

2025 JAZZ VENUE GUIDE

DOWNBEAT[®]

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

TRIBUTES

Quincy Jones
Lou Donaldson
Zakir Hussain
Roy Haynes
Martial
Solal

Sullivan Fortner's SOUTHERN HEART

Ted Nash & Alexa Tarantino
TRADING PLACES

FEBRUARY 2025 U.K. £6.99



DOWNBEAT.COM

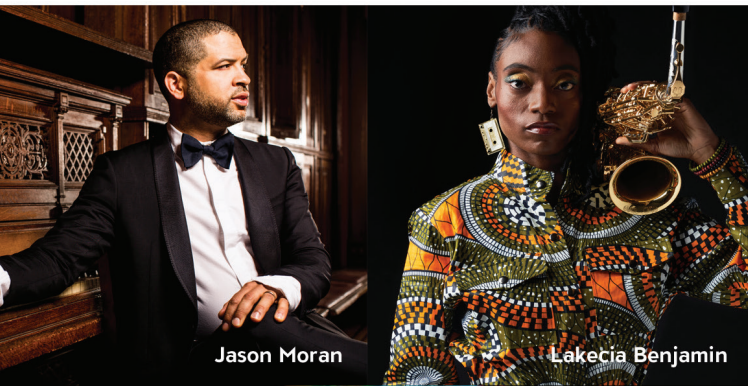
Watch
in-person
or via live
streaming!

THE
SORAYA

JAZZ AT NAZ



Scan here to
learn more



Jason Moran

Lakecia Benjamin



Chucho Valdés



Kurt Elling

Christian McBride

Eva Noblezada

FEB
SAT **1**
8PM

**Pacific Jazz Orchestra
with Eva Noblezada**

FEB
WED **5**
8PM

FEB
THU **6**
8PM

**Lakecia Benjamin, saxophone
& Phoenix**

JAZZ CLUB

FEB
FRI **7**
8PM

FEB
SAT **8**
8PM

**Christian McBride, bass
& Ursa Major**

JAZZ CLUB

FEB
THU **13**
8PM

**Jason Moran, piano
Plays Duke Ellington**

with CSUN Jazz "A" Band

FEB
SAT **15**
8PM

**Kurt Elling Celebrates
Weather Report**

with Special Guest Peter Erskine
Featuring Yellowjackets

FEB
THU **20**
8PM

Chucho Valdés: Irakere 50

with Special Guest
Arturo Sandoval



WITH
YOU
EVERY
STEP.

Vandoren[®]
PARIS

www.vandoren.com

© 2022 Vandoren SAS, www.vandoren.com. Imported to the U.S. by DANISR,
818 W. Evergreen, Chicago, IL 60642, 888.707.4455, www.dansr.com
Artist: Alexa Tarantino

GET THE WHOLE STORY AT WITHYOUEVERYSTEP.US

THE 58TH ANNUAL
ELMHURST UNIVERSITY

Jazz Festival

February 20-23, 2025

Featuring:

The WDR Big Band, with musical director Bob Minzter
from Cologne, Germany

The Yellowjackets Friday Evening, with The WDR Band

Dave Stryker Saturday Evening, with The WDR Band

Danny Gottlieb

Ryan Keberle

Alexa Tarantino

In-Person & Live-Streaming Tickets Available
Watch from anywhere in the world!

Info and tickets: elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival



DOWNBEAT

FEBRUARY 2025

VOLUME 92 / NUMBER 2

President Kevin Maher
Editor & Publisher Frank Alkyer
Contributing Editor Ed Enright
Reviews Editor Michael J. West
Creative Director Žaneta Čuntová
Assistant to the Publisher Sue Mahal
Bookkeeper Evelyn Hawkins

ADVERTISING SALES

Record Companies & Schools
Jennifer Ruban-Gentile
Associate Publisher
630-359-9345
jennr@downbeat.com

Musical Instruments & East Coast Schools
Ritche Deraney
Vice President of Sales
201-445-6260
ritched@downbeat.com

Record Companies & Schools
Dan Kulasik
Advertising Sales Associate
630-359-9338
dank@downbeat.com

OFFICES

188 W. Industrial Dr., Ste. 310, Elmhurst, IL 60126
630-941-2030
<http://downbeat.com>
editor@downbeat.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

877-904-5299 / service@downbeat.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Senior Contributors:

Aaron Cohen, Howard Mandel, John McDonough

Atlanta: Jon Ross; **Boston:** Frank-John Hadley, Allen Morrison; **Chicago:** Alain Drouot, Michael Jackson, Jeff Johnson, Bill Meyer, Paul Natkin, Howard Reich; **Chicago:** Ayana Contreras; **Indiana:** Mark Sheldon; **Los Angeles:** Gary Fukushima, Josef Woodard, Scott Yanow; **Michigan:** John Epland; **Minneapolis:** Andrea Canter; **Montana:** Philip Freeman; **Nashville:** Bob Doerschuk; **New Orleans:** Cree McCree; **New York:** Herb Boyd, Bill Douthart, Kira Grunenberg, Stephanie Jones, Ashley Kahn, Matthew Kassel, Jimmy Katz, Suzanne Lorge, Phillip Lutz, Jim Macnie, Ken Micallef, Bill Milkowski, Ivana Ng, Dan Ouellette, Ted Panken, Tom Staudter, Jack Vartoojian; **Philadelphia:** Shaun Brady; **Portland:** Alexa Peters; **San Francisco:** Mars Breslow, Yoshi Kato; **Seattle:** Paul de Barros; **Washington, D.C.:** Willard Jenkins, John Murph, Michael Wilderman; **Canada:** J.D. Considine, James Hale; **France:** Jean Szlamowicz; **Germany:** Peter Margasak, Hyou Vielz; **Great Britain:** Ammar Kalia, Tina Edwards; **Portugal:** José Duarte; **Romania:** Virgil Mihaui; **Russia:** Cyril Moshkow. **Contributor Emeritus:** Fred Bouchard.

Jack Maher, President 1970-2003
John Maher, President 1950-1969

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Send orders and address changes to: DOWNBEAT, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688. Inquiries: U.S.A. and Canada (877) 904-5299; Foreign (651) 251-9682. **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include current DOWNBEAT label showing old address.

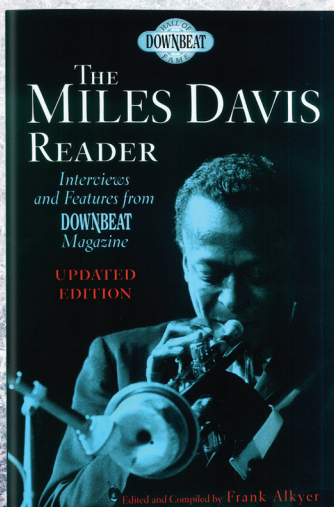
DOWNBEAT (ISSN 0012-5768) Volume 92, Number 2 is published monthly by Maher Publications, 188 W. Industrial Dr., Ste. 310, Elmhurst, IL 60126. Copyright 2025 Maher Publications. All rights reserved. Trademark registered U.S. Patent Office. Great Britain registered trademark No. 719,407. Periodicals postage paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: \$34.95 for one year, \$59.95 for two years. Foreign subscriptions rates: \$56.95 for one year, \$103.95 for two years.

Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission from publisher. MAHER PUBLICATIONS, DOWNBEAT magazine, MUSIC INC. magazine, UpBeat Daily.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: DownBeat, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688. **CABLE ADDRESS:** DownBeat (on sale Jan. 21, 2025) Magazine Publishers Association.

More MILES!

DownBeat's Miles Davis Reader is now available in paperback with more photos, more articles and more reviews. It has 50-plus years of Miles coverage as it happened—ripped from the pages of DownBeat magazine.

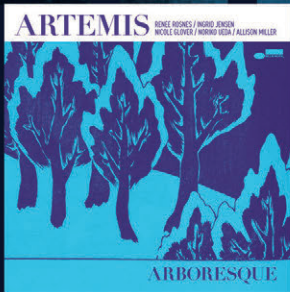


THE PERFECT GIFT FOR A LOVED ONE... OR FOR YOU!
Just go to downbeat.com/Miles



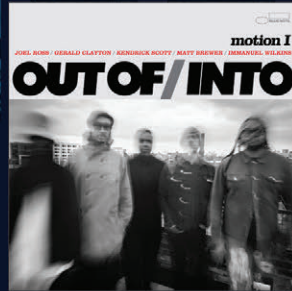
PRINTED
IN
U.S.A.

BLUE NOTE®



ARTEMIS
ARBORESQUE

DownBeat Readers Poll "Jazz Group of the Year" returns with new album featuring **Renee Rosnes, Ingrid Jensen, Nicole Glover, Noriko Ueda & Allison Miller**



OUT OF/INTO
MOTION I

Debut album from the Blue Note 85th Anniversary all-star collective featuring **Gerald Clayton, Joel Ross, Immanuel Wilkins, Kendrick Scott & Matt Brewer**.



IMMANUEL WILKINS
BLUES BLOOD

Saxophonist presents an ambitious new work featuring his quartet plus vocalists that explores the legacies of ancestry and the bloodlines connecting generations.



MCCOY TYNER & JOE HENDERSON
FORCES OF NATURE: LIVE AT SLUGS'

A blistering never-before-released 1966 live recording of the legendary pianist & saxophonist's quartet with **Henry Grimes & Jack DeJohnette** at the NYC jazz shrine.



TONE POET AUDIOPHILE
VINYL REISSUE SERIES

Definitive **all-analog 180g** vinyl reissues produced by **Joe Harley**, mastered by **Kevin Gray** from original master tapes, pressed at **RTI** & packaged in **deluxe tip-on jackets**.



BLUE NOTE CLASSIC
VINYL REISSUE SERIES

All-analog 180g vinyl reissues of classics spanning all eras & styles of Blue Note mastered by **Kevin Gray** from original master tapes & pressed at **Optimal**.



WE'RE BACK! PRESENTING:
BLUE NOTE REVIEW

VOLUME THREE
**TRULY, MADLY,
DEEPLY, MORGAN**

GET OFFICIAL BLUE NOTE MERCHANDISE AND EXCLUSIVE RELEASES AT **STORE.BLUENOTE.COM**

BlueNote.com
© Blue Note Records

FEBRUARY 2025

Inside

ON THE COVER

22 Sullivan Fortner

Path to Artistry

BY STEPHANIE JONES

The Grammy-winning artist recounts his 12-month trek back to self-trust: "You've got to trust that inner child, keep exploring, even though people think it's wrong." His inner child has been on fire lately — and nobody seems to think it's wrong.

FEATURES

28 Tributes

- Quincy Jones, BY ASHLEY KAHN
- Lou Donaldson, BY JOHN MCDONOUGH
- Roy Haynes Classic Interview, BY JOSHUA REDMAN
- Zakir Hussain, BY BILL MILKOWSKI
- Martial Solal, BY PHILLIP LUTZ

38 Ted Nash & Alexa Tarantino

Changing of the Guard at JLCO

BY TED PANKEN

SPECIAL SECTION

43 The 2025 Best Jazz Venues Guide

69 Indie Life

- 69 Elsa Nillson
- 70 Pritesh Walia
- 72 Otherly Love Records

KEYBOARD WOODSHED

- 74 **Master Class**
Hiromi Uehara on Embracing Synthesizers
- 76 **Transcription**
Alan Pasqua's Keyboard Solo on "San Michele"
- 78 **Toolshed**
Studiologic Numa Compact SE / X SE Synths
- 79 **Gear Box**

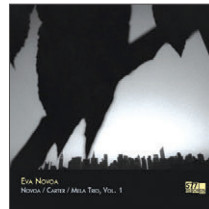


We say goodbye to DownBeat Hall of Fame drummer Roy Haynes with a classic interview originally published upon his induction in 2012. We also say goodbye to Quincy Jones, Lou Donaldson, Zakir Hussain and Martial Solal.

Cover photo by Antoine Jaussaud



56 Jon Batiste



58 Eva Novek



63 Kevin Sun



67 Steven Feifke

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 **First Take**
- 10 **Chords & Discords**
- 13 **The Beat**
 - 13 T.K. Blue
 - 16 Jeff Coffin
 - 18 NIKARA presents Black Wall Street
- 19 Brian Charette
- 20 Kristin Lee
- 55 **Reviews**
- 81 **Jazz On Campus**
Cal State Fullerton Goes to New Zealand
- 82 **Blindfold Test**
Joel Ross



RUNNIN' HOT • ELAN TROTMAN

CONGRATULATIONS TO ELAN TROTMAN
ON HIS #1 BILLBOARD SINGLE
"RUNNIN' HOT"
LISTEN EVERYWHERE YOU STREAM



ELAN
TROTMAN

CANNONBALL
CANNONBALL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
NBALL

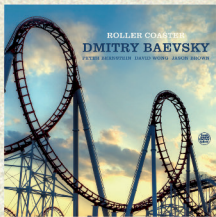
www.cannonballmusic.com

FSNT 688
DMITRY BAEVSKY
ROLLER COASTER

DMITRY BAEVSKY alto sax
PETER BERNSTEIN guitar
DAVID WONG bass
JASON BROWN drums

"Baevsky stamps his identity on virtually everything." —Jazztimes

"Roller Coaster" is a magnificent album with a great choice of songs showcasing Dmitry Baevsky's tone, agility and melodic invention in a beautiful dialogue with the great Peter Bernstein." —Jean Szlamowicz, Spirit of Jazz & Down Beat



TEA FOR THREE
ARI HOENIG TRIO



FSNT 691

ARI HOENIG
TEA FOR THREE

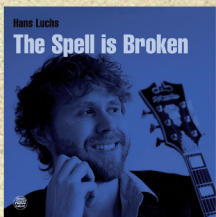
ARI HOENIG drums, vocals
GADI LEHAVI piano
BEN TIBERIO bass

"A new album of this trio where they explore each other on and off the bandstand."

FSNT 695
HANS LUCHS
THE SPELL IS BROKEN

HANS LUCHS guitar
DANIEL BERKEY tenor sax
MIKE KING piano
SIMON WILLSON bass
ADAM ARRUDA drums

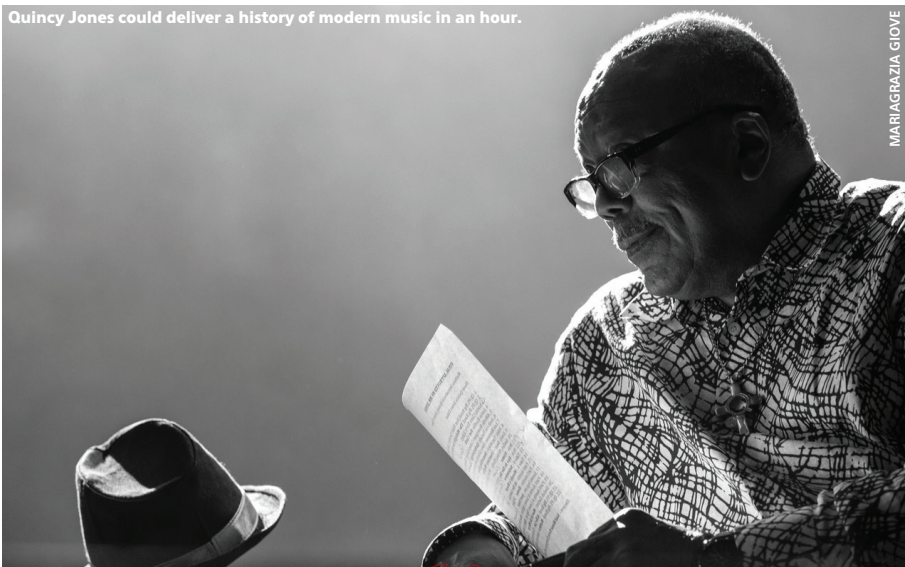
"Featuring 8 original tunes of various moods and grooves, 'The Spell Is Broken' is Hans Luchs' first record since relocating to New York. Joining him is a cast of excellent musicians who beautifully navigate his music with him."



Available on freshsoundrecords.com, Spotify, Amazon and iTunes

First Take > BY FRANK ALKYER

Quincy Jones could deliver a history of modern music in an hour.



MARIAGRAZIA GIOVE

Merging the Rivers of Jazz

DEC. 21, 2024 — ABOUT ONE YEAR AGO (in the November 2023 issue, to be exact), drummer Allison Miller's *Rivers In Our Veins* received a 4-star review in this magazine. After a recent conversation with Miller, I went back to listen to it again while we were putting together this month's issue. It's a song cycle inspired by the beauty of our nation's waterways.

As an analogy to jazz, the theme is befitting this issue: music coming from thousands of tiny tributaries, flowing into larger ones, then into a mighty river of this music that gently rolls on out to sea.

We have multiple generations of jazz celebrated in these pages. T.K. Blue, saxophonist and healer of hearts, leads us off on page 13. When selecting a band for his new album, *Planet Bluu*, he chose young musicians who also happen to be the children of some of our most beloved artists in this music. Check out the article to see who.

There's also NIKARA presents Black Wall Street (page 18), bringing Brooklyn attitude, hip-hop cool and a reverence for the elders to her music. One of those elders happens to be her grandfather, pianist Kenny Barron.

This month's issue also speaks to transitions and firsts. Ted Panken's thoughtful article beginning on page 38 features saxophonists Ted Nash and Alexa Tarantino discussing Nash stepping away from the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and Tarantino coming into the band as the first woman to become a full-time member.

Then, there's our cover feature on Sullivan Fortner (page 22), who's breathing new life into the art of the piano trio with a smile and no-nonsense honesty. His new recording, *Southern Nights*, was recorded right after playing a week

at the Village Vanguard, the venerated club that has seen generation after generation of jazz artists flow across its stage. With Peter Washington on bass, the trio also features Marcus Gilmore, grandson of legendary drummer Roy Haynes.

The passing of Mr. Haynes in November 2024 brings us to a series of tributes beginning on page 28. Quincy Jones. Lou Donaldson. Roy Haynes. Zakir Hussain. Martial Solal. Their loss is a lot for lovers of this music to take in.

When I met Quincy for the first time at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1991, he gave me a one-hour lesson in the history of modern music. Ray Charles, Count Basie, Frank Sinatra, Michael Jackson, Glen Campbell (yes, what an amazing musician Glen Campbell was) — he touched on it all. At the end of our talk, he asked me what I thought of rap. I said that I once thought it would save the world but had begun worrying that it might ruin everything. (I was wrong, of course.) "Q" chuckled and told me he was starting a magazine called Vibe that he hoped would become the DownBeat of rap music. I quipped, "Well, I guess I won't be working for you!" We shared a laugh and he replied, "Nope!"

A few years later, I met Roy Haynes. He was confident, fiesty and a blast. At one point, the iconic drummer wondered when he would get DownBeat's cover. "When will Roy Haynes get his respect?" he asked. Soon after, he appeared on the November 1996 cover looking badass in a black shirt against a wall of cymbals, drum sticks clutched to his chest. The headline? "Respect."

By the time you read this, the holidays will be long past. But everyone at DownBeat sends tidings of love and respect to all who continue to make this music flow with dignity and grace. **DB**

Privia

PX-S7000



Style, Reimagined.

The new Privia PX-S7000 is simply the best-sounding, best-feeling, and best-looking Privia ever made. Its breathtaking 4-speaker sound system and Smart Hybrid Hammer Action Keyboard deliver a playing experience like no other instrument. With 400 Tones including three legendary grand pianos and 50 vintage electric pianos, inspiration is always at hand. Its luxurious design, in your choice of three finishes and with an included matching stand, breathes life into any room.



www.casio.com

CASIO

Chords & Discords >



Jesse Davis - Yardbird Hard Rubber Alto



Immanuel Wilkins - New York Model Alto



Seamus Blake - Tonamax Hard Rubber



Mark Turner - Florida Model Hard Rubber



Abraham Burton - New London Model

**Those who play
them, know!**

NAMM Booth # 9734

www.tedklum.com
@tedklummpc



All Hail John McLaughlin

I've been following John McLaughlin since being blown away by the Mahavishnu Orchestra on a Saturday night rock concert TV show around 1973. But Phil Lutz — with the help of McLaughlin's insightful, far-ranging comments — delivered such a rich, satisfying and comprehensive profile of the latest Hall of Fame honoree as to arouse the music afresh in that deepest place of listening with words alone.

Also, a tip of the hat to your ever-adventurous transcriber Jimi Durso for tackling Kenny Garrett's latest and what some imagined poll might name "most unlikely solo to ever be transcribed."

John McDonough even brought a smile to my lips with his reference to that chameleon "Chuck Corea."

MARTIN WISCKOL
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Editor's Note: I love it, Martin! Two well-deserved plaudits for Phil and Jimi, and a great typo catch on "Chuck." Thank you, thank you and mea culpa! The editors will be grounded this weekend for that last one!

All Hail Charles Lloyd, Too!

A much-deserved congratulations to Charles Lloyd for two grand slams this year, first for his wins in the Critics Poll (HOF, Jazz Arist, Jazz Album and Tenor Saxophonist of the Year) and second for the Readers Poll (Jazz Artist, Album, Tenor Sax and Flute). *The Sky Will Still Be There Tomorrow* is one of my favorite records of 2024.

I also appreciated the excellent article on Russell Malone in the December issue. Overall, another great issue to end your 90th year.

MARC NEBOZENKO
EVANSTON IL

Editor's Note: Marc, you make our day with such nice words! We'll keep the 90th anniversary rolling until July 2025. Cheers!

McDonough? Hmph!

Oh no! Did John McDonough really have to revive that tired, and now thoroughly discredited stereotype about 1970s jazz? (Reviews, December 2024). I agree: After a promising start, fusion became MOSTLY terrible. I agree: The mainstream masters were mostly ignored by new audiences.

But personally, as a teenager discovering the music at that time, I was not at all depressed. I was too excited by the music of — to name a few who had great decades in the '70s — Charles Mingus, Dexter Gordon, Art Pepper, Woody Shaw, Von Freeman, Sun Ra, Anthony Braxton, Keith Jarrett, Charlie Haden, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Ted Curson, Johnny Griffin, Air, Wayne Shorter, Paul Motian and, yes, Miles Davis. Older listeners and people who



weren't there don't know how great the decade was. Their loss, but the music still exists, just waiting for non-dilettantes to discover it.

TONY ALEXANDER
MIAMI, FLORIDA

McDonough? Hmph, Humph!

John McDonough opened a review in the December issue with, "In the 1970s jazz threw open its doors to the call of freedom . . . and watched 20 million fans walk away." I'm not doubting the figure, but how did he arrive at it? And whatever the figure, how can responsibility be attributed solely to jazz without considering the competition, particularly rock and r&b?

BOB JACOBSON
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

For the Love of Terry Gibbs

When a multiple year Poll Winner (1950–1954 and 1962) reaches the age of 100, I respectfully feel they deserve at the very least a listing on the ballot for the Hall of Fame. Please do this for Terry Gibbs next year.

It is amazing to watch his current Facebook program every week at 1 p.m. PST and answer every question put to him. Terry Gibbs IS a national treasure without NEA honors. Please do not let him be a prophet without honor in the longest serving journal of our music.

MARSHALL ZUCKER
WANTAGH, NEW YORK

Editor's Note: Really well said, Marshall. We'll do it. We'll also include him in our Veterans Committee poll this year. Thanks.

Have a Chord or Discord? Email us at editor@downbeat.com or find us on Facebook & Twitter.

Légère™

REEDS LTD.

FREEDOM *to* PERFORM



Durable and dependable.
The world's best synthetic reeds.



SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS

JAZZ



JAN 24-25

**Jazz at Lincoln
Center Orchestra
with Wynton Marsalis**

FEB 21

Cécile McLorin Salvant

MAR 21

**Bill Charlap Trio
with special guests
Dee Dee Bridgewater
& Nicholas Payton**

APR 4

Hiromi's Sonicwonder

Brandee Younger Trio

MAY 9

Eliane Elias

Edmar Castañeda: Family

JUNE 13

**Oscar Peterson's
Africa Suite**

 **CSO.ORG/JAZZ**
312-294-3000

CHOOSE ANY 3 AND SAVE 15%

Media
Partners

CHICAGOJAZZ.COM
& CHICAGOJAZZMAGAZINE.COM

90
DWBZ

Illinois
ARTS
Council

90.9 FM
WBEZ

WBEZCHICAGO



"Our planet is crying, and we have to wake up, and we have to do more," says T.K. Blue, whose new album calls attention to the issue.

T.K. Blue: Music for a Crying Planet

On pianist Abdullah Ibrahim's landmark 1977 album *The Journey* (Chiaroscuro), a then-unknown alto saxophonist and oboist is listed in the credits under the name "Talib Rhynie." Forty-five years later, that gentleman is explaining how his life and career — and his monikers — have progressed over that time.

"You have a whole evolution of names," says the man born Eugene Rhynie in the Bronx in 1953 to Jamaican and Trinidadian parents. "And it wasn't my doing ... it just happened."

He had been given the name "Talib" (meaning "student" in Arabic) as a young man from a spiritual elder; Ibrahim eventually gave him another, as they toured Africa in the late 1970s: Abdul Kadir, or "knight of the powerful." "Kadir" became Kinwe

("blessed" in Swahili) in the early 1980s when he returned to Africa, this time with another pianist, Randy Weston, with whom he would work for 28 years as musical director.

When he signed with Arkadia Records in 1999, label president Bob Karcy suggested to Talib Kinwe that he adopt a stage name, asking if he had a nickname growing up. "I said, 'Sure, Blue,' because I love the color blue," he explains. "I always used to wear blue jeans to school every day." In that moment, T.K. Blue happened upon the name he has kept ever since.

Blue is speaking from Guadeloupe, an island in the Lesser Antilles chain of the French Caribbean, where he was performing a tribute concert to his late mentor, Dr. Weston. He's heading back to New York soon, but he's not ready to leave the balmy

tropical climate and the cerulean ooshan of his heritage. Nor is he ready to see those things vanish from this earth. "My wife and I scuba dive," Blue says, "and we're always concerned when we read about the tremendous pollution in the waters, and [how] the coral is dying at incredible rates." He notes that the decay of the world's environmental health coincides with what he calls the "junction of the most disharmonic mode on the planet," rife with social, racial and geopolitical dissension. He envisions an alternate world, "a place devoid of war, famine, systemic racism, gender discrimination and religious intolerance." He calls that world *Planet Bluu*, the title of his latest release.

Blue's *Planet Bluu* (Jaja Records) leans on the concept of music as a healing force, espoused by the Gnawa people in



T.K. says music is a healing force, and should be used as such.

Morocco. He was recently there again, with Herbie Hancock's entourage in Tangier for International Jazz Day, paying tribute to Gnawan master musician Abdellah al Gour, whom Blue first met in 1985 when he first visited Morocco with Weston. "[The Gnawans] heal people with music," he says. "They believe that every human being has a particular color — it could be red, blue, green ... when you get ill, it's because you get out of sync with your color, so they will first find your color, then they will play music to bring that color back to your spirit, and it heals you." T.K. Blue's color is, of course, blue — the same spirit color of our ailing planet.

"That was another reason for the utilization of the African hand piano," says Blue of his new record, "to represent the healing qualities of music." Many of the songs on *Planet Bluu* were conceived of and start with either kalimba, sanza, lukembi, mbira or bongo, each with unique tunings Blue affixed to each instrument he himself hand-crafted. He recalls, "I knew what I wanted melodically and harmonically, but I wasn't fixed in stone about the rhythm, so I went to Orion's house."

Orion Turre was Blue's neighbor in Jersey City, New Jersey, for a time, and he is also the son of trombonist Steve Turre, a long-time friend and collaborator. "[Orion] and I kind of fleshed out these rhythms, and

he did a marvelous job." Blue's ancient timbres mix with Turre's modern drumming to produce a variety of infectious, Afrobeat-inspired grooves that give the album its otherworldly, world-music vibe, at once primordial and futuristic.

Turre is not the only direct descendant from a notable jazz figure in Blue's band. Pianist Davis Whitfield is the son of guitarist Mark Whitfield. Bassist Dishan Harper's parents are accomplished Atlanta-area musicians, while his uncles Winard and Phillip are New York jazz veterans who have recorded together as the Harper Brothers. Blue had just happened to play a gig with those three younger musicians (at a barbecue restaurant owned by the grandchildren of Weston). "The gig felt so good," he remembers, "and then I was thinking about this record. I said, 'Shoot, why not?' And then it gave me an opportunity to play with Wally Jr., who I had never played with before."

Wally Jr. is the son of the late trumpeter Wallace Roney and the late pianist Geri Allen. Roney Jr.'s father was only 18 when Blue introduced him to Ibrahim at their show. Ibrahim had that young man sit in that same evening, and then promptly hired him to go on tour to Europe, with Blue. On *Planet Bluu*, Wallace Roney Jr. follows in his father's footsteps alongside Blue, complementing the saxophonist's warm tones with

robust fire and fluidity.

The pairing of the elder statesman with these younger lions reaffirms a time-honored paradigm in jazz and in human history: the transference of knowledge and wisdom to the next generation. In Blue's case, this was a happy accident, but he understands and reveres that tradition. "In Africa, these [hand pianos] are played predominantly by the jalis. These are the oral historians of their particular region or society. ... They can tell you who your great, great, great grandfather was, where he traveled, when he passed away ... and then they pass it down to their progeny, to their children, and they absorb it, and then maybe they play the same instrument." Blue easily could be referring to his band.

Mentors and students, fathers and sons. Student Talib Kadir was playing with Ibrahim, his mentor, at Ornette Coleman's loft space, called The Artist's House, when his soon-to-be new mentor Randy Weston appeared with his manager and his father in tow. "That really impressed me," Blue says, "his love of family, because he had his father with him." He later asked Weston if he could play with him, thus beginning a lifetime of shared musicianship and friendship. Blue has included tributes to Weston, who passed in 2018, on his recent recordings. On *Planet Bluu* he and his band of young brothers, along with Steve Turre, engage in a spirited rendition of Weston's composition "Chessman's Delight."

He includes a second homage to another mentor, the composer Hale Smith, whom Blue first met when Weston tapped Hale to conduct their band with an orchestra in Grenoble, France, in the 1980s. A few years later they would coincidentally become neighbors as well. Hale's serene composition "When It's Time To Say Goodbye" is played beautifully by Blue and yet another neighbor and collaborator, pianist Dave Kikoski.

At 71, Blue has already had to say goodbye to many of his friends, neighbors and mentors (though Ibrahim is still going strong at age 90). Yet he refuses to bid farewell to his vision of a better world. "Our planet is crying, and we have to wake up, and we have to do more," he states. The avid scuba diver refers to one of his new compositions, "Crystal Lake Bluu," about a body of clear water in which "you can see for miles and miles. Aquatic life is plentiful. There's no pollution."

It's one sound portrait among many in the mind of Talib Kinwe, first known as Eugene Rhynie, who became Blue before he learned to play the blues, affirming his own color as a healing force for the world that gave him so much, and for the spirit world in his dreams of what could be.

—Gary Fukushima



STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Providing student musicians with the opportunities they need to advance their musical careers is one of the cornerstones of the Jazz Education Network mission. Each year, we proudly recognize talented, hardworking, aspiring students with a passion for jazz through our scholarship program.

To apply, visit jazzednet.org/scholarships

Deadline: April 15



David Baker Scholarship

COLLEGIATE

\$3000

+full membership



Dave Brubeck Composer & Pianist Scholarship

COLLEGIATE • PRESENTED BY THE BRUBECK LIVING LEGACY FOUNDATION

\$1000

+prize package



Chick Corea Scholarship for Arranging

COLLEGIATE • PRESENTED BY iJAZZMUSIC.COM - JAZZ EDUCATION ABROAD

\$1000

+prize package



Dr. Dee Daniels Vocal Jazz Scholarship

HIGH SCHOOL / COLLEGIATE VOCALIST

\$1000

+prize package



Stanley Kay Scholarship

HIGH SCHOOL / COLLEGIATE DRUMMER • PRESENTED BY THE DIVA JAZZ ORCHESTRA

\$1000

+full membership



Jamey Aebersold Endowed Scholarship

COLLEGIATE

\$1000

+full membership



Yamaha Jim Widner Scholarship

COLLEGIATE

\$1000

+full membership



Hal Leonard Collegiate Scholarship

COLLEGIATE

\$1000

+full membership



Deborah Landon Memorial Scholarship

2 GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

\$1500

+full membership



Mary Ann Fischer Scholarship

HIGH SCHOOL BASSIST

\$1000

+full membership



Dr. Lou Fischer JEN-Co Founder Scholarship

HIGH SCHOOL

\$1000

+full membership



Mary Jo Papich JEN Co-Founder Women in Jazz Scholarship

COLLEGIATE

\$1000

+full membership



"I've already got four or five records that are basically completely done," Coffin says of his packed recording schedule. "So I'm going to release a bunch of stuff on my label in 2025."

Jeff Coffin: Music's Working-est Man

IF THE DOWNBEAT CRITICS POLL HAD A categories for "most eclectic musician" and "working-est man in show biz," there's a good chance that Nashville-based multi-reedist Jeff Coffin would win both for his remarkably diverse output and frantic schedule through the final half of 2024. Just check the record.

On July 19, Coffin released his 20th album as a leader, *Only The Horizon*, on his independently run Ear Up Records label. Joining him on that typically ambitious, wildly eclectic project were the West African percussion group Yeli Ensemble and the Charleston, South Carolina-based Gullah Geechee. The Yeli Ensemble appears throughout *Only The Horizon* but factors in most prominently on the 12/8 groove number "Pharoah Rise," Coffin's homage to his saxophone hero Pharoah Sanders, and the 6/8 Fela Kuti-flavored "Bom Bom."

Elsewhere on the album, a handpicked and expansive crew of all-stars make significant contributions — saxophonist Bill Evans; bassists MonoNeon, Tony Hall and Viktor Krauss; guitarists Keb' Mo', Cory Wong and Nir Felder; drummers Nate Smith, Keith Carlock and

Derico Watson; pianists Jon Cowherd and Leo Genovese; former Béla Fleck & the Flecktones bandmates banjoist Fleck, bassist Victor Wooten and drummer Roy "Futureman" Wooten; and current bandmates in the Dave Matthews Band, drummer Carter Beauford, trumpeter Rashawn Ross, bassist Stefan Lessard and keyboardist Buddy Strong.

"There's 42 people on the entire record, and so it was a lot to coordinate," Coffin said. "But I think I made all the right choices."

Three months after that album's official release in October, Coffin was inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame as a longstanding member (since 2008) of the Dave Matthews Band. In the ceremony from Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, the reedman accepted his award from presenter Julia Roberts. "I got to hug her," he giggled, recalling his brief onstage encounter with the actress.

When asked if he could ever have imagined back in the late '80s that he would one day be inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame, he replied, "Not in a million years, man." Back then, he was a student at the University of North Texas,

studying saxophone with Jim Riggs and playing in the highly touted One O'Clock Lab Band.

But he's there now, and rocking. On Nov. 22–23, the Dave Matthews Band played two sold-out shows at Madison Square Garden, then participated the following night in Soulshine, a star-studded, five-hour benefit concert for hurricane relief and recovery at MSG that featured the DMB along with the Warren Haynes Band (featuring Greg Osby), Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats as well as special guests Robert Randolph, Trey Anastasio, Trombone Shorty, Mavis Staples, Susan Tedeschi and Derek Trucks.

November also saw the release of a holiday album, *This Year At Christmas*, with yet another ongoing project of Coffin's, Band Of Other Brothers (with bassist Will Lee, guitarist Nir Felder, keyboardist Jeff Babko and drummer Keith Carlock). This third BoOB release on Coffin's Ear Up label (following 2016's *City Of Cranes* and 2021's *Look Up!*) features radical re-imaginings of holiday favorites, including funkified versions of "Silent Night," "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" and "Little Drummer Boy" as well as a psychedelic interpretation of "Good King Wenceslas" that has more in common with the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" than the original Victorian Christmas carol.

Beyond all of that, Coffin busied himself by running his label, booking gigs for his bands, doing clinics across the country for Yamaha and self-publishing instructional books while teaching at Nashville's Vanderbilt University.

"It's pretty constant," he said of his current activities. "I'm in my studio right now working on a new project that I recorded and another one I'm producing on West African drummer Ibrahim 'Ibro' Dioubate, who is leader of the Yeli Ensemble and involved in a project that I co-founded called AfricaNashville. So it's challenging in a lot of different ways, but it's all stuff that I really love to do. It doesn't always feel like work."

Founded by Coffin and dancer Windship Boyd, AfricaNashville promotes cultural exchange between African and American artists by hosting workshops, residencies, local performances and community outreach in Nashville and the surrounding area.

"I've been listening to African music since the late '80s when I was at North Texas," he explained. "It's completely changed the way that I hear music, and the way I share it and the way I write it. So it's inspired and informed the way that I approach music. And so learning from the tradition that these drummers in the Yeli Ensemble bring is really something else."

