat's "Footsteps and Smiles" took me back to the swingin' big bands of the 1960s. The 3 Cohens truly demonstrate their ability to interact musically on a wonderful trio version of Gerry Mulligan's "Festive Minor." Interaction is a showcase for Anat, Avishai and Yuval, but the confusing range of tunes makes it less of a cohesive recording than many of their recent individual efforts or their earlier recordings as a unit.

BOTTOM LINE: Interaction is a fun big band session for the 3 Cohens and the WDR Big Band. You can sense it in the exuberance of the soloists and the wide range of musical territory covered in the seven selections. Sadly, that is all that it is — a fun listening experience.

CAILI O' DOHERTY: BLUER THAN BLUE PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON MARCH 2, 2025 OUTSIDE IN MUSIC (RELEASED MARCH 7, 2025)

Like an archeologist unearthing artifacts from an ancient civilization, pianist Caili O'Doherty has discovered treasures from an earlier era of jazz. O'Doherty, who is on a mission to celebrate, preserve and expand

the achievements of the unsung women of jazz, rediscovered the music of Lil Hardin-Armstrong on Bluer Than Blue, Celebrating Lil Hardin Armstrong. The second wife of Louis Armstrong, Hardin-Armstrong is usually credited with advancing Louis' career and musical knowledge. As O'Doherty delved into her life, she quickly realized that this "first woman of jazz" also contributed some amazing compositions to the jazz repertoire, many of which were rarely recorded by folks other than Hardin-Armstrong and her contemporaries. However, rather than simply recreating period prices, O'Doherty has masterfully recrafted them for the quartet from her 2022 date Quarantine Dream bassist Tamir Shmerling, drummer Cory Cox and saxophonist Nicole Glover — with the addition of vocalists Tahira Clayton and Michael Mayo. Bluer Than Blue has it all. Whether they are delivering lyrics with heartfelt meaning on tunes such as "Happy Today, Sad Tomorrow" or scatting with exuberant joy on tunes such as "Call It Love," Mayo and Clayton breathe life into the vocal selections without unnecessary histrionics. Tunes such as "Clip Joint" are a perfect example of how Glover adds an edge to these classic tunes from the past with her more modern approach to improvisation. O'Doherty 's soulful and bluesy style shines as an accompanist and soloist throughout the session. She shows her stride chops on one of Hardin-Armstrong's most recognized tunes — "Struttin' with Some Barbecue." Shmerling and Cox are the perfect pair to drive the ensemble through everything from up-tempo swingers like "Two Deuces to slower pieces such as "Just A Thrill." O'Doherty could have simply dusted off these rare finds and presented them as recreations, but she went one step further — invigorating them with modern sensibilities to keep the legacy of Lil Hardin Armstrong as vital in 2025 as it was in her heyday. Like me, you will certainly treasure these treasures!

BOTTOM LINE: You might expect a celebration of Lil Hardin Armstrong's music to be filled with old-timey rhythms and musical cliches. Not so. On Bluer Than Blue, Celebrating Lil Hardin Armstrong, pianist and arranger Caili O'Doherty treats nine Hardin-Armstrong classics with a sense of reverence and modernism, truly making it a celebration of the past and present of jazz.

NICK HEMPTON/CORY WEEDS HORNS LOCKED

PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 25, 2025 CELLAR MUSIC (RELEASED FEBRUARY 28)

Other than the release date, there is nothing radically new about Horns Locked, the latest release from saxophonists Nick Hempton and Cory Weeds. The recording does not break any new jazz ground. It is not a cross-cultural or cross-genre musical experiment. It is not a musical manifesto on politics, gender or human rights. It is a joyous blowing session inspired by the classic tenor battles of Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Johnny Griffin. It is pure and simple, soulful and greasy and swinging and honest. That was the only agenda Hempton and Weeds had in mind when they performed with Nick Peck on Hammond B3 and Jesse Cahill on drums at Frankie's, a legendary Vancouver jazz club. Horns Locked captures the player's excitement and the enthusiasm of the crowd on eight tunes, some of which were recorded at the club and some at an impromptu studio session. Hempton and Weeds lock horns on many tunes familiar to fans of saxophonists. These include James Moody's "Last Train from Overbrook," Dexter Gordon's "Soy Califa," and Gene Ammons' "The One Before This." Hempton contributes "Change for a Dollar" and Weeds adds an appropriately titled "Conn Men" to the session, both are swinging 12-bar blues. One of the saxophonists (sorry, I can't tell which one), plays "Polkadots and Moonbeams" in true ballad style and both join in on a classic swing approach to "When You're Smiling." Whether it's ballads, standards, up-tempo blues, Latin tunes or shuffles, Peck and Cahill keep the fires burning with their solid and soulful playing. Although there is nothing radically new with Horns Locked, you are sure to enjoy the hardswinging soul jazz of Hempton and Weeds. It is obvious they certainly did!

