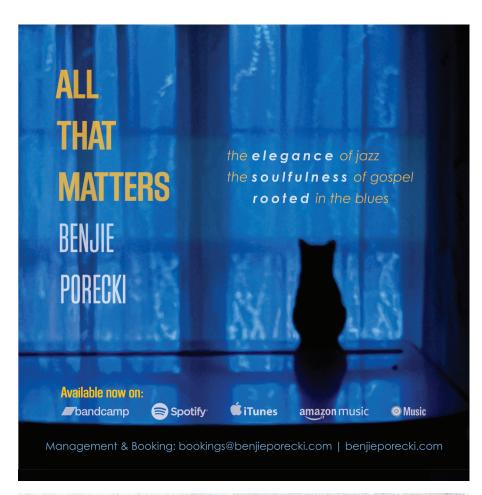
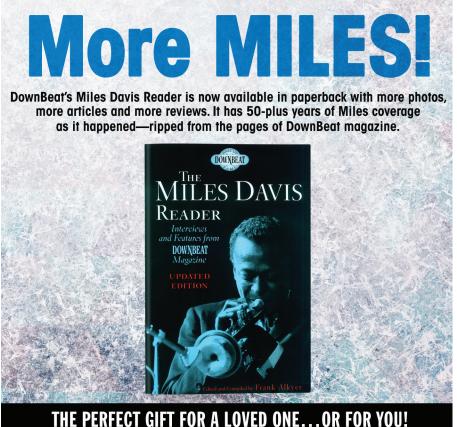




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Reviews Editor Michael J. West Žaneta Čuntová

ADVERTISING SALES

Record Companies & Schools

Jennifer Ruban-Gentile Associate Publisher 630-359-9345 jenr@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

Aaron Cohen, Howard Mandel, John McDonough
Atlanta: Jon Ross; Boston: Frank-John Hadley, Allen Morrisor, Chicago: Alain
Drouot, Michael Jackson, Jeff Johnson, Bill Meyer, Paul Natkin, Howard Reich;
Chicago: Ayana Contreras; Indiana: Mark Sheldon; Los Angeles: Gary Fukushima,
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James Hale; France: Jean Szlamowicz, Germany: Peter Margasak, Hyou Veliz,
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Virgil Mihaiu; Russia: Cyril Moshkow. Contributor Emeritus: Fred Bouchard.

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

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ON THE COVER

22 Branford Marsalis

Explores Keith Jarrett

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

Few undertakings have been weightier than Branford Marsalis' latest album, *Belonging*. His much-anticipated debut on the Blue Note label is a full cover version of Keith Jarrett's 1974 recording of the same name, coming in as one master commenting on another's work.

FEATURES

- 28 Steve Lehman Making the Music of Anthony Braxton BY GARY FUKUSHIMA
- 32 Sasha Berliner A Prodigy Fulfilled BY YOSHI KATO
- 39 We Love Vinyl!

SPECIAL SECTION

67 2025 International Jazz Festival Guide



Cover photo by Steven Sussman from the 2023 Newport Jazz Festival.



47 Vijay Iyer/Wadada Leo Smith



50 Rodney Whitaker



55 Lucía



56 John Hart

■ WOODSHED — WOODWINDS EDITION ■

- 60 Master Class:
 - Welcome to the Wild West of Woodwinds BY CALEB WHEELER CURTIS
- 62 Transcription:
 - Wayne Escoffery's Tenor Sax Solo on 'The Ice Queen' BY JIMI DURSO
- 64 Toolshed
 - JodyJazz DV HR Baritone Saxophone Mouthpiece
 - · Victory Revelation Series Professional Alto Saxophone
- 65 Gear Box

DEPARTMENTS

- **B** First Take
- 10 Chords & Discords
- 13 The Beat
 - 13 Coleman Mellett
 - 16 George Porter Jr.
 - 18 Blues Alley at 60
 - 19 Final Bar Roy Ayers, Bunky Green
 - 20 Nanami Haruta

47 Reviews

114 Blindfold Test Bill Goodwin





Jeff Lorber
Jimmy Haslip
Joe Vannelli
Russell Ferrante
Michael Thompson
Mark Lettieri
and more...