Coffin met the Yeli Ensemble on their second day after arriving in Nashville, but they soon got to know each other through the process of recording *Only The Horizon*. Since then, the Yeli Ensemble has worked with students at festivals and colleges, high schools, junior highs and

community centers. “Their reach is really seeping into the community in a beautiful way,” he said. “That’s one of the things that I’ve always felt that Nashville lacked — a very authentic kind of African music. And now we have it.”

Added Boyd, whose roots are in Nashville though she lived abroad in France for 25 years before returning to Music City in 2016, “I’m so thrilled to have these exceptional artists in Nashville. Recreating the unmatched energy and joy of their gatherings is such a gift to all of us.”

A poignant moment on *Only The Horizon* comes on “Bom Bom,” which features an extended solo by the late Albert Ayler-inspired tenor saxophonist Mars Williams, who passed in 2023 after a long illness. “Mars was a very dear friend,” said Coffin. “I met him a number of years ago at a festival in Colorado where he brought [his group] Liquid Soul. We hung out together and ended up talking gear and reeds and mouthpieces, as saxophone players tend to do. And every time I would go to Chicago, where he lived, I’d hook up with him. We’d go out for Chinese food or go to The Green Mill and just hang. We had a great friendship. He came to Nashville with the Psychedelic Furs to play at the Grand Ole Opry (Sept. 17, 2023, on a split bill with Squeeze), which was a trip. The afternoon before that gig, we had a Thai food lunch together and he ended up bring-

ing his horn down to my studio to play on that tune, ‘Bom Bom.’ He was already going through chemo treatments by then so his energy was not great. But there’s a little solo section in the middle where he’s just screaming on it. I just loved him so much, man. What an incredible spirit. And I’m so happy that he’s on the record.”

The album’s moving finale, “Yeli Geechee,” which recalls African-American spirituals like “Wayfaring Stranger,” “Steal Away” and “I’m Going Home,” has guest Keb’ Mo’ turning in a stirring performance on resonator slide guitar.

“I’ve known Keb’ for many years and we’ve collaborated on various live things,” said Coffin. “So I called him up and said, ‘I got this tune I’d love to send you to see if you’d consider playing on it.’ So he listened to it and said, ‘I’m totally down. I love it!’ And I then told him, ‘Listen, I can’t afford to pay you like what you would normally get. What are you cool with?’ And he said, ‘Man, you remember that ginger tea that you made me last time I was at your house? That’s all I want. That tea is amazing. Let me come over and we’ll have some tea, we’ll hang out and we’ll do it.’ And it was magic watching him work. He would kind of carve these parts out as we’re sitting in my studio. And I would watch and listen to him react to the music in the moment, finding his place in it. By the second or third time through, what he

had carved out was just magnificent.”

Elsewhere on *Only The Horizon*, Coffin is joined by his DMB bandmates on “Pickin’ Pockets,” which also features his Nashville neighbor Bill Evans on soprano saxophone. The funky opener, “Here We Go,” is grounded by frequent collaborator and former Flecktones bandmate Victor Wooten. Coffin plays an effected tenor saxophone on that tune, recalling the envelope filter-soaked lines of his hero Michael Brecker on 1978’s iconic *Heavy Metal Be-Bop*. Béla Fleck guests alongside the Yeli Ensemble on the funky “A Hat For My Beard,” which features Coffin overdubbing a horn section to rival Tower of Power. And Nashville-based pianist Jon Cowherd (of Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band) stretches out in McCoy Tyner fashion on the churning title track.

While Coffin admits to wearing a lot of hats these days, he said, “I try to wear them well. And I hope that I’m able to keep the bar at a certain level on all these different things that I do. It’s a lot of work, but it’s a lot of fun also. I love composing, I love recording, I love getting projects out there and I’m constantly working on things. I’ve already got four or five records that are basically completely done. So I’m going to release a bunch of stuff on my label in 2025.”

Stay tuned.

—Bill Milkowski



BILL EVANS IN NORWAY

A NEVER BEFORE RELEASED PERFORMANCE FROM THE BILL EVANS TRIO IN BRILLIANT STEREO SOUND QUALITY

Live recording remastered from the Original Stereo Tape Reels of the 1970 Kongsberg Jazz Festival vaults.

Includes a special booklet featuring exclusive concert photos, along with insightful essays by Zev Feldman, Marc Myers, Eddie Gomez, Marty Morell, Craig Taborn, and Aaron Parks, plus a rare interview with Bill Evans.

OUT NOW IN A STUNNING 180-GRAM DOUBLE LP AND CD
AVAILABLE IN STORES AND ONLINE!

“Hearing this trio stretch out is a joy!”
David Beckett, **UK Jazz News**

“One of the best Jazz albums of 2024 so far”.
Chris Pearson, **The Times**

“Highly Recommended!”
Robbie Gerson, **Audiophile Audition**

“This album stands out not just because of the remarkable musical performances, but also due to its absolutely flawless sound quality. The editorial work is exceptional and features an extensive booklet containing remarkable photos, informative liner notes and amazing interviews”

Étienne Dorsay,
Jazz Magazine
★★★★★



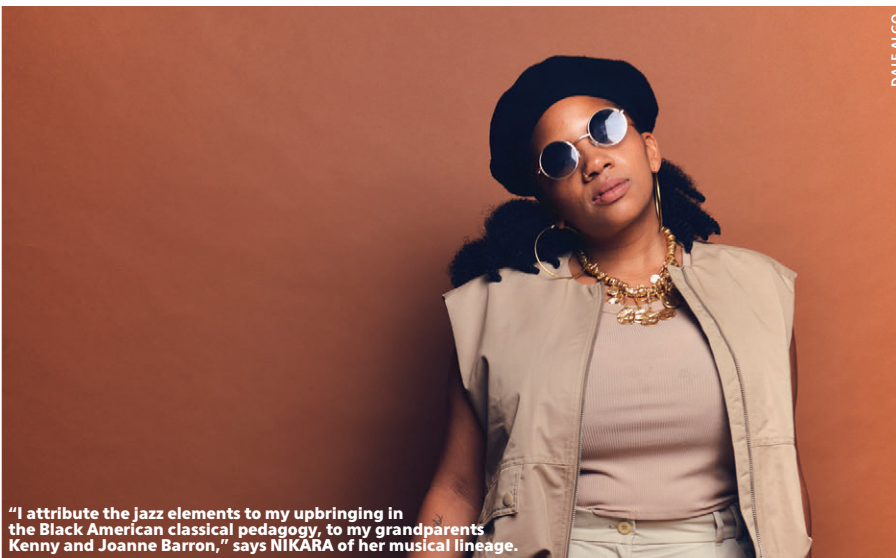
www.elemental-music.com



@elemental_music_records



@ElementalMusicRecords



"I attribute the jazz elements to my upbringing in the Black American classical pedagogy, to my grandparents Kenny and Joanne Barron," says NIKARA of her musical lineage.

NIKARA Presents a Brooklyn Tribute

BROOKLYN IS INDISPUTABLY A POWER spot in the musical universe, especially in terms of its contributions to jazz, r&b, hip-hop and other genres. Who better to sing praises to the place and its historical and ongoing influence than a musically gifted native daughter?

With her new album *The Queen Of Kings County*, the artist known as NIKARA presents Black Wall Street (born Nikara Warren) has created a warm and, by her admission, feel-good, jazz-lined and groove-basted nod to the place of her upbringing and current domain.

Along the way, the vibraphonist, composer and conceptualist also pays respects to her celebrated mentor and kin, her grandfather Kenny Barron. The veteran pianist shows up in sparkling cameos on "Stratford Penthouse" and "Prospect Park Interlude." Paying respect to musical icons from the famed borough, the album's mostly original songbook is punctuated with songs by Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield and Nina Simone. Musical ancestry is well-accounted for, but ushered forth in modern, personalized terms.

The Queen Of Kings County is the follow-up to the artist's well-received debut album, *Black Wall Street*. As NIKARA explains, her sophomore album "was surrounded by much more of a concept than my first. I wrote a ton of this music while living in different parts of Brooklyn. All of the songs and arrangements point to the different spaces I've been in physically and emotionally in relation to Brooklyn and being a New Yorker.

"Some of the tunes came to me before the concept, but once I arranged 'Inner City Blues,' wrote 'Stratford Penthouse' about my childhood home and used the history of New York's house music scene as a basis for 'Solar Plexus,' I realized

that so much of this record was steeped in where I'm from. There's really no way for me to express this music without my Brooklyn native upbringing shining through."

She clarifies that "growing up in Brooklyn in the '90s and 2000s definitely had a huge influence on the hip-hop elements of my music, but I attribute the jazz elements to my upbringing in the Black American classical pedagogy, to my grandparents Kenny and Joanne Barron. I grew up listening to the masters of jazz, Motown and funk, and would often be blindfold-tested by my grandfather in the car. The sounds of Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, The Heath Brothers, Jobim, Dizzy Gillespie, James Brown — all of that is in my blood. To me, none of this music exists without each other. As a group, we pull from the sense of feel emitted by those before us and sprinkle a little Brooklyn on it."

Fittingly, she frames the album's song set with music by timeless, genre-transcending legends Marvin Gaye and Nina Simone.

"I knew that, energetically, (Gaye's) 'Inner City Blues' would be a great place to start," she explains. "It sets the scene of the album and introduces the upbeat energy as the general feel of the body of work. The message in [Simone's] 'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' was a perfect ending.

"As New Yorkers, we can often come off intensely or can be misunderstood based on our strong opinions and inability to be anything other than ourselves. My feelings about the music are quite similar. I hope that people are able to grasp my enthusiasm and care, even if the music might exist in its own lane."

Having Barron as an in-family mentor left a bold imprint on her growth as a musician. "I

studied music business in college," she says. "It wasn't until I dove more deeply into the music as a learner and musician, rather than a listener, that I realized, 'Whoa, this guy's not just talented, he's an absolute genius.' He isn't a traditional teacher in the sense that he doesn't spoon-feed. He's not going to do the work for you."

Nikara Warren morphed into her current moniker as NIKARA Presents Black Wall Street as an activist statement and an assertion of her goal to address social issues alongside her musical journey. After learning of the tragic destruction and massacre of the prosperous "Black Wall Street" community of Greenwood in Tulsa in 1921, she recalls, "I couldn't believe such a horrendous tragedy that took place on American soil was not taught in schools. I used the original bustling Oklahoma neighborhood of Tulsa to serve as inspiration for this music. I wrote the original set of music in response to George Floyd and countless other Black humans who were unjustly killed by police. I felt that the idea of a community of humans thriving when they would otherwise be controlled by a system of oppression was a wonderful springboard.

"I needed an outlet to express the joy and wonder of not only Black music, but all music. I needed to create something that could celebrate the differences of all humans."

As to the vibes factor — still a lesser-featured and semi-specialized instrument in the jazz pantheon — NIKARA says that the "vibraphone sort of fell in my lap. To this day, I still don't always feel like a vibes player as much as I feel like a musician. I might be more comfortable on piano, bass or drums any given day, but vibraphone allows me to play percussively and melodically while using my whole body, which just feels right."

Serendipity played into her introduction, when her high school acquired a miniature student vibraphone as she was admiring vibraphonist Stefon Harris, who played in Barron's band. She took some lessons with Harris and "was pretty hooked. I spent most days in high school in the band room trying to learn bebop tunes and bits of solos I liked on the vibes."

In terms of guiding influences, she said, "I grew up listening to a ton of Milt Jackson. I was listening to a lot of Stefon Harris and Warren Wolf when I was coming up. Bobby Hutcherson plays on my grandfather's song 'Nikara's Song.' I was about 5 at the time, so I wasn't playing vibes yet, but I like to believe that there's a sense of foreshadowing there." She also points to inspirations gleaned from Lionel Hampton, Gary Burton, Steve Nelson and Roy Ayers, among others.

NIKARA's musical identity and mission amount to a work-in-progress, emboldened by two strong album statements to date. "I'm beginning to feel more comfortable in my own skin," she says. "There's a ton more I have to give, and it's only the beginning. I know where I'm going. And I'm open to what's next." —Josef Woodard



"While most organists would play with three drawbars out, he would pull the fourth one out, too — a little bit of a brighter sound," Charette says of his love for Jack McDuff.

Brian Charette's Jack McDuff Homage

ON THE BACK COVER OF HIS LATEST album, the organist Brian Charette is pictured crouching in a kung fu fighting stance. Charette looks fierce but serene, which also evokes his approach to the Hammond B-3.

Charette is a "black sash" practitioner of White Crane kung fu, a style that, according to one martial arts academy website, "combines defense and attack, soft and hard power, uses firm, yet evasive footwork" and leads to "cultivation of sensitivity and clarity of mind and body." Those are all qualities presented on *You Don't Know Jack* (Cellar Music), an homage to Charette's favorite Hammond organist, Jack McDuff (1926–2001).

The album, which features tenor saxophonist Cory Weeds, guitarist Dave Sikula and drummer John Lee, includes two McDuff tunes ("Jolly Black Giant" and "6:30 In The Morning") and originals by Charette and Weeds that, largely based in the blues, emulate but also expand on McDuff's soul-jazz palette.

McDuff was one of the chief acolytes of the legendary Jimmy Smith, the pioneer of greasy, bluesy organ jazz. To a budding young musician, a recent arrival in Manhattan in the mid-1990s, McDuff was an imposing figure and a hero; in their one meeting at the Blue Note, Charette didn't say much; he was too starstruck.

"I learned how to play in Harlem on Jack McDuff's organ," Charette said from his East Village apartment. "It was at the Showman's Club," one of several Harlem venues then specializing in organ jazz.

Charette had come to New York intending to "become a hotshot pianist," but at 21, hungry for work, he was asked to go on the road with blues acts playing the "Chitlin' Circuit" in the South and Midwest. "They needed a Hammond organ, and the new keyboard of the day was a Hammond

XB-2," the first digital organ made by the company. "So, I got one of those and a small Leslie, and I would push it all around the East Village."

Charette became a fan of McDuff's compositions for his organ trio, especially on his more unsung albums from the 1970s. "He doesn't play too many notes, which I really like. Also, while most organists would play with three drawbars out, he would pull the fourth one out, too — a little bit of a brighter sound."

Another big influence on Charette was the late Dr. Lonnie Smith, with whom Charette became close friends. "He was a joker," Charette recalled. "I knew him from playing in the Hammond organ booth at the NAMM Show. We were both Hammond artists. He would sit down next to you ... and not look at you. And he had this MIDI cane that he used to make music. And he would put it on your foot and not look at you. Then he would slowly turn around and say something like, 'You owe me money!' or 'I hate you!' But he was really a very nice man."

Charette would sit behind Smith and observe him at gigs. "I learned a lot from watching him," he said, "including how to use a kind of fast, 'snaky' vibrato; he would play exotic scales with it that I really liked."

As a composer, Charette has been eclectic and exploratory, as evidenced by the variety of music on his more than 20 albums, many of them on Posi-Tone and SteepleChase. He has composed music for large ensembles including Prague's Jazz Dock Orchestra and Budapest's Modern Art Orchestra. At this point in his career, however, he has made a conscious choice to simplify, to get back to basics.

"There was a time when I was writing very dense music," he said. "I would write in the modes of Olivier Messiaen. I would write in different time signatures. I would also combine elec-

tronics with organ, which I don't really do anymore. I write less complicated music now."

The new album is the most traditional he's done in years, he said. "I didn't want to think as much. I didn't want the music to be hard. If you're traveling around, and you're bringing your music to different places, and it's really [complicated], it's not easy to play. And my more cerebral music maybe felt a little less authentic to me than the music I play now."

His collaborator Weeds is a bit of a Vancouver institution, having founded and run the Cellar Jazz Club for 13 years until it closed in 2014. He also founded the Cellar Live jazz label in 2001, now Cellar Music Group. Weeds has booked Frankie's Jazz Club in downtown Vancouver since 2016.

"The record came together very organically, pardon the pun," Weeds said. He had brought Charette out west in 2023 to play a few nights at Frankie's. At first the idea was to celebrate Cellar's recent release of an archival McDuff record, *Ain't No Sunshine—Live In Seattle*. They ultimately decided to record two McDuff tunes from that album and fill out the rest with Charette originals and one by Weeds, all performed in a straight-ahead soul-jazz style that would pay homage to McDuff.

The day after the Frankie's engagement ended, "we went in casually to a studio here in Vancouver that's got a really good organ, and we laid down what we thought was really good. Then, to be honest, I kind of forgot about it. But when Brian got the rough mixes, he was really excited. And the guitar player, Dave Sikula, who engineered it, is like, 'Man, this sounds great!'"

The response to the record has been strong, Weeds says. "We sent it out to radio, and I got a lot of personal messages back, which is rare. We've also gotten a strong response from our Bandcamp page and from musicians who have heard it."

They are responding, Weeds thinks, to the recording's honesty. "People like authenticity," he said. "When you hear something authentic like that it smacks you in the head. To sum Brian up, he's a very real person. When you ask him, 'How are you?' you'd better be prepared for the answer."

Some of the tunes are greasy, funk-laden romps, like the title tune and McDuff's "Jolly Black Giant," with high-energy, joyful soloing. Charette's "Microcosmic Orbit," a brisk but contemplative tune in 6/8, is named after "a Taoist breathing meditation in which you can heal all of your ills and become enlightened," he said. "It's basically Qigong," the Chinese practice which, like kung-fu, has been used for centuries to cultivate and balance qi, the life-force of traditional Chinese medicine.

"You know, kung fu means, literally, hard work over a long period of time," he explained. "It's been a lot of work, that's for sure. You might say, for me, music is kung fu." —Allen Morrison



“Why, being a classically trained musician, do I have to only play the obvious themes?” asks Kristin Lee, a violinist who sought to expand her musical horizons.

Violinist Kristin Lee Unveils Her Love for American Music

KRISTIN LEE WAS JUST 7 YEARS OLD AND didn't speak a word of English when her family left Seoul, Korea, emigrating to the U.S. Once here, she embraced the violin taking refuge in it from the teasing and racism she faced. She let her instrument become her voice. And what a voice it became.

Now an internationally acclaimed soloist, Lee has performed with many of the world's greatest orchestras on revered concert stages from Carnegie Hall to the Kennedy Center to the Louvre Museum in Paris. She's also a prolific chamber musician who's appeared at festivals around the globe, as well as working as a devoted educator, currently in residence at the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.

Drawing on this well of experience in her adopted country, Lee has released her debut album *American Sketches* (First Hand Records), an homage to the music that helped shaped this country's heritage — from Scott Joplin-style ragtime to George Gershwin to Thelonious Monk, along with less well-known composers who caught Lee's ear. It was recorded in collaboration with pianists Jun Cho and Jeremy Ajani Jordan, who also arranged several pieces.

“When I was still in school at Juilliard, I was asked to give a recital in Maryland that delved into American music,” Lee recalled about the album's evolution. “That gave me the opportunity to really do a deep dive. I knew all the big names, but there was this whole list of people whose music I'd never heard.

“So I started to think more rebelliously. Why, being a classically trained musician, do I have to only play the obvious themes? Maybe I can tap into some other genres. Then I started to meet more folk musicians and jazz musicians, and the more people I met, the more I deep-

ly delved into their music, and my heart said something's gotta change. That's how this whole thing came about.”

That's just the beginning. The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Cree McCree: *You have such a wealth of musical projects and experiences, I was surprised to learn this was your debut album.*

Kristin Lee: Most of those projects were led by other people, which helped me to gain a lot of different perspectives and understand my own passion and interests. I've always been such a curious person and really struggled to pinpoint exactly what I wanted to do. So it took me a long time to understand exactly what that is and find the courage to put something out there.

McCree: *The American music catalog you drew from is very deep and wide. Was it hard to zero in on what you wanted to do?*

Lee: I knew all the big names, like Scott Joplin and Gershwin and Monk, of course. But there was this whole list of people whose names are less familiar. Amy Beach was the very first American female composer; her Gaelic Symphony premiered in 1896. And Henry “Harry” Thacker Burleigh came on my radar because of the Czech composer Antonin Dvorak, who wrote *New World Symphony* and *American Quartet*. Harry Thacker introduced Dvorak to a lot of the American spirituals and folk tunes when he moved to Iowa.

McCree: *I love the rags. Scott Joplin was the big originator, but there are lots of other rags on the album.*

Lee: Those are all written by my friend John Novacek, an amazing pianist and composer,

who's been a big scholar of Scott Joplin's life and his music. We've played together in a lot of summer festivals, and he introduced me to these pieces a while back. So when this project came about I immediately reached out to him.

McCree: *Your collaborators on this album are also wonderful. Jeremy Ajani Jordan is like the mad improviser, right?*

Lee: He really is. He's also a huge part of why I chose these particular pieces on this album. Jeremy arranged Scott Joplin's “The Entertainer,” J.J. Johnson's “Lament” and George Gershwin's “But Not For Me.” By arranged, I mean I basically play the tunes and get to improvise a little bit, and he's just back there improvising. I've already gotten inquiries asking for access to the sheet music. And I say, I'm sorry. It doesn't exist. [*laughs*]

McCree: *I love that you were audacious enough to pay tribute to Thelonious Monk, but you didn't try to channel his piano on your violin. You went for the way Coltrane sounded like when he and Monk played live together at Carnegie Hall. And it's uncanny Kristin, really rich and full. You must be very pleased with that.*

Lee: Yeah, I am. Thank you. It was a challenge for me, because so much of classical training is based on how fast we can play and how much we can memorize. And I've always been such a fan of music that shows vulnerability in the sound.

McCree: *You're also really interested in new American composers, like the two on your album.*

Lee: I had no idea who Jonathan Ragonese was until Jeremy introduced me to his music. He's primarily a jazz saxophone player who recently began writing music that combines several genres into one composition, which is very much in line with this project.

The other one is Kevin Puts, who's one of the most well-known classical composers today. Last year he won a Grammy, and then had his opera premiered at the Met. I've always been very drawn to his music, which is extremely harmonically dense, tonal and melody-driven, and very suitable for the violin. This particular tune on the album is short, but just so beautiful.

McCree: *What would you most like people to take away from listening to American Sketches?*

Lee: I'm trying to break the boundaries of what music can really stand for, in order to understand what this country's about.

I'm a second-generation American myself, and I've been given a voice through my music. Music is not about being divisive. So I want the people who listen to this to get a sense that music is about celebrating what's good in this country.

—Cree McCree

90

Never Looked Better!



DOWNBEAT.COM



Sullivan Fortner's PATH TO ARTISTRY

BY STEPHANIE JONES

PHOTO BY ANTOINE JAUSSAUD

Every week at the Village Vanguard fosters its own sound. No one really knows how the music might evolve by Sunday, but after a solid opening night on Tuesday, nerves can settle and concepts can begin to materialize. After his second trio set at the historic New York club in July 2023, Sullivan Fortner remembers thinking, "This feels good." He left feeling excited and a bit relieved. "I was nervous because Marcus [Gilmore] and Peter [Washington] had never even met before that week," he says.



The trio on *Southern Nights* played a week at the Village Vanguard before recording at Sear Sound. From left, Peter Washington, Sullivan Fortner and Marcus Gilmore.

Earlier that year, the pianist and composer began taking similar chances. “I’d been mixing and matching people,” he says. “During the Jazz Cruise, I had Joe Sanders and Jeff Ballard, and I felt the same way — nervous. We set up the instruments, and I counted off the first song. And just like that night [at the Vanguard], immediately I could feel it: ‘This is going to be fun.’”

Even though they’d never played together and hadn’t really rehearsed, the New York-based pianist and composer trusted his trio to create something beautiful. He also trusted himself. But having the kind of confidence that overrides anxiety takes work. And frequently for artists across disciplines, building confidence requires a level of resilience no one should have to prove they’ve got.

Several years ago, Fortner heard feedback from a couple of labels: “One said, and I’m paraphrasing, ‘This is the most unlistenable, unmusical thing I’ve ever heard in my life.’ Another said, ‘If this album was made by somebody else, we’d put it out.’” The words

stung. The dismissals left him questioning his worth as a working musician.

Nearly five years later, the Grammy Award-winning artist sits at a small conference table in Steinway Hall, his winter coat slung over the back of an office chair, recounting his 12-month trek back to self-trust. “You’ve got to trust that inner child,” he says. “Keep exploring, even though people think it’s wrong.”

With daily encouragement from his partner and frequent collaborator Cécile McLorin Salvant, and support from his mentors Jason Moran and Fred Hersch (the latter whom Fortner still owes a few steak dinners), the late Jean Philippe Allard (whom he credits for “allowing musicians to be themselves”) and his own inner voice, Fortner finished recording what would become his 2023 Grammy-nominated release *Solo Game*. That experience changed him. Trusting his own concept, his own intuition — his own craft — revitalized him. “I realized, ‘OK. That is the answer,’ to follow your instincts and to tap into that

place of discovery.”

Even as artists succeed in gaining and regaining confidence and self-possession — while working each day to serve their artistry — self-trust can feel elusive. Despite being energized after his second set at the Vanguard with Gilmore and Washington, he remained undecided on whether to record the music. But encouragement is transformative. “Cécile told me I needed to try to record [the music],” says Fortner, who hadn’t booked a live engineer for the week. “I said, ‘But it’s too late.’ She said, ‘Just try.’”

The encouragement he received on the bandstand opening night — along with his hard-earned self-reliance — strengthened his confidence as well. “I looked at Peter and he was smiling. Peter barely ever smiles [*laughs*] unless it’s really happening. I always judge it by the bass player: If the bass player is happy, it’s going to be a great night.”

Fortner booked that Saturday at Sear Sound, with Todd Whitelock engineering. The trio recorded about 13 songs and he

extracted nine for *Southern Nights*, the album he would release in November via Artwork Records, his fourth as a solo leader. The music includes compositions from Allen Toussaint, Cole Porter, Osvaldo Farrés, Donald Brown, Bill Lee, Consuela Lee, Clifford Brown and Woody Shaw, plus “9 Bar Tune,” one of three Fortner originals the trio had played through the week. “For a cohesive album, I wanted to keep the nine-bar tune because it was swing-

‘People that play with me have to be aware of the subtleties.’

ing,” says Fortner.

Inside the studio, he knew exactly what he wanted and how he wanted to achieve it. He describes their setup as the “traditional Oscar Peterson setup”: piano on the right, bass in the middle, drums on the left. Fortner wanted the record to sound and feel as close to the live shows as possible. “Nobody used cans,” he says. “We had to completely rely on the room to record.” It was the first time he’d recorded that way. “I said, ‘I don’t want any edits. If we screw it up that bad, we’ll just do another take.’” Some tunes got more than one take, but none got more than two. He directed the mixing to be as minimal as possible. When the time came to master the album, he asked, “Does it need to be mastered?” They said, “Yeah.”

On *Southern Nights*, the trio moves together through deep syncopation, reflexive interplay and stirring melodies, stretching from New York to New Orleans, Fortner’s hometown. They lean into what he describes as a wholly supportive space to experiment texturally, which listeners can hear from the first gesture. “Because of Peter’s type of experience, there’s a certain groundedness that I felt,” he says. “So, I had a lot of earth to depend on in case I wanted to jump.

“And Marcus, while does have that, he sits kind of in a land where I sit. There’s some groundedness, there’s some awareness. You hear Marcus and in all the craziness, you still hear his grandfather’s ride cymbal. You still get that information. So, from a textural standpoint, it kind of allowed me to investi-

gate even further because I knew I was going to have an anchor and I knew I was going to have somebody else to feed, and somebody to feed me.”

The instincts Fortner has developed over time, and learned to trust, began in observation. Admittedly, he didn’t really know what was happening musically the first time he heard the Bill Charlap Trio perform when he was still in high school. “The only thing

I could do was judge if it was good by how [the audience] reacted to it,” he says. “When Peter took a solo, everybody [in the audience] was leaning in. That was the first thing I noticed. There’s a certain kind of command that [Peter] has — the language and his note choices. He’s a bass player.

“And with Marcus,” whom Fortner met when they were both still in high school, “the more he developed and the more I developed in the music, I started to realize how complex everything he was doing was, but how easy it felt. I think that’s the sign of a true master. Even with Peter, the complexity is there, but it doesn’t look hard. You see it with all the great artists. They can do some of the craziest impossible things, but they do it with a sort of ease that just makes you feel like you can do it.”

When Fortner was still a student at Manhattan School of Music, Roy Hargrove recruited him to join his quintet, and later his big band. During his seven-year tenure with the trumpeter, Fortner fostered a relationship with bassist Ameen Saleem, whom he also observed intently from behind the piano. “I could look at his body language and tell if he was feeling good,” he says. “And it always depended on who was in the drum chair. His body language would change, for example, if Jimmy Cobb sat at the drums or if Gregory Hutchinson sat at the drums, Steve Williams or Willie [Jones III]. All of a sudden everything became lighter.”

Through the years, he’s also learned what

FEB 20 - MAR 1 • 2025

biamp
PORTLAND JAZZ FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY PDXjazz

ERYKAH BADU

TERENCE BLANCHARD
FT. THE E-COLLECTIVE & TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON

CHRISTIAN McBRIDE & URSULA MAJOR

**TRANSLINEAR LIGHT:
THE MUSIC OF ALICE COLTRANE**
FT. RAVI COLTRANE & BRANDEE YOUNGER

THE ALTONS & THEE SINSEERS

ANDREW CYRILLE QUARTET

VIJAY IYER TRIO

THE PHILHARMONIK

IMMANUEL WILKINS

ORIONS BELTE

JAZZMEIA HORN

PARLOR GREENS

JIMMIE HERROD

PLUS MANY MORE!

PDXJAZZ.ORG

biamp Marie Lamfrom CHARITABLE FOUNDATION M.I. Murdock CHARITABLE TRUST MILLER FOUNDATION PORTLAND



"You've got to trust that inner child, keep exploring, even though people think it's wrong," says Fortner.

happens when the bass player is uneasy. "The rest of the rhythm section is uneasy and the horn player or the singer is in trouble," he notes. From that, Fortner learned what he can do to assist.

"There are certain things that you can do, as a piano player, to elevate the rhythm section," says Fortner. "I've noticed you can help settle a rhythm section. Playing upbeats generally propels the rhythm forward, as opposed to playing downbeats, which settles

it and almost grounds it a little bit more."

Trusting instincts and earned knowledge requires confidence, which rises and dips. When he's not feeling as confident in the moment, Fortner returns to a piece of advice he received years ago taking lessons with Hersch, who later would produce *Solo Game*: "Play a note. Then that note leads to another note. Pretty soon you have a phrase. After that phrase, you have a chorus. And then you've played the tune. You just take it bite

by bite by bite. If you look at it like, 'Oh, god, I gotta devour this entire elephant in an hour,' you're screwed."

Fortner's ability to heed that advice, to slow down and let the music happen, followed a meaningful shift in his point of view. For years, he couldn't bring together the sounds and styles he'd grown up compartmentalizing. "I always felt like gospel and jazz and classical and R&B couldn't work together. I was told that they could ... but I didn't think it could work in me. My upbringing in the church couldn't justify it — sacred versus secular." Asked if he could pinpoint what happened to change that perspective, Fortner pauses before responding. "Roy happened," he says.

"Roy Hargrove happened. Barry Harris happened. Cécile McLorin Salvant happened. Dianne Reeves happened. John Scofield, Stefon Harris — all these people I started playing with happened, and I started to see, 'Wait a minute, you're going to do a baroque song on your gig?' ... 'Yeah, why not?' ... 'But this is a jazz gig!' ... 'So what? Who cares? Nobody cares — music is music.' ... and not only to see them play it but to see them play it with the same looseness as they would play jazz ... and then going and finding recordings of James Booker playing Chopin's 'Minute Waltz' as a New Orleans boogie-woogie. Jonathan Batiste is sort of trying to do that now with the blues meets Beethoven. People are becoming aware that these mergers can come together and [find] some middle ground, looking at everything as an equal opportunity to create something. Everything is valid. Let's incorporate it all."

Fortner's list of collaborators expands beyond those he mentions. His growing resume includes brief and extended associations with Wynton Marsalis, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Paul Simon, Etienne Charles, Ambrose Akinmusire, Peter Bernstein, Nicholas Payton, Jazzmeia Horn and The Baylor Project, among many others. Now in the latter half of his 30s, as he begins working more and more with younger musicians, Fortner champions that inclusive perspective as a collaborator and a mentor. He recently assembled his most active working trio to date with bassist Tyrone Allen and drummer Kayvon Gordon. Their work together earned them the number-one spot for Rising Star Jazz Group in the 2024 DownBeat Critics Poll — and in 2023, he brought them on a West Coast tour. "It's definitely been humbling," says Fortner, "because they're younger than I am, and I'm used to being the youngest person in the band." But his years as a leader have given him insight into his own playing and a sense

of what he needs from his fellow artists. “I think of myself as a little more of a subtle player,” he says.

“So the people that play with me have to be aware of the subtleties and be able to orchestrate in a way that doesn’t get in the way of all the layers that I deal with when I play. A drummer like Kayvon, his dynamic range is just right, and he also knows how to dress a piano player — kind of like Marcus. They know how to dress them in a way that makes it feel like [the piano player is] doing more than they actually are. [laughs] They play in a helpful way, in a supportive way. Same thing with Tyrone. He’s a solid bass player, with a personality that comes through. I have a lot of fun with him. I think the more we play, the more the sound will come together.”

Another insight he’s gained over the course of his career comes directly from Belle Rose, Louisiana, a small town outside Baton Rouge — not far from New Orleans — where many of his family members live. “They had their own rhythm in how they spoke and how they dealt with [things],” says Fortner. “The more you sat and talked [with them], the more words would start making sense, but at first it sounded like

mumbling. And there’s something about that, in a musical sense, that I relate strangely to bebop, certainly in the way that they phrase — the way the rhythms fall. It makes me realize that music reflects speaking. The music reflects the way that people spoke to one another. That’s the hidden code — trying to capture that essence.”

Knowing that philosophy, the phrasing, accents and cared-for looseness across the title track for *Southern Nights* — a Toussaint composition — sound that much more intentional. “That tune is [very New Orleans],” says Fortner, “but the rest of the record is very New York. I think I picked that tune because that was the thread [through the week]. It was a tune that we played every night for every set. And it was the tune that we went back to that kind of held us together.”

With each creative risk and each career milestone, Fortner can still find his relationship with self-trust shaky at times. He views himself not as an artist but as a person “on the path to artistry,” and understands maintaining self-trust while on that path requires patience. His respect for the music, for those who created it and those who have evolved it, informs his own development and how

he perceives his work. “One of the biggest misconceptions is, because you do art then you’re an artist,” he says. “It’s a life dedication. It’s a focus. It’s a calling to be better and better every time, even when it doesn’t seem like there’s going to be a reward at the end.”

“Cécile and I were watching the documentary *Jiro [Dreams of Sushi]*. Just the amount of craftsmanship and art — how important all the ingredients are, the prep work, massaging the octopus for 50 minutes before you cut it up. That’s artistry. That’s what I mean. That type of integrity, fortitude, tenacity. ‘I’m going to work at it until it’s better than the last time I did it.’ The people I look up to the most, it’s a life’s dedication, a constant reach toward perfection.”

Asked what the world can do for artists, aspiring and realized, Fortner responds without hesitation: “To allow opportunity and space, to welcome it, to help create it — and to not shut it down. The best thing we can do, especially for our kids, is to provide the space and opportunity to create without judgment. And to provide an environment of encouragement. That’s going to change the status quo. It’s going to make the world a lot more colorful and a lot less dull.” **DB**



 **UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE BANDS**

IMMEDIATE VACANCIES

 **RHYTHM
VOCAL
WINDS**

HOPKINS



TRIBUTE

Quincy, Quincy,

AN APPRECIATION

Quincy Jones has departed. His death, on Nov. 3, came at the age of 91, and the cause was pancreatic cancer. He was a major force in American popular culture who began as a trumpeter in the earliest years of a career that spanned seven decades, and covered a wide swath of musical styles and roles: arranger, composer, bandleader, record producer, film scorer, business executive, activist and eventually company chief, participating in all tiers of the entertainment industry.