BOTTOM LINE: If your jazz diet is craving some "grease," saxophonists Nick Hempton and Cory Weeds serve it up on Horns Locked. This soulful, swinging and sax heavy date is as tasty as the classic tenor sax battles that inspired it. Organist Nick Peck and drummer Jesse Cahill spice up the main ingredients — the exuberance and joy of Hempton and Weeds — with energized support and solos.

NUMBO

PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025 MAHAKALA MUSIC 086 (RELEASED FEBRUARY 24, 2025)

Conceived and directed by bassist Michael Bisio, NuMBq features a group of master improvisors that achieve a unique balance between music reminiscent of the Third Stream and New Thing movements in jazz. It's no mystery that the Third Stream influence comes from violist Melanie Dyer and English horn player Marianne Osiel (both new to me) and the New Thing feel is a result of jazz stalwarts drummer Jay Rosen and bassist Michael Bisio. The mystery for me is what does NuMBq mean? So, let me offer my take. N is for nimble. Members of the ensemble are as nimble as they can be working through eight delicate to complex improvisations. They seamlessly shift emphasis from one player to another, often breaking up into smaller units. Dyer and Osiel are particularly adept at the art of conversing, intertwining and unwinding. U is for unusual. I would be hard pressed to think of another recording that features a quartet of viola, English horn, bass and drums. The unique combination gives the recording a chamberlike feel but with a definite edge. M is for moods. The quartet achieves a variety of moods throughout the session. While "Elegy For MG" and "Medicaid Melancholy" alternate between ensemble and solo sections, tunes such as "Broken Waltz," AC 2. ONU," and "Improv #1091" are pure collective improvisations, some based on Ornette Colemansounding motifs. There is also a wonderfully moving bass and viola duo on "Going Home/Amazing Grace." B is for bass. Whether he is bowing, playing pizzicato or strumming, Bisio's bass is constantly building a strong foundation that inspires other members of the quartet to shift, sway, swirl and sweep. I would remiss not to mention Jay Rosen's contributions to this session. His use of the traditional drum kit, shakers, bells and other devices adds color and spark to every tune, much like he did with Trio-X. Q is for quintessential. Without a doubt, this session represents the most perfect example of a modern-day approach to Third Stream/New Thing music.

BOTTOM LINE: The viola sweeps and swoops. The English horn croons and caresses. The bass pushes and pulses. The drums underscore and undulate. It all comes together on NuMBq, a group and recording that combines the delicacies of Third Stream music with the fire and passion of the New Thing.

NOAH PREMINGER: BALLADS

PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 18, 2025 CHILL TONE RECORDS (RELEASED FEBRUARY 21, 2025)

Ballads, the newest release from saxophonist Noah Preminger, promises something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue. The old is Preminger's moving rendition of Gershwin's 1926 ballad "Someone To Watch Over Me." The new are four original ballads Preminger wrote for this session. The borrowed is a tune from the folkrock community. The blue is the heartfelt version of "Stan's Mood," an often-overlooked ballad from the pen of Stan Getz. Supported by pianist Julian Shore, bassist Kim Cass and drummer Allan Mednard, Preminger joins the classic tenor sax balladeers he admires, particularly on the "old" and "blue" selections. Sandwiched between those tunes is a loping take on "Carry Me Ohio," a song from singer-songwriter Mark Kozelek, aka Sun Kil Moon, and four Preminger originals — the slow and mournful "Unfair World," the classic sounding ballad "In Our 20s," the Latin-tinged "Democracy" and the tender and sedate "Pneu." Preminger's sensitive, sophisticated and sinewy tone are perfect for capturing the mood of these ballads. Perhaps his own compositions are a way to expand the ballad tradition into the 21st century but they lack the lyrical and memorable qualities of the classic ballads from the Great American Songbook. The subtle work of Cass and Mednard allow Preminger to luxuriate on the seven ballads as well as providing a cushion for Shore's elegant solos, particularly on "Stan's Mood" and "Democrary." In 1963, John Coltrane captured the beauty of ballads on his Impulse Records date titled Ballads. In 2001, Michael Brecker added his take to ballads with The Nearness of You, The Art of the Ballad. Preminger tosses his hat into the ballad ring with Ballads. Unfortunately, other than "Stan's Mood" and "Someone To Watch Over Me," the remainder of the tunes suffer from a sameness in the tempo and melancholy mood. Fortunately, Preminger and his crew handle them with passion, creativity, elegance and stellar playing.