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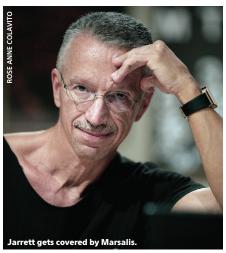
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First Take)

BY FRANK ALKYER





New Guiding Lights

SOMETIMES AT DOWNBEAT WE PLAN THE themes for an issue. Most of the time, the themes simply emerge on their own.

The latter is certainly the case with this issue. The development of jazz over the decades has led to the development of songs that are played and replayed by improvising artists. As this music has continued to evolve for well over a century since its inception, the jazz canon has become jazz canons; the American Songbook has spawned multiple American Songbooks.

When artists dip into the vast trove of music that has been created under the big tent of jazz, of course they're going to branch out beyond the tried-and-true classics of, say, a Basie, Ellington, Parker or Coltrane (not that many don't still find plenty of water in those wells).

Case in point is this month's cover artist. Branford Marsalis has innovated in his own compositions at the highest levels. But there are times when the multireedist shines a light on the work of other legendary composers — in this case, a living composer in the form of Keith Jarrett. Beginning on page 22, writer Phillip Lutz interviews Marsalis and members of his quartet to find out why they recorded, tune for tune, Keith Jarrett's classic recording *Belonging*, which came out in 1974 on ECM. People cover plenty of Jarrett tunes, but a full album? It's a serious dedication to Jarrett's art, and the results are a delight.

Turn to page 28 and read about another fantastic dedication, this time from saxophonist Steve Lehman. Instead of the lyrical splendor and groove of Jarrett's European quartet, Lehman dives into the experimental glory of another living legend, Anthony Braxton, who has served as a mentor to Lehman. Recorded live before an enthusiastic audience at ETA in Los Angeles, the album shakes, spins and twists with

surprise, including a cool melding of Lehman and fellow L.A.-based saxophonist Mark Turner.

Then there's a more local or regional love affair with a composer that's starting to reach wider audiences. For decades, Michigan State University has been a hub for great artists, both students and educators alike. One former MSU student is composer Gregg Hill, who's gaining quite a reputation for his body of work. In this issue alone, he served as the producer of the debut album from trombonist Nanami Haruta (see her Beat feature on page 20), and he wrote the title track. Then, on page 50, veteran bassist, and MSU faculty member, Rodney Whitaker receives a 4-star review for his latest recording, *Mosaic, The Music Of Gregg Hill* (Origin).

If you look back to the October 2024 issue of DownBeat, we featured Michael Dease, another trombonist, DownBeat poll winner and MSU faculty member, who had just put out his own ode to Hill: Found In Space: The Music Of Gregg Hill (Origin), which received critical raves, too.

It all points to the eternal quest for new sounds, new directions and, especially, new influences. Improvising artists are seekers, wandering the sonic planet, never satisfied to do the same thing twice in their solos — or in their choices of what to play.

Take, for instance, Haruta (by the way, a current MSU student) and her take on why she chose to not only play Hill's composition on her new recording, *The Vibe* (Origin), but also tunes by other living, working artists.

"There is so much great music that never gets recorded by someone else," Haruta says. "That's why I recorded 'Sister Rosa' by Christian McBride and 'Girlie's World' by Renee Rosnes, great compositions that nobody else recorded."



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Kennedy Center Wake-Up Call

I often ask myself why I love jazz. My conclusion — jazz is courageous, free, inclusive and evolving. Just like where it was invented: America. Frank Alkyer's description [April issue, "First Take"] of what happened to the Kennedy Center is a wake-up call — the canary in the coal mine. Did I say jazz is also BRAVE? Thank you, DownBeat, you make me proud to be a fan.

DON SEXTON

Saluting Civic Mindedness

Your statement, titled "Kennedy Center Dishonor," in the April 2025 issue of DownBeat, is important. As the periodical of record for the jazz community, DownBeat needs to contain commentary on civic issues affecting its citizens. I salute you for speaking out on the recent outrageous action by President Trump spoiling what had been an apolitical force for good in the music world for nearly 50 years.