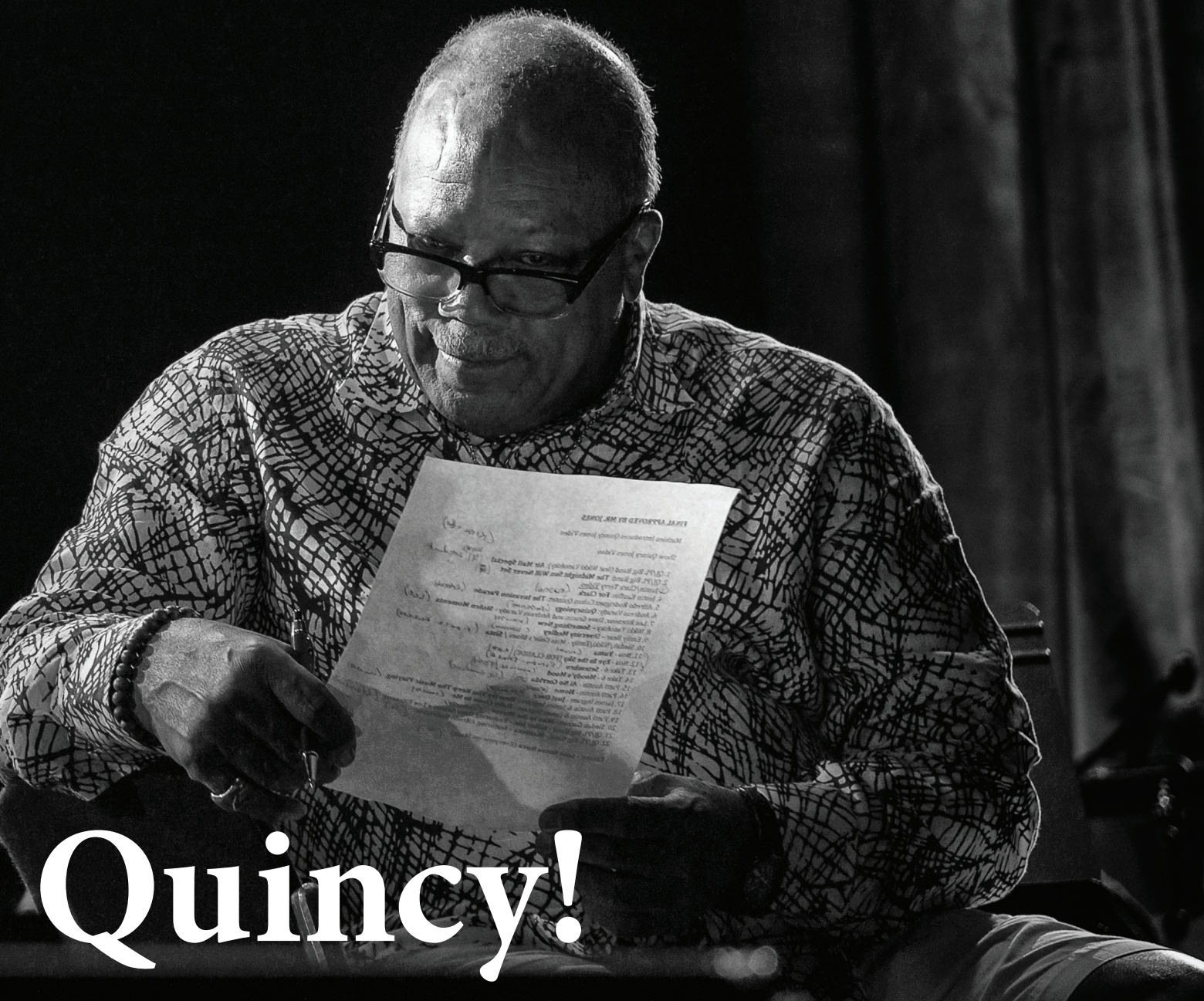
As an African-American, he stepped over a succession of color barriers, opening doors through which many other Black musicians followed. His name — often shortened to simply

“Q” — was synonymous with the highest level of popular success. When he was well into his 80s, he was involved in a variety of projects and creative efforts, maintaining a full schedule. Yet

he was as known for being approachable and exceedingly affable, revered by generations of musicians and music fans alike.

“I’ve never been this busy in my life,” Jones said in 2017 at the age of 84. “We’re doing 10 movies, six albums, four Broadway shows, two networks, business with the president of China, intellectual property. It’s unbelievable, man.”

Jones was a hipster and a quipster who spoke his own language. The power to sit in a studio chair and work until a project was done? He



Quincy!

OF QUINCY JONES

By Ashley Kahn Photos by Mariagracia Giove

called it “ass power.” Music he loved to wake up to, like Miles Davis’ *Kind Of Blue*? “That’s my orange juice.” Why he hated the numbers 2, 6 and 11? “That means my song didn’t make it into the Top 10 or Top 5, or it just missed a No. 1!”

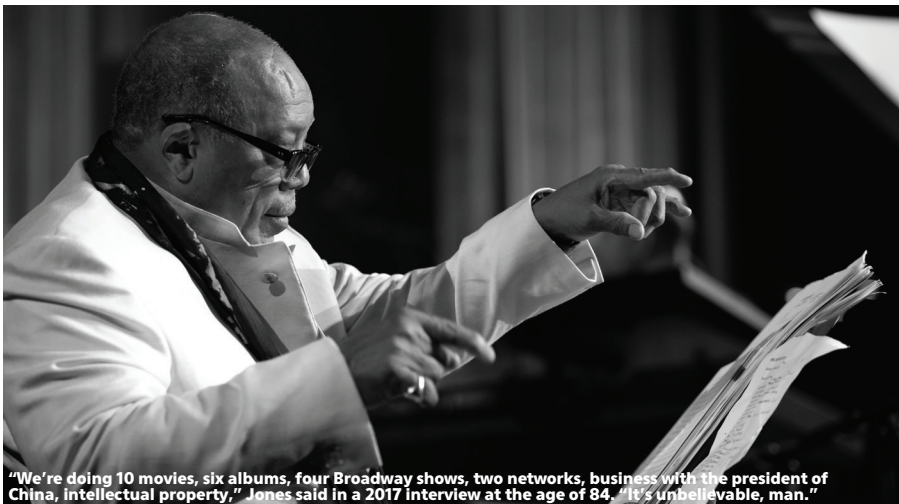
Jones is most immediately familiar to a general public for his role with such pop triumphs as Michael Jackson’s 1982 blockbuster *Thriller* (still the bestselling album to date), the 1985 all-star single “We Are The World” or the 1990 sitcom *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. But he was born into

the world of jazz in the mid-1940s, coming of age when big bands still held primacy, and he never lost that connection. His lengthy career provided proof of the truism that while there are and have been many varieties of Black American music — jazz, blues, soul, funk, hip-hop — all are branches on the same tree.

“I produced my first TV production with Duke Ellington in 1973,” Jones recalled in 2017. “And he left me a photograph with a message, ‘Now you be the one help to decategorize

American music . . . ’ Duke hated the idea of categories, man. That’s what I’ve always tried to do with Michael Jackson, with Charlie Parker, The Treniers, Lesley Gore, I don’t care. Bring it on. I’m ready for all the genres.”

He was born Quincy Delight Jones Jr. in 1933 in Chicago to parents with musical passions. His mother was a singer and a college graduate, his father a carpenter. He grew up on the city’s South Side, dealing with street fights, witnessing gangster life and his mother being hospitalized for



"We're doing 10 movies, six albums, four Broadway shows, two networks, business with the president of China, intellectual property," Jones said in a 2017 interview at the age of 84. "It's unbelievable, man."

mental illness. His father moved him and his brother first to Louisville, then Seattle, where an 11-year-old Jones discovered a piano after breaking into a social hall. He put his fingers to the keys and the rest, as it's said, is history.

Jones focused his burgeoning interest on trumpet and other instruments, as well as arranging and composing. He grew into the local music scene while still a teenager, playing with other Seattle musicians like Ray Charles and groups led by the likes of Bumps Blackwell. While still underage, he sneaked into shows when Duke Ellington, Count Basie and other big band heroes came to town, requesting lessons from bandmembers. (Basie trumpeter Clark Terry was one of those who helped mentor the precocious youngster, initiating a lifelong friendship celebrated in the 2014 documentary *Keep On Keepin' On*.) By his late teens, Jones enrolled at Boston's Schillinger House (now Berklee College of Music), but the real world started calling.

The 1950s and early '60s reveal an experience-filled path that found Jones increasingly in the company of music greats. He joined Lionel Hampton's band and was part of its groundbreaking 1953 tour of Europe, playing alongside Clifford Brown, Art Farmer and electric bassist Monk Montgomery. While in Sweden, he recorded his first tracks as a leader. Upon his return, he served briefly as in-house producer for Epic Records, as musical director for Dinah Washington in the studio and for Dizzy Gillespie on the road. At age 23, in '57, Jones was offered the chance by fellow producer Creed Taylor to record his own big band project for ABC-Paramount, yielding his debut album, *This Is How I Feel About Jazz*. Two years later, he recorded two LPs for Mercury: *The Birth Of A Band* and *The Great Wide World Of Quincy Jones*.

By the close of the '50s, Jones was striving for a full-time big band of his own, filled with top-tier talent, performing his music and charts. In 1960, he led a 30-piece orchestra to Europe to

accompany the musical *Free and Easy*. When that project fell apart, he took the band on the road in an effort to preserve the group as a musical unit. But the tour collapsed, leaving musicians stranded and Jones financially and emotionally depleted. For Jones, the ordeal proved to be a Road to Damascus moment. He gave up the big band dream, replacing it with a more utilitarian ideal of taking on all musical roles that came his way. He would never be without work again.

All that followed professionally, through the 1960s and after, revealed how adeptly Jones was able to apply his jazz and bandleading chops to create pop music success. His gig as a music executive at Mercury, yielding the chart-topping single "It's My Party" by Lesley Gore and eventually an executive position at the label. His best-selling work as bandleader/arranger with Count Basie and Frank Sinatra — the first to dub him "Q." "That call from Frank was a major turning point in my career and my life," Jones wrote in his autobiography, *Q*. "If you worked for him, your ass was out front with him. That's how he played everything — up front. Race wasn't a chasm that he had to cross."

Other noteworthy accomplishments during this time included Jones' own updated funk-jazz recordings for Creed Taylor's CTI label, *Walking In Space* and *Gula Matari*; his singular scoring and theme work for movies like *The Pawnbroker*, *In The Heat of the Night* and *In Cold Blood*; and TV shows like *Sanford and Son*, *Ironsides* and a Duke Ellington salute in '73.

"The '60s affected me deeply," Jones would later write of the seismic shifts that shook American society during this period. But work had come first, and his reaction to join in the spirit of the time was "almost a delayed reaction. ... I was so busy trying to build a financial platform to stand on I could never look back."

If there was a period when Jones' own music began to diverge most from conventional jazz paths, it was undoubtedly a string of albums recorded between 1973 and 1981 for the A&M

label — most notably *Body Heat* and *The Dude* — that found Jones favoring a polished, R&B-driven sound: shorter song forms, high-end studio techniques, employing a rotating cast of musicians, singers and songwriters. *Body Heat* notched him his first Top 10 hit as a recording artist. It also landed him in the center of the contemporary Black pop music scene, a spot he would never leave, with bigger victories soon to come: the soundtracks to *The Wiz* and *The Color Purple*; a trio of albums with Michael Jackson (*Off The Wall*, *Thriller* and *Bad*); and the establishment in 1990 of his own label, Qwest, and the production company Quincy Jones Entertainment.

Some jazz purists may have moaned, but they only had to wait until 1989 when he released his cross-genre *Back On The Block* — which proved to be the last recording for both Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan — to understand how dedicated Jones remained to the musical style that provided his start. In '91, he attached his name to the Montreux Jazz Festival, assisting with its artistic direction. In his first year, he convinced his old friend Miles Davis to revisit his legendary collaborations with arranger Gil Evans; the recording of that famous concert was released as *Miles & Quincy: Live At Montreux*.

In more recent years, Jones continued to support the music, appearing at various jazz festivals, mentoring younger jazz artists (like vocalist Nikki Yanofsky) and signing a few to managerial contracts, including pianists Justin Kauflin and Alfredo Rodriguez, and singer/multi-instrumentalist Jacob Collier, all of whom benefited from his support and eternal optimism.

How to sum up Quincy Jones and his lifetime of achievements? A simple comparison might help. Most successful record producers enjoy a 10- or 15-year run if they're lucky, and are associated with one, perhaps two musical styles. Jones connected styles that defined the path of popular American music for more than 70 years with jazz as the connective heart. From bebop to hip-hop, Jones witnessed the arrival of new musical languages and made room for it all.

With Jones, there remains a need to look past the superlatives and focus on what matters most: a life that remained devoted to music, long after the accolades and awards. Since his departure, a 2008 *CBS Sunday Morning* profile on Jones keeps playing on socials. The story opens discussing how he displays his 27 Grammy statuettes that he won from of a remarkable total of 77 nominations (he was nominated three more times, winning one more before he passed).

"We gotta put 'em some place," Jones shrugs, champagne flute in hand, like he couldn't be less concerned. "How do I describe you?" the journalist asks, "As a composer, an arranger, a musician? A businessman?"

"Quincy," he keeps answering, chuckling. "Quincy. Quincy."

DB



Lou Donaldson composed two songs that have found a place in the jazz canon: "Blues Walk" and "Alligator Bogaloo."

Lou Donaldson

HARD-BOP CHAMPION: 1926–2024

By John McDonough Photo by Michael Jackson

Alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson, the final surviving member of the original Art Blakey quintet that in 1954 introduced "hard bop" into the growing jazz lineage of classification, died on Nov. 9 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, eight days after his 98th birthday.

He had planned to attend a 98th birthday celebration at Dizzy's Club in New York, but canceled due to an onset of pneumonia. He had continued to perform as recently as 2017, when he officially announced his retirement. Since then, his appearances had been confined to occasional celebrations of his long career.

Born in Badin, North Carolina, on Nov. 1, 1926, Donaldson grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, and began studying clarinet in his mid-teens when the careers of Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw were at their peaks. He continued his studies at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University in Greensboro and by 1945 was good enough to join the Navy band at Great Lake Naval Training base near Chicago.

With the U.S. military segregated then, his section colleagues included Clark Terry, Willie Smith and Ernie Wilkins. It was in the Chicago area where he first heard the music of Charlie Parker. He promptly set aside the clarinet and focused on alto saxophone.

He studied further at the Darrow Institute of Music near Albany, New York, then moved to New York City by 1949. Donaldson worked with Hot Lips Page, and sat in with Charlie Parker and Sonny Stitt. He first recorded in 1950 with Charlie Singleton, who led a small band that also included, during this period, other younger

players such as Jackie McLean, J.J. Johnson, Cecil Payne and Oscar Pettiford. Donaldson was falling into the key relationships that would influence the foundations of his playing.

Then destiny took over. Blue Note Records, which had been founded in 1939 as a home for traditional jazz through much of the '40s, began turning its attention to the modernity that was shaping the post-World War II jazz scene. By 1950, the LP had arrived and Blue Note was gathering a repertory company of young players who would define the next decade and beyond.

By 1952 Donaldson had been invited into this anointed circle by Blue Note founder Alfred Lion, who had heard him at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem. That spring he participated in sessions with Monk, Max Roach, Milt Jackson, Kenny Clarke and others. Finally, in June he recorded for the first time with Horace Silver. The album came out that year as *New Faces, New Sounds: Lou Donaldson Quintet/Quartet* and was the first to be issued under Donaldson's name. In November he recorded with Art Taylor, Gene Ramey and Silver again as the Lou Donaldson Quartet. That session, along with two 1954 sessions, came out as *Lou Donaldson's Quartet/Quintet/Sextet* in 1957. Donaldson's Blue Note profile was rising quickly. He and Silver, and now Art Blakey, recorded together for the first

time, again as the Lou Donaldson Quartet. Together they would find something they might have missed individually — a way to bridge the brainy experimental elements of bebop with the emotional fundamentalism that had made jazz entertaining and popular. Soon it would acquire a brand name: "hard bop."

In February 1954 Blue Note set a live date at New York's Birdland with Donaldson, Silver, Blakey and Clifford Brown. Four sets would be taped in one night, and the music hit the market that fall as a single 10-inch LP: *A Night At Birdland With The Art Blakey Quartet, Vol. 1*. A Volume 2 followed in December.

Something new had materialized, something simple yet forceful. A few months later, Blakey and Silver joined with Kenny Dorham and Hank Mobley in a cooperative to record formally as the Jazz Messengers, a name that Blakey had used in the '40s, though the LP came out under Silver's name. There would be many Jazz Messengers to come, but none with Donaldson. The brand would become Blakey's, but the line between bop and hard-bop would always have a certain float.

Meanwhile, Donaldson, like the others, would find his own career path. From 1952 to 1963 he would remain part of the expanding Blue Note family and record often with Silver and Blakey in addition to Gene Ammons and organist Jimmy Smith between 1957 and '63. In 1958, he cut "The Sermon" with Smith, Blakey, Lee Morgan and Kenny Burrell, and saw it become a rare Blue Note hit for Smith. The associations with Smith and organist Jack McDuff grew his reach into a more funky rhythm & blues audience, so much so that in 1964 he left Blue Note for Chess Records in Chicago and its associated labels Argo and Cadet.

In 1967, he returned to Blue Note, whose stable now included another generation rising stars: Freddie Hubbard, Wayne Shorter, Pepper Adams, Blue Mitchell and others. He scored an unexpected success under his own name almost immediately with "Ode To Billy Joe" with Mitchell and Lonnie Smith. He toured Europe often during the 1980s, returning in 1985 to participate in the Town Hall celebration of the Blue Note label, *One Night With Blue Note*, in which he reunited with Jimmy Smith. Among the happiest of his last records are two from 1999 recorded aboard a Caribbean jazz cruise by Chiaroscuro, one with Arturo Sandoval and Nicholas Payton. And Mosaic Records assembled an epic Donaldson collection in the early 2000s, *The Complete Blue Note Sessions (1957–1960)*.

Donaldson composed two songs that have found a place in the jazz canon: "Blues Walk" (also his theme song) and "Alligator Bogaloo." Among the many honors he collected was a Jazz Master Award in 2012 from the National Endowment for the Arts. **DB**



TRIBUTE

Roy Haynes

SECRETS OF HIS TIME

By Joshua Redman Photo by Jimmy Katz

EDITOR'S NOTE: In tribute to Roy Haynes, who died on Nov. 12, we look back at one of our favorite interviews, one he did with Joshua Redman in honor of entering the DownBeat Hall of Fame in 2004.

Roy Haynes had every right to be emotional. The day before his interview with saxophonist Joshua Redman, he had attended the wake of his friend and contemporary Elvin Jones. The two drummers had shared a special kinship over the past 50-plus years, providing the rhythmic pulse behind some of the most influential combos in jazz.

When Haynes started his interview with Redman — with whom he has played on several occasions — and the topic of Jones came up, his emotions began to spiral.

“Elvin’s funeral really got me. I didn’t know it would affect me like that,” said Haynes [then at age 78]. “I talked about how we first met in 1951, with Hank [Jones] here in New York. We were both in our 20s. I was cool. Then I talked about the last time we were together, which was about eight months ago, in Boston, for Zildjian. And I was cool. But when you get there, man, to the funeral parlor and everybody’s dressed up ... Oh, man! Just as soon as I saw one person, I just couldn’t deal with it.

“Elvin was a couple of years younger than me, though,” he continued. “But it just seems we were on the road for all of these years, and every now and then we’d see each other. Of course, the last few years we didn’t see each other. Max [Roach] was there in a wheelchair. Whoa! I just can’t deal with it, man.”

Haynes had to walk around the room at the Dreyfus Records offices in New York to fight

back the tears. So it showed a lot about Haynes’ character that he went through with the interview; and lucky for us he was in the mood to talk, as Haynes offered an abundance of insight as to what has made his career one for the DownBeat Hall of Fame, as well as his current sounds that have led the way for his win as Drummer of the Year in the 52nd Annual Critics Poll.

JOSHUA REDMAN: *You must have a secret to eternal youth and vitality. The first time I played with you was with Pat Metheny more than 10 years ago. I was scared out of my mind: How am I going to hang with one of the greatest musicians of all time and one of my favorite drummers? One thing I thought I would have going for me was that I was young, I had energy. But after three tunes, I was worn out. It wasn’t just being worn out physically. You didn’t wear me out with volume or with force or with duration. But you wore me out with your mind. You wore me out with your awareness.*

You were listening to everything, and throwing everything I played back at me like, “Take that!” In a supportive way. How do you do it?

ROY HAYNES: I try to save everything for the bandstand. Before I go on, if there’s somebody backstage talking about something that I’m not interested in, I don’t usually like to tell them I don’t want to hear that, but I try to break away from everything else to save whatever I have for the bandstand. Years ago it was a natural thing.

Maybe a spiritual thing. When I’m on the bandstand, that’s my religion, and I try to give it all I can.

I have no beats to waste. When I’m playing with a soloist, regardless of what instrument, if they’re playing and I’m not getting anything from them, and they just stay in one little groove and don’t go anywhere, I realize I’m wasting something. I want to have some kind of dialogue, something to inspire me. I like a soloist to tell a story or paint a picture or something.

REDMAN: *One thing that has set you apart from so many drummers has been your interactive ability. Is that something that you were thinking about in developing your style?*

HAYNES: In 1947, when I joined Lester Young, I had heard that Prez was sensitive to drummers. But in 1947, this new bebop thing was going on. When I got with Prez, my first gig was October, up in Harlem at the Savoy Ballroom, where people were dancing. I played two tunes with Prez, and he came over to the drums and said, “Prez, you sure are swinging.” I was dancing with him. I was juggling, but I was still feeding him what he needed.

Before that, I was with Luis Russell’s big band. People told my brother that I made the band sound different. I wasn’t aware of all of this. I know that I was listening to Papa Jo Jones and to Shadow Wilson, and I was listening to Art Blakey with big bands. Max [Roach] had come

out with the little groups, even though I heard him with the Benny Carter Big Band.

REDMAN: *You were listening to them and they were influencing you, but were you thinking about doing your own thing at the time, or did it just come naturally?*

HAYNES: I always wanted to be myself, from day one, with everything, whatever I did. I was listening to Jo Jones first. Then I met Art Blakey. He was with Fletcher Henderson. I'm talking about 1943 or 1944. He used to call me his son.

REDMAN: *You're talking about the time in which you came up, and musicians of my generation often think about that time — the '40s, '50s and '60s — as being the golden years of jazz. But we weren't there. So we can know of that time only through recordings, through the books, through the little film that exists and through the legends, the myths, the stories that have been passed down.*

HAYNES: It felt like the golden days, man. Just now, I was riding in the car down Broadway, and I passed the original Birdland. And it hit me. That whole feeling. You talk about golden days.

'They used to say, "So-and-so is a natural drummer," and I fell under that category.'

Back then, I looked so young. We got close. That was even before bebop got popular. Then maybe 1944-'45, it started getting more popular.

REDMAN: *Many musicians in my generation seem preoccupied with the question of how to find your own sound, how to be original, how to innovate — as if finding your sound is something elusive, it's a struggle. I hear musicians like you, and it seems like it's something that comes naturally. Did you think about being an innovator?*

HAYNES: It was almost natural. It didn't feel like much of a struggle. In that period, 1947-'49, we didn't have schools with jazz teachers, people who played this music for a living. So my school was more or less the bandstand, just listening and getting kicked in the behind. Growing up in Boston, a teenager playing with some older guys, they were hard on drummers. They used to say things, just to mess with your head, like, "A drummer is supposed to be felt and not heard." You were supposed to be almost keeping time for them.

REDMAN: *You're an accompanist.*

HAYNES: Right, keeping time. Well, not even keeping time. An accompanist, yes, in a way. But you've got to supply them with the beat. A more functional approach. Yeah, so it was hard for me then. And I was trying to dance back and forth, the bass drum and the left hand. I was so happy when I did it with Prez and he liked it, I figured I could play with anyone behind that. And I went with Miles and Bird after that.

It was beautiful. I loved every moment of it. Even the pretty girls that would hang around the bars.

REDMAN: *So by comparison, how do you feel about the scene today?*

HAYNES: There are a lot of great musicians out there, a lot of great young drummers. I wouldn't want to be their age coming up now, because I would be confused. There are so many guys sounding so great.

REDMAN: *Confused by all the information?*

HAYNES: No, confused by all of these great players. They've got all the knowledge, all the old records coming out that everyone has done. A lot of them didn't hear Coltrane in person. Did you hear Coltrane in person?

REDMAN: *That's before I was born.*

HAYNES: That is something that kills me. When I'm up on a bandstand with you, or whomever it is, we all become the same age. Know what I mean? All the guys in my band, the young band I got, the Fountain of Youth band, a quartet, those guys are all in their 20s. One guy just may have turned 30. Saxophonist Marcus Strickland is in the band, John Sullivan's on bass and Martin Bejarano on piano.

REDMAN: *I remember noticing something the last time I played with you at the Blue Note for your 78th birthday celebration. We were playing some bop tune ("Segment" maybe), and as always you were swinging like crazy. I looked over, and realized that you were barely playing your hi-hat.*

Your left foot was going up and down, but your hi-hat was just accenting every once in a while. Maybe once every couple of bars, you'd play something on the hi-hat. But nothing resembling the standard bebop 2 and 4. I can't believe I didn't notice this before.

HAYNES: Back in the early '50s, we used to say for the cymbal, "Ding-Da-Ding, Ding-Da-Ding, Itchy-Itchy-Boom, Itchyboom." When I was playing with Miles, we used to call it "itchin'." A lot of drummers were playing the hi-hat on 2 and 4, as you said. And Miles turned around and said [in Miles' voice], "Roy Haynes, you can itch without playing the hi-hat!" So it's almost the same thing that you noticed. I would play the hi-hat every now and then. A lot of players needed that, because all the other drummers were doing it, 2 and 4 on the hi-hat. And Rudy Van Gelder at the studio, he was one of the first ones to put a mic by the hi-hat.

REDMAN: *I'm wondering about the swing feel, just a sense of feel and groove in music. Are these things that can be acquired? Is it skill, or is it just an innate talent?*

HAYNES: [Points his index finger to the sky.] It comes from there. Back in the old days, they used to say, "So-and-so is a natural drummer," and I fell under that category. That word, "swing," it had a definite meaning back in those days. I never analyzed it, but I noticed a certain feel. And that's one of the things that kept me out here for this length of time.

I like to play with saxophone players. And there was an alto player (he's not living now) by the name of C.I. Williams. He used to tell me all the time, "You're a saxophone player's drummer." Playing with saxophonists is almost my specialty.

REDMAN: *What about your ability to achieve so much intensity without seemingly playing hard, without excessive volume? Your playing is so powerful, but yet it's so light and crisp at the same time. Is that an accurate description?*

HAYNES: No, but that's all right. Playing a ballad with Coltrane, the intensity was still up there, man. But with a lot of other players I played with, it wasn't. I'm talking about earlier in my career, it wasn't there. Say, with Sarah Vaughan, she sings a ballad slow, you'd do these slow brushes. I couldn't play bmshe like that on a ballad in the '60s with Trane. Talk about intensity. That was still there. Maybe that has to do with control, as far as controlling the way you can play — light, tasty, but still it's powerful.

REDMAN: *Did playing with Sarah and other singers help in that respect?*

HAYNES: Maybe. But I had that thing before. I keep naming John Coltrane, but he listened to a lot of singers. He never told me, but I could tell. The tunes that he played. I mentioned him earlier only because of the intensity, which we had talked about

earlier. I still try to control it, and still make it say something. I like to tell a story or paint a picture within a song. Dynamics are important.

REDMAN: *What about some of the choices that you've made in your musical development, in who you've chosen to play with? I've heard that you turned down a gig with Duke Ellington.*

HAYNES: That's absolutely true.

REDMAN: *Why was that?*

HAYNES: The guys in Duke Ellington's band, a lot of them didn't even speak to each other. I was with Charlie Parker. We played at Carnegie Hall. Duke Ellington was headlining, naturally. Louie Bellson was with the band, but he had just married Pearl Bailey, and he was getting ready to go to Europe on a honeymoon. I was living in a hotel downtown here in New York. Duke knew where I was living. He called me up the next day, and we talked and talked.

When I was with Luis Russell, I knew what I had to do with the band. That was my first big band of that size, even though in 1946 I played with Louis Armstrong's big band for a week. You've got to be tight with the first trumpet player. He usually would sit beside you. So I knew Duke Ellington would probably be into what I was trying to do, but I was sure that some of the guys in the band would not have been into what I was trying to do.

REDMAN: *You played with Sarah for five years. Did you leave that gig in order to have more time to do other things musically?*

HAYNES: Well, I started having children. But I was ready to come out and play.

REDMAN: *Because right after that, you played in the '60s with people like Stan Getz, Coltrane, Andrew Hill, Joe Henderson, Chick Corea.*

HAYNES: [Thelonious] Monk was the first gig after Sarah Vaughan. Kenny Burrell was in there somewhere, and then Monk. I wanted to stay home then, because I was on the road with Sarah, and started having children, and a mortgage to pay as well. That was one of the great things about Sarah, that the money was always there. It wasn't a lot of money, but it was steady. And with Bird, it was pretty irregular, even though I was having fun on the bandstand.

REDMAN: *You have an incredible connection with the audience. When I played with you at the Blue Note the last time, a friend of mine came, and she hadn't been to that many jazz shows, and she walked away saying, "I love jazz. Why can't every jazz concert be like that? Why can't every drummer be like that?" What does the audience mean to you?*

HAYNES: Once you get the audience to relax, then you can do anything you want to do musically, once you get them in. But some guys, they'll play



all of their own original stuff and everything like that. The people who know about you are going to enjoy it. But what about those people who don't know anything about you and you want them to know more about what you're doing?

Jazz gets a bad rap. The word "jazz," I hate it. So many people say they don't like it. But there's something. You bring the people in. They'll listen to the rest of the tune that you're playing, or they'll start listening more. On the bandstand, my musicians, we relax, and it should go back and forth. The audience should feel it.

REDMAN: *There's absolutely no compromise. You're playing exactly what you want to play.*

HAYNES: You're playing what you want to play once you get them.

REDMAN: *But there's a spirit that people feel. You have a way of communicating what we love about the music so much to the audience.*

HAYNES: That's very true. And it can work! There can be a market for it, and we could be in better shape.

REDMAN: *What about the relationship between jazz and the rest of the world today, jazz and the rest of our culture? Is it different than it was in the '40s and '50s?*

HAYNES: Yeah, there's money out there. Grants. We weren't getting all that stuff.

REDMAN: *What about jazz and the African-American community? Do you feel like its relationship to the African-American community is different now than it was when you were coming up?*

HAYNES: It's much different. All the cities like Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Boston and L.A. ... but they had more jazz clubs. In the inner city, they always had jazz clubs right in the neighborhood. The young Blacks could go to the clubs, and it didn't cost a lot of money.

That's one of the things that screwed us up, when they started charging per show and started charging so much money.

We had a lot of clubs in Harlem that were playing jazz, and people came in to buy a beer — before they were charging. All of that's gone now, in all the cities. If you play in a club, and it's \$25 to \$35 a person to go in, that's something to think of.

They ripped our country up, all the cities. They took all the hotels, all the mom-and-pop stores. You've got to go to the mall now; they've got all the big stores. That affected the music, too, in our country. So we've got to go to Europe. Well, I hate to get on that, but it's true.

REDMAN: *Is there something lacking in the scene today?*

HAYNES: Yeah, man. There used to be a lot of humor, especially with the older guys. Today, somebody can be in college or high school, and already they want to have their own projects. In the early period, that didn't happen right away. People wouldn't even talk about getting their own record dates. Today, a record company is ready to sign you up. That's one of the different things. I don't know if it's good or bad.

One drummer told me some years ago, "You guys aren't aware; we got it under control. We're cool." And that's true. They know how to handle it. Sometimes they know so much, they don't know how to use their knowledge. With music, too. Sometimes some of the players got so much going on, they want to do all of it right away. Everything is chops and speed. But as Lester Young would say, "But can you sing me a melody?" Can you paint a picture? Melodies are important.

REDMAN: *What keeps you going musically?*

HAYNES: The music. What I'm surrounded with — that gives me a lift, because sometimes I have to go to a gig, and I don't feel like going.

REDMAN: *You would never know it once you get on the bandstand.*

HAYNES: That's what I meant by what I said earlier. Don't ask me silly questions before I go on. Let me think, just go on and hit. A lot of times, I don't feel like going on. But the music gives me a lift. And when I'm surrounded by good players, that inspires me. I take each day at a time. And it looks like something good happens during the music all the time.

REDMAN: *Finally, they'll hate me for asking this, but what is jazz?*

HAYNES: [sings] Jazz ain't nothin' but soul. Jazz? That's a word. I never did like the word. What's jazz? It's improvising. Anything could be jazz. Another thing that happens now, when I'm introduced to somebody, they say, "This is Roy Haynes; he's a jazz drummer." In the old days, they never said it like that. They said, "Roy Haynes — he's a drummer." **DB**



Zakir Hussain

AMBASSADOR TO THE WORLD: 1951–2024

By Bill Milkowski Photo by Michael Jackson

Tabla master Ustad Zakir Hussain, one of India's reigning cultural ambassadors and a revered figure worldwide renowned for his joyful and captivating virtuosity, died on Dec. 15 in a San Francisco hospital from complications of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a rare disease that causes progressive scarring of the lungs. He was 73.

According to the Times of India, Hussain was hospitalized for two weeks and later moved to intensive care as his condition worsened. His manager Nirmala Bachani said in a statement that Hussain had been battling blood-pressure related problems.

Hussain's profound influence over five decades helped shape world music, most notably through his 50-year partnership with guitarist John McLaughlin in their groundbreaking East-West group Shakti, which won a 2024 Grammy Award for Best Global Music Album for their 2023 release, *This Moment*. The tabla maestro also won two other honors at the 66th Grammy Awards ceremony in the Best Global Music Performance and Best Contemporary Instrumental Album categories for his collaboration with Edgar Meyer, Béla Fleck and Rakesh Chaurasia on *As We Speak*. Other significant collaborations over his illustrious career came

with the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart on his Planet Drum project, bassist Bill Laswell on his Tabla Beat Science project and a host of recordings with prominent jazz musicians, including saxophonists John Handy (1975's *Karuna Surprise* and 1976's *Hard Work*) and Pharoah Sanders (1998's *Save Our Children*), guitarist Pat Martino (1998's *Fire Dance*), keyboardist Joe Zawinul (2002's *Faces & Places*), saxophonist Charles Lloyd (2006's *Sangram* and 2022's *Trios: Sacred Thread*) and bassist Dave Holland and saxophonist Chris Potter, collective known as The Crosscurrents Trio (2019's *Good Hope*).

Hussain was also a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble and guested on albums by George Harrison (1973's *Living In A Material World*), Van Morrison (1979's *Into The Music*), Jack Bruce (1990's *A Question Of Time*), the Kronos Quartet (2000's *Caravan*) and on two electric Miles Davis tribute recordings by guitarist

Henry Kaiser and trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith (2002's *Sky Garden* and 2004's *Upriver*). Hussain also led Masters of Percussion, a long-running group he formed in 1996 and continued touring with up until the time of his death (in fact, he had bookings with the group already slated for 2025). As a composer, he scored music for numerous feature films and also composed four concertos that saw premieres in India, Europe and United States (by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center).

Born March 9, 1951, in Bombay, Maharashtra, India, Hussain was the foremost disciple of his famous father, legendary tabla master Ustad Allah Rakha. A child prodigy, he began working professionally by age 12, when he began performing concerts of North Indian classical music in his native country. As a teenager, Hussain accompanied his father on a tour of the United States with Pandit Ravi Shankar, which culminated with a stunning performance at the Monterey Pop Festival in San Francisco in June 1967. Three years later, Hussain and McLaughlin met for the first time at a music store in New York's Greenwich Village called the House of Musical Traditions. "Zakir and I met there during the summer of 1970," McLaughlin recalled in a 2023 DownBeat interview. "I knew the people there and I used to go there to check out the sitars and tambouras and other Indian instruments. And I told the proprietor, 'If ever a great Indian musician comes into the store, ask him if he would give a friend of yours a lesson; doesn't matter what instrument.' A few weeks later, I got a call about this great tabla player who was there and I said, 'Ask him if he'll give me a vocal lesson.' So I went down to this store and Zakir, who was giving a rhythm workshop there, ended up giving me a vocal lesson. We just hit it off, and we really became pals."

McLaughlin and Hussain first jammed together in 1972 at the Bay Area home of Ali Akbar Khan (Zakir was teaching at the Ali Akbar College of Music in Berkeley at the time). As the guitar great recalled, "I had never felt so instantly free and comfortable and joyful. And Zakir felt it, too. We both felt it. And I think it was from that experience that Shakti was born." As Hussain recalled of that pivotal experience, "We jammed and it was like we had done this before. It never felt like we had to adjust or tell each other what to do. We just started playing, and it was just so right!"

Their first concert together happened in 1973 at Saint Thomas Church in midtown Manhattan. "And it was at that point that John floated the idea to us for us to play together as a band and travel," Hussain recalled. "It was a very courageous decision that John made. He gave up a money-making machine like the Mahavishnu Orchestra and put himself in this situation with Shakti where there was no surety that this would survive, that this would even fly, that people

would even accept it or understand what was happening. But he did it anyway.”

The group’s July 5, 1975, performance at Southampton College on Long Island was documented and later released in 1976 as Shakti’s first self-titled album. The group subsequently released *A Handful Of Beauty* later that year followed by 1977’s *Natural Elements* before disbanding. They reformed more than 20 years later (with Hussain and McLaughlin being the only members of the original band) and released a series of live albums, including 1999’s *Remember Shakti*, 2000’s *The Believer* and 2001’s *Saturday Night In Bombay*. In 2023, they released their first studio album in 46 years, the Grammy-winning *This Moment*.