BOTTOM LINE: Coleman Hawkins caressed them. Lester Young "sang" them. Dexter Gordon romanced them. John Coltrane embellished them. Stan Getz soothed them. Archie Shepp stretched them. With the release of his newest recording, tenor saxophonist Noah Preminger expands upon them. The "them" to which I am referring are ballads, the true test for generations of tenor saxophonists. On Ballads, Preminger passes the test with mixed results.

MURMURATION PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 16, 2025 MAHAKALA MUSIC 082 (RELEASED FEBRUARY 7, 2025)

When jazz musicians of any era and style get together, they unknowingly use a concept defined as murmuration to navigate the complexities of collective improvisation. Simply stated, murmuration is the term ornithologist use to describe how a group of starlings can fly together in one of the most dazzling synchronized displays in the natural world. They have no leader and follow no predetermined plan, only observing others in the flock to determine their actions. So, what better name for a recording than Murmuration. The flock on this recording is a coming together of musicians from the East Coast and Midwest including Dave Sewelson on baritone, Gabby Fluke Mogul on violin, George Cartwright on alto and guitar, Anthony Cox on bass and Steve Hirsh on drums. The result is nine tunes that demonstrate how, like starlings, these "birds" can twist and turn into all kinds of different shapes as they soar to musical heights. On the opening track, "Thieving Magpies," members of this musical flock assemble one by one as they intuitively communicate to create a fluttering assemblage of notes and rhythms. On other tunes, smaller groups emerge to change the direction of the music. On "Mississippi Flyway," for example, Cartwright on guitar, Fluke-Mogul and Cox take the lead with a modern chamber-like sound of the New York String Trio. Sewelson and Cartwright on alto recall the flights of the World Saxophone Quartet on the opening of "Out of Here," a tune that also has an inspired duo section featuring Sewelson and Hirsh. Fluke-Mogul and Cox fly high on the opening of "Warbling Universe." An in-the-moment call and response section between Sewelson and Fluke-Mogul changes the direction of "Murmuration." The session is full of little surprises along the way as well, like when Fluke-Mogul quotes "Happy Birthday" on "Out of Here!" She is filling the void left by Leroy Jenkins and Billy Bang. Throughout it all, Hirsh's fluid and flexible drumming captures the fluttering of the wings as the flock slides into their different formations. Mahakala Music assembled this group er for one reason — to fly together in a dazzling synchronized display of melodies, rhythms and sounds. And that, quite simply is what Murmuration is all about.

BOTTOM LINE: This is not smooth jazz, but this group of modernthinking musicians moves smoothly through nine freely improvised compositions. This is not beloop, but this group is always full of musical surprises. This is not cool jazz, but the sounds are often chamber-like in their approach. So, what is Murmuration? Like the word itself, It is the essence of what makes jazz jazz — a group of musicians gathering to see where their sonic flights may take them.

SULLIVAN FORTNER SOUTHERN NIGHTS

PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 12, 2025 ARTWORK RECORDS (RELEASED FEBRUARY 14, 2025)