JOHN AUSTIN MURPHY AKA, THE MONSIGNOR WRIU JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Spot-On Commentary

Hats off to DB editor Frank Alkyer for his April First Take column. Frank expressed what so many us are feeling. "But as president, you gotta have a spine, don't you?" is priceless. I am in a deep funk myself, but thanks, Frank, for a little antidote.

BILL BENJAMIN BILTMORE LAKE, NC

Message Defeated

Regarding Jim Macnie's review of Sylvie Cour-

voisier's Bone Bells on page 36 of the March issue: "... and was taken more with buoyant recreation than their exacting accord." What is that supposed to mean? I love it when people write sentences so complex to prove that they're smarter than everyone else yet in the end nobody knows what they're talking about, so the whole message is defeated. It's a failed message to make them look brilliant.

P.S.: More "Free Jazz" please — like the old Coda Magazines.

JIM V. VIA EMAIL

Remler's Guitar, Again

Sorry to belabor the issue, but Bill Milkowski need not stand corrected regarding Emily Remler's guitars (January issue). She is often pictured playing what appears to be a Gibson ES-335 or ES-345. Both differ from the 330 in that they are semi-hollow and, just as important in terms of sound, they have Gibson humbucking pickups while the 330 has P-90 single coil pickups. Any guitar nerd like me will spot the difference instantly. Anyway, her beautiful tone was her own no matter which instrument she was playing. Thanks for a great issue.

JOEL LEIVICK SANTA CRUZ. CALIFORNIA

A Wonderful Issue

I love DownBeat, although sometimes I disagree with the absence of certain coverage or the review of a recording. The March issue was special. Jim Durso's Woodshed article on Gonzalo Rubalcaba's comping rhythms was excellent. My classical piano associates often comment on the lack of interest in the left-hand comping of jazz pianists, but we know there is uniqueness in both voicing and rhythm.

Gary Fukushima's article in The Beat answered many of the questions I had regarding the effects of the fires on the lives of jazz musicians who live in Altadena, California. After shedding some tears, I not only noted ways to contribute to the fundraising organizations, but I seriously contemplated the roles various possessions play in my life. Thanks for a wonderful issue.

JAMES DORSEY COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND

Lose the "T"

On page 82 of the March Downbeat, under the John Hollenbeck section, "Wichita Lineman" should not contain a T in Wichita. Jimmy Webb was likely referring to Wichita, Kansas.

RICHARD HENRY NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

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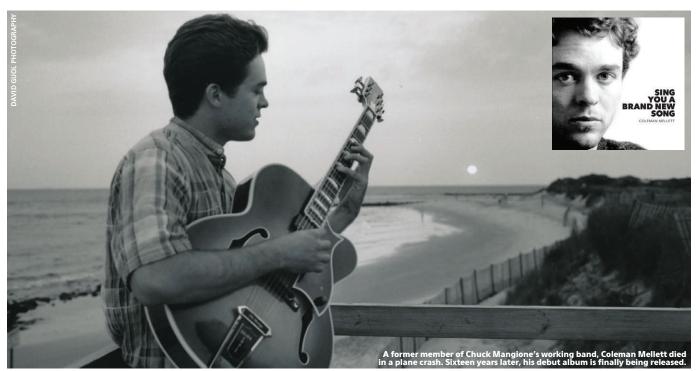
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TURNTABLE



George Porter Jr., Blues Alley @ 60, Final Bar: Roy Avers & Bunky Green, Nanami Haruta



Coleman Mellett: a Tribute 16 Years in the Making

via FaceTime. The 67-year-old Jersey girl has been a gardener most of her life. Flanked by stalks and leaves, she sat in her greenhouse on an afternoon in February. "I can't wait to get my hands in the dirt," she said, looking beyond the plexiglass. "This is like my happy time."

For Bryson, as it does for so many people, happiness coexists with grief. A singer and an acclaimed bandleader, the daughter of Dizzy Gillespie, she hasn't performed publicly in 16 years — not since the death at age 34 of her husband and musical partner, Coleman Mellett. The late guitarist, who'd been a member of Chuck Mangione's working band for nearly a decade, died in a plane crash on a flight from Newark to Buffalo in 2009. Bryson and Mellett had been together for 13 years.