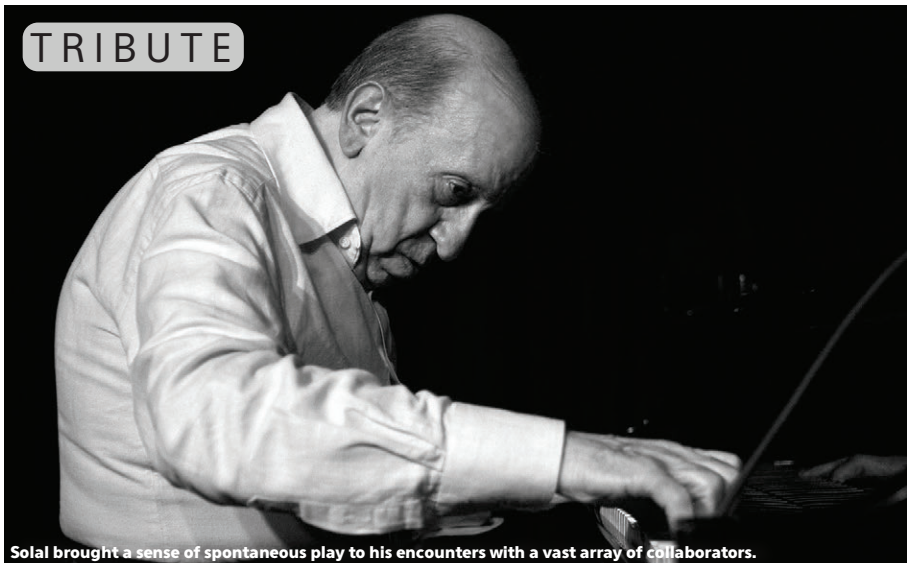
“I’ve just been so lucky,” Hussain said in a 2023 DownBeat interview. “How fortunate can one be to have these friends in Shakti for all these years and a relationship that spans these decades, but at the same time have a chance to be able to grow in a very deep manner and an understanding of each other’s abilities and roots and creative processes and so on. And therefore, we arrive at this juncture more enriched than when we began 50 years ago.”

He added that his peerless technique on the tabla was an amalgam of styles culled from various other percussionists that he admired and worked with over the years. “My basic technique is something that I learned from my father, but I’ve also absorbed the influences of people like Giovanni Hildago, Airto Moreira, Amando Peraza, Humza Al Din and so many different percussionists from all over the world who play their instruments with hands. Looking at all that and trying to move all that information on to my tabla has been my goal. This melodic element of the tabla, where I play bass lines and all that stuff, is definitely not an Indian thing to do. But watching people like Max Roach or Elvin Jones and seeing how they utilize the whole drum kit in a very rhythmic and melodic way and how they stretched time — that was a huge inspiration to me. Or watching Armando Peraza use five congas, and when he took a solo the congas not only projected rhythmic patterns but also melodic ideas — that had a big impact on me. So all that information inspired me to be able to try and make the tabla talk in the same manner. And that’s changed the way the tabla is played these days. A lot of young tabla players now have adopted this approach to being able to play tabla not just thinking about it as a rhythm instrument but also a melody instrument with the possibility to express emotions.”

In a statement, Hussain’s family said: “His prolific work as a teacher, mentor and educator has left an indelible mark on countless musicians. He hoped to inspire the next generation to go further. He leaves behind an unparalleled legacy as a cultural ambassador and one of the greatest musicians of all time.”

DB

TRIBUTE



Solal brought a sense of spontaneous play to his encounters with a vast array of collaborators.

Martial Solal

GOODBYE TO A WIZARD OF FRENCH JAZZ

By Phillip Lutz Photo by Jack Vartoogian

Martial Solal, whose irrepressible wit and incomparable wizardry at the piano captivated and confounded listeners for 70 years — and who made an indelible mark in the world of film, having composed a suitably breathtaking score for director Jean-Luc Godard’s 1960 debut, *Breathless* — died Dec. 12 at the age of 97.

Solal, who was born in then-French Algeria in 1927 and emigrated to France in 1950, was one of the last survivors of the freewheeling jazz scene of post-World War II Paris. A revered figure whose passing was announced by the French minister of culture, he remained active of mind and spirited to the end.

In a 2018 phone conversation, Solal recalled arriving in the capital city and starting the process of establishing himself. That involved emerging from the shadow of the city’s pre-eminent pianist, Bernard Peiffer. With him, Solal played four-hands in the cellars of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. From him, Solal took over as house pianist at the legendary Club Saint-Germain. After him, Solal became the first-call pianist for American expatriates like drummer Kenny Clarke before breaking out as a solo act.

And what an act. Fully six decades after arriving in Paris, he was, at age 83, attracting overflow crowds in New York, as he did to an April 2011 duo engagement at the Village Vanguard. Nearly five years later, in December 2015, saxophonist Dave Liebman experienced his initial bandstand encounter with Solal at Paris’ Sunset Sunside Jazz Club. Speaking to DownBeat, he described: “I was thrown by his spontaneity. It’s up my alley and in jazz we’re supposed to treasure those moments, but the first time we played the two sets at the club, I

was like, ‘How am I going to hang in there with this guy?’”

When they met again the following April for a concert at Château Guiraud in Sauternes, France (which yielded the Sunnyside album *Masters In Bordeaux*), they were in sync. Liebman found that beneath Solal’s rapidly multiplying harmonic and melodic excursions was a deep, if idiosyncratic, sense of groove that he could lock into. For all Solal’s digressions, his direction in the end was clear. “His timing is perfect,” Liebman said, “and that was the saving grace because a lot of times I had to depend on the rhythmical aspect of turning corners.”

If Solal’s excursions came off as cerebral, they were always delivered with intent, according to French-American pianist Dan Tepfer, a sometime student and longtime friend of Solal’s. “He was always respectful of form,” Tepfer said. “He was never haphazard.”

Invariably, Solal brought a sense of play to his encounters with a vast array of collaborators, from Sidney Bechet to Stan Getz, from Daniel Humair to Jack DeJohnette.

Solal might ultimately be remembered most for his *Breathless* score. Should that happen, the work — a characteristically fragmented affair tempered by a touch of whimsy — would represent the ultimate quirk of fate, but one Solal’s ironic side might appreciate.

DB



**TED NASH &
ALEXA TARANTINO
CHANGING OF THE**



GUARD AT JLCO

BY TED PANKEN PHOTO BY GILBERTO TADDAY



GILBERTO TADDAY

"Alexa's presence in the band will inspire a lot of folks particularly women," says Ted Nash of his replacement in JLCO.

On Oct. 23, Ted Nash – having toured the world playing alto, soprano and tenor saxophones; clarinet and bass clarinet; and flute, alto flute and piccolo with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra – let it be known on social media that he was “passing the torch” to Alexa Tarantino.

If only because openings for JLCO’s 15 permanent positions appear about as frequently as sub-freezing days on the equator, this would be a newsworthy event, as was this season’s hiring of 25-year-old saxophonist Abdias Armenteros, who’d frequently filled in for Walter Blanding in recent years. But the announcement stood out for a much more consequential reason: Tarantino, 32, is the first woman to become a permanent orchestra member since it became an official department of Lincoln Center in 1991.

Speaking alongside Nash during a Zoom call in mid-December from JALC’s midtown offices, Tarantino recalled looking to Nash as a “guiding light” since her years at Hall High School in West Hartford, Connecticut. After graduating from Eastman School of Music and playing lead alto in the big band DIVA, Tarantino finally met Nash in 2017 when she enrolled at Juilliard, where he taught several of her classes. He was impressed with her

take-charge attitude, “confident without being arrogant, very secure, but also open to learn and listen,” he said. “Once she started to sub in JLCO, I could tell she’d be an important voice. I could also tell she had things to work on.”

Nash, who has contributed some 200 charts to the band’s capacious book since 1998, continued: “Women in the schools think, ‘Here’s one of the greatest bands in the world, and it’s all men. Why should I continue doing this when it just seems like a dead end?’ Alexa’s presence in the band will inspire a lot of folks, particularly women. Her energy, youth and spirit make everyone feel good, and don’t detract from her unwavering seriousness about the music.”

Tarantino made a point of acknowledging top-shelf sister practitioners like saxophonists Camille Thurman, Nicole Glover and Erika von Kleist, trumpeter Tanya Darby and pianist Helen Sung, all consequential JLCO presences during the same time period.

“I appreciate the recognition as the first per-

manent woman, but you don’t need eyes to recognize if you like someone’s music or if they’re serious,” Tarantino said. “When I was younger, my parents instilled in me the mentality to get on the bandstand, take care of business and leave it all there — bring an energy that leaves the room better than when I first walked in.”

Tarantino brought those attributes to her initial JLCO sojourns, which coincided with a heavy touring schedule with Cécile McLorin Salvant and Artemis. “I had to balance a lot of musical things, focusing not only on doing my job correctly, but also my sound, my improvising, my language and my style,” she said. “I was lucky to be with people who wouldn’t tiptoe around me. I don’t want Ted and Sherman [Irby] and Wynton [Marsalis] to speak to me differently than anyone else. I need them to tell me when it’s not sounding right, because I want to fix it.”

“I still have in-depth conversations with Wynton about demanding more of yourself every second you’re on stage, to play with commitment and fearlessness, even in making a mistake, as if each time might be your last. For a long time he’s told me, ‘When you walk in a room I don’t want people thinking, ‘Oh, Alexa is so nice; she’s the woman who plays the saxophone.’ I want people to almost gasp, ‘I’ve heard about Alexa; her playing is so intense.’”

She recalled struggling with Marsalis’ brick flute piece “Ballot Box Bounce” from JLCO’s

album *The Democracy! Suite* (Blue Engine) while touring with the band in Europe last summer. “Wynton called it spontaneously as an encore. We can do the melody because we got the technique together, but it’s super tricky to improvise on a fast, angular, ‘Rhythm’ changes-esque, Wynton-like chord progression. One time I felt horrible about my solo. I went to Wynton later and said, ‘I’m so sorry; that was rough.’ He said, ‘You don’t need to apologize. You had it, but I could tell you got in your head at one point.’ Then he said, ‘Did you see how when you came up with this idea, you changed the rhythm section’s whole concept?’ — and he mentioned three other things.”

Nash connected with Marsalis after nailing the *Rhapsody In Blue* clarinet cadenza on Marcus Roberts’ 1996 *Portraits In Blue* album (Sony Masterworks), witnessed in the studio by Marsalis and Stanley Crouch. “Wynton asked Stanley, ‘Who’s he?’ Stanley said, ‘It’s Ted Nash. He played with Mel Lewis for 10 years.’ I’d been in awe of Wynton since the ‘80s, and thought it would be amazing to play with him. I met him a few times backstage at festivals, and he’d been cool and aloof. But after the session, he told me, ‘I like your playing. Why don’t you come out and do some gigs with my band?’ We went to Europe, did the Hollywood Bowl, made the record *Jump Start And Jazz* [Sony Masterworks]. Then in 1998, Sherman told me he was leaving to join Roy Hargrove. A few months later, they asked me to join.”

A Los Angeles native, Nash, 64, had toured with Don Ellis, Lionel Hampton and Quincy Jones before he turned 18; after moving to New York in 1980, his resume included the run with Lewis and tenures with Benny Goodman and Gerry Mulligan. “I was used to playing older music, but I hadn’t dealt with Duke’s music, and I was a bit naive about it,” Nash said of the Ellington-saturated programs that constituted his first full year in the band. “I thought, ‘What did I get myself into? Now I’m going to play ‘Satin Doll’ every night for 365 days.’ I wasn’t thinking about *The Tattooed Bride*, *A Tone Parallel To Harlem*, *Sunset And The Mockingbird* and all those suites. Wynton, Joe Temperley, Wes Anderson and Marcus Printup taught me how to interpret that music.

“I was genuinely nervous around Wynton that first year, like I had to prove myself. I remember a concert where I traded solos with Victor Goines on a slow blues. I played a bunch of cliché licks and got some house. Blues wasn’t really my thing. On break, Wynton goes, ‘Can I rap to you for a moment?’ ‘What’s happening?’ ‘Man, you’ve got play *you*. You can’t be playing all that cliché stuff.’ Wes Anderson walked by and saw the look on my face. Wes said, ‘I’ve been there’ — and he kept walking. Wynton isn’t afraid to tell you the truth, but he’s not afraid to hear the truth, either. I learned that



you could tell him, ‘I think you’re rushing that phrase.’ He’ll say, ‘Yeah, let’s try it again.’ It was important to learn that this guy, one of the greatest musicians of all time, comes every day to learn and make the music the best it can be.”

A decade later, Tarantino, initially an alto player who delved into doubling during high school, took inspiration from the tonal personalities of Nash and Irby via JALC’s Essentially Ellington program. She took note of Marsalis and the band performing Ellington’s music Tarantino recalled looking to Nash as a “guiding light” since her years at Hall High School in West Hartford, Connecticut. “It was a childhood dream to play in that band,” she said. “What touched me most from the entire experience was understanding the values within the ensemble and the culture of JLCO on and off the bandstand — the camaraderie, teamwork and attention to detail, the no-ego, looking out for each other, the respect and friendship, knowing when to give people space and when to bond. It struck me so deeply that I wanted to spend my life doing it. I had no other choice at that point. It wasn’t about being the best soloist or the best improviser. It’s that family aspect, the beautiful blend of souls in the orchestra as new people come in.”

After concluding her final audition round for Juilliard, which Marsalis attended, Tarantino got a call asking if she’d be willing to sub for Nash for a couple of weeks. “I remember thinking, ‘I don’t even care what happens with Juilliard. This is it.’ Until then, I hadn’t realized the level of intensity that Wynton and the band members demand from each other. I thought I was working hard, practicing and being as diligent as possible. But it cracks open a whole other level of what you demand of yourself musically and creatively. It’s always best to be surrounded by people who are better than you. You have no choice but to rise.”

Enhancing that process of continuous personal development, Tarantino added, is JLCO’s

rigorous rehearsal schedule: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., two to four times a week. “The freelance world doesn’t always provide that consistent level of attention to detail and support in terms of making the music great,” she said. “This band is full of characters, and the collection of personalities is exactly what makes it unique. JLCO emerged directly from the lineage of the surviving members of Duke’s band, but it’s taken a life of its own, based on the lives of the members.

“I sometimes tell students we’re like a sports team. If one person’s having an off-day, the rest pick up the slack. With other bands, it can be easy to check in, do the gig and check out, because you’re rightfully focused on getting to the next gig. Or, if you’re able to be fully in the moment, you might not get to play with that group of people on every gig, because bands have to shift according to what’s going on any given night in New York. We’re in a privileged position, one where challenging ourselves to express at the highest level comes first. Everybody brings this vulnerability, this seriousness. That’s the magic combination.”

Nash noted that this process also has its costs. “The schedule is intense,” he said. “At a certain point, you realize that your life is out on the road, dedicated to 35-plus weeks a year of one thing. Fortunately, all the music and writing and everything we do feeds into and helps develop other aspects of our musical personalities in other environments. But when we’re riding the bus six hours between cities, I have to write some music. I’ve got my computer, my keyboard, my headphones. I’m calling people, setting up stuff for next time I have two free weeks. Alexa will have to figure out how to manage this intense schedule and all this music, and then continue to be a creative person and do her own projects. I started to do that pretty well, but I reached a point where I’m not getting to some projects the way I want. So this felt like the right time to leave, to give me space to dedicate time and energy to things I’d put on the back burner.”

Apart from developing friendships and relationships with each person in the band as she begins her JLCO journey, Tarantino intends to focus on outreach and inclusivity. “There are assumptions in the community around the band’s style or Jazz at Lincoln Center as a whole,” she said. “The challenge is to help people see beyond a single snapshot of the band from 15 to 25 years ago, to realize what it’s grown into and what it’s doing to connect with audiences around the world. I’m proud to be part of this organization because of its work bringing this music to people who need it most, to help students who have that spark to see a path forward for themselves. It’s not that we’re looking down from our hall on the fifth floor. It feels we’re at the front door, saying, ‘Come on in, and see this view.’”

DB


Don Was / Photo: David Bazemore




LOBERO JAZZ

Presenting the best in Jazz since 1949.

LOBERO THEATRE, SANTA BARBARA
@LOBEROTHEATRE LOBERO.ORG



Dinner · Cocktails · Concerts




A LITTLE PIECE OF OLD SCHOOL NIGHTLIFE
... in the 21st Century

View Upcoming Shows:
www.CROONERSMN.com

Box Office:
763-760-0062

6161 Highway 65 NE
Minneapolis, MN 55432

Jazz & Spirits



well preserved

Fort Worth, Texas
www.scatjazzlounge.com



FRANKIE'S JAZZ CLUB

VANCOUVER'S PREMIER JAZZ CLUB

LIVE MUSIC WED-SUN

FINE ITALIAN DINING

WINE & COCKTAIL BAR




FRANKIESJAZZCLUB.CA
(604) 688-6368
755 BEATTY STREET, VANCOUVER, BC



Celebrating Creativity Since 1975
Thank You For 50 Years!

Santa Cruz, California
kuumbwajazz.org



GREAT JAZZ VENUE 2025

Jimmy's
JAZZ & BLUES CLUB

DINE. DRINK. DELIGHT.



New England's Premier Club for Dinner & a Show!

PORTSMOUTH, NH

[f](https://www.facebook.com/jimmysjazzblues) [@jimmysjazzblues](https://www.instagram.com/jimmysjazzblues)
JIMMYSONCONGRESS.COM

DOWNBEAT 2025 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ VENUE GUIDE



JOINTS ARE JUMPIN'!

More than 120 clubs and venues make our list this year,
more proof that live jazz is, well, alive and well!

Sourced by Frank Alkyer

Melanie Charles performs at Jazz at the Logan in Chicago.
(Photo by Yuanjian Liu)

UNITED STATES



Drummer Adonis Rose and his band Piece of Mind perform at the Blue Llama.

features emerging talent across jazz, soul, hip-hop, R&B and funk.

bluenotejazz.com/nyc

Dizzy's Club

New York, NY

The entire Jazz at Lincoln Center complex offers fantastic listening experiences, but Dizzy's Club, with its glass-walled view of Central Park, presents something special. February bookings include the Ted Nash Big Band, Edmar Castañeda, the Alan Broadbent Sextet and more.

jazz.org/dizzys

Jazz Forum Arts Tarrytown, NY

It is the best jazz club in Westchester and the only non-profit club. The lineup is always top notch and musicians love playing there. It is a listening room with reasonably priced drinks and food. Recent acts include Nye with Nicole Zuraitis, Christian Sands Quartet, Catherine Russell & Sean Mason Duo and Philip Harper Quintet.

jazzforumarts.org

Jazz Gallery

New York, NY

Celebrating its 30th anniversary, the Jazz Gallery is an intimate listening room in the Flatiron District of Manhattan presenting established and emerging artists who challenge convention. The club's 30th anniversary fundraiser will feature Ron Carter, Jeff "Tain" Watts and a special guest to be announced.

jazzgallery.org

Mezzrow

New York, NY

Under the umbrella of the SmallsLIVE Foundation, Mezzrow is a sister club to Smalls featuring an über-intimate listening experience with great acoustics in this tube-shaped, underground club. The February schedule is shaping up with the Mike LeDonne Trio, while recent performances include the Sheila Jordan Quartet and the Jeremy Manasia Trio.

mezzrow.com

Nublu New York, NY

This East Village club presents a variety of music in a three-level space. Recent performers include Samora Pinderhughes, Sara Serpa and Marta Sanchez Night Pass as part of the Winter JazzFest. The two locations are 151 Avenue C, and Nubu Classic at 62 Avenue C.

nublu.net

Ornithology

Brooklyn, NY

A creation by Rie Yamaguchi-Borden and Mitch Borden, who founded Smalls Jazz Club in Manhattan, Ornithology has become a hip hit in Bushwick with packed houses in a cozy atmosphere.

ornithologyjazzclub.com

Smalls

New York, NY

Another of the great, tiny New York basement clubs, Smalls serves as a hub for established players and upstarts. January shows featured the Joe Farnsworth Quartet, the Ricky Ford Quartet and the ELEW Trio.

smallslive.com

EAST

CONNECTICUT

Firehouse 12

New Haven, CT

Firehouse 12's recording studio doubles as an intimate 75-seat auditorium, where its Jazz Series runs for 12 weeks during the spring and fall. On tap in 2024 were Taylor Ho Bynum/Alexander Hawkins Duo, The Jay Leonhart Trio, Dezron Douglas 2 PEACE, Tyshawn Sorey Trio and Matt Wilson's Christmas Tree-O.

firehouse12.com

The Side Door Jazz Club

Old Lyme, CT

Billed as the "only club" between Boston and New York City, The Side Door rests in the historic Old Lyme Inn. It's operated by an ambitious, jazz-loving couple. Recent acts include Heindrik Meurkens Quartet, Ed Fast and Congabop-Supertet, the Loston Harris Trio and more.

thesidedoorjazz.com

MARYLAND

An Die Musik Live!

Baltimore, MD

This venue offers 20-plus concerts each month ranging from local to international artists. After the pandemic, the club continues to livestream shows as well as welcoming and including in-person audiences.

andiemusiklive.com

Keystone Korner Baltimore

Baltimore, MD

Back in the 1970s, the Keystone Korner San Francisco served as a magnet for jazz greatness. Todd Barkan has brought the vibe to the East Coast. Pieces of a Dream, Cyrus Chestnut, Pedrito Martínez & Alfredo Rodríguez, Sarah Hanahan Quartet and more have recently filled the room.

keystonekornerbaltimore.com

MASSACHUSETTS

The Lilypad

Cambridge, MA

The Lilypad programs an array of musical styles with a heavy dose of jazz from local legends like The Fringe and saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi. Recent shows have featured Charlie Kohlase's Explorer Club and the Gill Aharon Trio.

lilypadinman.com

Scullers Jazz Club

Boston, MA

A fixture since 1989, Sculler's features top names on weekends like the Steve Davis Quintet, Christian Sands, Isaiah Collier and Tierney Sutton, as well as weekday sets by area musicians.

scullersjazz.com

Wally's Café Jazz Club

Boston, MA

Founded in 1947, Wally's was the first Black-owned jazz club in New England — a tiny room showcases young talent.

wallyscafe.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Jimmy's Jazz & Blues Club Portsmouth, NH

Housed in a former YMCA, the club creates a cool, industrial vibe from this landmark structure. Recent acts include John Pizzarelli, Warren Wolf, Jane Monheit, Eric Johnson, Kandace Springs and more.

jimmysoncongress.com

NEW YORK

Birdland

New York, NY

Planted in Manhattan's theater district, Birdland features some of the finest jazz players in the world. February's lineup includes the Pasquale Grasso Trio, Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks, Mike Stern, Nicole Zuraitis and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra.

birdlandjazz.com

Blue Note New York, NY

The Blue Note preserves jazz history while fostering innovation. In addition to headliners like Robert Glasper, Pat Metheny, Christian McBride and Chris Botti, the club regularly

STUDIO 151
ICHI-GO-ICHI
SUSHI/COCKTAILS/VINYL



STUDIO 151

nublu



NUBLU
LIVE MUSIC

151 AVENUE C, NYC • WWW.NUBLU.NET

Smoke New York, NY

One of New York's premier venues, Smoke offers top-notch programming of timeless jazz. Founded in 1999, Smoke boasts a Grammy-nominated label, Smoke Sessions Records, and a celebrated streaming concert series, Smoke Screens. Its annual Coltrane Festival is a must, and recent performances include the Bill Charlap Trio, the Al Foster Quartet with Chris Potter and the Eubanks Brothers Band.
smokejazz.com

The Stone at The New School New York, NY

The Stone serves as a great listening room for creative improvisation beyond borders. Founded in 2005 by John Zorn, December featured a Stone Residency with guitarist Thurston Moore.
thestoneny.com

Village Vanguard New York, NY

Founded in 1935, the Vanguard is the most-revered room in New York and continues to be a bucket-list destination for music lovers. Mondays with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra are a must. But the rest of the week features the best in jazz, from Kenny Barron to Chris Potter to Kris Davis to Fred Hersch and beyond.
villagevanguard.com

PENNSYLVANIA **Chris' Jazz Café** Philadelphia, PA

Founded in 1989, it's the longest continuously operating jazz club in the history of Philadelphia. The club mixes amazing locals with known national acts like Ari Hoenig & the Jazz Heads, Peter Bernstein and Chris' All-Star Quintet and the Benny Benack III Septet.
chrisjazzcafe.com

The Deerhead Inn Delaware Water Gap, PA

Located in the beautiful Poconos, the Deerhead is the oldest continuously running jazz club in the U.S. The list of greats who have played is nearly endless. The albums recorded there, legendary. In December, the Orrin Evans Trio and John Fedchock's "Justifiably J.J." performed, as did Bill Charlap solo.
deerheadinn.com

MCG Jazz Pittsburgh, PA

With a mission to preserve, present and promote jazz, since 1987 MCG Jazz has allowed audiences to witness world-class jazz artists deliver innovative performances in its intimate 350-seat music hall. Recent acts include Diego Figueiredo, Pasquale Grasso Trio, Veronica Swift, Jazzmeia Horn, Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, Take 6, Ray Angry, Amina Figarova & the Matsiko World Orphan Choir, Lee Ritenour & Dave Grusin and the Abdullah Ibrahim Trio.
mcgjazz.org

SOLAR MYTH PHILADELPHIA, PA

This hip, full-service operation offers a coffee shop, bar, record store ... oh, and live music. On that tip, the music lineup features artists like the Darius Jones Trio, Jaleel Shaw + Cameron Campbell and even hosted Bobby

Zankel's 75th birthday celebration.
solarmythbar.com

South Restaurant & Jazz Club Philadelphia, PA

Southern cuisine and an intimate 75-seat space make South a must-stop up north. The club invites a stream of great local talent to play in one of the great jazz cities on earth.
southjazzkitchen.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Blues Alley Washington, D.C.

This year marks Blues Alley's 60 anniversary as America's oldest, continuously operating jazz supper club. It will also mark the 30th anniversary of the non-profit Blues Alley Jazz Society. The club has presented every major jazz music icon from Dizzy Gillespie to Chick Corea, Sarah Vaughan and Dave Brubeck. Past years' performers have included Bob James, Kenny Garrett, Lee Ritenour, Louis Hayes, Monty Alexander, Bill Charlap, Joshua Redman and James Carter.
bluesalley.com

The Club at Studio K Washington, D.C.

This 160-seat venue is booked by Jason Moran, the Kennedy Center's artistic director for jazz. Upcoming shows include Linda May Han Oh, Allison Miller and Myra Melford's Lux Quartet.
kennedy-center.org/reach/studio-k-club

SOUTH

FLORIDA **Heidi's Jazz Club & Restaurant** Cocoa Beach, FL

Heidi's nails ambiance, delivering regional artists in an intimate, 100-seat setting. Heidi's features local and touring jazz and blues artists. Recent performers include Donald Harrison as well as Rachel Z & Omar Hakim.
heidisjazzclub.com

Judson's Live Orlando, FL

After opening in February 2024, the club's first headliner was the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis. More recently artists like Sammy Figueroa, Haley Reinhart and top local talent have been featured.
judsonslive.org

LOUISIANA **Blue Nile** New Orleans, LA

The Blue Nile, located in the heart of New Orleans' historic Frenchmen Street, has been the home of countless top funk, blues, soul, and brass shows, featuring local, national and international acts. Recent acts have included Kermit Ruffins & the BBQ Swingers, the Soul Rebels, Big Sam's Funky Nation, Stooges Brass Band, Irvin Mayfield, John Papa Bros, Krasno Moore Project, Lyrics Born, Karina Rykman, Marco Benevento.
bluenilelive.com

Kermit's Treme Mother-In-Law Lounge New Orleans, LA

Founded by Ernie K-Doe in 1994, this low-tech beauty serves as a brass band party starter. Kermit Ruffins opened it back up with great music and great food, often cooked by Ruffins himself.

kermitslounge.com

Preservation Hall New Orleans, LA

Intimate, pure and swinging, several sets happen nightly at this famed French Quarter club. The emphasis is on traditional NOLA jazz.
preservationhall.com

Snug Harbor Jazz Bistro New Orleans, LA

Snug Harbor Jazz Bistro in New Orleans is a beloved institution for jazz enthusiasts. Located on Frenchmen Street for more than 30 years, it offers an intimate setting and mesmerizing performances. The venue pairs a vibrant music scene with a Creole-inspired menu, creating a true New Orleans experience. Known for excellent acoustics and ambiance, Snug Harbor features live music seven nights a week. Recent acts included Jon Batiste, Brian Blade Fellowship, Catherine Russell, Mahmoud Chouki, Kurt Elling, Donald Harrison Jr., Chris Thomas King, Delfeayo Marsalis' Uptown Jazz Orchestra, Jason Marsalis, Herlin Riley, Marcia Ball and the Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey.
snugjazz.com

Tipitina's New Orleans, LA

Tipitina's delivers eclectic musical experiences — Christmas with Big Freedia, Galactic on New Year's Eve, The Radiators in January (sold out at press time), Tab Benoit and lots of amazing local talent.
tipitinas.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Sharp 9 Gallery Durham, NC

An intimate room seating 90 people with wonderful acoustics. Recent and upcoming performers include Nicole Zuraitis, Nicole Mitchell, Joe Chambers, Dan Tepfer, Kate McGarry, Jeremy Pelt, Sean Jones, Stacy Dillard, Geoff Keezer, Carl Allen, Roland & Raasaan Barber.
durhamjazzworkshop.org

SOUTH CAROLINA **The Jazz Corner** Hilton Head Island, SC

Celebrating nearly a quarter-century of presenting jazz and jazz-adjacent music, this 99-seat venue offers music and gourmet food with two shows nightly. The Martin Lesch Band plays every Monday in January.
thejazzcorner.com

TENNESSEE **Rudy's Jazz Room** Nashville, TN

A 2017 addition to Nashville's music scene, Rudy's presents jazz nightly in an intimate setting. Chef and co-owner Michael Braden offers a New Orleans-based menu and a full bar.
rudysjazzroom.com

TEXAS

Scat Jazz Lounge Fort Worth, TX

Scat Jazz Lounge is the kind of vibe you envision when you think of a classic jazz club. SJL has been delivering first-rate, straightahead live jazz for more than 17 years. Recent acts have included Shelley Carrol, Cyrille Aimee, Ricki Derek, Brad Leali, Stefan Karlsson, Quamon Fowler, Tatiana Mayfield, Marcos Varela, Randy Lee and Red Young.

scatjazzlounge.com

MIDWEST

ILLINOIS

The Jazz Showcase Chicago, IL

The Showcase was founded in 1947 by the late Joe Segal. It's now owned and operated by his son, Wayne, who maintains the club's high standards. Recent bookings have included Greg Ward, Tim Warfield, Marquis Hill, Corey Wilkes and more.

jazzshowcase.com

The Green Mill Chicago, IL

Featuring perhaps the coolest jazz club ambiance in Chicago, the Mill is an old Prohibition-era speakeasy. The February lineup includes Sheila Jordan, Matt Wilson's Good Trouble, Chris Foreman and a host of great Chicago talent.

greenmilljazz.com

Andy's Jazz Club

Chicago, IL

A staple of the River North neighborhood, Andy's digs deep into Chicago's wealth of jazz talent while offering up top-notch food and drinks.

andysjazzclub.com

Constellation

Chicago, IL

Low-key with excellent acoustics, Constellation offers more than 200 concerts a year. Geared toward the outer edges of improvised music, the January/February schedule includes Happy Apple, The Crooked Mouth and Samora Pinderhughes.

constellation-chicago.com

Hungry Brain

Chicago, IL

Hungry Brain serves as an incubator for the city's up-and-coming musicians.

hungrybrainchicago.com

Space

Evanston, IL

Space has become one of the most eclectic clubs around. Recent jazz acts include Benny Green, The Headhunters and the Rebirth Brass Band.