Pianist Sullivan Fortner had no idea a weeklong trio residency at The Village Vanguard would lead to his next album, but it did! According to Fortner, The Vanguard sessions were the first time that he, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Marcus Gilmore played together as a trio, and from the first note, it felt as if they had been doing so for years. So, that same week the three went into the studio to record Southern Nights. The recording captures the joy and energy of their live performances with an eclectic mix of tunes performed with no edits or retakes, just like they were still at The Vanguard! Fortner's playing throughout the album is enticing, explosive, expansive and expressive. Fortner entices us into his funky, soulful version of Allen Toussaint's "Southern Nights" by introducing the tune with plucked piano strings. He explodes with a flurry of runs and chord clusters as he skirts around the melody of Cole Porter's "I Love You." He expands the romantic bolero theme of Osvaldo Farres' "Tres Palabras" with blues infections, new melodic themes and a call and response section where his right hand answers the patterns he delivers with his left hand (a technique he uses on several other tracks as well). He shows his expressive side on the beautiful ballad "Again Never," written by bassist Bill Lee. The trio is in sync on those tunes as well as Fortner's angular original "9 Bar Tune," Donald Brown's quirky "Waltz for Monk" and the soulful bouncy feel of Conusela Lee's "Discovery." Washington and Gilmore also do their fair share of enticing, exploding, expanding and expressing throughout the nine tunes on Southern Nights. Washington's strong bass lines drive the trio's take of Woody Shaw's "Organ Grinder" and his solos on "Tres Palabras" and "Again Never" are sublime. Gilmore adds the ideal rhythmic punctuations throughout the session and kicks off Clifford Brown's "Daahoud" with a well-articulated drum solo. I would imagine that listening to Southern Nights is like experiencing the immediacy and interplay of the trio's live performances that inspired Fortner that week at The Village Vanguard.

BOTTOM LINE: Known for accompanying singers such as Cecile McLorin Salvant, Samara Joy and Lauren Henderson, Southern Nights is Sullivan Fortner's first trio recording, firmly establishing him as an enticing, explosive, expansive and expressive player worthy of the praise he received for his 2024 Solo Games release.

HIPP HIPP HOORAY, CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL OF JUTTA HIPP PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 11, 2025 **FUNDAJCA SLUCHAJ (RELEASED FEBRUARY 4, 2025)**

German pianist Jutta Hipp's life was full of twist and turns. Born in Leipzig, Germany in 1925, she had to secretly listen to her favorite jazz recordings during the Nazi regime. After the war, Hipp became a displaced person ekeing out a living as a jazz pianist in her native country. Leonard Feather, who heard her perform in Germany in 1954, organized Hipp's move to America where she performed at clubs and festivals and became the first woman to record for Bluenote Records in 1956. Shortly after that recording, Hipp, who suffered from depression and stage fright, disappeared from the scene and spent the rest of her working years in a New York City clothing factory. The trio of trumpeter Thomas Heberer, bassist Joe Fonda and drummer Joe Hertenstein, known as Remedy, captures those twists and turns on Hipp Hipp Hooray, Celebrating the Centennial of Jutta Hipp. (Note: Like Hipp, Heberer and Hertenstein are both natives of Germany). According to Heberer, from Hipp's point of view (and many youngsters in 1950s postwar West Germany), the music she loved, and America, were cut from the same cloth — freedom, democracy and promise. Hipp Hipp Hooray captures those ideals in nine originals that allow Heberer, Fonda and Hertenstein to explore all the twists and turns of melodies, harmonies and rhythms. The session begins with the heartfelt "Lionel's Dream," a somber piece written in recognition of a son Jutta had to give up for adoption in the late 1940s. The mood shifts as a strong walking bass line introduces "Detroit Meets Leipzig," a tune that balances bop with free jazz. Heberer explores his full range of trumpet sounds over Fonda's expressive and expansive bass playing on "Das Brot der Fruhen Jahre." Fonda's bowing prowess takes the spotlight on "Bass Bottom," providing a foundation for Heberer and Hertenstein to cover a lot of musical ground. A recitation about Hipp's life adds drama to a driving "Der Gruene Zweig." The final number, "Jutta on Top," comes closest to the music Hipp was attracted to — an upbeat belop sounding track. The liner notes clearly state that the goal of Hipp Hipp Hooray was not to emulate Hipp's style of playing but to capture the essence of her spirit and story through the twists and turns of the music. That is indeed what Heberer, Fonda and Hertenstein do so well on this recording, but you would expect nothing less from Remedy.

BOTTOM LINE: While most jazz musicians celebrate the centennial

year of jazz legends by merely recreating the music that made them famous, Remedy, the group of trumpeter Thomas Heberer, bassist Joe Fonda and drummer Joe Hertenstein, chose to celebrate the centennial of German pianist Jutta Hipp on Hipp Hooray by capturing the twists and turns of her life in nine original compositions.