But in February, with support from producer Barry Miles and engineer Ron DiCesare, Bryson released Sing You A Brand

pring is coming," said Jeanie Bryson New Song, a project 16 years in the making. At once an artifact and an animate gesture, Sing You A Brand New Song combines a full-length recording of Mellett's music on Ride Symbol Records with an award-winning film that documents the delicate task of finishing an artist's album when they're no longer here to guide the process.

> "Thank God he finished the vocals," said Bryson, who serves as film's producer and album co-producer with Miles. The record's 12 songs — 11 originals plus James Taylor's "Fire And Rain" — reveal Mellett's range as a musician and a songwriter. Subverted line cliches and surprise turns of melody add dimension to his frank, intimate lyrics. Bell-toned consonances dip into rubs. And on pensive tunes like "Oh Kayo" and "Fire And Rain," a buoyant sweetness — now bittersweet — balms the pain. "I know about music," said Bryson. "I know what's good. This is good."

The album began as rough demos, one of

which Mellett sent to Miles in 2008. "I knew I wanted to put Coley [Collett's nickname] and Barry together," said Bryson, who admires Miles as an instrumentalist and an arranger. She felt Mellett's demos needed piano, so she pressed the bashful guitarist. "I begged Coley to email Barry one song."

Before long, Mellett and Miles were working toward releasing what would become Sing You A Brand New Song. "He just had so many things together," said Miles. "He knew the jazz vocabulary and the language. And he also obviously loved the pop and R&B music from the '70s and the '80s." Miles, who knew Mellett as a dexterous player on tour with Mangione, remembers his first encounter with the young songwriter's lyrics: "Everybody was surprised with his lyrics, especially Jeanie's mom," said Miles, referencing the late composer and lyricist Connie Bryson. "I remember her saying, "Where are these songs coming from?"

Days after the crash, and raw with grief,

ECM



Vijay Iyer/Wadada Leo Smith Defiant Life

Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith and pianist Vijay Iyer with their second duo album, following 2016's A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke. "This recording session was conditioned by our ongoing sorrow and outrage over the past year's cruelties, but also by ourfaith in human possibility." (Vijay Iyer)



Joe Lovano Marcin Wasilewski Sławomir Kurkiewicz Michał Miśkiewicz Homage

The American tenor giant teams up with the Marcin Wasilewski piano trio for a second round of fine-tuned interplay – a coming together of forces the Guardian dubbed "an ethereal, tonally luxurious meeting of hearts and minds."

Bryson and Miles began the monumental task of finishing Mellett's record without him. Amid sadness and confusion, Bryson clung to what she knew for certain: Mellett wanted to document his work. He had no aspirations of landing a recording contract. The album itself was the goal. "It was like, 'I need to finish this for me. This is my work."

The record took roughly 13 months to complete. Miles and DiCesare sorted thousands of tracks in dozens of formats and sequencer programs. Four songs were nearly complete demos; the remaining were sketches. After organizing the raw material, Miles began calling musicians to fill out the sound. He and Bryson sought artists who would honor the music's intimacy and its complexity. "All of these musicians donated their time and their talent," said Miles. "There was no money involved."

Mangione and bassist Will Lee recorded their contributions at Ultrasound in New York. At Miles' Cape May studio, Bryson and singer Natascha Roth recorded backing vocals. The other artists, who include Larry Goldings on organ and Steve Gadd on brushes, recorded their parts remotely; from his studio in the Berkshires, James Taylor recorded guitar and vocals for multiple tracks. "I really wanted him to just play the rhythm guitar part," said Miles, "but then he went ahead and did some background vocals in the choruses at the end of the one song. It was just a wonderful thing."

To create an album whose sound stays true to the artist's unadorned expression, Miles and DiCesare went into production overdrive. For "Morning Line," Miles stripped Mellett's three-vocal overlay down to one. "His voice was just so clear," said Miles. "I wanted to make it even more intimate than it was without throwing everything away." Named for Lummi Island in Washington, "Island Home" was a 50-second sketch of a verse and chorus. Using synth harmonica, Miles affects a call-and-response with Mellett's wordless melody. "Luckily, the guitar and the voice were on separate tracks and there was no leakage from one to the other." Because the album needed Bryson's voice to feel complete, she proffered a track she and Mellett recorded together years earlier. After isolating each vocal and guitar track for what would be titled "You Got Me Too (remix)," Miles muted the reverb and brought down the tempo without changing the pitch before Lee recorded his bass part. Engineer Zack Kornhauser mastered the final mixes.