[evanston.space.com](http://evanston.space)

Winter's Jazz Club

Chicago, IL

This cozy jazz room hosts local artists in a great listening room and a hip location. Recent acts include Patricia Barber, Tammy McCann,

Pharez Whitted and Chris Madsen with Alyssa Allgood.

wintersjazzclub.com

INDIANA

The Jazz Kitchen Indianapolis, IN

Celebrating its 30th anniversary, The Jazz Kitchen features an intimate, 140-seat room with nightly shows. The club offers a full menu and bar. Bookings for 2025 include an Indy Guitar Summit, Kim Waters, The Headhunters and The Bad Plus.

thejazzkitchen.com

MICHIGAN

Blue Llama

Ann Arbor, MI

Blue Llama Jazz Club features live jazz every night from local and national artists. The Afro Caribbean cuisine, when paired with the music, delivers an unforgettable experience. Recent acts have included Christian McBride, Kenny Garrett, Pasquale Grasso, Joshua Redman, Keyon Harrold, Diego Rivera, Cyrille Aimee, Mokoomba, Nduduzo Makhathini, Dee Dee Bridgewater & Bill Charlap, Bria Skonberg, Benny Benack III Quartet, Allan Harris Quartet and Raul Midón.

bluelamaclub.com

Cliff Bell's

Detroit, MI

This classic art-deco club reopened in 2005 offering up-and-coming musicians and established artists. Past acts include the James Carter Organ Trio, Tariq Gardner's

Edmonton's Home for Jazz - Est 1957

Yardbird Suite

EDMONTON **jazz** SOCIETY

The Yardbird Suite is a favoured destination for lovers of the very best in jazz, blues, soul, and the indefinable, in a casual, intimate venue.

yardbirdsuite.com



Evening Star and the Vincent Chandler Jazz Warriors Big Band.

cliffbells.com

Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe

Gross Pointe Farms, MI

The 65-seat suburban Detroit club offers music Tuesday through Saturday, offering a mix of regional and national acts.

dirtydogjazz.com

MINNESOTA



Crooners Lounge & Supper Club

Minneapolis, MN

The Twin Cities' premier listening room for jazz and other genres offers classic supper club fare and a world-class Main Stage in the intimate Dunsmore Jazz Room, Maggie's Piano Lounge and the seasonal Belvedere tent overlooking scenic Moore Lake. Now in its 10th year showcasing international, national and acclaimed Minnesota artists, Crooners is a celebrated destination listening venue as four clubs in one. Presenting more than 250 concerts during the pandemic with drive-in styled live performances, today it continues to wow audiences. Recent artists have included Ethan Iverson, Pat Bianchi, Ben Sidran, Byron Landham, Mauricio Zottarelli, Sinne Eeg, Count Basie Orchestra, Paul Bollenback and more.

croonerslounge.com

Dakota Jazz Club

Minneapolis, MN

Since 1985, internationally acclaimed and regionally touted artists have filled the calendar. Recent acts include Stanley Jordan, Meshell Ndegeocello, José James, The Bad Plus and more.

dakotacooks.com

MISSOURI

Ferring Jazz Bistro

St. Louis, MO

The 200-seat Ferring Jazz Bistro hosts shows year-round, featuring national acts and area musicians. Upcoming performances in February feature Lakecia Benjamin, Carmen Lundy and Kandace Springs.

jazzstl.org

Murry's

Columbia, MO

Local acts are presented Monday through Saturday. And the "We Always Swing" Sunday at Murray's concert series brings in big names. Recent bookings include Matt Wilson's Good Trouble, the Peter Bernstein/Bobby Broom Quartet and René Marie.

murrysrestaurant.net

OHIO

BLU Jazz+

Akron, OH

BLU Jazz+ has been keeping the local jazz scene thriving since 2013, featuring live music five nights a week. Recent headliners include Alexia Bomtempo, Benny Benack III and Dan Wilson.

blujazzakron.com

Bop Stop

Cleveland, OH

Great acoustics, views of Lake Erie and a swinging dose of local jazz — that's what makes the Bop Stop a first-rate jazz room.

themusicsettlement.org/bop-stop

WEST

ARIZONA

The Nash

Phoenix, AZ

The Nash is the only full-time jazz club in Phoenix with 300 shows annually. The 2025 season includes hits by the Lewis Nash Trio (of course!), the George Cables Trio and Jazzmeia Horn.

thenash.org



The Ravenscroft

Scottsdale, AZ

Ravenscroft is a state-of-the-art venue that provides a fully immersive experience for music and jazz fans in Scottsdale, Arizona. The 200-seat Ravenscroft Hall features the world-renowned Constellation Acoustic System by Meyer Sound. The second stage is the Jazzbird, a plush, New York City-themed jazz lounge offering seating for 144 and a full selection of wine and craft beers.

theravenscroft.com

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



Bach Dancing & Dynamite

Society

Half Moon Bay, CA

The club has been around for more than 60 years, incorporated as a non-profit in 1964. Pete Douglas opened the club in his family's home and he later built on the concert room. It closed after his passing, but his daughter reopened on the beach just south of San Francisco. Patrons and musicians have 180-degree views of the Pacific Ocean. The room is made with cedar walls made for great acoustics. Recent acts have included Sullivan Fortner, Emmet Cohen, The Cookers, Bria Skonberg, Jazzmeia Horn, Keyon Harrold, Richard Bona, Nduduzo Makathini and Kandace Springs.

bachddsoc.org

Black Cat

San Francisco, CA

Black Cat is another beautiful club in San Francisco's Tenderloin district, offering up acts like Benny Benack III, Marc Cary and Sachal Vasandani & Romain Collin.

blackcatsf.com



Kuumbwa Jazz

Santa Cruz, CA

From grassroots beginnings, Kuumbwa has grown to present over 130 concerts annually in a welcoming listening environment as well as year-round music education programs. Recent acts have included Dianne Reeves, Branford Marsalis, Take 6, Céclie McLorin Salvant, Brad Mehldau, Shabaka, Jazzmeia Horn, Emmet Cohen and GoGo Penguin.

kuumbwajazz.org

Libretto

Pasa Robles, CA

Libretto is a membership-based jazz club and listening room nestled in wine country. The intimate 62-seat venue is open Friday and Saturday, bringing the likes of John Beasley, Mike Garson, the Lao Tizer Quartet, the Larry Goldings Trio and the Gerald Clayton Trio.

librettopaso.com

Mr. Tipple's Recording Studio

San Francisco, CA

Intimacy, ambiance and local talent, Mr. Tipple's offers it up.

mrtipplesf.com

Yoshi's

Oakland, CA

The legendary club celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022. With a great Japanese menu and even better music, it recently hosted Mike Stern, Con Funk Shun and Boney James.

yoshis.com

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Baked Potato

Studio City, CA

Since 1970, fusion bands and electric groups have called this funky bar home. Recent performers include Ernie Watts, Tom Scott, Billy Childs and Marvin "Smitty" Smith.

thebakedpotato.com

Catalina Bar & Grill

Los Angeles, CA

This sprawling performance space has hosted the jazz greats. Recent acts include Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, Pancho Sanchez and Lee Ritenour & Dave Grusin and Tierney Sutton.

catalinajazzclub.com

Sam First

Los Angeles, CA

This intimate, modern cocktail bar is within walking distance of baggage claim at LAX. Early 2025 bookings include Eric Scott, Gerald Clayton's Tuesday Happenings and Clarence Penn's The Arrival.

samfirstbar.com

COLORADO

Dazzle

Denver, CO

For 29 years, Dazzle has been bringing Denver the best jazz, blues and more. Now located at the Denver Performing Arts Center, Dazzle is a serious listening room that features national touring acts as well as the best of Denver musicians.

dazzledenver.com

NEW MEXICO

Outpost Performance Space

Albuquerque, NM

Outpost is Albuquerque's non-profit, member-supported, community-based performing arts center presenting world renowned and local jazz as well as other musical styles year-round in its intimate 150-seat theater.

outpostspace.org

WASHINGTON

Dimitriou's Jazz Alley

Seattle, WA

For 30-plus years, this magnet for big-name touring acts has served Seattle.

jazzalley.com

The Royal Room

Seattle, WA

This funky, cool venue was the brainchild of musician Wayne Horvitz. The space hosts educational programs and evening sets by local musicians.

theroyalroomseattle.com

PERFORMING ARTS CENTERS



SFJAZZ Center

MICHIGAN

Paradise Jazz Series

Detroit, MI

This fantastic series runs October through June with six concerts at the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, home of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Recent artists have included Terence Blanchard, the Ron Carter Quartet, Cécile McLorin Salvant, the SFJAZZ Collective, Cyrus Chestnut and Friends and the Chucho Valdés Royal Quartet.

dso.org

NEW YORK

Jazz At Lincoln Center

New York, NY

While the concept was born in the 1980s, this house that jazz built opened in 2004 under the vision of Wynton Marsalis, now reaching audiences of some 3 million a year through concerts, tours and educational programs.

jazz.org

NEW JERSEY

NJPAC

Newark, NJ

At the Newark Performing Arts Center, jazz often takes center stage with bassist Christian McBride serving as the program's advisor. From hosting the Sarah Vaughan Jazz Vocals Competition to presenting the TD Jazz Series to community jazz jams, NJPAC delivers. Upcoming performances include Regina Carter and Cassandra Wilson.

njpac.org

CALIFORNIA

Lobero Theatre Santa Barbara, CA

Since 1949, the Lobero has offered the legends of jazz. Recently included among "The 11 Most Beautiful Theaters in the World" by Architectural Digest, recent acts include Preservation Hall Jazz Band, the Charles Lloyd 85th Birthday Celebration, the Derek Douget Band and Tierney Sutton.

lobero.org

SFJAZZ Center

San Francisco, CA

With year-round concerts numbering more than 400 a year, SFJAZZ has become a global leader in presenting jazz. Recent artists have included Terence Blanchard, Jason Moran, Stanley Clarke, Brandee Younger and Samara Joy. The organization also spearheads the San Francisco Jazz Festival.

sfjazz.org

The Soraya Northridge, CA

This beautiful complex venue on the campus of California State University Northridge hosts its annual Jazz at the Naz festival presenting such groups as the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra but also has a jazz club that features the likes of Lakecia Benjamin, Jason Moran, Kurt Elling and Chucho Valdés.

thesoraya.org

ILLINOIS

Jazz at the Logan

Chicago, IL

This series at the Logan Center of University of Chicago runs September through May. Upcoming artists are Chief Adjuah and Gerald Clayton. Previous artists include Melanie Charles, Tomeka Reid, Emmet Cohen, Jeff Parker, Theon Cross, Fire & Water Quintet and Ben Wendel.

chicagopresents.uchicago.edu/

Symphony Center Presents Chicago, IL

The Chicago Symphony Center's Jazz

Series runs September through June, with eight concerts in this bastion of classical music. Recent artists have included Danilo Pérez, John Patitucci, Brian Blade, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Wynton Marsalis, Bill Charlap, Hiromi, Elaine Elias and Christian McBride.

cso.org/jazz

WORLD CLASS ARTISTS



SAMARA JOY



BILL CHARLAP TRIO

WORLD CLASS VENUE



JESÚS MOLINA



MYRON MCKINLEY



THE RAVENSCROFT.COM
8445 E HARTFORD DRIVE
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85255
800-785-3318

INTERNATIONAL



OKAN performs at Yardbird Suite.

COURTESY YARBIRD SUITE

AUSTRIA

Jazzit Musik Club

Salzburg

For more than 20 years, Jazzit Musik Club has served as a lively space for jazz, improvised music, avant-garde and contemporary art. Special emphasis is placed on promoting unconventional approaches and offering space for new trends beyond the boundaries of typical genres. Recent acts have included Artifacts Trio (Nicole Mitchell, Tomeka Reid, Mike Reed), Kassa Overall, Alabaster DePlume, Bill Frisell Trio.

jazzit.at

Jazzland

Vienna

Jazzland, the quaint cellar club billed as the oldest in Austria, celebrated its 52nd anniversary in 2024. Recent performances include Lew Tabackin, Jeremy Pelt, the Original Storyville Jazzband, the Vienna Composers Big Band and Rossano Sportiello.

jazzland.at

Porgy & Bess

Vienna

The non-profit organization Porgy & Bess defines itself as a Jazz & Music Club with a multifaceted program. The main focus lies on the implementation of a structure that takes into consideration the Austrian jazz scene's wide range of ways to articulate itself as well as new development perspectives, such as collaborations with international guest musicians. Recent concerts have included Dave Holland, John Scofield, John Zorn, Charles Lloyd, Ambrose Akinmusire, Cyrill Aimee and Lakecia Benjamin.

porgy.at

CANADA

Dièse Onze

Montreal

This cozy club is a favorite spot for dedicated jazz fans and was the recent site of a recording by pianist Jean-Michel Pilc. Live shows are anchored by the Kim Richardson Trio and the Alex Bellegarde Latin Jazz Quartet.

dieseonze.com

Frankie's Jazz Club

Vancouver

Frankie's Jazz Club is Vancouver's premier live music venue. This intimate club offers a unique blend of jazz and blues, a full-service cocktail bar and top-rated Italian cuisine in a cozy atmosphere. Recent artists include Jocelyn Gould, George Colligan, Jacob Chung, Mike Boguski, Jacqui Naylor, Mike Dirubbo, Warren Hill and Angela Verbrugge.

frankiesjazzclub.ca

The Rex Jazz & Blues Bar

Toronto

With some 60 shows monthly, this musicians' congregating point is the place to catch a host of great Canadian talent. Recent acts include the Brodie West Quintet, the Ted Quinlan Quartet and the Brian Dickson Jazz Orchestra.

therex.ca



The Blues Alley Jazz Society is pleased to announce the launch of the 2025 Ella Fitzgerald Jazz Vocal Competition



Celebrity Judge Vanessa Rubin



Celebrity Judge Nicole Zuraitis

ellafitzgeraldcompetition.org

BLUES ALLEY JAZZ



Visit bluesalley.com for the Schedule of Events

For tickets and info visit bluesalley.com or call 202-337-4141
Blues Alley Jazz, 1073 Rear Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20007

Upstairs Jazz Bar & Grill

Montreal

From midweek jams to weekend headliners featuring Montreal and Canadian talent, as well as touring musicians from the States, Upstairs offers a cool, throwback vibe.

upstairsjazz.com



Yardbird Suite

Edmonton

Located in the cultural hub of Old Strathcona, the Yardbird Suite is Edmonton's home for jazz since 1957. The club offers great live performances in a casual, intimate venue.

yardbirdsuite.com

CZECH REPUBLIC

Agharta Jazz Centrum

Prague

Agharta is a basement venue housed in a building dating back to the 14th century. As one of the most popular jazz spots in Prague, this venue/bar/Arta Records label shop hosts local jazz artists nightly as well as international touring musicians.

aghartacz

The Jazz Dock

Prague

Hip architecture, high-end meals, great drinks, a view of the Vltava River and concerts by top-shelf artists make this a bucket-list destination.

jazzdock.cz

ESTONIA

Philly Joe's Jazz Club

Tallinn

Philly Joe's Jazz Club is Estonia's incubator for jazz, with a mission to elevate the Estonian jazz scene by nurturing local young talent while also welcoming world-class icons.

phillyjoes.com

FINLAND

Storyville

Helsinki

This two-story venue has a piano bar above and a supper club below for four lively musical nights each week.

storyville.fi

FRANCE

Duc Des Lombards

Paris

With weekend late-night jam sessions and series like The New Scene for up-and-coming musicians, Duc Des Lombards features European talent and U.S. artists.

ducdeslombards.com

Le Caveau de la Huchette

Paris

Since 1946, this "temple of swing" has been a jazz staple in the Latin Quarter. It's home to music seven nights a week.

caveaudehuchette.fr

New Morning

Paris

Blues, klezmer, funk and disco nights mix with straight-ahead and fusion styles at this musical and social hot spot. Recent shows featured Immanuel Wilkins, October London

and Sylvain Rifflet.

newmorning.com

Sunset-Sunside

Paris

Offering music nightly, this club has hosted the likes of the the Dmitry Baevsky Quartet featuring Peter Bernstein, the Kirk Lightsey Trio and the Jacky Terrasson Trio.

sunset-sunside.com

GERMANY

A-Trane

Berlin

Since 1992, this "trane" has been serving up German and international cuisine with local and international stars. Recently, the club featured a sold-out Dominic Miller residency.

a-trane.de



BIX Jazzclub

Stuttgart

Known for exceptional acoustics and stellar lineups, BIX brings world-class musicians to the heart of the city, blending classic and modern jazz styles. Guests enjoy a warm atmosphere perfect for savoring whisky, cocktails and gourmet bites while experiencing unforgettable, up-close performances. Recent acts have included Christian Sands, Astor Piazzolla Quintet, Jeff Lorber Fusion, Spyro Gyra and Kurt Elling.

bix-stuttgart.de

Ella & Louis Jazz Club

Mannheim

Since 2018 the Ella & Louis Jazz Club Mannheim has been one of the most dynamic jazz clubs in Germany. Four days a week the club presents local, national and international artists like the Yellowjackets, Ernie Watts, Stefano Di Battista, Robin McKelle and Iro Rantala.

ellalouis.de

Jazzclub Unterfahrt

Munich

Unterfahrt has presented contemporary jazz artists from more than 30 countries, including emerging young talent and well-known artists, some 350 days a year. Recent acts have included the Dave Holland Trio, Chief Adjuah, Kris Davis Diatom Ribbons with Terri Lyne Carrington, Walter Smith III and the Chris Potter Trio.

unterfahrt.de

Jazz im Prinz Karl

Tübingen

The 45-year-old, membership-driven institution recently has presented Immanuel Wilkins.

jipk.net

Jazzkeller

Frankfurt

Jazzkeller is a subterranean beauty with great acoustics and the feel of old-school, intimate performances. Recent acts include the Jesse Davis Quartet, the David Hazeltine Trio NYC and Claus Koch & The Operators.

jazzkeller.com

ISRAEL

Beit Haamudim

Tel Aviv



**"THE HUB FOR JAZZ
IN THE TRIANGLE"**

*Educating and
inspiring*



*Over 130+ concerts a year
featuring regional and
national artists as well as
adult and youth ensemble
programs.*

Beit Haamundim hosts the best of Israel's jazz scene seven days a week. Recent shows featured the Ofer Ganor Quartet, the Barak Mori Quartet and the Guy Levy Trio.
facebook.com/beithaamudim

ITALY

Alexanderplatz

Rome
Italy's premier jazz club was refurbished recently and continues to emphasize small-group concerts in classic and modern styles.
alexanderplatzjazz.com

Casa del Jazz

Rome
With three venues, Casa del Jazz delivers a variety of concerts including plenty of jazz.
casadeljazz.com

JAPAN

Body & Soul

Tokyo
Since 1974, this venue — which seats about 50 — has presented high-quality Japanese

jazz artists.
bodyandsoul.co.jp

Shinjuku Pit Inn

Tokyo
Known for showcasing domestic artists, this 57-year-old venue (32 years in its current location) is a revered listening room.
pit-inn.com

LATVIA

M/Darbnīca

Riga
M/Darbnīca is a cultural space located in the heart of Riga. Emerging and established musicians from jazz and other genres converge, promoting classic jazz, new compositions and the art of improvisation.
mdarbnica.lv

VEF Jazz Club

Riga
VEF Jazz Club concert series began in 2018, offering jazz lovers a chance to enjoy regional and internationally known musicians. VEF Jazz Club has hosted Denis Pashkevich

Sextet, Trio Vein, Peter Sarik Trio and more.
vefkp.lv

MEXICO

Zinco Jazz Club

Mexico City
With a great menu and intimate, modern decor, this underground club has earned a reputation for hipness.
zincojazz.com

THE NETHERLANDS

Bimhuis

Amsterdam
This internationally acclaimed concert hall boasts a 48-year history and more than 300 concerts annually by the likes of David Murray, Kit Downes and Irreversible Entanglements.
bimhuis.com

NORWAY

Victoria Nasjonal Jazz Scene

Oslo
Housed in a stylish setting, Victoria Nasjonal Jazz Scene can accommodate 300 people. Norway's vibrant jazz scene is represented here, as are touring musicians like Joe Lovano.
nasjonaljazzscene.no/en

RUSSIA

Igor Butman Jazz Club

Moscow/St. Petersburg
While relations with Russia make it prohibitive to travel there at this time, famed saxophonist Igor Butman's two clubs present Russian artists as well as international touring acts.
butmanclub.ru

SCOTLAND

The Jazz Bar

Edinburgh
Harnessing Edinburgh's creative talents into an offering of year-round live gigs, this award-winning basement venue is great for a Saturday afternoon coffee, a fresh cocktail or a cold pint. Recent performances include Georgia Cecile, Valery Ponomarev and Fergus McCreadie.
thejazzbar.co.uk

SPAIN

Jamboree

Barcelona
This classic club has hosted the greats since 1960 — from Duke Ellington and Ornette Coleman to Barcelona native Jorge Rossy.
jamboreejazz.com

SWEDEN


Fasching

Stockholm
Jazz club Fasching is one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious. Historically, the likes of Chet Baker, Carla Bley, Chick Corea and more have graced the stage.
fasching.se

SWITZERLAND

Marian's Jazz Room

Bern
Since 1992, this 130-capacity room has been



SNUGHARBOR | Jazz BISTRO

THE HOUSE THAT ELLIS BUILT

NEW ORLEANS' PREMIER JAZZ CLUB

OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK!

SNUGJAZZ.COM
@SNUGJAZZ_NOLA

626 FRENCHMEN ST. | NEW ORLEANS, LA

CELEBRATING Snug Harbor 40 YEARS

ELLIS MARSALIS JR. (1934 - 2020)



JAZZ FORUM WESTCHESTER'S PREMIER JAZZ CLUB

GREAT FOOD & DRINK | WORLD-RENOWNED MUSICIANS

NAMED TOP 100 JAZZ VENUES WORLDWIDE BY DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE

FRI, FEB 28 - SUN, MAR 2

BILL CHARLAP & RENEE ROSNES
TWO STEINWAY GRAND PIANOS

"This is one of the greatest jazz clubs in the world"
- Bill Charlap

1 DIXON LANE, TARRYTOWN, NY • JAZZFORUMARTS.ORG/EVENTS

open from September through May. Known for great acoustics, its jazz festival (which runs March through May) features residencies by the Cyrus Chestnut Trio, the Jon Regen Trio and the Arturo O'Farrill Family Band.
mariansjazzroom.ch

TURKEY

Nardis Jazz Club

Istanbul

Founded in 2002, housed in a historic building and capable of seating 120 people, Nardis presents mostly local musicians, two sets a night, Monday through Saturday.
nardisjazz.com

The Badau

Istanbul

The foundations of Turkey's only gastro-jazz club were laid in 2015 by Eren Noyan, owner, chef and jazz singer. The room has become home to many local musicians as well as international acts passing through the region.
[instagram.com/thebadau.istanbul](https://www.instagram.com/thebadau.istanbul)

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The 606 Club

London

Since 1976, this basement club has been run by musician Steve Rubie with a mission to present the best artists from the U.K. The club has grown from a 30-seater to 120, but the vibe remains intimate.
606club.co.uk

Cafe OTO

London

Cafe OTO offers space for creative new music and musicians going beyond the mainstream. Commissions, residencies and concert recordings are part of the programming.
cafeoto.co.uk

Jazz Cafe

London

With gourmet food and live concerts, Jazz Cafe has seated views upstairs and a downstairs dance floor. Funk and soul bookings share the marquée with the likes of the Dele Sosimi Afrobeat Orchestra.
thejazzcafelondon.com

Pizza Express Jazz Club

London

Since 1976, great pizza and jazz go together like peanut butter and jelly at this basement club in the heart of Soho.
pizzaexpresslive.com

Ronnie Scott's

London

Since 1959, Ronnie Scott's has been celebrating the biggest names in jazz and blues in the heart of London's Soho district. For early 2025, the venue has booked Incognito, Eliane Correa & Lat Evolución Orchestra and Timo Lassy & Jukka Eskola.
ronniescotts.co.uk

The Vortex

London

This intimate nonprofit establishment features a variety of jazz styles focusing on free improvisation.
vortexjazz.co.uk

the **JAZZ** KITCHEN
CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS

"ONE OF THE TOP
 100 JAZZ CLUBS
 IN THE WORLD"
 - DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE

Keep up with the latest at TheJK!
 5377 N College Ave.
 Indianapolis, IN 46220
 Tel: 317-253-4900

thejazzkitchen.com

BACH DANCING & DYNAMITE SOCIETY

Over 60 years of world-class jazz on
 Miramar Beach!

Half Moon Bay, CA
bachddsoc.org

Blue Note
 NEW YORK

UPCOMING SHOWS

FEB 18-23, FEB 25 - MAR 2
ESPERANZA SPALDING

MAR 3, 17, 31 & APR 14
DAVID MURRAY RESIDENCY

MAR 6-9
RAVI COLTRANE

MAR 18-23
BILLY COBHAM'S TIME MACHINE

131 W 3RD ST, NEW YORK 10012
 212.475.8592 • BLUENOTEJAZZ.COM

BIX

...AND JAZZ FOR ALL!

www.bix-stuttgart.de

Hey, Jazz Girls!

*Just in time, our 90th anniversary T-shirt
in women's styles! Enjoy!*



DOWNBEAT.COM

Reviews

Masterpiece ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★ Good ★★★ Fair ★★ Poor ★



EBRU YILDIZ



Encounters & Collisions finds vocalist Sara Serpa composing her own lyrics for the first time.

Sara Serpa *Encounters & Collisions*

BIOPHILIA

★★★

There's a lot to take in. In addition to Sara Serpa's beguiling voice and lissome melodic inventions, *Encounters & Collisions* comes with an illustrated book and a personal narrative about her emigration from Lisbon to Boston, where she attended Berklee College of Music. As absorbing as all three are, oftentimes they compete for attention.

Sometimes, it's easier to just delve into the 19-page book, filled with ingenuous drawings and recollections of some her various firsts in the U.S., such as applying for a visa, meeting new friends (some of whom supposedly with

little to no knowledge about Portuguese culture), bearing a child and losing a parent. Or you can just listen to the album, which unfolds like an audiobook, accompanied by adventurous academia jazz and crisp narration.

This marks the first time Serpa has composed her own lyrics, and it's commendable that she's drawing on her own experiences. But, while many of the evocative musical diary entries have their universal appeal, hardly anything leaps forward to distinguish Serpa's experience from a zillion other people.

The otherworldly beauty of Serpa's singing and stateliness as her recitation is unquestionable. Nevertheless, the album is saddled with an insistent sense of twee pathos. Little joy bursts through to counter the album's laconically paced navel-gazing. It's not until toward

the end — with “Story 8,” “Music Makes Me Who I Am” and “Two Cities, Many Homes,” which details her focus shifting from European classical music to jazz and reflection of migrating to the U.S. from Portugal 18 years later — do gleams of hope enter.

For all its multidisciplinary nature and transfixing allure, *Encounters & Collisions* begs for more: more nuanced, singular recollections of experiences, more contrasting narrating voices and more pleasure. —John Murphy

Encounters & Collisions: Story 1; Language; Story 2; Vista; Story 3; Things Must Move Quickly; Story 4; Between Worlds; Story 5; Labor; Story 6; A Mother's Heart; Story 7; Phone Call; Story 8; Music Makes Me Who I Am; Story 9; Two Cities; Many Homes. (64:25)

Personnel: Sara Serpa, voice, compositions, lyrics, stories, drawings; Ingrid Laubrock, saxophone; Angelica Sanchez, piano; Erik Friedlander, cello.

Ordering info: biophilialrecords.com



Jon Batiste
Beethoven Blues

VERVE/INTERSCOPE

★★★★

License to revise the particulars of a revered classic is rarely given. The Ravel estate once sued to block the release of a Benny Goodman “Bolero.” So Jon Batiste has *taken* such license, with two worthy purposes: to extend the orbit of the jazz repertoire, and to liberate familiar classical texts from the oppression of their composers.

He takes Beethoven, however, in a spirit of considerable reverence and caution. His amendments and variations are subtle enough to be at

Artemis
Arboresque

BLUE NOTE

★★★★

The many avenues of digital delivery have led to a decline in the art of creative pacing and placement. The shortest song among the eight here is 4:30; the longest just 71 seconds more. This random observation seems germane when a gorgeously crafted cover of Wayne Shorter’s “Footprints” sits — somewhat underwhelmingly — in the middle of *Arboresque*, the band’s third album and its debut as a quintet. There are a number of gems of that caliber here; it’s the dramatic tension that’s absent.

Drop in on a track like leader Renee Rosnes’s “Olive Branch” or bassist Noriko Ueda’s “Komorebi,” and you’ll find no shortage of compelling playing.

Nicole Glover’s ballad “Petrichor” presents a sumptuous textural blend of her grainy tenor and Ingrid Jensen’s ripe Harmon-muted horn.

Rosnes’ playful arrangement of Donald Brown’s “The Smile Of The Snake” seems to span a century, blending contemporary phrasing with great ricky-ticky accompaniment by Allison Miller.

Sandwiched between it all is that dazzling Rosnes arrangement of “Footprints,” which

home within their context, but bold enough to be surprising when they come (e.g., the broken pirouettes in the “A” sections of “Für Elise,” heard in short and extended versions). But the temper is largely romantic and deferential. He never attempts to swing it, except with the most subtle restraint. (The exception is “Waldstein Wobble,” a romping boogie-woogie.)

No composition carries a rigid performance imprint by virtue of its composer. It remains forever compliant to the will of its many passing caretakers and curators. Music may be born as composition. But it lives in performance and interpretation. In that sense “Moonlight Sonata,” whose interpreters have spanned Arthur Rubinstein to Vanella Fudge, is no different than “Body And Soul,” whose custodians include Louis Armstrong to Amy Winehouse. Originalism can live with evolution.

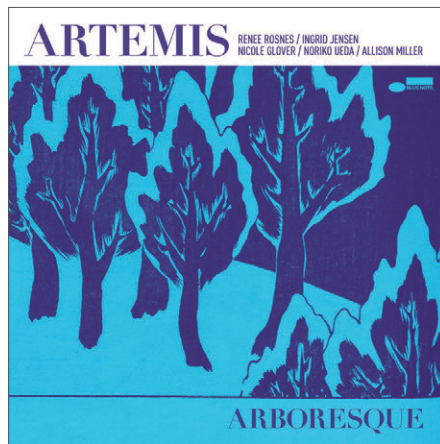
For decades jazz has tried to borrow from rock in a futile search for anything of sustained value. Maybe jazz has had a much richer vein to mine in the classics but felt shy about asking. Batiste isn’t so timid. *Beethoven Blues* does honor to both.

—John McDonough

Beethoven Blues: Für Elise; Symphony No. 5 Stomp; Moonlight Sonata Blues; Dusklight Movement; Seventh Symphony Elegy; American Symphony Theme; Ode to Joyful; 5th Symphony In Congo Square; Waldstein Wobble; Life of Ludwig; Für Elise-Reverie. (51:42)

Personnel: Jon Batiste, piano.

Ordering info: vervecords.com



could stand as an exemplar of how to approach an iconic piece by a recently departed master. There’s a touch of Shorter’s whimsy, some bracingly “out” tenor, achingly sweet trumpet and a tinge of electronics to anchor it all in the ’60s. Ideally, this piece should serve as a dramatic peak; here, it sits like just another masterpiece in the gallery.

—James Hale

Arboresque: The Smile Of The Snake; Komorebi; Sights Unseen; Petrichor; Footprints; Olive Branch; What The World Needs Now Is Love; Little Cranberry. (44:05)

Personnel: Ingrid Jensen, trumpet; Nicole Glover, tenor saxophone; Renee Rosnes, piano; Fender Rhodes; Noriko Ueda, bass; Allison Miller, drums.

Ordering info: bluenote.com



Jon Irabagon
Server Farm

IRABBAGAST

★★★★

Existential threat or exciting promise? Such are the hopes and fears for the growing use of AI in music. Prolific saxophonist and bandleader Jon Irabagon has a colourful history of using controversial topics as inspiration for his projects. 2024’s *Recharge The Blade* had a morbid fascination with historical and fictitious villains, for instance. Returning with *Server Farm*, Irabagon now turns his attention to the concept of AI, producing five intricate and lengthy compositions for a 10-piece ensemble.

Writing for his largest band to date, the impact of the record is direct and enveloping. Opening number “Colocation” kicks off with a lyrical solo from percussionist Levy Lorenzo on the kulintang, a set of Filipino gongs, before the full band erupts into a driving rock-influenced groove, ascending towards a distorted guitar solo that commands attention but falls apart into a cacophony of snare hits and scraped strings almost as soon as it has begun.

This technique of motifs building and then collapsing through unexpected interjections continues throughout the record, as if replicating the influence of a virus or computer program competing with human creativity. “Routers” features the 10-piece band tying together sprightly polyrhythms while Irabagon interrupts with shards of an electronically processed tenor solo, while the bass balladry of “Graceful Exit” sees Michael Formanek’s bowed lines punctuated by eerie electronic textures. The effect is ultimately engrossing and unsettling — much like the prospect of AI itself — melding man and machine to produce an album of competing wills and brief glimpses of harmony.

—Ammar Kalia

Server Farm: Colocation, Routers, Singularities, Graceful Exit, Spy. (59:01).

Personnel: Jon Irabagon, tenor and soprano saxophone; Matt Mitchell, piano; Chris Lightcap, electric bass; Dan Weiss, drums; Mazz Swift, violin; Peter Evans, trumpet; Miles Okazaki, guitar; Wendy Eisenberg, guitar; Michael Formanek, acoustic bass; Levy Lorenzo, percussion and electronics.

Ordering info: jonirabagon.bandcamp.com

The Hot Box

	Critics	John Murph	John McDonough	James Hale	Ammar Kalia
Sara Serpa <i>Encounters & Collisions</i>		★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★
Jon Batiste <i>Beethoven Blues</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★½
Artemis <i>Arboresque</i>		★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½
Jon Irabagon <i>Server Farm</i>		★★★★½	★★	★★★★½	★★★

Critics' Comments

Sara Serpa, *Encounters & Collisions*

Mirrors an absorbing autobiographical narrative against alternating, semi-atonal chamber sketches. Serpa's flat, pitch-perfect wisp melts intimately into the cool equilibrium of alto and cello for an emotionally intricate counterpoint. An interesting coupling of human storytelling and tricky art songs of acetic modernism.

—John McDonough

Raw. Intimate. Courageous. Those characteristics don't lead to easy listening, but Serpa's honesty melds with her distinctive voice to make this extraordinarily compelling.

—James Hale

Moving spoken-word storytelling on the theme of migration and identity accompanies this artful and subtly incisive new record. It's the gentle backing of pianist Angelica Sanchez, cellist Erik Friedlander and saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock that gives the album its uniquely textural beauty and engagingly skewed melodies.

—Ammar Kalia

Jon Batiste, *Beethoven Blues*

Hmmm ... OK. Nice. Not my cup of tea, but nice.

—John Murph

Musical sacrilege or a well-drawn moustache on the Mona Lisa? Enthusiastically performed while seeming to ask: Why? Perhaps no surprise, this is most engaging when Batiste leaps off the master's framework and finds his own path.

—James Hale

Some experiments work well, with the modulations of "Für Elise-Batiste" translating beautifully into Batiste's blues phrasing, while others like the "Seventh Symphony Elegy" play too rushed and truncated to allow the infamous melody to take hold.

—Ammar Kalia

Artemis, *Arboresque*

A marvelous example of how vital post-Motown bop still sounds in the hands of outstanding musicians.

—John Murph

A mostly pensive suite of pastels, consistent in temperament and superbly balanced. Fine solo work but within an ensemble context. Is that the wham-bam Gene Krupa swagger I hear Allison Miller tossing into "Smile of the Snake"?

—John McDonough

A typically tight and virtuosic selection of compositions. Highlights include the languorous group swing of "Komorebi," a searing saxophone solo from Nicole Glover on "Sights Unseen" and a fast-paced take on Wayne Shorter's "Footprints."

—Ammar Kalia

Jon Irabagon, *Server Farm*

Whimsical, at times dizzying, modern jazz to soundtrack the recent impact of generative artificial intelligence.

—John Murph

The concept of human intelligence mimicking the artificial is more provocative here than the music. A measure of civility intrudes, even as it purveys a thunderous unruliness that becomes irritable. "Routers" offers a contrasting clip-clop trot that has a certain charm.

—John McDonough

Visceral clamor meets groove. At its best, *Server Farm* moves nimbly between extremes of structure and texture. The beauty lies where the layers intersect.

—James Hale

AVAILABLE AT MVDSHOP.com
+ EVERYWHERE MUSIC IS SOLD

CD IN STORES December 6
VINYL IN STORES March 7



PHILIPP SCHIEPEK
Meadows Mirrors

Creative solo and trio pieces were composed and featured on the classical nylon-string guitar.

"An insightful and versatile guitarist"
—ALL ABOUT JAZZ
FINE MUSIC

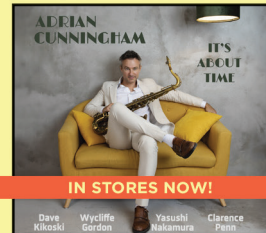
CD & VINYL VERSIONS
IN STORES NOW!



QUADRO NUEVO
Happy Deluxe

The music radiates the joy of an adventurous life. The band's tour in Brazil inspired their latest album "HAPPY DELUXE".

FINE MUSIC



IN STORES NOW!

ADRIAN CUNNINGHAM
It's About Time

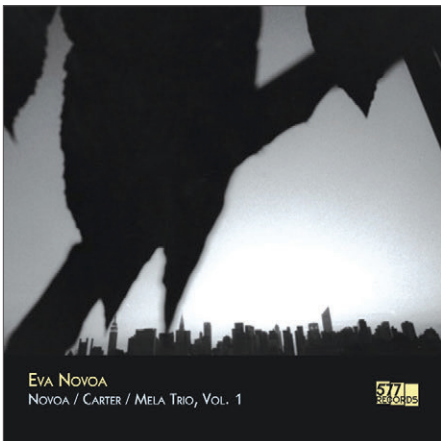
A NEW collection of ten compositions blending intricate harmonies and soulful improvisations - a tapestry of sound both nostalgic and innovative.

ARBORS RECORDS

MVDaudio
A DIVISION OF MVD ENTERTAINMENT GROUP



SUBSCRIBE 877-904-JAZZ



Eva Novoa Novoa/Carter/ Mela Trio Vol. 1

577

★★★★½

Eva Novoa is a Barcelona-born pianist who's been living and working in New York for about a dozen years as of this writing. This is her third release for the 577 label, each of which has featured a different trio. Her first group consisted of bassist Masa Kamaguchi and drummer Gerald Cleaver, and her second teamed her up with bassist Drew Gress, doubling on modular synth, and drummer Devin Gray. This time

Jane Monheit Jane Monheit

CLUB 44

★★★★½

Monheit has been exploring the Great American Songbook since she burst onto the scene, with passionate interpretations that bring new emotional nuances to familiar tunes. By the time she was 22, she was recording, touring and collaborating with Ron Carter, Terence Blanchard, Christian McBride and Brazilian icon Ivan Lins, who asked her to write English lyrics for several of his songs. Two collaborations with Lins are on this album: "My Brazil" and "New Beginning."

"My Brazil" is a love song to his homeland, played simply with Max Haymer's sparse piano and Karl McComas Reichl's minimal bass complementing Monheit's serene vocal and Joel Frahm's sax fills. "New Beginning" is one of the album's high points: Haymer and Reichl hang back while Monheit delivers an impressive performance. As she sings of "learning to be lonely," tearful melismas and sustained notes full of longing drive home lyrics balancing loss with a newfound inner strength. She concludes with the self-possessed delivery of the last line: "Leaving you behind me, I will find my way."

out, she's joined by Daniel Carter on a multitude of wind instruments and Francisco Mela on drums and vocals, while Novoa herself switches between piano and Fender Rhodes, strikes gongs and shakes percussion instruments, and even whistles.

The thing about Novoa is, she's a born collaborator. The three long tracks on this album — the shortest is 8:40, the longest 20:04 — allow each musician to come to the fore at various times, with the other two offering heartfelt support. There's never a moment where the music is allowed to coast, and indeed, most segments are driven by raw passion, even though it's channeled into music that has enough discipline that it feels composed or at the very least the product of rehearsal and discussion. For example, although Daniel Carter is the only horn heard, his saxophone playing is free but meditative, while his trumpet playing has the subtlety of '50s Miles, and Mela, on "Hasta Mañana Vida Mía," delivers hoarse, incantatory vocals. Between and behind them, Novoa offers keyboard-shattering rumbles, stabbing Fender chords, and whatever else the moment demands.

—Phil Freeman

Novoa/Carter/Mela Trio Vol. 1: Aire; Hasta Mañana Vida Mía; Fuego. (39:25)

Personnel: Daniel Carter, tenor, alto and soprano saxophones, trumpet, flute, clarinets; Eva Novoa, piano, Fender Rhodes, Chinese gongs, percussion, whistling; Francisco Mela, drums, vocals

Ordering info: 577records.bandcamp.com



Other standouts include "Young and Foolish" and Billy Joel's "And So It Goes," two more tunes touching on nostalgia and melancholy; "Green Finch and Linnet Bird," with Haymer's piano supporting Monheit's ironic reading of a song contrasting captivity and freedom; and an impressive scat interlude on "In a World of My Own," from Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*.

—j. poet

Jane Monheit: On a Clear Day You Can See Forever, Young and Foolish, Whatever Lola Wants, My Brazil, Green Finch and Linnet Bird, In a World of My Own, Not a Day Goes By, Too Close for Comfort, New Beginning, And So It Goes. (47:41)

Personnel: Jane Monheit, vocals; Rick Montalbano, drums; Max Haymer, piano; Karl McComas Reichl, bass; Kevin Winard, Tiki Pasillas, percussion; Joel Frahm, saxophone; The Nashville Recording Orchestra.