TOM TEASLEY/DAVE BALLOU: LUNCH BREAK PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 10, 2025 **TEASLEY MUSIC (RELEASED FEBRUARY 14, 2025**

Percussionist Tom Teasley picked a perfect dance partner in trumpeter Dave Ballou for Lunch Break. The two dance through eleven tunes with the grace and ease of Astaire and Rogers. At times, they embrace each other's melodic or rhythmic cues. The next minute they separate and dance to their own musical impulses only to come together for the final dip. Having performed everywhere from South America to Asia and the Middle East to New Zealand, Teasley brings an arsenal of percussion instruments and rhythms to the dance. Ballou brings his full array of flurries, shouts, smears and flourishes. Ballou's distinctive intervals pirouette over Teasley's Middle Eastern groove on "Tips in Baghdad." The trumpeter lunges and twirls while Teasley creates a web of rhythms on the free sounding "Rush Hour." On "When the Wind Cries," Ballou weaves in and out of the meditative tune that features Teasley on kalimba. There is a well-choreographed call and response section on the straight-ahead "Four on Six." Teasley's tabla rhythms embrace Ballou's long tones on "Mop, Shake and Roll." Ballou's trumpet entwines nicely with Teasley's Indian chant on "Rigg Talk." Teasley dances alone on the boppish "For Max" and the hypnotic "Gratitude." Teasley's use of kalimba, shakers, cymbals, bells and wood blocks, not to mention a traditional drum set, provide the sparks for Ballou's distinctive improvisations on Lunch Break. At the same time, Ballou's use of intervals, shifts from lower to upper registers and his crisp to warm tone inspire Teasley to create layer upon layer of welldeveloped rhythms. Although this recording lacks the raw energy and freedom of Lester Bowie and Phillip Wilson's classic late 1970 trumpet/ percussion duo on Improvising Artists, it is refreshing to hear Teasley and Ballou dance their way through Lunch Break.

BOTTOM LINE: Having spent most of his career as a global music ambassador, percussionist Tom Teasley is a new name to me. However, with several outstanding recordings on the Steeplechase and Cleanfeed labels, I am well familiar with the modern sounds of trumpeter Dave Ballou. On Lunch Break, this percussion/trumpet duo explores the

unique musical influences in which they specialize and come together to share.

ROB BROWN: WALKABOUT

PUBLISHED BY ABE GOLDSTIEN ON FEBRUARY 1, 2025 MAHAKALA MUSIC 070 (RELEASED JANUARY 24, 2025)

Ornette Coleman once said melodies could be improvised infinitely and that musical ideas could flow naturally without a predetermined structure. Saxophonist Rob Brown continues to lead the pack in advancing the musical concepts expressed by Coleman on Walkabout. With the creative and sensitive support of bassist Brandon Lopez and drummer Juan P. Carletti, Brown weaves a tapestry of melodies, rhythms and moods through four extended cuts. From his opening notes of "Microcosm," Brown's astringent tone on alto quickly brings Coleman to mind. His prayer-like pleading dances around the pulse of Lopez's bass and the swirling rhythms of Carletti. Following an 11 minute angular solo in which Brown explores the high and low registers of his horn with staccato passages and free flowing runs, Lopez and Carletti take the melody in a different direction until Brown returns to the intensity of his opening statement. From the explosive intensity of "Microcosm," Brown switches to flute for the more serene "Zephyr," which showcases Lopez's bowed bass and Carletti's use of shakers and shells to add color to the melody. Shifting back to alto, Brown is in full control of the musical adventures on "Natural Pathways," an Ornette Coleman song-like form that builds naturally as Brown weaves his ripples of melodies around the free-flowing accompaniment of Lopez and Carletti. The set ends with "Tousled and Jostled," which is a perfect title for a piece on which Brown expands a simple melody into a whirling dervish of melodic fragments, bass drones and rhythmic diversity. The music of Walkabout can best be described in two words — exhaustingly exhilarating. At times the energy level generated by the trio can exhaust you, yet you are constantly exhilarated by the ways in which Rob Brown and company weave melodies, rhythms and moods into a tapestry of sound.

BOTTOM LINE: Since his first release with Matthew Shipp in 1988, saxophonist Rob Brown has been quietly and ferociously advancing the legacy of Ornette Coleman. Walkabout is the latest example of how Brown, working with bassist Brandon Lopez and drummer Juan P Carletti, succeeds in improvising infinitely with musical ideas flowing naturally without a predetermined structure.