Not until Bryson reviewed the finished documentary did she realize Mellett's songs were really just love letters; the film, a love story. Lyrics like "Take my hand so we can sit and watch the seasons change" and "Show me the way you make my grey skies blue/ So if you have to leave, I just might know what to do" unveil not only his poet's soul but his profound devotion to Bryson. "It was a very deep, soulful connection," she said, later adding, "it was a love of a lifetime."

Eighteen months after his death, Bryson attended a James Taylor and Carole King concert in Holmdel, New Jersey. It was the first time she allowed herself to miss working with Mellett. "When I saw them on stage, I thought, 'Oh, God, yes. I miss that,'" she said. "It was that musical connection of people that have been playing together for 50 years. And I realized how much I lost."

With this project complete, Bryson looks toward the future. Though she hasn't set foot on a plane in 16 years, she recently began working with a therapist to address her trauma from learning of Mellett's death on the nightly news: "Looking at the picture of the fireball — that's how I found out that his plane crashed." As for the future of her career, she'd like to release decades-vaulted Jeanie Bryson recordings, one with Holland's Metropole Orkest, another with Kenny Barron, Victor Lewis and Ray Drummond. "I think they're valid recordings," she said.

For the moment, her goal is to encourage people to hear Mellett's album and view its unconventional recording process. In the backyard garden she shared with Mellett, through tears, she said, "All I want is for people to hear this. I know how many people it could touch if they would hear it. It's just such joyful music."

—Stephanie Jones



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George Porter Jr. Plays for the Hip

ny discussion of the origins of funk music would necessarily begin with James Brown but must also include The Meters, the instrumental group that put a decidedly New Orleans spin on the genre in the late '60s and early '70s. The loosetight, syncopated connection that bassist George Porter Jr. had with drummer Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste — in combination with keyboardist Art Neville and guitarist Leo Nocentelli — on such infectious, oft-covered funk anthems as "Cissy Strut," "Chicken Strut," "Look-Ka Py Py" and "Funky Miracle"

set the template for countless funk bands that followed. And while the original group disbanded in 1978, they did manage to have a few reunion gigs over the years at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and for other special occasions.

Porter would later front a new lineup dubbed The Funky Meters before forming his Runnin' Partner band in 1990, subsequently touring in support of their self-titled Rounder Records release that year. Originally a seven-piece horn band, with numerous live recordings to its credit over the past

three decades, the band has recently been pared down to a quartet with keyboardist Michael Lemmler, guitarist Chris Adkins and drummer Terrence Houston. And the official name of the group has shifted to George Porter Jr. & Runnin' Pardners for their recent release, *Porter's Pocket* (on the Denver-based funk-centric label Color Red).

This strictly instrumental album harkens back to classic Meters fare, particularly on tunes like the funky opener, "Buttermilk," the Booker T. & The MG's-ish "Don Julio Rides Again," the New Orleans second-line flavored "See Me? See Me?" and the album's single, "Tito's Dumpling Machine," which conjures up memories of "Cissy Strut" and "Funky Miracle" from The Meters' 1969 self-titled debut. But this is a more versatile outfit, capable of segueing from chugging funk to breakneck uptempo swing mode behind Lemmler's B-3 organ solo on "Buttermilk" or behind his piano solo on "Proteins & Carbohydrates," with guitarist Adkins morphing from Grant Green to Eric Gale mode on his own solos.

Elsewhere on the eclectic *Porter's Pocket*, they deliver an authentic reggae one-drop riddim on "Sauce On The Side," delve into Sly Stone *Fresh* territory on "Gangs In Alamosa" and touch on cinematic music on the atmospheric "Latenighter," a moody number with some allusions to Ennio Morricone's soundtracks to Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns of the '60s. Said Porter, "That's one where when we were hearing it back in the studio, I said, 'Man, this sounds like a track that can go really well in a low-budget exploitation movie."