Ordering info: club44records.com



Jazz Sabbath The 1968 Tapes

BLACKLAKE

★★★★

As gimmicks go, Jazz Sabbath's is pretty amusing. "In 1968 Jazz Sabbath were an instant hit on the UK jazz scene," claim the liner notes. "[T]he crowds couldn't get enough of the compositions penned by pianist Milton Keanes." Eventually, the trio snagged a record deal, but the label thought that Keanes' best stuff was "too experimental" and refused to release it. Somehow, though, the songs got into the hands of "that Birmingham band" and Keanes' bright, bluesy tunes were forever tainted by the darkness of heavy metal.

In actuality, "Keanes" is the English keyboardist and guitarist Adam Wakeman, a former sideman with Black Sabbath and full-time member of Ozzy Osbourne's band — who is also the son of one-time Yes-man Rick Wakeman. This marks Jazz Sabbath as a very elaborate inside joke. The point isn't just the novelty of hearing "War Pigs" or "The Wizard" rendered as cocktail-friendly acoustic jazz, but that these are the "original" takes, which were later perverted by Osbourne and company in the course of laying the foundations for British heavy metal.

Take that, Spinal Tap!

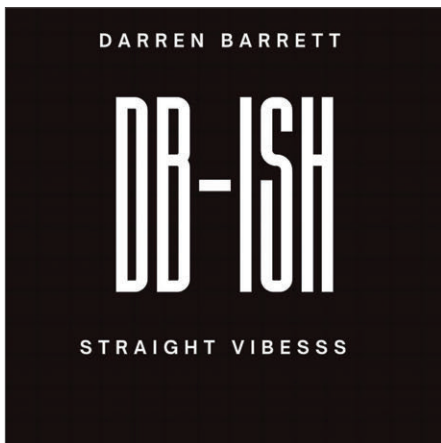
To be clear, *The 1968 Tapes* is fairly mediocre jazz (although burdened with considerably less corn than its predecessor, *Volume 2*). But that's the point. Part of the genius of the concept is that Wakeman, as Keanes, manages to make Sabbath's sledgehammer riffage seem so politely bland: not industrial sludge, but the blues as imagined by André Previn.

Just call him Irony Man. —J.D. Considine

The 1968 Tapes: Into the Void; Spiral Architect; Warning; The Wizard; Electric Funeral; Supernaut; War Pigs. (43:30)

Personnel: Milton Keanes (Adam Wakeman), piano, Rhodes, Moog; Jacque T'fono (Jack Tustin), bass; Juan Také (Ash Soan), drums; Wes Tostrayer (Pete Rinaldi), guitar (4, 6); Hugh Jampton (Andrew Ross), tenor saxophone; Leighton B'zard (Adam Wakeman), Hammond, clavinet; Willy Makit (George Hogg), trumpet; Al Dentay (Richard Barrett), guitar (1, 5); Francis Mellie (Adam Wakeman), percussion.

Ordering info: blacklake.eu/records/index.php



Darren Barrett *dB-ish: Straight Vibesss*

DB STUDIOS

★★

It is somewhat remarkable what is sometimes considered innovative and contemporary. Darren Barrett is a fine trumpeter who can play in several jazz idioms. However, during the five long performances on his recent *dB-ish: Straight Vibesss*, which clock in between 11 and 16 minutes apiece, his statements on trumpet are mostly brief and either electrified or muted. The music, which utilizes two keyboardists (Santiago Bosch and Warren Pettet),

Lisa Hilton *Lucky All Along*

RUBY SLIPPERS

★★★

Lisa Hilton's flowing, melodic *Lucky All Along* opens with Hilton's "Little Beach Mornings" and ends with "Snow on the Beach," a Taylor Swift tune that attests to Hilton's pianistic depth and willingness to surrender to and then occupy the emotions a song contains. Both reveries reflect Hilton's nuanced sensibility.

Informed by such jazz masters as Miles Davis and Bill Evans and such painting masters as Georges Seurat and Vincent Van Gogh, Hilton delivers eight originals and three covers. Her band's deconstruction of Davis' "All Blues," featuring the muted, cutting trumpet of Igmarr Thomas, Hilton's sweeping lines, Luques Curtis's rounded bass and Rudy Royston's perfectly timely drum explosions, is a creative update; "And Some Blues," a Hilton original several tracks farther in, reaffirms her affinity for the blues.

All 11 tracks are strong. Some standouts: "Prophesies & Predictions" is a brooding original inspired by the recent election. The rhythms of Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" launch it as the foundation of a more contemplative track. The album's most complicated tune, it ends on a Latin note, after an unexpected detour into

two drummers (Julian Miltenberger and Tobias Israel) and bassist YoungChae Jeong, has as its dominant voice a drum machine.

Each of the selections, all of which are one- or two-chord vamps, follows a similar format. The drum machine introduces the song and, for at least half of the piece, provides a very repetitious foundation for the keyboardists to create atmospheric chords and patterns over. Barrett pops in here and there with tonal distortions that recall Miles Davis in the early 1970s (although with his own tone). When the drum machine finally drops out, generally after 6 to 9 minutes, the musicians improvise freely and with high energy, wandering a bit before the song either concludes quietly or the drum machine returns for a second round. Despite the song titles, which in four cases mention a musician's first name, the subject is not featured and the music is essentially all ensembles.

Take away the drum machine and this could pass for a Lonnie Liston Smith mood music album from the 1970s or an off day from the period by Miles Davis. While the keyboardists do their best with the material that they were given, one waits in vain for something to happen. —*Scott Yanow*

dB-ish; Straight Vibesss: dB's Vibesss; Julian's Vibesss; YoungChae's Vibesss; Warren's Vibesss; Santiago's Vibesss. (68:38)

Personnel: Darren Barrett, trumpet, beats; Santiago Bosch, Warren Pettet, keyboards; YoungChae Jeong, bass; Julian Miltenberger, Tobias Israel, drums.

Ordering info: [instagram.com/darrendbee](https://www.instagram.com/darrendbee)



funk. "See You Again" is a processional written by Charlie Puth, a friend of Hilton's. Thomas is at his subtlest on this stately, arresting tune and Hilton's piano worries Puth's motif to moving effect. The title track, like the Puth, has an anthemic quality. Thomas is lighter here, and his and Hilton's solos are lean and sculpted. "Lucky All Along" is a sweet tune Hilton's ragtime flourishes make even sweeter. —*Carlo Wolff*

Lucky All Along: Little Beach Mornings; All Blues; Prophesies & Predictions; Hollywood Moment; And Some Blues; Escapist Fantasy; See You Again; Stary, Stary Eyes; Lucky All Along; Big Sur Views; Snow on the Beach (58:09)

Personnel: Lisa Hilton, piano; Luques Curtis, bass; Rudy Royston, drums; Igmarr Thomas, trumpet.

Ordering info: [lisahiltonmusic.com](https://www.lisahiltonmusic.com)

Bill Laurance & Michael League ACT *Keeping Company*



Bill Laurance & Michael League *Keeping Company*

ACT

★★★

On *Keeping Company*, a second duo album for pianist Bill Laurance and polymath Michael League — the Snarky Puppy ringleader — the pair keep company nicely and are determined to keep a sense of musical cool. Between Laurance's supple pianistic touch and League's supportive oud, fretless bass and occasional vocal assists, the music, mostly co-written by the duo, flows with lyrical ease and easy-on-the-ears composure.

Improvisations or left turns are kept at a minimum. A relaxed, melodic moodscaping feel is paramount, continuing the path laid out on the duo's 2023 debut, *Where You Wish You Were*.

Among the highlights on the track list are the touching ballad "You," with its bittersweet harmonic intrigue, and "Yours," a gently rumbling groover. "Escher," true to the fool-the-eye graphic leaning of draftsman M.C. Escher, ramps up the rhythmic kinetics over a 6/4 pulse, while "Where You Wanna Go" taps Ramsey Lewis' "In Crowd"-esque soft soul-jazz elements and features a ripe fretless solo by League.

For cover material, the Laurance/League team lays into the savory two-chord vamp of Rico Rodriguez's "Africa" and closes the album with an introspective version of the Turkish folk song "Iki Keklik Bir Kayada." Here, League's humble but colorful oud chops sound right at home alongside a lulling vocal part on the final melodic statement.

Keeping Company achieves its admirable but modest goal, creating mildly exotic tunes suitable for semi-foreground or background listening. Sufficient deposits of appealing musicality — often tinged with echoes of Pat Metheny Group aesthetics — sneak in from the wings, alerting us to a larger intelligence behind the pleasant surfaces. —*Josef Woodard*

Keeping Company: Katerina; You; Yours; Escher; How Does it Feel; Stonemaker; Africa; Clay; Where You Wanna Go; Trails; Iki Keklik Bir Kayada (42:36)

Personnel: Bill Laurance, piano; Michael League; oud, fretless bass, vocals.

Ordering info: [actmusic.com](https://www.actmusic.com)

A Study in Piano Contrasts

Iconic pianists **Oscar Peterson** and **Cecil Taylor** represent opposing poles of an aesthetic spectrum, in complete disagreement about what music is all about. The traditionalist and the iconoclast, the formalist and the expressionist, the avatar of conservative standards vs. the radical revisionist who blows assumptions to smithereens — their stances are clear in reissues of their recordings from 30 and 35 years ago.

City Lights: The Oscar Peterson Quartet Live in Munich 1994 (Mack Avenue/Two Lions; ★★★ 78:42) and the Cecil Taylor Unit on **Live in Bologna** (Leo; ★★★½ 162:24) and **Live in Vienna** (Leo; ★★★½ 161:52), respectively, from Nov. 3 and Nov. 7, 1987, only share representing the leaders' returns to action after health-related losses: Peterson's, a severe stroke that necessitated a long year of rehabilitation; Taylor's, the 1986 death of saxophonist Jimmy Lyons, his musical partner since the early '60s. In response, Peterson delivered a masterly concert in which his astounding right-hand dexterity and hard-won reuse of his left are demonstrated amid sympatico accompaniment (remarkable Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass; Lorne Lofsky, guitar; Martin Drew, drums). Taylor summoned new collaborators including multi-reedist Carlos Ward, violinist Leroy Jenkins and percussionist Thurman Barker for a European tour, continuing his unabated drive to recast structural artistic fundamentals.

Peterson's soul harkens back to virtuosic Art Tatum. His intricate, rippling yet precisely articulated lines and chords; command of touch, tempo, dynamics and harmony; allusions to the piano's Romantic legacy as well as its blues connotations; and grasp of the American songbook are impeccable. Admired from childhood — long prior to his 1949 Norman Granz-enabled breakout — and an international star up to his 2007 death, Peterson faced criticism about his originality and emotional commitment to interpretation during bebop's rise (parallel to his own) and subsequent developments.

In 2018 I awarded five stars to Peterson's reissued trio recordings from 1951 to '54 as delights reflecting the pianist's "apparently limitless imagination, wit and spontaneous lyricism." Forty years and thousands of performances later, back from devastation, Peterson remains fluid and authoritative, able to scamper as on the opener "There Will Never Be Another You," yet not so fresh. His sidemen are exemplary but auxiliary. The recital is about fulfillment, not surprise. The audience loved it.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

Taylor was all about surprise. Only four years younger than Peterson and likewise conservatory-educated, he nonetheless set an angular, abstracting path in the mid-'50s with a uniquely physical approach to the piano. He



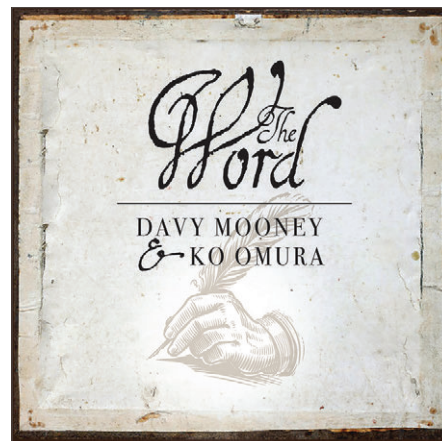
created dense, architectural compositions, excelled in solo improvisation and drove high-energy, expansive, dissonant, "free" yet directed group blowouts, too.

Live in Bologna begins just so wildly, testing players and listeners alike. Although only a four-some, the Unit is orchestral. Taylor's single-note runs are done with two jabbing index fingers. His bass roars are matched by upper-register echoes. He sweeps the keys in one direction, upending them from the other. He lunges into grandiose motifs, juggles several, dares us to keep up.

The Unit's mission was in part to create and explore unknown musical dimensions; William Parker's plucky bass, Jenkins's sawed overtones and Barker's percussive work throughout both albums contribute richly to that. Barker is, in fact, the unsung hero; his marimba playing coaxes lyricism from Taylor in duet passages, and some of the prettiest, quietest group play. In contrast, Ward on alto strives for variety and burns with urgency, but Taylor seems play through rather than with him. The ensemble storms on both albums, demanding immersion, hard to follow but worth the effort.

One effort I've failed at regards the recordings' histories. Originally issued as limited edition two-LP sets, they each ran 90-plus minutes. For CDs in the 1990s, they were edited to 70-plus. Producer Leo Feigen says he does not remember doing this, but Bandcamp now offers the 90-minute versions as four tracks, corresponding to the four sides of the LPs, plus the shorter "CD edit." Trying to compare these versions to discover the edits I'm repeatedly distracted. The music is kaleidoscopic, seemingly different in every audit. I think the Unit's forays into vocalization and gentler episodes are missing from the CD edit, but it's a mystery fit for study. Taylor's music lives by being elusive, coming on like gangbusters, demanding attention. **DB**

Ordering info: leorecords.bandcamp.com



Davy Mooney & Ko Omura *The Word*

SUNNYSIDE

★★★★

This sequel to 2018's *Benign Strangers* again finds New Orleans-born guitarist Mooney and Japanese drummer-percussionist Omura joined by pianist Glenn Zaleski, saxophonist John Ellis and bassist Matt Clohesy. Their deep-rooted chemistry is even more pronounced seven years later.

Omura's mellow opener, "Sheep Wash," highlights the intrinsic melodicism of the quintet while also prominently featuring Ellis and Zaleski as soloists. Mooney's flowing linear concept comes to the fore on his winding, darkly hued "Wormcast" and his moody title track, both of which find him executing tight unisons on the head with Ellis' tenor. Omura's interactive "Purusha" is a stretching vehicle for probing solos by Mooney, Zaleski and Ellis while the guitarist's mesmerizing "Groove for Clyde" finds Ellis overdubbing soprano sax and bass clarinet to striking effect. Mooney's lively call-and-response exchanges with Zaleski are animated and conversational, setting the table for Ellis' dynamic soprano sax solo.

A strong Pat Martino influence comes across on Mooney's deft double-timing on Omura's luminous "K.I." (Kaida Inspired)," while the percussionist's tabla playing on "Ektaal" gently underscores the guitarist's delicate playing and Ellis' potent bass clarinet solo. Mooney's 12/8 "Lords and Master" slowly insinuates itself on the listener like a minorkey blues, then Omura returns to tabla for the album's freest number, "Dattatreya," which reverts to form after an initial two minutes of wide-open exploration. They close with Mooney's "Maybe," patterned after iconic bossa nova singer-songwriter Chico Buarque. —Bill Milkowski

The Word: Sheep Wash; Wormcast; The Word; Purusha; Groove for Clyde; K.I. (Kaida Inspired); Ektaal; Lord and Master; Dattatreya; Maybe. (57:35)

Personnel: Davy Mooney, guitar; John Ellis, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone (5, 9), bass clarinet (5, 7, 8); Matt Clohesy, bass; Glenn Zaleski, piano; Ko Omura, drums, tabla (7, 9).

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



Curtis' trio with Michael Sarin (left) and Sean Conly (right) is one of two he uses on *The True Story of Bears*.

Caleb Wheeler Curtis *The True Story of Bears* *and the Invention of the Battery*

IMANI

★★★★

There seems to be an emerging trend of packaging two distinct, disparate recordings together as a double album. Yes, the two halves of saxophonist Caleb Wheeler Curtis' *The True Story of Bears*

and *the Invention of the Battery* are both trios, but they're very different trios (not even having quite the same instruments) playing very different music. The logic of stacking these two statements together is lost on this reviewer.

But that's not because they're not both fine recordings. The first disc comprises seven Curtis originals, all of them rather complex yet remarkably concise; a suspenseful solo (tenor sax) read of Arthur Blythe's "Odessa"; and two endcap record-

ings of Curtis' grandfather. Curtis navigates his tunes' complexity by overdubbing himself on four horns (trumpet, tenor, soprano, stritch). He's equally adept at all of them, though when soprano and stritch come together, as on "Bears and the Invention of the Battery," they evoke bagpipes, tolerance for which may vary. Highlights include the playful "This Cult Does Not Help," with Curtis taking trumpet and sax solos while Conly and Sarin lock in keenly, and the slinky, noir-ish "Empire."

Disc 2 is a lean assay of Thelonious Monk tunes that argues for the composer as minimalist. Curtis, now backed by bassist Eric Revis and drummer Justin Faulkner, argues the case well. He emphasizes the innate repetition of "Boo Boo's Birthday," strips out transitional passages on "Played Twice" without marring its tunefulness and reduces the drum line of "Light Blue" to little more than a pair of rudiments, augmenting them all with delicious solos on three of his horns (no tenor here). Both halves work; they'd just work better apart. —Michael J. West

The True Story of Bears and the Invention of the Battery:

Another Tape (for Gerald); The First Question; This Cult Does Not Help; A Feather is Not a Bird; Odessa; Bears and the Invention of the Battery; Stellar Ray, See? Miedo; Empires; So Long; Oská T; Introspection; Boo Boo's Birthday; Raise Four; Reflections; Played Twice; Ugly Beauty; Jackie-ing; Light Blue; Raise Four. (83:05)

Personnel: Caleb Wheeler Curtis, trumpet, soprano saxophone, stritch, tenor saxophone (1–10); Sean Conly, bass (1–10); Eric Revis, bass (11–20); Michael Sarin, drums (1–10); Justin Faulkner, drums (11–20).

Ordering info: imanirecords.bandcamp.com



Younee *Improvisations Live* *in Germany*

FULMINANTMUSIC

★★★★

Younee's third solo piano album presents 20 impromptu improvisations drawn from 18 concerts in Germany. On each track, the 30-something Korean-born virtuoso — responding to words received from the audience, her impressions of the ambiance of each venue or the idiosyncrasies of the on-site piano — endeavors to function in "a state of pure instinct... as if my soul is open and sounds flow through me without con-

scious effort."

In truth, it's hard to discern much difference between the raw materials and shapes deployed herein from the elemental melodies and harmonic structures of the compositions and arrangements on Younee's *Jugendstil* (2014) and *My Piano* (2016), both generated primarily in the recording studio. In each instance, Younee places her formidable technique and florid sensibility at the service of a "Free Classic and Jazz" approach comprising a heterodox self-stated influence tree: beautifully executed refractions of the pre-20th century Euro canon and Bill Evans, Marian McPartland, Nina Simone, Friedrich Gulda and Keith Jarrett; scales and rhythms to indigenous to Korean music; and a penchant for notes-and-tones narrative informed by her early experiences as a popular prog-rock and K-pop practitioner.

Does Younee's ability to conjure pleasing forms from the blank slate make her a 21st-century equivalent to Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Liszt, as her label representatives imply? She's an impressive musician, but not quite. —Ted Panken

Improvisations Live in Germany: Moderation; Frühling; Moderation; for J.O.S; Moderation; Joy; Moderation; Tod und Leben; Wasser; Moderation; Funky Sonata; Moderation; Stars on the Sky without Gravity; Moderation; Crazy Night in Lichtenfels; Moderation; Red Indian Summer; Moderation; Vollmond; Moderation; From Korea to Bach; Moderation; Bright Moonlight; Moderation; Jazz Symphony; Lefthand Improvisation; Moderation; Cuba; Moderation; Instrument Is Alive; We Will Meet Again; Hello Beethoven; Moderation; Unterfahrt; Moderation; Seoul. (74:09)

Personnel: Younee, piano.

Ordering info: younee.com



The University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Institute of Jazz, is offering a position tentatively beginning with the winter semester 2026/27 for

University Professorship for Trumpet-Jazz

a based on § 98 of the Universities Act and § 25 of the collective agreement for university employees; indefinite employment contract, level of employment: full-time; collective agreement minimum monthly salary currently € 6,362.50 gross.

The complete job ad including further information can be found at:
<https://csc-kug.at/studierende/jobinfo/stellenausschreibungen-kug>

Doing It for Themselves

Dayna Stephens has proven his eloquence on previous albums, but the diction, temperament and dynamics shaping *Hopium (Contagious; ★★★★★ 41:59)* combine to make his latest outing as a leader a must-hear. This could be the product of refinement. The prolific 46-year-old saxophonist crafts his lines and sculpts his tunes with a keen sense of balance on these seven performances, delivering an emotionally thorough program. Exclamation comes in succinct doses; introspection preaches its useful rewards. Of course the record's victory might also be the result of chemistry. Bassist Ben Street, drummer Greg Hutchinson and pianist Aaron Parks helped the leader sparkle on 2021's *Right Now! Live At The Vanguard*. Each has a yen for immediacy, and working off the drummer's sage insistence, the foursome moves as one.

Ordering info: daynastephens.bandcamp.com

Ilya Osachuk's *The Answer* (Osachuk; ★★★ 50:41) suggests that craft can be almost as entertaining as art. The bassist's debut sticks to the middle of the road, using clarity and panache to hone a language that should tickle fans of mainstream jazz. With the lessons of Juilliard still close in his rearview mirror, pulsing swing guides this two-band trio affair. Some tracks feature former teachers Billy Drummond and Donald Vega, others younger improvisers from the Winnipeg native's own cohort. Buoyancy and verve mark almost every track, especially "Lviv Perspective." But as pleasant as the ride is, it sometimes feels like Osachuk goes exactly where you think he's going, tracing long-established templates. This adherence to tradition is understandable for a debut; the bassist is still forming an artistic persona. Perhaps *The Answer* foreshadows a future where stability makes room for risk.

Ordering info: ilyaosachuk.bandcamp.com

After almost two decades of shared creativity, the **WORKS Trio** sounds deeply aligned on *Scouring For The Elements (Connection Works; ★★★★★ 66:00)*. From through-composed pieces to fully improvised larks, flutist Michel Gentile, pianist Daniel Kelly and drummer Rob Garcia turn their unique instrumental amalgam into a platform for showcasing accord. Their approaches are several. "Experiment In 5" boasts an eerie drama. "Diary Of A Missing Voice" manages to be both whimsical and sober. Every gesture of the percussion-centric "Free Candy" generates air, light and vitality. This emotional diversity conjures thoughts of myriad forebears; the flexibility of the Newton/Davis/Wadud and Giuffre/Hall/Brookmeyer trios come to mind. Perhaps their rapport is best illustrated in the instantly composed "Prepared Uncertainty," a dazzling soundscape full of chutes and ladders that cov-

Tomohiro Mori self-releases his third album.



DAICHI CHOJARA

ers a wealth of terrain in just under six minutes.

Ordering info: works3.bandcamp.com

Sometimes vitality is enough to win the day. Sure seems that way with **Tomohiro Mori's *Prana* (Mori; ★★★½ 49:08)** whose title is a Japanese reference to the "life force" within us all. The Fukuoka native is a Berklee grad and propulsive drummer with a yen for whatever you wanna call 2024's high-strung hard-bop offshoots (see David Weiss' fierce *Auteur* for another example). Stormy, staunch and swinging, the pieces on his third album enter the ring with a work-to-do vibe, not only making room for animated solos, but brokering a handful of string quartet arrangements that snuggle organically into the action. Indeed, action is everywhere. Mori spent time absorbing lessons from Ralph Peterson and Terri Lyne Carrington, two improvisers who like to keep things popping. So his addition of Snarky Puppy percussion whiz Keita Ogawa is a wise move.

Ordering info: tomohiromori.com

Smitten with the work of large ensemble maestro Bob Brookmeyer, **Omar Thomas** left Brooklyn for Boston to trade the claustrophobia of a brass section for the boundless vistas of composing/arranging. Good move, because Thomas has plenty to say; in fact, the creative bandleader's impressive third album is an ambitious affair that might have too much to say. ***Griot Songs* (Omar Thomas Music; ★★★½ 83:08)** brims with ideas. Shifting escapades, narrative turnabouts, textural rhapsodies — each new shift makes its impact. His scores for tunes by Radiohead and Lyle Mays stress the luster of modern orchestral expression, and "Obeah Woman" thrives on percussive dynamics. But there are moments where the program feels prolix and the extrapolation overwhelms. "The Path" is meant to render an epic atmosphere but comes off being verbose. **DB**

Ordering info: omarthomas.com



Waldo's Gift *Malcolm's Law*

SEVERN SONGS

★★★★½

The Bristol, U.K., trio's debut album, *Malcolm's Law* is a kaleidoscopic hailstorm of enthralling contradiction: precise technique paired with frenzied electric guitar riffs; piercing, crisp snare hits paired with thick, distorted, crackly bass guitar; and arrangements that often times don't feel structured at all but rather seem to destroy the dividing line between each of the parts. Waldo's Gift explains that the band "essentially Trojan-horse metal into jazz venues," and this clandestine description fits. The ratio of discernible jazz to rock attributes skews to the latter, but this isn't a bad thing.

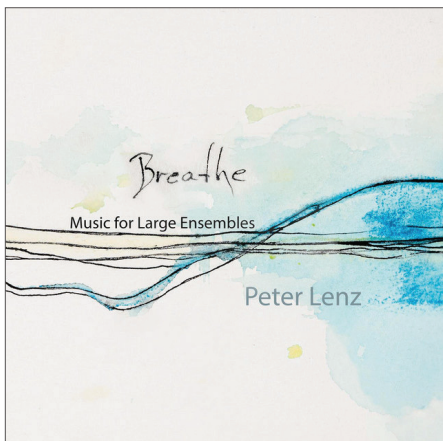
Anyone familiar with progressive or math rock scenes will hear the opening of "Candifloss" and likely do a double take to ensure *Malcolm's Law* isn't actually a new album from defunct Oceanside, California, band Chon, which was known for music that was similarly intricate while heavy in tone and rhythmic drive. This stylistic approach is an underlying current throughout *Malcolm's Law*, with a few of the tracks — "The Galli," "Jellyfish" and finale "Last on the Plane" — offering some breathing room between the instruments and motifs and dynamics that are generally less bombarding. Perhaps the most impressive aspect is knowing every track is a single live take, revealing incredibly balanced performance, mixing, production and mastering. The hectic nature of the music might feel repetitious for the progressive-rock uninitiated, but that's a matter of taste moreso than quality. *Malcolm's Law* isn't a scientific certainty that contends with recurring scenarios, but this album will likely prompt many intrigued replays.

—Kira Grunenberg

Malcolm's Law: Candifloss, Malcolm's Law, Classic Waldi Anthem, Cosy Hour, The Galli, Cafe Jim, Jellyfish, This One is Improvised, Last on the Plane. (32:45)

Personnel: James Vine, drums; Harry Stoneham, bass; Alun Elliot-Williams, guitar.

Ordering info: waldosgift.bandcamp.com



Peter Lenz *Breathe: Music for Large Ensembles*

GAMBSART

★★★★½

Austrian composer Peter Lenz (based in New York) presents compositions for big band, big band with string quartet and a smaller ensemble drawing on both. The results are innovative, often beautiful and well-developed, deftly blending jazz, European chamber music and off-kilter minimalism. Lenz excels in his use of soloists to advance the argument of his pieces. The long title track for chamber ensemble

unfolds in four parts, each revolving around a horn solo. Chris Speed creates a dazzling weave with his bell-like sound on clarinet, trombonist Jacob Garchik gambols gamely and alto saxophonist Brian Krock spars with the strings.

The big band's "Encloued," inspired by Messiaen, offers hauntingly beautiful reed textures and a strong, optimistic trumpet solo by Kenny Warren; the delightfully clever "Eleanor" waits until the very end to reveal its secret source.

The album opens with the full ensemble's "Between the Lines," a shape-shifting piece whose staggered layering and percolating rhythms recall Darcy James Argue, though with Lenz's distinctively lush warmth. The other full ensemble piece, "Von Inneren Grenzen (Of Inner Borders)," is a dark art song in German about the 2016 European refugee crisis that feels like the aural equivalent of an Anselm Kiefer painting. As such, it may feel remote to Americans, though the problem is certainly not an unfamiliar one and the vocal can be followed as pure sound. —Paul de Barros

Breathe: Between the Lines; Breathe; Von Inneren Grenzen; Encloued; Eleanor. (49:41)

Personnel: David Leon, alto saxophone, flute; Brian Krock, alto saxophone, flute, English horn; Chris Speed, Sam Sadigursky, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Jay Ratman, bassoon, bass clarinet; John Lake, David Neves, Jake Henry, Kenny Warren, trumpet, flugelhorn; Brian Drye, Jacob Garchik, Matt McDonald, James Borowski, trombone; Luke Marantz, piano; Keisuke Matsuno, guitar; Marty Kenney, bass; Jim Black, drums; Efrat Alony, vocals (3); strings (1–3); Meg Okura, violin; Ludovica Burtone, violin; Benni von Gutzeit, viola; Susan Mandel, cello; Angela Morris, conductor.

Ordering info: peterlenz-music.com



Kevin Sun *Quartets*

ENDECTOMORPH

★★★★★

Tenor saxophonist Kevin Sun, who has been a force on the New York scene for the past decade and enjoyed a longtime weekly residence at Brooklyn's Lowlands Bar, has his own passionate sound and a flexible, mostly avant-garde style. *Quartets* is his seventh album as a leader.

The first CD in this twofer (from Oct. 30, 2022) has Sun heading his longtime quartet with pianist Dana Saul, bassist Walter Stinson and drummer Matt Honor, while the second (from May 1, 2023) features Stinson, pianist Christian Li and drummer Kayvon Gordon. Except for two standards and a pair of other pieces, all songs are by Sun. Both pianists are particularly outstanding.

Quartets offers impressive variety in its exploration of moods, rhythms and original melodies. There are surprises heard along the way. Hyper pieces such as "Dance Notation," "Far East Western" and "rbh" often alternate with mellow and melancholy ballads including "And The Oscar Goes To" and "Homage Kondo." "Melpomene" has a whimsical and scalar theme, the brief "Heideggerdashian" features a freeform outburst by Sun and "That Lights A Star," which includes some slap-tonguing at first, has Sun taking some wide interval jumps a little reminiscent of Eric Dolphy. Other highlights include the swinging "Storied History" (based on "All The Things You Are"), a relatively straightforward rendition of "On The Street Where You Live" and a mournful "Estate." Sun's speechlike playing on the closing "Kierkegaardashian" wraps up his colorful and stimulating program. —Scott Yanow

Quartets: Dance Notation; Far East Western (Prelude); Far East Western; Shadows Over The Sea; Melpomene; And The Oscar Goes To; Storied History; Title Theme: The Legend Of Zelda (Ocarina Of Time); Heideggerdashian; Homage Kondo; On The Street Where You Live; Rudderless Blues (or Obscure Notions); That Lights A Star; Outlawry; tbb; Pixelate; Yellow Magic (Tong Poo); Estate; Kierkegaardashian. (89:53)

Personnel: Kevin Sun, tenor; Dana Saul or Christian Li, piano; Walter Stinson, bass; Matt Honor or Kayvon Gordon, drums.

Ordering info: endectomorph.com

Village of the Sun *Live in Tokyo*

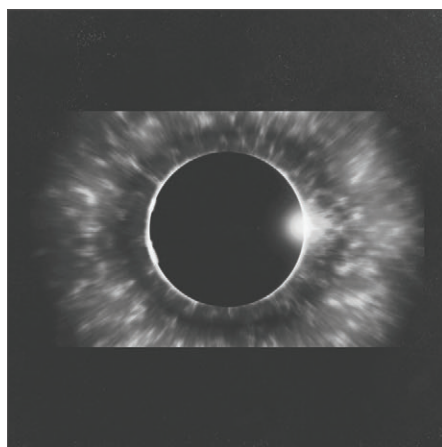
GEARBOX

★★★★½

Village of the Sun comprises three players on the resurrected U.K. British jazz scene: tenor saxophonist Binker Golding and drummer Moses Boyd, joined by composer, producer, electronics maven Simon Ratcliffe (Basement Jaxx) on keys. This live EP from Japan is a follow-up to their debut recording *First Light* from a couple years ago, and a precursor — an *amuse-bouche*, if you will — to their upcoming London Jazz Festival appearance. It is their first live recording and it holds some surprises.

An EP that totals 32 minutes in length, *Live in Tokyo* includes only three selections. Its opening track, "The Spanish Master," is an ascending Chick Corea-ish vamp with a piercingly bright saxophone sound. It's got the spare texture of drum'n'bass — but Boyd is remarkably adept at providing a polyrhythmic pulse with deliberately insinuating cooking heat.

"Ted" finds the harmony fleshed out, with Boyd kicking into higher gear with a mock samba beat and Sutcliffe's electronic cuica effects and mysterious sound manipulation. Golding opens with horn swells, while Ratcliffe creates some nice chattering effects underneath.

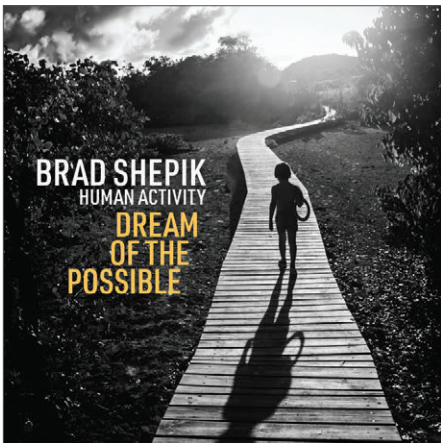


The title track is all about Golding. It's got that trippy, smeary feeling of returning to Earth after staying up all night, with shades of Pharoah Sanders ringing in your ear as the saxophone pokes around in the upper altissimo register. This track holds more promise and suggests possibilities to break through to non-aficionado listeners. There's more slicing and dicing here than Ron Popeil in a TV kitchen. —Larry Appelbaum

Live in Tokyo: The Spanish Master; Ted; Village of the Sun. (32:15)

Personnel: Moses Boyd, drums; Binker Golding, tenor saxophone; Simon Ratcliffe, keyboards.

Ordering info: gearboxrecords.com



Brad Shepik *Human Activity: Dream of the Impossible*

SHIFTING PARADIGM

★★★

Veteran guitarist Brad Shepik has spent much of his career enfolded an array of global traditions in his music, gathering disparate aesthetics within a loosely mainstream fusion sound. Those blends have never been more thorough than on this new quintet recording, his second wordless rumination on climate change. Initially he planned to use the name of his composition “Code Red” for the entire project, but his wife — photographer Caroline

Dmitry Baevsky Quartet *Roller Coaster*

FRESH SOUND/NEW TALENT

★★★

This is essentially a duet album, with tailored, responsive accompaniment. Alto saxophonist Dmitry Baevsky and guitarist Peter Bernstein share an almost equal share of the playing time in a kind of dialog that keeps things on a fairly even keel. Bassist David Wong and drummer Jason Brown play supportive, unobtrusive roles as the quartet moves through standards and two Baevsky originals, including the medium-tempo swinging title track.

The places where the music lifts off come from more intimate renditions of rarely played songs like Rezso Seeres’ “Gloomy Sunday,” Hubert Giraud’s “The Sun Died” and the album opening duet of Benny Golson’s “Out Of The Past,” the pace slower, the conversations between the altoist and guitarist emerging in an engaging, parlor-like fashion. Likewise with Josef Myrow’s “Autumn Nocturne,” the closing duet between Baevsky and Bernstein. “The Sun Died” feels like a blues, and with its relaxed pulse, is over too soon. Likewise with Ray Charles’ “A Sentimental Blues,” where the music just strolls along like an easy-flowing river.

Baevsky’s soft tone coheres nicely with

Mardok, whose work fills the CD booklet—convinced him to embrace a more hopeful title.

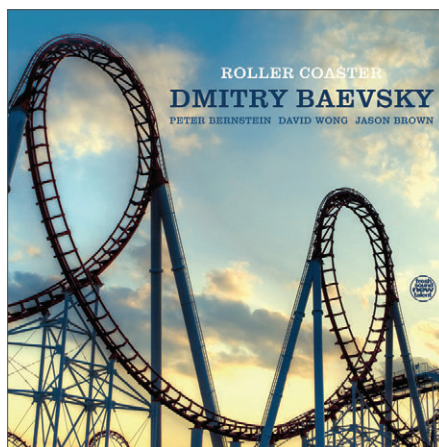
It’s always a bit tricky for instrumental music to convey the sort of messages behind Shepik’s writing, although some of his titles make his thoughts relatively clear. “All Hands” insists that everyone on the planet must chip in to stanch the earth’s environmental degradation, while “Orange Haze” reflects the increasing frequency of wildfires. The intricate weave of styles and the varied aesthetics of his ensemble suggest the sort of cooperation required to save the planet. Shepik’s fluid lines form a simpatico match with those of his frontline partner, the French-Lebanese violinist Layale Chaker who nonchalantly straddles Western classical and Arabic traditions through her feverish yet eloquent improvisations. Drummer John Hadfield taps into Latin and Indian grooves with an attack that eschews a reliance on cymbals in favor of stuttering, complex tom and snare patterns, while former Dawn of Midi pianist Amino Belyamani and bassist Sam Minaie modulate the leader’s tendency toward fussiness with fluidity and grace.

— Peter Margasak

Human Activity: Dream of the Impossible: Code Red; the Search; Dream of the Impossible: Symbiocity; Future Generations; Travel Back; Stand Heat; All Hands; Naturitudo; Orange Haze. (62:06)

Personnel: Brad Shepik, guitar, Bulgarian tambura, saz, banjo; Layale Chaker, violin; Amino Belyamani, piano; Sam Minaie, bass; John Hadfield, drums and percussion.

Ordering info: shiftingparadigmrecords.com



Bernstein’s puckish if understated spunk, his chordal support a constant. No real fireworks here; just four players offering up with what could pass as an agreeable Sunday afternoon jam session. When things do pick up, as on an uptempo version of Matt Dennis’ “Will You Still Be Mine?” the mood that pervades still lingers on the gentle, sleepy side. An interesting repertoire on Baevsky’s 11th album.

— John Ephland

Roller Coaster: Out Of The Past; Matador; Gloomy Sunday; Mount Harissa; Roller Coaster; The Sun Died; A Sentimental Blues; Will You Still Be Mine?; Ectypos; Would You?; Autumn Nocturne. (62:00)

Personnel: Dmitry Baevsky, alto saxophone; Peter Bernstein, guitar; David Wong, bass; Jason Brown, drums.

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com



Guy Klucevsek/ Volker Goetze *Little Big Top*

MOTÉMA

★★★

Veteran accordionist Guy Klucevsek is well-known around New York, spanning the spheres of jazz, improvisation, klezmer and new music. German trumpeter Volker Goetze is way more obscure. Staten Island is in the house, unusually; this album recorded was there and co-funded by Staten Island Arts. It’s also where Klucevsek and Goetze reside.

Although billed as a duo, the team is actually a quartet, featuring alto saxophonist Jeff Hudgins and clarinetist Doug Wieselmann, the latter quite ubiquitous on the scene, particularly at the Nublu clubs. Klucevsek acts as a micro-orchestra, surrounded by decorative horn soloists, pointillist and perky. His compositions mostly spring from a klezmer or Balkan base, although shunning melancholia and mournfulness in favor of a bright circus-spring. The music has ample space for clever wriggling, dancing lightly. There are tunes dedicated to Nino Rota, Kurt Weill and Rufus Reid. Strong themes meet concise solos, with numbers between three and five minutes duration, all the instruments dancing together fleet-footedly. Klucevsek sprinkles light trebly notes with dainty grace. “The Gift” has a pensive mood and a slower pace, beginning a fine closing run of pieces, with “Three-Quarter Moon” outstanding, “Meet Me On The Midway” providing the most upbeat trot and “Tangocide” involving a prickly exchange between the horns and accordion. Klezmer has entered the circus, but without any loss of profundity. Unfortunately, the sleeve artwork is very poorly executed.

— Martin Longley

Little Big Top: Little Big Top, Fez Up, The Sun, The Moon, And The Truth, Dancing In The Aisles Of The Icicle Repair Shop, Euroslavian Wedding Dance, Comin’ On Home, For The First Time, O’O, The Gift, Pink Elephant, Three-Quarter Moon, Meet Me On The Midway, Tangocide, Hymn For Her.

Personnel: Guy Klucevsek, accordion; Volker Goetze, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jeff Hudgins, alto saxophone, vocals; Doug Wieselmann, bass clarinet, clarinet.

Ordering info: guyklucevsekvolkergoetze.bandcamp.com



COURTESY FRANK CARLBERG



Pianist Frank Carlberg premieres a new quintet on *Dream Machine*.

textural potential of a novel front line comprising the leader's pianos, Leo Genovese's organs and synths, and Hery Paz's tenor saxophone. They have worked in other settings; the two keyboardists have recorded as a duo, and all three appear on Carlberg's big band meditation on Thelonious Monk. Their undeniable rapport enables them to realize some very challenging material. At some points their instruments weave complex patterns, such as the interlocking phrases on "The Jester." But quite often they're in close formation, exploiting the effects of small differences of attack, such as the combination of vibrato-laden organ and uninflected sax on "Nostalgia," or punchy unison, as on the opening statement of "Reconstruction."

These methods persist across a variety of stylistic approaches, from yearning balladry to robust dust-ups, and one supposes that the specificity is necessary in order for the arrangements to obtain desired effects. But the music is more engaging during less confined moments, such as the quiet exchanges between piano and drums on "Nostalgia" or the moment when Carlberg starts adding filigree around Genovese's breakout solo on "Zimmer's Dream." —Bill Meyer

Dream Machine: Dream I; Nostalgia; The Jester; Into The Sunset; Dream II; Reconstruction; Going Back; Dream III; Zimmer's Dream; Grand Hotel; Dream IV; Search and Rescue; Light Matter. (72:58)
Personnel: Frank Carlberg, piano, Rhodes; Leo Genovese, Hammond B3, Farfisa, synthesizers; John Hébert, bass; Hery Paz, tenor saxophone; Dan Weiss, drums.

Ordering info: frankcarlberg.bandcamp.com

Frank Carlberg *Dream Machine*

RED PIANO

★★★★

Dream Machine introduces a new quintet led by pianist, composer and educator Frank Carlberg. It is named in part for the Dreamachine, an invention of Beat figures Brion Gysin and Ian Sommerville that uses a light inside a cylinder

on a turntable to stimulate alpha wave activity in its viewers. More personally, Carlberg also means it as a reference to nocturnal states of mind. These inspirations do not, however, lead to music that is particularly psychedelic in effect. The four brief, numbered "Dream" pieces are densely packed with events, like those dreams that are so involved that the dreamer wakes up feeling like they need a rest.

Rather, Carlberg's compositions exploit the



JAZZ STUDIES AT CAL STATE FULLERTON



Lowest tuition of any 4 year jazz program in California.

We offer a challenging, but friendly environment. New programs in music technology and vocal jazz.

22 miles from Los Angeles

PROGRAMS IN JAZZ STUDIES

(both instrumental and vocal), Music Education, Classical performance. Two big bands, eight combos, (all faculty directed), two vocal jazz ensembles, and the Fullerton Pops Orchestra.

OUR AMAZING FACULTY:

Rodolfo Zúñiga, Director of Jazz Studies

Internationally known drummer, percussionist, composer

Bill Cunliffe, Professor of Jazz Studies

Grammy Award winning arranger, composer and pianist

Kye Palmer, trumpet, **Francisco Torres** and **Lemar Guillary**,

trombone, **Ron Eschete**, **Zack Caplinger** and **Matt Yeakley**,

guitar, **Luther Hughes**, bass, **Paul Kreibich**, drums,

Damon Zick and **Jeff Ellwood**, saxophone, **Teryn Re**,

jazz vocals, **Eric Dries**, jazz piano, **Charles Sharp**, jazz history.

Students are able to study with classical faculty, including members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Pacific Symphony.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE:

Bachelors and Masters degrees. Masters deadline, May 1

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rodolfo Zúñiga, rozuniga@fullerton.edu
 Bill Cunliffe, bcunliffe@fullerton.edu

Dr. Randall Goldberg, Chair, School of Music
 657 278 3511

Discover a World of Firsts

These five debut releases are prime examples of jazz's vast international reach. From Russia to Ireland to Canada, these musicians are making their mark on the genre through original works inspired by art, philosophy, personal events and nonlinear time travel. Their unique spins on classic records draw heavily on their individuality as bandleaders.

Christopher Dammann, out of the Chicago area, on his sextet's eponymous outing (**Out of Your Head; ★★★ 53:43**) offers up a complete dose of spontaneous combustion where the concept of non-linear time travel is the thematic thread of the record. This may be Dammann's first record as a leader, but it's not his first time around the block; he's been tied to the Chicago-based 3.5.7 Ensemble for years, building up a definitive sound that allows for full, self-balancing polyphony while still keeping the group's communal spirit intact. Dammann leads the front in the intro to "If I Could Time Travel I Would Mend Your Broken Heart" with an soft, eerie bass solo that is followed by Edward Wilkerson Jr.'s equally haunting timbre on alto clarinet. On "When I Was Young And My Heart Had Windows," Wilkerson goes bonkers on tenor saxophone, blowing to the heavens and beyond.

Ordering info: outofyourheadrecords.bandcamp.com

Like Dammann, Russian-born tenor saxophonist **Art Baden's** bluesy compositions on **How Much Of It Is Real (Rainy Days; ★★★½ 40:30)** explore the turbulent life experiences he's had and the mentorship he's received from legends like Wayne Shorter and Joe Locke. A recent graduate of the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, Baden's experiences as a student are the impetus for this album, which has a high-gloss shine via the contributions of vibraphonist Locke, drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts and bassist Jay Anderson. It's Baden's smooth, elegant timbre combined with the collective sound landscape from the band that immediately sucks in listeners. A standout is "4th Cycle," a freer piece complete with colorful tonal patterns led by Baden, who notes it started as an assignment given by Herbie Hancock and went through four revisions before getting approval. The elusive tunes provide answers to the life-changing incidents that have shaped Baden's musical evolution.

Ordering info: rainydaysrecords.bandcamp.com

Montreal-based trumpeter **Lex French** uses Miles Davis as his North Star. **In The World's First Summer (Justin Time/Netzwerk; ★★★½ 49:31)** is a stunner motivated by Davis' second great quintet. His stirring take on "Bye Bye Blackbird" gives us a glimpse into his evolving genius as a trumpeter. Pianist François Bourassa blends seamlessly with French as he reworks Davis' style. French also digs into other musical in-



New Zealand-born, Canadian-based Lex French.

fluences, particularly folk music from Spain and South America.

Ordering info: lexfrenchmusic.com

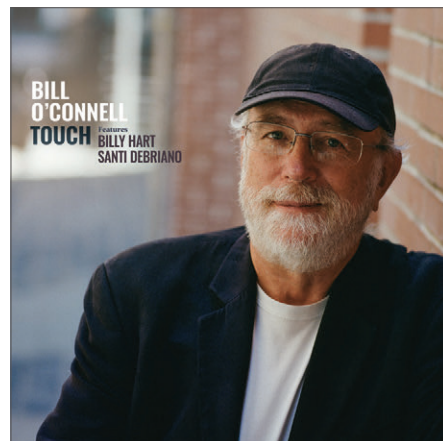
Visions Jazz Ensemble's Across The Field (Patois; ★★★ 57:19) delivers modernized marching-band style tunes from the early 1900s, the band opting to dive into familiar territory from their college band days at Indiana University. Trumpeter Sam Butler and tenor saxophonist Garrett Fasig, well-known musicians in the Midwest, guide the band. On "Tiger Rag," the rhythmic punches cement the album theme. The recording is filled with contemporary undertakings of traditional music: jazz marches ("Ramblin' Wreck"), waltzes ("Victory March") and ballads ("Across The Field"). The impressive arrangements are the centerpiece.

Ordering info: sambutlermusic.com

While the other records fancy originals, **Julia Danielle's** self-titled debut (**Shifting Paradigm; ★★★ 27:05**) gives listeners a glimpse into her arrangements of some of the most well-known standards in jazz. The Chicago native has made quite a mark on the national scene, winning the Ella Fitzgerald Jazz Vocal Competition and a DownBeat Student Music Award. While she selected familiar classics tackled by vocalists for decades, her bohemian spin on "Embraceable You" and "Night And Day" are solid attempts. The string quartet on "Beautiful Moons Ago" adds lush harmony to the composition of Nat "King" Cole and Oscar Moore. Danielle's velvety flow is apparent throughout as she destroys hearts in her a capella version of "I Want To Talk About You." On the more upbeat "There Will Never Be Another You," she flexes her scatting muscles. Danielle makes a statement with her first recording and gives listeners a glimpse into the start of a promising career.

DB

Ordering info: shiftingparadigmrecords.com



Bill O'Connell Touch

JOJO

★★★½

In the realm of music, sound is obviously the most important of the senses, but pianist Bill O'Connell taps "Touch" as the title of his latest release. Of course, taste can never be excluded when the trio includes bassist Santi Debriano and drummer Billy Hart.

The unit is super tight and in sync on all 11 tracks, and the essence of their collective urgency and agency is exceedingly bright on "85th Street," which is presumably in New York City. The tune's breezy intensity begins with Debriano's vibrancy that morphs perfectly with Hart's shifting propulsions, all of which is a trellis for O'Donnell to delicately hang his creativity. His high notes are often placed at the end of his solos, and they exude a brilliance, particularly on "Cay-Man," that resonate like Caribbean pans. On "So Beautiful, So Sad," the trio, again with Debriano setting the pace and sonics, invites an applique of rhythmic nuances from Hart.

The album's three standard tracks, "Maiden Voyage," "I Hear a Rhapsody" and "Three Little Words," may not be immediately recognizable, and O'Connell's imagination is marvelously at work as he departs from the literal interpretation, etching his own poignant imagery. His quick excursions across the keyboard are at once tender before explosive conclusions.

The title track is one that captures O'Connell slowly developing its narrative, gracefully scaffolding it until the full arc of his vision blooms.

Oh, there is one other sense that should be noted, and that's the feelings — and in this context O'Connell and his cohort are definitely in touch.

—Herb Boyd

Touch: Touch, Maiden Voyage, Around and Around, Cay-Man, 85th Street, So Beautiful, So Sad, Three Little Words, El Junque, Sea Glass, I Hear a Rhapsody, Billy's Blues. (55:44)

Personnel: Bill O'Connell, piano; Santi Debriano, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

Ordering info: jojorecords.com



Steven Feifke *The Role of the Rhythm Section Vol. II*

LA RESERVE

★★★★

The Role of the Rhythm Section Vol. II is an exuberant celebration of this music we call jazz. Feifke's characteristically inventive arrangements shine, aptly showcasing the technical deftness of the trio of players, who recorded this collection hot off a residency at the Blue Note in New York. Drummer Bryan Carter, bassist Dan Chmielinski and Steven Feifke on keys sound tight as a rubber band, deftly navigating myriad rhythm changes (especially on tracks like "I've Got Rhythm") with the dexterity of an Alvin Ailey Dancer. The arrangements are so inventive, in fact, that a clip of a recent performance posted on the La Reserve Records Instagram account was incorrectly identified by a follower as "Ugestu," the Cedar Walton composition popularized by Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. (The interpretation was, in fact, "Someday My Prince Will Come.") Though Feifke and his trio make light work out of no less than three Gershwin-penned numbers (and the aforementioned evergreen Disney-rooted gem), this album is more than a collection of standards from the Great American Songbook.

Feifke also shares renditions of three exciting originals: "And Then There Was Nothing Left," "Ebb and Flow" and "Duma." All three keep the momentum of the album spinning like a top.

All in all, Feifke succeeds again in translating his Grammy-winning talent for arranging big band into the classic trio formation, making this small group sound 10 feet tall, full of energy and brimming with palpable verve from the first track to the last.

—Ayana Contreras

The Role of the Rhythm Section Vol. II: I Got Rhythm, Invitation, And Then There Was Nothing Left, Ebb and Flow, Our Love Is Here To Stay, Someone To Watch Over Me, Someday My Prince Will Come, Duma. (5:12:1)

Personnel: Steven Feifke, piano; Bryan Carter, drums; Dan Chmielinski, bass.

Ordering info: lareserverecords.com



W4RP Trio x LiKWUID *Sermon of the Matriark*

PHENOTYPIC

★★★★½

When the members of the W4RP trio announced that their new project would be based on research of Afro-diasporic matriarchal societies, thoughts may have strayed toward the idea that the futuristic ensemble was tending toward a more rustic sound.

Nope. Not even close (unless Moby's epochal "Play" is your idea of rustic).

Instead, the group doubles down on its unique chamber sound, adding rapper/DJ/producer LiKWUID and creating a sprawling work that touches on Afro-pessimism, defiance, and southern rocker/fiddler Charlie Daniels. LiKWUID's declamations rage fire over the impassioned mix of strings, keys and percussion. Verses rail against tokenism and glass ceilings. It feels like an appropriate response to the 2024 election.

The 17 tracks of *Sermon* break into two multi-part segments. One, the three-part title track, functions as a clarion call to resistance against the

forces of discrimination. Another, "Gimme Dat," showcases the virtuosity of keyboardist Mikael Darmanie, violinist/bassist Josh Henderson, cellist J. Y. Lee and percussionist Rick Martinez. Daniels' unexpected nod comes on "The Devil Went Down to Cackalacky (via Georgia)," a timely reminder that human ingenuity is stronger than any imagined demons.

On other tracks, the band deftly illustrates that "chamber" need not be discreet or delicate as their sound waves rush powerfully out of the speakers or headphones. There will be many records that offer marching orders for the next four years, but this one has set the bar high.

—Martin Johnson

Sermon of the Matriark: Sermon of the Matriark part I (Prelude); Sermon of the Matriark part II (Testify); Sermon of the Matriark part III (After the Rainbow); Up; The Devil Went Down to Cackalacky (via Georgia); Gimme Dat I (gambit); Gimme Dat II (in motion); Gimme Dat III (throwback); Gimme Dat IV (transe); Gimme Dat V (wake up); Gimme Dat VI (they tweakin); Gimme Dat VII (caps); Gimme Dat VIII (4th wall); Here's One; Matriark Redux; Southern Belle; To My Momma. (43:15)

Personnel: Mikael Darmanie, piano, keyboards; Josh Henderson, violin, electric bass; J. Y. Lee, cello; Rick Martinez, drums, synths; LiKWUID, vocals.

Ordering info: phenotypicrecordings.com

SKIDMORE

Jazz

INSTITUTE

JUNE 28–JULY 12, 2025

Faculty:
 Todd Coolman—Artistic Director and bass
 Bill Cunliffe—piano
 Steve Davis—trombone
 Jimmy Greene—saxophone
 Russell Haight—saxophone
 Bob Halek—drums
 Sara Jacovino—trombone
 Clay Jenkins—trumpet
 Dennis Mackrel—drums
 George Muscatello—guitar
 Mike Rodriguez—trumpet
 Lauren Sevian—saxophone
 Dave Stryker—guitar
 David Wong—bass

Director: Brian Carucci

www.skidmore.edu/summerjazz | 518-580-5447



America's premier Gypsy Jazz band is proud to present a collection of all original compositions—tunes to make your feet tap, your heart sing, and to make Django proud. An amazing assortment of inspired tracks from the US godfather of Gypsy Jazz and his crack team of faux gypsies (=Gadjos).

Available here:
www.hotclubsf.com/cds

Elliot Galvin - The Ruin
 Out 07. 02. 2025

Knats - Knats
 Out 28. 02. 2025

GEARBOX
 gearboxrecords.com

Kira Kira Live
 KIRA KIRA

KIRA KIRA LIVE

Satoko Fujii piano
 Natsuki Tamura trumpet
 Alister Spence fender rhodes
 Tatsuya Yoshida drums

'Nothing short of superb ... This balance between structure and freedom makes this album such a compelling listen.' 4 and ½ stars;
 Glenn Astarita, AllAboutJazz

Album available via all good streaming platforms
 CD available via SquidCo, and Downtown Music Gallery US
 Birdland Records AU

ASM015
 Alister Spence Music

CD and download at
alisterspence.bandcamp.com/album/kira-kira-live

LATENT INFO
 PETROS KLAMPANIS
 KRISTJAN RANDALU
 ZIV RAVITZ

enja

LATENT INFO
 PETROS KLAMPANIS

An exploration of sound, silence and the stories we overlook.

"Petros Klampanis is a musician who has always spoken from the heart."
 Downbeat Magazine

Available Feb 7th, 2025 on LP/CD/DL & stream

Kristjan Randalu piano
 Petros Klampanis bass, electronics
 Ziv Ravitz drums

enja

Infrequent Seams

Eyal Maoz Eugene Chadbourne

The Coincidence Masters

EYAL MAOZ (Guitar)
EUGENE CHADBOURNE (Guitar)

THE COINCIDENCE MASTERS

"This is by far, the best guitar duo record that I have heard in a while. Too marvelous for words..."
 - Downtown Music Gallery

"...stream of consciousness music is rarely as gripping and amusing as what can be heard on
 The Coincidence Masters"
 - The Quietus

Infrequent Seams

eyalmaozmusic.com

EARSHIFT MUSIC
FALL 2024

VAZESH TAPESTRY
 FEAT. HAMED SADEGHI,
 JEREMY ROSE AND
 LLOYD SWANTON

PEGGY LEE & COLE SCHMIDT FOREVER STORIES OF: MOVING PARTIES

GLENN DOIG TRIO
 FEAT. SIMON BARKER AND
 BRETT HIRST

www.earshift.com



PABLO GO

"That's always been really compelling to me, how the sound of the places we inhabit shapes the cultures that surround them," says flutist Elsa Nilsson about the geographic nature of her music.

ELSA NILSSON'S ATLAS OF SOUND

The default setting for jazz is likely in the basement or upper floor of a big city venue, with sirens and subways and even airplanes periodically accenting live performances.

But for her latest album, *Atlas of Sound* — *Quila Quina* — $-40^{\circ} 17'38.21''N, -71^{\circ} 45'68.48''S$ (Ears & Eyes Records) flutist/composer/bandleader Elsa Nilsson plays compositions she wrote during a five-day writing residency at the very remote titular locale in Chile's Patagonia region.

"For the first song on the record ["The Wind from the North Comes from the West"], the first three notes were literally the pitches that the wind made through the trees as it came up the hill I was sitting on," Nilsson recalled. "There's nothing abstract about that, per se. But then from that, this whole other song comes."

Speaking from a tour stop near Vancouver, British Columbia, she explained the origins of the album, which is the second in her Atlas of Sound series: "I think the seed was first planted when I was 6. My dad is a fisherman in Sweden, and he used to take me to these islands because I didn't like being on the fishing boat. And I would just run around and make up songs for hours by myself.

"Growing up, I spent time in Sweden, and

I spent time in California. Those two cultures were really, really different. So I was always fascinated by how different the sounds were," she continued. "And that's always been compelling to me, how the sound of the places we inhabit shapes the cultures that surround them."

The towering trees that she took in during her youth while attending wilderness survival camp in Northern California served as the inspiration for *Atlas of Sound* — *Coast Redwoods* — $41^{\circ}32'09.8''N, 124^{\circ}04'35.5''W$, the inaugural album in the Atlas series. (Listeners can use the coordinates found within both album titles to visit — or at least e-visit — the exact places where both albums were born.) Those pieces were originally recorded on location, with their transcriptions serving as inspiration for longer-form pieces she wrote at home in Brooklyn and later recorded with pianist Jon Cowherd and bassist Chris Morrissey.

Quila Quina, in turn, came about when Rodrigo Recabarren, the drummer in her Band of Pulses group, got that quartet a gig

at a festival in his native Chile. Wanting to take advantage of being in South America, Nilsson trekked to a remote area within a national park on Indigenous Mapuche lands for an official visit that her label had facilitated with the Positive Force Team.

"I'd never been in the southern hemisphere, and the wind kept coming from the 'wrong' direction. I've got a good sense of direction, so being turned around was awkward," she said. "It's a similar distance to the equator from where I grew up. So the conditions for evolution were similar." Nilsson recognized some plants as Patagonian imports that can be found in Swedish gardens. "And the smell of pine at high altitude reminded me of California."

After composing, she met up with Band of Pulses pianist Santiago Leibson to record at a studio in his native Buenos Aires and capture the project as a duo.

"She's fearless," Leibson said. "When I play with her, she just goes places, and I follow."

Fellow Brooklyn resident Leibson recounted how Nilsson explained some of the inspiration, whether plants or mountains or lakes, behind each piece as she gave him her charts. He'd taken trips to Patagonia earlier in his life, he said, so he was familiar with the region but not Quila Quina specifically. "So I translated her notes and my experiences into the music and interpreted what each song was about."

Listeners, too, can hear *Quila Quina* with similar insight. Nilsson published an accompanying "field atlas" for each Atlas of Sound release that includes poems, pictures and artwork by her and others as well as descriptions of each track. While these can enhance the aural experience, she doesn't consider either field atlas to be required reading.

"My feelings about everything I create is that once I release it, it's not mine anymore. It's up to the listener to engage with it however feels genuine and true to them," she said. "So with the Atlas Project yes, absolutely, just listen to it. Or read the whole thing, or read part of it. I want people to engage with it from their perspective."

Nilsson enjoys unique perspectives as a flute player in a jazz world and also as someone who's been influenced by her upbringing in Sweden and California as well as her time in New York.

As for her multicultural background, it's helped her bridge worlds on a few different levels. "There are all these little things that are connection points between cultures. I think that's where music is really powerful: It can get into those spaces and build those connections and open up those spaces," she said. "And a thing that we don't talk about enough is how this connects to the beyond-human, natural community. That's what I think I'm doing: translating that through the lens of a musicality."

—Yoshi Kato



"When I'm playing fingerstyle, I almost get a flow in a pianistic way where chords are moving legato into each other rather than sounding like I'm stabbing them," says guitarist Pritesh Walia.

PRITESH WALIA'S ENTREPRENEURIAL HOPE

New Dehli-born guitarist Pritesh Walia has been enjoying a sudden flurry of activity. Last year he released two albums on Pritesh Walia Music and Production, his own label.

In February came *PSA*, a fusion project with keyboardist Sharik Hasan and drummer Avery Logan that puts an edgy, modernist spin on the jazz organ trio format. Then in November came his debut as a leader, *Hopetown*, a trio recording with bassist Chris Worden and drummer Ben Yoshimura that showcases Walia's fluid and lyrical guitar lines in service of his harmonically rich compositions.

Between managing the label, booking gigs and playing in multiple bands, Walia is a man on a mission with a lot of momentum behind him. He's been pursuing music since age 13, when he began studying Indian classical music in New Dehli. "I had no choice, really," he said. "Classes were mandatory, and the only form of music that we had at school was Indian classical music, either South India or North India. So I was exposed to a lot of it — at school, at home, at weddings, birthday parties and cultural events. And that actually made me drift a little from

wanting to learn that music."

He started out on a beat-up four-string guitar in class and eventually got his first legit guitar at age 15. By then, it was rock music that grabbed his ear. "I'd show up to my Indian classical class with my guitar, getting all my teachers furious by playing these rock tunes I had learned. And I remember my Indian classical teacher telling me, 'Do not show up again if you're not learning the things I'm showing you.'"

Walia would later leave India for Los Angeles, where he studied at the Musicians Institute College of Contemporary Music with guitarists Scott Henderson, Allen Hinds and Dean Brown, and Yellowjackets pianist-composer Russel Ferrante. After graduating, he relocated to Boston in 2014, earning a bachelor's degree from Berklee College of Music in contemporary jazz performance and jazz composition, then a master's in jazz performance from New England Conservatory.

"I studied at NEC with Miguel Zenón, Ethan Iverson, Frank Carlberg, all extraordinary players and now friends," he said. "I also played with Maria Schneider and studied her way of writing when she was at NEC for quite a bit. And I also got a lot of helpful feedback from Donny McCaslin and Jerry Bergonzi, who I would bring my trio tunes to. NEC put everything together in one place for me."

In forming his own label, Walia has been able to freely express the different aspects of his playing and musical interests. While *PSA* showcases him playing strictly single-note lines in an organ group context with the kind of precision picking that recalls a major influence, Pat Martino, much of his playing on *Hopetown* incorporates a hybrid picking style that allows him to deftly switch back and forth from aggressive picking to tasty fingerstyle playing, often simultaneously.

"That's the only way I can get voicings on guitar to not sound like they're being attacked too hard," he explained. "When I'm playing fingerstyle, I almost get a flow in a pianistic way where chords are moving legato into each other rather than sounding like I'm stabbing them. I'm constantly doing that throughout almost every song on *Hopetown*."

The lone cover on *Hopetown* is a radical re-imagining of the Beatles' "Blackbird" involving reharmonization, time displacement, a slamming Led Zeppelin-esque bridge and a swing section that Walia blows over with impunity. "That's my way of normalizing the Beatles in the jazz sphere," he said. "I just wanted to see how much can I say in this one song, which has been played by guitar players all over the world in the same way all the time. Can I change it? Can I treat it as I treat a jazz standard? Can I re-harmonize it? ... I like to take small melodic fragments and parts off a piece of music that I really love and see how much I can stretch it."

An upcoming project with Brazilian singer Stephanie Borgani and three distinct string quartets, will allow Walia to expand on the Brazilian influence heard on tunes like the upbeat "Brief" and the breezy title track to *Hopetown*. As he said, "The guitar players from Brazil are just exceptional — Toninho Horta, Romero Lubambo, so many others. Their chordal language is so rich, adjacent to traditional jazz guitar but very different. When you go deep into the Brazilian world of guitar, it's amazing what these players can achieve in terms of syncopation, rhythm and interesting voicings with bass and chordal movement together. That's actually where the intro to 'Hopetown' comes from. And I'll get into more of that on the strings record."

Also upcoming on his independent label is a big band project, *Henry Godfrey Jazz Orchestra Plays The Music Of Pritesh Walia*, a grand undertaking featuring 27 musicians, including pianist Aaron Parks and alto saxophonist Godwin Louis. —Bill Milkowski

BOOMSLANG RECORDS



**MONEYFRIENDS
AMERICAN HANGOVER** 11/15/24
DIGITAL & CD



**MAX SANTNER: MANKAI
NAME THE COLOR** 11/29/24
DIGITAL & CD

WWW.BOOMSLANG-RECORDS.COM



ELSA NILSSON
On Tour in 2025!

- 2/15 Bar Bayeux, Brooklyn, NY
- 3/7 Kulturhuset, Stockholm, SW
- 3/8 Älmhult Folkets Hus, SW
- 3/9 Musik i Lerum, SW
- 3/11 Jazz i Halmstad, SW
- 3/12 Fridhem Folkhögskola, SW
- 3/13 Victoriateatern, Malmö, SW
- 3/16 Philly Joe's, Tallinn, Estonia
- 3/19 Christiania Jazz Klub, Copenhagen, DK
- 3/20 Jazz Esberg, Esberg, DK
- 3/22 Donau 115, Berlin, Germany
- 4/6 First Friday Jazz Series, Neighborhood Church, New York, NY

Get tickets NOW at elsanilssonmusic.com

TRUMPETER LEX FRENCH UNVEILS HIS NEW ALBUM



LEX FRENCH
FRANÇOIS BOURASSA · MORGAN MOORE · JIM DONAS

in the world's first summer

IN THE WORLD'S FIRST SUMMER

Traces of Miles Davis can be heard throughout In the World's First Summer. He also takes cues from poetry and paintings that add to the album's artful nature. Tying it all together is Lex's fantastic Montreal-based band, one of the best quartets currently active in North America.



FACTOR Canada **SODEC** Québec

DARREN BARRETT

DB-ISH

STRAIGHT VIBESSS

FOLLOWING **TWO ACCLAIMED 2024 ALBUMS**, SPIRITED TRUMPETER DARREN BARRETT DETAILS A HIP-HOP OF THE 90'S INSPIRED PROJECT "DB-ISH - STRAIGHT VIBESSS".


COMES OUT ON FEBRUARY 7, 2025 VIA DB STUDIOS

"It is both moving and potentially transformative to listen to Darren Barrett... It is easy to be transfixed... not just a reminder, but a demonstration of what might happen through experimenting more with our shared music." - *DownBeat Magazine*

"Exhilarating" - *Jazziz*

After releasing two acclaimed albums in 2024, trumpeter/multi-instrumentalist/composer Darren Barrett, who has played on Esperanza Spalding's GRAMMY-winning album *Radio Music Society*, will release "dB-ISH - Straight Vibesss" on February 7, 2025, featuring Santiago Bosch, Warren Pettay, Youngchae Jeong, Julian Miltenberger, Tobias Israel and Judy Soberanes.



TWO QUARTETS.
TEN YEARS.
ONE VISIONARY VOICE.



KEVIN SUN
QUARTETS

"Indispensable" - *Paris Move*

A sonic journey through a decade of NYC's most innovative jazz

ENDECTOMORPH MUSIC

COMING HOME TO YOU

Noah Peterson



Swinging original jazz from San Antonio, Texas

Noah Peterson
"Coming Home To You"

Listen now on your favorite streaming service

www.noahpeterson.com



MATTHEW GRIBBEN

Stephen Buono's new label looks to mix, mash and mosh in delivering music that surfs between jazz, indie rock, the avant garde and more.

OTHERLY LOVE RECORDS

You don't start an independent record label because you want to make money on the deal.

You especially don't start an independent jazz label to get rich. You do it because you want to shepherd art into a world that needs all the inspiration and beauty it can get.

Stephen Buono, co-founder of the L.A.-based label Otherly Love, understands the separate but close-enough-to-touch musical ecosystems of jazz and underground rock, and has carved out a place for himself in the blurry zone between them. Originally from Philadelphia, he migrated out west some years ago and has become a vital part of the city's underground art scene, booking shows, doing PR and working with artists like Nels Cline, Carlos Niño, Patrick Shiroishi and others.

Otherly Love is run by Buono and a childhood friend, Matt Pierce. "Since I've been involved in the industry," he says, "I'm always being hit up by people saying, 'Hey, can you try to get this on a label?' And so I was trying to do that for what [became] our first two releases. And I told Matt, 'You know, I just can't find a label for these people. I'm trying to hook them up.' And he's like, 'Well, why don't we start a label?'"

Since launching in 2023, Otherly Love has released more than a dozen titles. Saxophonist Patrick Shiroishi, whose solo album *Glass House* is out now, describes Buono as "a no-bullshit, honest human who really, really loves music ... exactly the kind of person you want running a label, especially right now."

Glass House is exactly the kind of fascinating, unclassifiable art that requires an independent label. Shiroishi's saxophone, often overdubbed and subjected to effects, is just one element of an immersive sound collage that includes piano, bass and drums; the sounds of cooking, text messages being sent and conversations just far enough away to be indecipherable; washes of eerie synthesizer and more. If it wasn't already the soundtrack to a theater piece, it could easily be the score for an adaptation of Ling Ma's novel of societal collapse and fading memory, *Severance*.

Another Otherly Love release that would have a hard time finding a home on a larger label is the self-titled debut by Weird Of Mouth. The group consists of alto saxophonist Mette Rasmussen, pianist Craig Taborn, and drummer Ches Smith. The music is a high-energy leaf storm of sound, but possessed of an introspection and discipline clearly audible in its members' other work, especially Taborn and Smith.

"Every time Craig Taborn releases a record it's an event, for me personally," Buono says. "So it's not just another album." He describes his goal as releasing "unique pieces that people are going to be excited to hear ... it's humbling, because this stuff needs to get out. You know, I truly think that."

Many jazz labels — from Pi Recordings and AUM Fidelity to Posi-Tone and High-Note/Savant — have a vision; they explore

a specific corner of the vast magic carpet that is jazz. When asked how to classify Otherly Love, Buono hesitates slightly. "I would say, you know, Pi Recordings is a favorite label, and I respect them so much, but I also equally respect SST and I equally respect Sublime Frequencies. So you know, I feel like there's a place between all of them, and that's kind of where I hope for the label to be. I think there's a certain energy that they all have. And I can't choose one, man. You know what I mean?"

"Stephen's been in this scene, knows so many people, and has gone to so many shows ... he's a lifer," Shiroishi says. "As far as the label goes, he wants to build an amazing roster [and] present projects with lineups that maybe didn't have the opportunity to happen in the past."

One-off lineups are an Otherly Love trademark; Buono's own project, Church Chords, brings together singers and players from a large pool of collaborators. It's music that's part jazz, part indie rock, part cybernetic funk. The tracks on the project's full-length debut, *elvis, he was Schlager*, start out following conventional song form, but then drag it into the bushes to do unsettling things.

Another key element of Buono's philosophy is establishing links between creative spirits on both coasts. "I'm very much in different scenes," he explains, "like the Philadelphia, New York and L.A. art rock scenes. And then I'm in the jazz scene. And then I know people, like I've spent time around a lot of the masters, you know, and it's all the same to me." So when he reaches out to pair a jazz guitarist with a member of one of the most storied noise-rock bands of the '90s, it makes perfect sense in his mind, and the creative challenge is to conjure a sonic artifact that retains the wild, why-not spirit that inspired Buono and the artists in the first place.

Fortunately, there are plenty of artists who share that spirit. One key 2025 release will be a double live LP culled from a month-long Philadelphia residency centered around Sun Ra Arkestra saxophonist Marshall Allen. It features guest appearances from Immanuel Wilkins, James Brandon Lewis, Eric Revis, Chad Taylor, Luke Stewart and members of the indie rock band Yo La Tengo as well as the avant-garde noise act Wolf Eyes. "I basically had to take 15 hours of music and listen to it over three days and whittle it down to an hour and 20 minutes," he says. "So I'm very in love, excited about that project."