Porter explained the evolution of the reggae feel on "Sauce On The Side." "In my live gigs, we started doing a Johnny Adams song called 'Body And Fender Man' with a reggae feeling. And the groove was so good I thought, 'Man, we just can't let this groove go to waste on a song that we have no rights to.' So we added a few more chord movements to the feel, and that's what it turned out to be. We turned it in from a 16-bar blues to a 24-bar blues."

"The original idea when we went into the studio was to record a jazz record," said the 77-year-old bassist-bandleader, who continues to front the Runnin' Pardners in their weekly Monday night appearances at the Maple Leaf Bar in Uptown New Orleans. "But it just didn't work out to be a really outright jazz record. You know, it got more funky than jazzy in the end, even though there's a couple of tracks where we also did the swing thing in the middle of the solos. We do more of that kind of thing on live gigs. And because Terence Houston is such a wonderful drummer, he can swing anything."

Porter, who has also played on 18 of the 21

Caribbean Jam Cruises since its inaugural journey in 2004, added that none of the songs for *Porter's Pocket* came into the studio as finished pieces. "Chris brought in a couple of licks that we developed into songs in the studio. For instance, he came up with a lick for 'Tito's Dumpling Machine,' but he was hearing it on '1,' and I heard it on the 'and.' So that song got transformed from being on the downbeat of 1 to the 'and' before 2. You know, it's a New Orleans thing. The Meters did that forever, man."

Porter explained that he developed his signature push-and-pull groove with Zig Modeliste quite organically back in the day. "Zig and I created the bottom that everything else grew on, where you come in can change the whole concept of where one is. And it was all intuitive. We definitely didn't write out charts or anything like that."

Initially, when he was doing a residency at The Ivanhoe on Bourbon Street with Art Neville and the Neville Sounds, a group that would later become The Meters in 1965, Porter was playing a Melody Plus bass, which was a Japanese copy of a Höfner bass. Ten months into that gig there, the Melody Plus slipped off a chair at the club one night and broke. He quickly replaced it with a new Gibson EB-2 semi-hollowbody bass, which he ended up

using on The Meters' first record, released in May of 1969. For their second album, *Look-Ka Py Py*, released in December of that year, Porter played a Fender Telecaster bass. By 1970, for *Cabbage Alley*, he switched to a Fender Precision, which remained his bass of choice for the next three decades. He currently plays a Lākland Bob Glaub 44-64 Classic Precision modeled after his old Fender Precision bass. As for strings, he prefers old and dull to new and bright. As he said, "My strings leave the bass when they break. I would never, ever play a bass that has all brand-new strings on it. If I have to change all four of my strings, the bass is gonna sit around a while before I play on it."

Porter has always prided himself in utilizing up and down strokes with his thumb, à la Wes Montgomery. These days, particularly with Grateful Dead offshoot bands like The Mickey Hart Band and 7 Walkers, led by Dead drummer Bill Kreutzmann, he relies on a two-fingers-and-thumb approach, which harkens back to a discipline from his youth. As he explained, "For those bands I had to start playing triplets and these 16th-note things, and I didn't want to play with a pick, which is how most guys played those Dead songs. So I got my right hand together. I basically went back to the school, because when I was an acoustic guitar player, from ages 8 to 12, I played

the classical formula with my first two fingers after my thumb. So I've always had that in me, and I just started working out that technique again, just getting my fingers to play 16th notes better. So I've been using my fingers a little bit more lately, but my thumb is still a very important part of my whole approach."

But don't ask him about using his thumb for slap bass. "My slapping on record is all of maybe 40 seconds. It's just not my thing," he said.

Whatever technique he applies to the strings, Porter remains the rock-solid groove-meister on any bandstand. "From where I sit at in the chair, my job as a bass player is to coincide with the drums, and at the same time stay away from the drums' backbeat," he said. "Give that backbeat as much space as it can get. So I try very hard not to put a note on that backbeat. That was one of the things that worked really well with The Meters. And as much as I may want to get away from the legacy of The Meters, it's such a fundamental part of my musical upbringing that I'll always have that."