"I'm excited to see what Stephen and the label does," Shiroishi says. "I'm sure there will be some gems in there. Shit is going to get fucked up here, but at least we can look forward to some music and community to offer some sort of support, whether at home or at shows."

—Phil Freeman

ROBERTO MAGRIS EUROPLANE FOR JAZZ

FREEDOM IS PEACE



"While Europlane was a potent force around Europe from 1998-2003, the band hadn't operated over the last 20 years, until Magris was asked to resurrect the group for a main jazz event in Austria, recorded live by the ORF Radio. This reassembling of Magris' world-class ensemble includes Tony Lakatos (Hungary), Florian Bramböck (Austria), Lukas Oravec (Slovakia), Rudi Engel (Germany), Gasper Bertoneclj (Slovenia) and Roberto Magris (Italy). Magris' 24th recording for JMood is a triumphant declaration from a crew of bona fide all-stars. - Bill Milkowski



Available now at www.jmoodrecords.com and jmoodrecords.bandcamp.com

JUDY WEXLER NO WONDER



judywexler.com

"No Wonder presents the divinely talented vocalist Judy Wexler and a cadre of L.A. A-listers in an overall bravura performance."
- Bebop Spoken Here

Out January 24, 2025

Jewel City Jazz
A-TRAIN ENTERTAINMENT

OMAR THOMAS LARGE ENSEMBLE

Award-winning composer/arranger Omar Thomas weaves vivid emotional narratives on his exhilarating dream project, *Griot Songs*



"Griot Songs firmly plants Omar Thomas in the pantheon of distinguished and exceptional writers. He blurs the lines stylistically in the best of ways with a texturally compelling 'heart and soul' sonic story all his own."

GRAMMY-WINNING DRUMMER/COMPOSER
Terri Lyne Carrington

"Omar Thomas... proves himself a modern-day griot - summoning influences, traditions, and narratives from both past and present, framing them in a manner that is at varying times tender, dramatic, mystical, and joyful - but always absolutely captivating!"

GRAMMY NOMINATED COMPOSER/BANDLEADER
Chuck Owen

OMARTHOMAS.COM

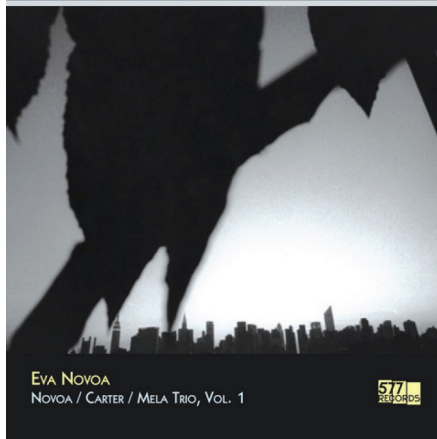
SHIFTING PARADIGM RECORDS

NEW AND UPCOMING RELEASES



shiftingparadigmrecords.com

NEW RELEASE FROM EVA NOVOA AVAILABLE NOW!



NOVOA / CARTER / MELA TRIO, VOL. 1

In an invigorating creative explosion the multi-talented instrumentalist unites with sax legend Daniel Carter and beloved drummer Francisco Mela. Prepare to be reawakened when you experience Novoa tickling the ivories, dominating the Fender Rhodes, and Chinese gongs.

Art cover and photographs by Richard Sandler



www.evanovoa.com

Church Chords
elvis, he was Schlager

History Dog
Root Systems

Marshall Allen's
Ghost Horizons
Live in Philadelphia

Ches Smith
Clone Row



Piano phenomenon Hiromi uses synthesizers and electric keyboards to enhance her sonic palette when performing and recording with her band Sonicwonder.

Generating Excitement & Embracing a Sense of Wonder with Synthesizers

I use two different kinds of electric keyboards with my band Sonicwonder. One is a Nord Lead A1 that I place on top of my piano, and I have a Nord Electro on the right side of the piano. So, in performance, I have a total of three different instruments at my disposal — they just happen to be played by one person.

I use the Nord Electro like a Rhodes or

Wurlitzer electric piano, whereas I tend to use the Nord Lead A1 like a synthesizer — it has a selection of pads and lead sounds that are more synth-like. And I combine these two electric instruments with my Yamaha CFX concert grand piano in new ways every time, depending on how I hear the music.

When I write music for Sonicwonder, I

hear certain sounds I want to layer upon each other, to help orchestrate the arrangement. The band's trumpeter, Adam O'Farrill, employs a lot of effects. When he uses a pad sound, for example, or a harmonizer on his trumpet, I try to use an electric piano sound or acoustic piano, or maybe a lead sound, to complement that. And when Adam is going

for a natural, dry sound on the trumpet, I tend to play more synth pads. We frequently switch roles to add richness to the orchestration.

Getting Electrified

I first started recording with synthesizers and electric keyboards on two albums I made in 2007 and '08 with my band Sonicbloom: *Time Control* and *Beyond Standard*. I chose to play them on those two records because I had David “Fuze” Fiuczynski on double-neck elec-

tric guitar, and my goal for that band was an electrifying sound. Later, during an extended period when I was performing with my trio, doing duets with harpist Edmar Castañeda, recording *Silver Lining Suite* with a string quartet and playing with my piano quintet, I was going for more of an acoustic sound. But I'll always have a love for electric instruments, and I've always enjoyed that kind of music.

After I build a motif using electric keyboards, at the very end I'll play the same idea on acoustic piano for the first time ... I love that.

I grew up listening to Chick Corea's Elektric Band, Return to Forever, The Headhunters with Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul and Jim Beard. And I always had a big crush on guitar players: I love Jeff Beck, Pete Townsend, Frank Zappa and so many others. Something I always wanted to do was sustain and bend the note, and I love the distorted sounds you can get on electric guitar. There are so many different colors to that type of music, and that was the goal that I was looking for with Sonicwonder — a more electric and layered sound.

For example, the title track of our 2023 debut *Sonicwonderland* starts with a kind of old-school, funky analog synth sound, which I'm using almost like a Clavinet, so it has a really percussive intro to it. The only things I personally don't use are a looper or arpeggiator, because I prefer to do it the “human” way, even if it's not as technically accurate. Some people believe I've used a looper, and many times people think I use an arpeggiator, but I've never used either of those because I like to just play it, and that makes it more human-feeling — it's a not-too-electric, more analog way of

using my keyboards. So that song starts with a kind of funky sound, and the electric bass and the drums merge with that line, then the trumpet begins playing with effects applied. When Adam starts to play with pedals, I'll go into electric piano mode on the Nord Electro to add a tone like a Rhodes piano. I like to go back and forth, and I'm physically quite busy.

Often, after I set up grooves and build a recurring motif using electric keyboards, at the very end I'll play the same idea on acoustic

piano for the first time, and I love that effect. When it lands on the acoustic piano, it adds a whole new flavor to it. I love traveling through these different instruments.

My Nord Lead A1 has four analog waveforms — sine wave, triangle wave, sawtooth wave and square wave — and there are other extended waveforms. Starting from there, I can then choose different setting for the oscillators and what kind of filters I want to use. I can create up to four layers on my synth, and mix and match them to achieve the sound that I'm hearing in my head. And maybe I need a hint of flanger, or, when I'm soloing, I want a ring modulator — I can improvise with how much effect I use during my improvisations, and that can change the whole context of a solo.

So, first I set up the basic sound, then the rest is improvised on the spot: Do I want a little more wah-wah here, or more drive here? It depends on where the solo is taking me. I improvise with all those settings and effects, just like you would improvise a solo on any instrument.

When I first got my keyboard as a teenager, it was like a whole new thing to play with. Even before reading through the manual, I would just start changing the levels and settings — just toying with it. And gradually I would learn what this filter does, what this effect does. That's how I self-studied.

If you're interested in acquiring a synthesizer or other electric keyboard, I strongly recommend you go to the showroom of any keyboard store and try out as many instruments

as possible to determine which one is your dream keyboard. Every player is different, and it depends on what you're hearing from your point of view as a soloist or as orchestrator/arranger. What are you looking for from the keyboards? What do you desire sonically? Play-test every keyboard and explore the touch, the bends, all the effects and all the filters. There should be one keyboard that really satisfies your needs. And from there, just play with it like a child: “Here's your new toy!”

Venturing Out There

One thing I like to do when I use keyboards is play harmonized lines with the acoustic piano. I layer the sounds of piano and synth or keyboard at the same time — it really creates a unique sound, and it's something you can't really do if you have another keyboardist in the band. You have to have one brain to execute that properly.

On Sonicwonder's previous album, we used some sounds that resemble arcade music of the 1980s, and our upcoming release has a little bit of that, too, as well as other sounds that are reminiscent of that era, when primitive video games were first emerging in popular culture. A couple of new songs that I've written for the band — “Balloon Pop” and “Yes! Ramen!” — emulate those 1980s tones.

For the Sonicwonder project, I'm definitely using more keyboards, synths and electronic effects, and I'm loving it. For our new CD, *OUT THERE* (scheduled for release in early April on Telarc), I wrote a four-part suite. The first movement is “Takin' Off,” the second movement is “Strollin',” the third movement is “Orion” and the fourth movement is “The Quest.” It's a big musical adventure that we play straight through, a half hour of continuous music.

It starts out with, What's out there? Curiosity. If you're curious, you shouldn't be scared to go out there and make discoveries. And then you stroll around and look for things in the second movement, which is always a fun piece for the band to play. And when you get to “Orion,” the time element changes: Up until the second movement, it's daytime in that world, and then with “Orion” it goes into the night zone, where there's more strolling, like driving through the stars. Then, for the last movement, you go out to conquer the quest, the final stage of the adventure.

When we play these four pieces straight through during our live shows, it's very intense for us, and for the audience, too. But when you experience the intensity and adventure of the entire piece, you are set free. It's an amazing feeling.

DB

Hiromi and Sonicwonder will embark on a U.S. album release tour for *OUT THERE* starting in April 2025. Visit her online at hiromiuehara.com.

ALANPASQUA.COM



Pasqua keeps connected to the composition by returning to the melody during his electric keyboard solo.

Alan Pasqua's Keyboard Solo on 'San Michele'

This is a gorgeous tune — and I suspect keyboardist and composer Alan Pasqua agrees with me, since he's recorded "San Michele" a number of times. For this transcription, we're taking his solo from the live version presented on the 2022 album *Proto-Cosmos* (Blue Canoe), featuring Pasqua on electric keyboard with electric guitarist Allan Holdsworth, electric bassist Jimmy Haslip and drummer Chad Wackerman.

His solo starts in the middle of a chorus, which already is effective, even though atypical. After Holdsworth's break, the rhythm section basically grooves for half a chorus (not presented here), building suspense. When Pasqua does officially begin it's very melodic.

He even has a motif that he develops over the first four bars. Notice the two high notes dropping to repeated low notes, which in the final iteration is almost inverted.

After a one-measure break Pasqua radically changes his approach, hitting us with some fast and dense playing. This becomes another motif. After seven bars of this we get some more melodic playing, and he continues to alternate between these for the rest of his solo.

Something that makes this motivic aspect clearer is that the fast sections also cover a lot of range (making it difficult to present in an easily readable way. I can't find a good spot to switch to 8va. And I didn't want to use a grand staff for the amount of time he drops below

treble clef.) Bar 9 drops almost two octaves. Bar 12 runs up three. By bars 30–34 we hear him blazing from a high B to an F# below the staff back up to an E higher than the previous B and then back down to the low D below the staff. That's a lot of range to be traversing in a handful of measures.

Measures 42–43 also climb up almost three octaves, and then we get a more obvious motif: four descending notes. Played within a triplet rhythm makes it polyrhythmic, which is hip, but to play it at that speed? That's massively impressive. (It also gives us another half octave in upper range.)

Pasqua also keeps connected by returning to the melody. Measures 20–24 basically

restate the melody. This is the middle of his solo, which some might say is an odd place to return to the melody, especially it being the end of a chorus (running the risk of the other players taking that as a cue that he's finished). Notice that he doesn't play the melody verbatim, but adds some rhythmic spice to it. Also, Pasqua returns to the melody for his last four bars, but here he sticks closer to the rhythm of the melody but changes some of the notes. Adding in chords underneath also helps to finalize his statement.

There is also the ebb-and-flow of his subdivisions. His largest subdivisions are 16th notes (not terribly fast since the tune is in a somewhat slow 6/8) through 16th-note triplets, 32nds and 32nd triplets (his smallest subdivisions). At first he moves through these in a straight line, 16ths through bar 9 where we hear 16th triplets, and then on to 32nds for a measure-and-a-half, then 32nd-note triplets in bars 11 and 12.

After this Pasqua drops us back to 16ths, and does so when he hits that ultra-high C#, the highest note we've heard so far. Tying the end of his increase in rhythmic energy to arriving at an extreme high pitch is quite effective.

And then he starts building the rhythmic energy again: three measures of (mostly) 16ths, then a couple of bars of 16th-note triplets, but then only about a half measure of 32nds before we're back to 16ths. So, he doesn't complete the climb to 32nd-note triplets and doesn't give us much in the way of 32nds, either. And after a few bars of 16ths we have a rare moment of space in measures 22-23.

Then it's a more gradual trip up the chain again: five bars of 16ths, almost two of 16th-note triplets, a little over two measures of 32nds and another bar of space. Then we're back at 16ths again, with some hints at triplets, up to 32nds, and finally the long string of 32nd-note triplets for almost four full measures.

This is the climax he's been leading us to both rhythmically and in terms of range. After this it's a gentle letdown in both, concluding the journey he's led us through.

DB

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. He recently released an album of Indian classical music played on the string bass, titled *Border Of Hiranyaloka*. Find out more at jimidurso.bandcamp.com. Jimi can often be witnessed performing/rehearsing/teaching/pontificating online at twitch.tv/CoincidenceMachine.



Studiologic Numa Compact SE / X SE

Special Edition Portable Synthesizers with More Powerful, Updated Sound Engines

Studiologic's Numa Compact series continues to uphold its reputation as the Swiss Army Knife of synthesizers with two Special Edition models currently on the market: the Numa Compact SE and Numa Compact X SE, each with four dedicated sound engines. They might look small and weigh only 15.6 pounds, but they are packed with incredibly useful tools you'd normally find in much bigger, more expensive instruments. The most important improvements in the Special Editions include the acoustic piano engine, the electric piano modeling, the synth engine, the number of sounds and programs, and more parameters for sound design.

The primary difference is in the number of sounds, according to Gianni Giudici, brand manager and sound developer. "We found a way of compressing and encrypting the memory and inserting many more sounds as compared to previous versions," he said. "In the Numa Compact 2 and 2x (released in 2017 and 2018, respectively), we had between 80 and 100 sounds in the engine. And now, using the same amount of memory, the number of sounds in the Numa Compact SE and X SE is much higher. We have 148 sounds, thanks to the special encryption and compression algorithms we use." Since the release of the Special Editions, Studiologic has published even more sounds that can be installed.

The Numa Compact SE and X SE share exactly the same internal sound engines, number of sounds and specs. The organ tonewheel engine and the synth engines are present in both the Numa Compact SE and X SE versions. The only difference is in the control panels. The Numa Compact X SE, in addition to the nine drawbar-type sliders found on the Compact 2x, has three additional buttons assignable to MIDI functions. The Numa Compact SE doesn't have drawbars, but you can still control drawbar function via external MIDI since it shares the same organ engine as the X SE version.

You can customize sounds in the electric piano section using a new model derived from the recently introduced Studiologic Numa X Piano. A new tine control allows you to change the tines of all the electric pianos exactly like on the Numa X Piano. On the Numa Compact 2 and 2x, the electric pianos were simply sampled. Now, the body of the sound and the tine of the sounds are separate, and you can control them separately on all electric piano sounds and effects.

The acoustic piano section has evolved to include a new parameter

that's also derived from the Numa X Piano. In addition to adjustable damper-pedal string resonance, a feature of the Numa Compact 2 and 2x, the new Special Edition models offer duplex resonance: the natural resonance of the top one-and-a-half octaves of an acoustic piano, keys that don't have any damper on them. The Special Edition models also provide control over damper noise and hammer noise, features not yet present the Numa X Piano. "These are subtle things that make the piano sounds feel more natural," Giudici said. "It's like real acoustic modeling."

The organ side of the Compact SE and Compact X SE benefits from improvements in sound generation, in addition to the rotary control, Leslie simulation, close microphone, far microphone, stereo mics and mono mics present in the latest firmware updates to the Numa Compact 2 and Compact 2x.

Studiologic also made major improvements to the synth model, which on previous versions had nine parameters (including cutoff resonance and fast/slow attack control and decay release). Now, the synth section controls include portamento, portamento time, monophonic/polyphonic mode, and legato/staccato articulation. "You can choose a monophonic synthesizer, and set the portamento control so it only activates if you play legato," Giudici said. "It's like having a pitch bend control without touching the pitch bend knob."

The Numa Compact SE and X SE are amplified with small built-in speakers. And, like all previous Numa Compact models since the launch of the series 2013, they feature a Audio USB port that lets you connect to an external device and route those sounds through the speakers (or headphones). You can also record the internal sounds you play, together with any incoming external sounds, and mix them all into a stereo track via MIDI control.

Both the Compact SE and Compact X SE can be powered using the provided AC adapter. They are also designed to operate with USB power (although in USB power mode, speaker amplification is not available). They feature 88 standard-size semi-weighted keys, best described as a comfortable compromise between a piano feel and the smoother action of an organ or synth. Every sound in the Numa Compact series has a different velocity sensitivity that's appropriate for the type of keyboard being emulated.

—Ed Enright

studiologic-music.com

KEYBOARD Toolshed > GEAR BOX

1. Genos Speaker System

Yamaha designed the GNS-MS01 monitor speakers to maximize the sound capabilities of its Genos Digital Workstation. Consisting of two 20-watt satellite speakers and a 40-watt subwoofer, the 2.1 active monitor system has a frequency response of 40Hz to 20kHz (-10 dB). To set up the GNS-MS01, users can connect each speaker directly from the Genos workstation, with no cable management required.

More info: usa.yamaha.com

2. Height-Adjustable Bench

The KB5503B Height-Adjustable Keyboard Bench from On-Stage enables the ergonomic playing of acoustic pianos, electric keyboards and synthesizers. Height settings are available ranging from 17.5 to 23.5 inches, making it easy to dial in a comfortable playing position. A pneumatically assisted mechanism raises and lowers the seat with the pull of a lever. Crafted from dense foam and covered in black leatherette, its 3-inch cushion delivers long-lasting comfort while reducing fatigue. Thick legs offer support for up to 330 pounds.

More info: on-stage.com

3. Sound Control

Akai's MPC Key 37 is a standalone desktop synthesizer with onboard sampling, sequencing, plugin instruments, insert effects, splice integration and a three-octave full-size keybed. The unit's MPC plugins are emotive sonically with in-depth controls for versatile customization and sound design. The MPC Key 37 packs a diverse lineup of I/Os to connect synths, sound modules, modular racks, studio monitors and more via stereo 1/4-inch inputs and outputs, Direct USB MIDI, five-pin MIDI in/ MIDI out, four TRS CV/gate output jacks and a USB host port.

More info: akaipro.com

4. Multi-Samples & Modeling

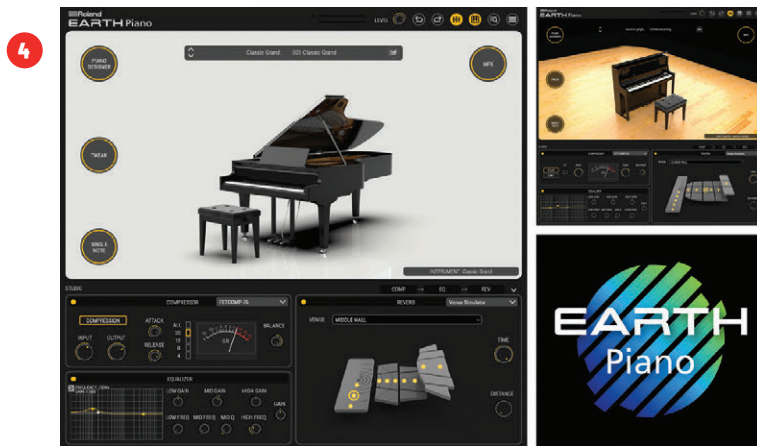
Roland's EARTH Piano, a software-based musical instrument available exclusively on Roland Cloud, brings the brand's acoustic piano sound technologies to computer production workflows, offering multiple piano types and deep customization options. It combines detailed multi-sampling with proprietary modeling techniques to create a desirable blend of realism and playability. EARTH Piano includes seven distinctive instruments that can be modified to taste. There are resonant concert grands for jazz and classical styles, polished and punchy pianos for studio tracks and upright, felt and toy pianos for pop.

More info: roland.com

5. Pure Vintage Charm

Part of Native Instruments' COMPLETE series of instruments and effects, Vintage Organs includes the sounds of the Hammond B-3, C-3 and M-3 models, the Vox Continental II and the Farfisa Compact. All sounds are meticulously sampled from the original instruments to preserve the authentic quality of the most popular tone-wheel and combo organs of the 1960s and '70s.

More info: native-instruments.com



DB Music Shop >

For Rates: call (630) 941-2030. All ads are prepaid, no agency commission. Check, money order, and all major credit cards are accepted. **Deadline:** Ad copy and full payment must arrive 2 months prior to DB cover date. **Send your advertisement by MAIL:** DownBeat Classifieds, 188 W. Industrial Drive, Ste. 310, Elmhurst, Illinois, 60126. **EMAIL:** dank@downbeat.com.

WE BUY OLD RECORDS!
WE MAKE HOUSE CALLS ANYWHERE IN THE USA
CALL US TOLL FREE
888-993-4673



LP's, 45s, 78 & 12"
 No Collection is too Large!

JAMEY AEBERSOLD JAZZ

World famous play-a-longs, books, CDs, and DVDs for every improvising musician from novice to pro.
jazzbooks.com

OVER 2,000 PRACTICE TRACKS
STREAMING.JAZZBOOKS.COM

JAZZ DVD'S / VIDEO

Concerts, documentaries, movies, TV, DVDs, Videotapes, Laserdiscs

We take requests at:
service@jazzwestdvd.com

JAZZWEST,
 BOX 842 (DB), Ashland, OR 97520
 (541) 482-5529 www.jazzwestdvd.com

ONLINE JAZZ LESSONS.

Study all styles & aspects of jazz improvisation and saxophone with **Jeff Harrington, Berklee Professor, MIT Affiliated Artist, Harvard University MLSP Instructor.**
www.jeffharrington.com
 Email: lessons@jeffharrington.com.
 617-332-0176.

www.pmwoodwind.com
 847-869-7049

Chicago's Best Store for Saxophones
 & all other Woodwinds. Great Selection. Expert Repair.

DB Buyers Guide >

Alister Spence 68	Endectomorph Music 71	Noah Peterson 71
alisterspence.com	endectomorph.com	noahpeterson.com
Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society . 53	Eva Novoa 73	NuBlu Jazz Club 45
bachddsoc.org	evanovoa.com	nublublu.net
BIX Jazzclub & Lounge 53	Eyal Maoz 68	Omar Thomas 73
bix-stuttgart.de	eyalmaozmusic.com	omarthomas.com
Blue Note Jazz Club 53	Fordham University 8	Otherly Love 73
bluenotejazz.com	fordham.edu	otherlylove.net
Blue Note Records 5	Frankie's Jazz Club 42	P. Mauriat 83
bluenote.com	frankiesjazzclub.ca	pmauriatmusic.com
Blues Alley Jazz 50	Fresh Sound Records 8	Petros Klampanis 68
bluesalley.org	freshsoundrecords.com	petrosklampanis.com
Boomslang Records 71	Gearbox Records 68	Portland Jazz Festival 25
boomslang-records.com	gearboxrecords.com	pdxjazz.org
California State University, Fullerton 65	Hot Club San Francisco 68	The Ravenscroft 50
fullerton.edu/arts/music	hotclubsf.com	theravenscroft.com
Cannonball Music 7	J Mood Records 73	Scat Jazz Lounge 42
cannonballmusic.com	jmoodrecords.com	scatjazzlounge.com
Casio 9	Jazz Forum Arts 52	Shifting Paradigm 73
casiomusicgear.com	jazzforumarts.org	shiftingparadigmrecords.com
Chicago Symphony Orchestra 12	The Jazz Kitchen 53	Skidmore 67
cso.org/jazz	thejazzkitchen.com	skidmore.edu
Crooner's Lounge & Supper Club 42	JEN – Jazz Education Network 15	Smoke Jazz Club 49
croonerslounge.com	jazzednet.org	smokejazz.com
Darren Barrett 71	Jimmy's Jazz & Blues Club 42	Snug Harbor 52
instagram.com/darrendbee/	jimmysoncongress.com	snugjazz.com
DownBeat 4, 21, 54, 57	JodyJazz 84	The Soraya 2
downbeat.com	jodyjazz.com	thesoraya.org
Durham Jazz Workshop – Sharp 9 Gallery 51	Judy Wexler 73	Ted Klum 10
durhamjazzworkshop.org	judywexler.com	tedklum.com
Earshift Music 68	Kuumbwa Jazz Center 42	U.S. Air Force Band 27
earshift.com	kuumbwajazz.org	music.af.mil/bands
Elemental Music 17	Légère 11	University of Music & Performing Artz Graz 61
elemental-music.com	legere.com	jazz.kug.ac.at/en
Elmhurst Jazz Festival 4	Lobero Theatre 42	Vandoren 3
elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival	lobero.org	dansr.com
Elsa Nilsson 71	MVD Entertainment 57	YardBird Suite 47
elsanilssonmusic.com	mvdshop.com	yardbirdsuite.com
	Nettwerk 71	
	nettwerk.com	



The Fullerton Jazz Orchestra performs during its New Zealand adventure.



Cal State Fullerton's New Zealand Adventure

THIS IS IN MEMORY OF DR. RODGER FOX, officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM), who passed away on May 27. That was one day after the band that I direct, the Fullerton Jazz Orchestra of Cal State Fullerton, along with faculty member Rodolfo Zuniga, arrived to tour with his big band.

Holy cow! I was overwhelmed with the loss of one of my favorite human beings. So many questions. But immediately, what would happen now with our tour?

I knew and worked with Rodger for more than 20 years. There were trombone players with greater technical ability, with greater range, with more finesse, but none that could swing any harder.

His resume reads: "(As) New Zealand's foremost jazz trombonist, big band maestro, jazz educator, arranger and producer, he has performed in concert with some of the biggest names in the business — Dave Weckl, Steve Gadd, Michael Brecker, Dennis Chambers, Bobby Shew, Diane Schuur, Peter Erskine, David Clayton-Thomas, Maynard Ferguson, Robben Ford and Joey De Francesco — from the jazz and entertainment world, promoted live concerts with his Big Band in the Global Festival arena and worked tirelessly over many years promoting jazz in New Zealand."

His methods to make these things happen were somewhat unorthodox, but usually worked for a great experience for him, his bandmates and the audience.

Friends of mine, like Bruce Paulson, trombonist from *The Tonight Show*, and jazz flutist Holly Hofmann had told Rog about me, and he invited me down to play for a week. He willingly booked a puddle-jumper so I wouldn't have

to take a bus for seven hours from Auckland to the first gig, in Napier. Of course, I threw up on that very turbulent flight over some rather tall mountains, so I wrote a turbulent tune, "Puking Over Napier," later called "Napier," which he recorded on an album called *Warriors*.

Rog played hard, partied hard and sometimes spent too much money, but always survived, and survived brilliantly.

After that first trip, I went back every few years to play and record with him, which was always an absolute ball. I remembered that my old friend Matt Harris had taken the Cal State Northridge band there, and I asked Rog, "What would it take to come up with an itinerary for next year?" He said, "It's all there, man. I've booked it already!" So we would just go there and open for his band.

Only problem was the money.

In big academic organizations, like the one I've been teaching in for the past 18 years, the problem is, like all big companies, the bureaucracy, the bulkiness, the rigidity of procedures. At the same time, often the people are great. And I sure found that out planning for this trip.

First thing I did was start a GoFundMe, and put a big check in there to start. (Not that big, but, you know, substantial.) Then I went around to my sponsors. They all started getting excited and wanting to help. Then I looked at my accumulated budget, and, well, I was kind of close. But then came a wrinkle. There was no way to get the funds to the travel agent I had asked to book the tickets in time. You know, they have to get the funds right away, and it might take a week, two weeks or more. Well, you all know the drill. And there were all these university restrictions seeing as it was interna-

tional travel.

I thought I was screwed.

So my dean, Arnold Holland, proposed a solution: to go through the university-approved travel agency. They would coordinate all the payments, the visas, the university regs. It would just cost another \$10,000 or \$20,000 ... or so. Panicked, I went to my chair, Randy Goldberg, and he said, "I can get some more funds for you."

Whew.

Back to Dr. Holland and he said, "Bill, don't worry. We're doing this." My blood pressure went down about 20 points.

When I told the kids, they were overjoyed. Some of them had never been on a plane before.

And they all got to the airport on time.

So, we get to New Zealand and Eddie Hare, director of jazz at Westlake Boys High School told me Rog had passed. My heart sank. I've got 18 kids and 10 days to kill. But the phone began to ring and emails started chiming in, and all the Kiwis (New Zealanders) said, "Don't worry, mate. We're doing this."

The jazz community came through. The tour went great, and the kids and I had such a fantastic time. They are still buzzing on the high of it.

Even in the face of hardship, this music brings out the best in all of us. It's about fun, creativity, discipline and, most of all, "doing unto others."

That's why I'm here, and know you are, too.

—Bill Cunliffe

Bill Cunliffe is professor of music at Cal State Fullerton and was named a Distinguished Professor of the College of the Arts in 2010. He is a Grammy-winning arranger and composer and has led his piano trio for 30 years.

Joel Ross

Joel Ross was touring Europe last summer with his group Good Vibes in support of his new Blue Note album, *Nublues*. On the same day of a performance at the North Sea Jazz Festival, he made time for a live Blindfold Test — his first — on the festival's Central Park talk stage.

Christian McBride & Inside Straight

"Gang Gang" (*Live At The Village Vanguard*, Mack Avenue, 2021) McBride, bass; Steve Wilson, alto saxophone; Warren Wolf, vibraphone; Peter Martin, piano; Carl Allen, drums.

I saw them play this song live at the Vanguard. It's Warren Wolf. It sounded like an etude, so I heard some classical training. Warren's touch is pretty distinctive to me, and then once he played the blues, he played something I just know sounds like Warren. He has the best mix of both actual technique on the instrument as well as a deep and profound understanding of multiple types of music. His dad had him playing the vibes at a super early age, like 2 or 3! I'm pretty sure he had to stand on a box.

Bobby Hutcherson

"Even Later" (*Cirrus*, Blue Note, 1974) Hutcherson, vibraphone, marimba; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Emanuel Boyd, Harold Land, tenor saxophones; Bill Henderson, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Larry Hancock, drums; Kenneth Nash, percussion.

It feels like Bobby. Same vibes and piano sound from his *Happenings* album, the one with Herbie, where they play "Rojo." Now he's on marimba. That's a Bobby Hutcherson roll. I was at the Brubeck Institute and a teacher of mine, pianist Joe Gilman, drove me down to Bobby's house in Montara where I got to spend an afternoon with him, to play for him, and we just talked. He gave me the advice to write music every day, write about my life.

Patrician Brennan

"Sizigia (Sizygy)" (*More Touch*, video, 2021) Brennan, vibraphone, marimba, electronics; Kim Cass, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums; Mauricio Herrera, percussion.

Patrician Brennan. The way she's incorporating electronics into the music and onto the instrument is very unique. Extremely rhythmic and cultural. I know that was my good friend and inspiration Marcus Gilmore on drums, so that also gave it away. I think she has such a refreshing voice and is also still technically profound. We actually played together with Ben Wendel for his Jazz Gallery commission.

Charlie Hunter

"Turn Me Loose" (*Return Of The Candyman*, Blue Note, 1998) Hunter, 8-string electric guitar; Stefan Harris, vibraphone; Scott Amendola, drums; John Santos, percussion.

The language they're using while soloing sounds more contemporary than older vibraphonists. They sound similar to my mentor Stefan Harris, a little bit. So now I'm wondering if it's Juan Diego Villalobos. No? There's a clarity in harmonic ideas that I hear from musicians who studied under Stefan. [afterwards] Interesting. So a younger Stefan. I heard the way his rhythm is a bit wide to me, a bit elastic. That's why it didn't sound like the Stefan that I know. He's the reason I went to the Brubeck Institute and he basically revamped the way I practice, the way I hold my body, made me realize I need to breathe, and then also helped me get my ear together to help me hear different chords, bass notes, qualities, things like that.

Dave Holland Quintet

"Metamorphos" (*Points Of View*, ECM, 1997) Holland, bass; Steve Wilson, alto saxophone; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Steve Nelson, vibraphone; Billy Kilson, drums.

Is that Steve Nelson? And Sir Holland. I just rode in on the bus with him here today. It's drenched with blues, especially the moment Steve came



LAUREN DESBERG

"That's something that vibraphonists do, be listening to the harmonic information but also dial completely into the drummer and respond to that," said Ross.

in but even when Dave started playing. You could dance to it yet you can feel the groove even though it wasn't in your traditional 4/4 time. I love that about it. Steve is another unique voice. I think you can hear an older wisdom and more experience than a lot of my peers, and I like the way he shapes his phrases a lot. You generally don't see it coming. I think he's constantly listening to and playing off of whatever is happening. That's something I noticed that vibraphonists do, be listening to the harmonic information but also dial completely into the drummer and respond to that — I think Steve does a unique job of melding that together.

Benny Goodman Sextet

"Good Enough To Keep (Air Mail Special)" (*Benny Goodman Sextet Featuring Charlie Christian*, Columbia Records, 1940) Goodman, clarinet; Christian, electric guitar; Lionel Hampton, vibraphone; Dudley Brooks, piano; Arthur Bernstein, bass; Nick Fatool, drums.

[listens to entire track] It was important to let that play. It's Lionel Hampton. What is there to say? He's the father of jazz vibraphone pretty much. I love listening to him the more mature I get. I was indoctrinated with Bags basically from 5th grade until I graduated high school, with some Bobby thrown in there. I was too immature to appreciate Lionel Hampton. I feel that if he was here playing right now it would still be relevant: his sense of rhythm and the melodicism in his lines.

Edmar Castaneda/Joe Locke Duo

"Sword Of Whispers" (*Live At Jazz Baltica 2010*, YouTube video) Castaneda, Peruvian harp; Locke, vibraphone.

That was beautiful. I know Joe likes this type of music. It's very moving compositionally. That had his touch. I heard the four mallets and ruled out Gary Burton and from there — hearing the maturity and the lines and the technique, the facility across the instrument, how he lays his chords, how he was supporting Edmar — it all started to reveal Joe Locke. I learned about Joe in high school, specifically the Jazz Baltica duets he did with Bobby Hutcherson. That was an important one for me.

Isaac Hayes

"Ellie's Love Theme" (*Shaft: Music From The Soundtrack*, Eclipse, 2006) Hayes, vibraphone, piano; Charles Pitts, Michael Toles, electric guitars; Lester Snell, electric piano; James Alexander, bass; Willie Hall, drums; Memphis Horns, horns; Memphis Strings, strings.

It's not Lem Winchester is it? Plus Charles Stepney? It sounds like Motown, soul music from the '50s, '60s. Like what I would listen to on the radio with my dad and actual singers singing it. It's very visual, picturesque backdrop music.

DB

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

LEAH CONCIALDI

EXCLUSIVELY PLAYS THE PMST-600CV "VENUS" AND THE PMB-300UL



P. Mauriat
Go for the Sound



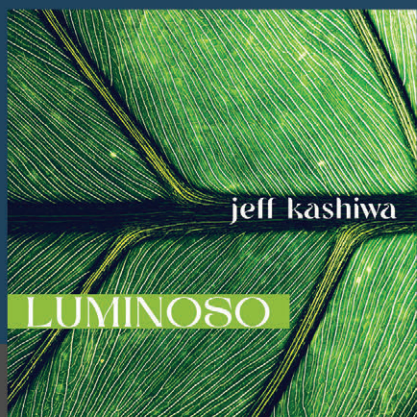
www.pmauriatmusic.com

Jeff Kashiwa plays JodyJazz



HR* CUSTOM DARK Soprano 7* • HR* CUSTOM DARK Alto 7
HR* CUSTOM DARK Tenor 8 • DV HR Alto 7

“Like most players I spent years searching for the right sound with a number of different mouthpieces. I wanted to find the perfect combination of warmth and character with the flexibility to have a traditional sound in a contemporary setting. The search ended when I found my sound in the HR* CUSTOM DARK mouthpieces. They give me everything I’m looking for in a mouthpiece.”



New Recording *Luminoso*

Available at iTunes, Amazon Music, Spotify, Youtube Music,
Pandora, Deezer and at jeffkashiwa.com



photo by Joshua Flynn