He added, "The key to what we were doing in The Meters and what we continue to do with Runnin' Pardners is syncopation. To me, syncopation is like jazz. It wasn't meant for the masses. It was meant for just a hip few."

-Bill Milkowski

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Harry Schnipper, owner of Blues Alley, and a few of the dignitaries who have graced the stage: Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins, Elvin Jones and

Blues Alley Swings at 60 from the Nation's Capital

n a Thursday afternoon in early New York Voices and Tuck and Patti. March, the lights are dimmed inside Blues Alley as employees polish tables and scrub the floors. The Washington, D.C.based, red-brick carriage-house jazz club is preparing to welcome Nicholas Payton.

"He's without a doubt one of the preeminent jazz trumpeters from New Orleans," says Harry Schnipper, Blues Alley's owner and executive director, noting that the club has been a regular stop for Payton since the beginning of his solo career.

Blues Alley is a cozy, roughly 3,250-squarefoot venue that includes a kitchen, bar and upstairs space. Its walls are decorated with photos of jazz stars such as Ramsey Lewis, Ahmad Jamal, Sarah Vaughan, Sonny Rollins and many more.

Payton is one of the thousands of jazz luminaries who regularly visit Blues Alley, the oldest, continuously operating jazz supper club in the U.S., according to Schnipper's account. Later in the month, other marquee artists such as Buster Williams, Lenny White, Benito Gonzalez, Steve Davis, Eddie Henderson and Sy Smith were slated to perform.

On July 21, Blues Alley will celebrate its 60th anniversary. Surrounding that auspicious date, the hallowed venue will present a rotating cast of "legacy acts" that include Yellowjackets, Stanley Jordan, Jon Faddis, David Benoit, Eliane Elias, Michael Stern, the

Schnipper became Blues Alley's owner in 2003, but his history with the club dates back to his teens. He was 16 years old in 1973, when he went there for the first time to see Larry Coryell and his Eleventh House ensemble. Schnipper recalls Georgetown — the district where Blues Alley lives — at that time being a "sleepy little neighborhood that was mostly industrial" as opposed to today's posh residential homes and top retail stores, teeming with foot, vehicle and bicycle traffic.

Conversely, Schnipper compares the Georgetown of the early '70s to New Orleans' Bourbon Street. "You couldn't roll a bowling ball down M Street without hitting a jazz club or a nightclub," he says before mentioning other legendary but now-defunct music venues such as the Cellar Door, Desperados, the Crazy Horse, the Saloon, the Pirate's Den and the Dungeon.

Today, Blues Alley is the lone survivor on that long list. Not only has Blues Alley persisted through waves of gentrification that have priced many people and business owners out of Georgetown and the greater Washington, D.C., area, the club has ridden the waves of multiple stylistic evolutions within jazz, various local and federal government administrations, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Jan. 6 insurrection on Capitol Hill.

In short, he and the club have seen it all.

With this year marking the fifth anniversary of the pandemic, Schnipper reflects on how Blues Alley survived, noting that it was, in part, because it's in the nation's capital. "We are a bit of a cultural anomaly in terms of our relationships," he says of D.C. "Decades ago, I began developing a partnership with Voice of America."

In April 2020, producers from VOA asked Schnipper if he wanted to do a broadcast performance in tribute to VOA's Willis Conover the following year in celebration of the legendary jazz broadcaster's centennial birthday. The lightbulb in Schnipper lit up. But he didn't wait until the following year to switch to streaming virtual live shows; he launched Monday Night Jazz Series at the National Press Club in November 2020 in partnership with VOA. The streaming concerts at the National Press Club continued until Blues Alley reopened for in-person concerts in September 2021.

"By the time I'd finished [those streaming concerts], I was working with all of the embassies in Washington, D.C." Schnipper says. "Let's face it. This industry is all about relationships. Also, my broker, accountant and attorney all said that if I didn't do something during that time, there wouldn't be a market for me to present jazz when the pandemic finished. So, I seized the opportunity to establish Blues Alley as a global brand.

"So, fast-forward, we are now broadcasting around the world," he adds, "We are streaming shows simultaneously [from Blues Alley]. A great deal of this is archived on our website."

Blues Alley was founded in 1965 by Tommy Gwaltney, a Dixieland jazz clarinetist and vibraophonist, who used the venue to celebrate his favorite brand of jazz. In fact, he would play there often, leading a combo called the Blues Alley Cats, which also accompanied many of the visiting jazz musicians who performed there. Three years later, Gwaltney sold it to Bill Cannon, a retired Air Force colonel.

When Cannon became the owner, the booking at Blues Alley modernized to include artists such as Thad Jones and Monty Alexander. The year that Schnipper first saw a show at Blues Alley, lawyer and entrepreneur John T. Bunyan owned it.

Under Bunyan's leadership, Blues Alley increasingly became an internationally renowned jazz club with acts that stretched a greater idiomatic spectrum — from tradjazz to hard-bop, fusion to avant-garde. The joint caught the attention of Dizzy Gillespie, who reportedly said, "Now, this is a jazz club," in 1978.

Bunyan expanded the Blues Alley brand by launching the Blues Alley Music Society and Youth Orchestra in 1985. It was a nonprofit designed to cultivate emerging jazz talent. In terms of documenting young talent during that time, no album is more illustrative than Wynton Marsalis' Live At Blues Alley, which captured the then 25-year-old trumpeter leading a crackling quartet in December 1986. Released a year later on Columbia Records, the album increased the buzz about Blues Alley being a premier jazz club.

Back to current times, Blues Alley is facing a potentially serious challenge. With the Trump administration's recent dismantling of VOA and bullying art institutions such as the Kennedy Center and the National Endowment for the Arts, non-mainstream artists of varying idioms are understandably worried. The Trump administration's federal budget-slashing actions could impact D.C.'s arts ecosystem.

Schnipper says that since Trump's second presidential inauguration, he's witnessed a contraction in the cultural market, particularly with jazz.

"But I've seen a corresponding growth in the number of artists looking to perform at Blues Alley," Schnipper says. "So, I think it's incumbent upon small venue owners to step up our game and consider the value of our entertainment." —John Murph

Final Bar >

Roy Ayers: 1940-2025

VIBRAPHONIST AND COMPOSER ROY Ayers, whose soul-driven, electrified approach influenced generations of R&B-adjacent musicians, died March 4 at his home in Manhattan after a long illness. He was 84.

His career saw the release of more than 40 albums, and he collaborated with globally celebrated artists such as Wayne Henderson, Rick James, the Roots, George Benson and Fela Kuti, as well as the "neo-soul"-influenced producer Adrien Younge.

Roy Edward Ayers Jr. was born on Sept. 10, 1940, in Los Angeles to a musical family. He began to play the vibraphone at age 5 after seeing a live performance by Lionel Hampton, who bestowed a pair of vibraphone mallets upon the youngster. While in his early 20s, he began playing and recording with L.A.-based saxophonists Curtis Amy and Vi Redd. Ayers' debut album, West Coast Vibes (United Artists), was released in 1963. He went on to gain national exposure starting in 1966, when he joined flutist Herbie Mann's band. Mann, famous for the strong groove element inherent in his music, helped the young vibraphonist land recording



contracts and served as a producer on albums released under his own name in the late 1960s.

The band Roy Ayers Ubiquity, which brought him to the peak of his popularity in the 1970s, was considered highly influential in the then-burgeoning jazz-funk realm. Ayers' 1976 hit "Everybody Loves The Sunshine" is the most recognized title in his acclaimed oeuvre of original songs, which have been sampled hundreds of times by hip-hop and R&B musicians. Other memorable tunes by Ayers include "Coffey Is The Color," "Love," "Running Away," "Love Will Bring Us Back Together" and "We Live In Brooklyn, Baby." —Ed Enright

Bunky Green: 1933–2025

VERNICE "BUNKY" GREEN, THE TRAILblazing alto saxophonist, composer and educator, passed away on March 1 at age 91. Known for his bold harmonic approach and deeply expressive sound, Green was a pioneering figure in modern jazz, influencing generations of musicians with his adventurous improvisation and commitment to pushing boundaries.

Born in Milwaukee on April 23, 1933, Green rose to prominence in the 1960s, performing with Charles Mingus, Sonny Stitt and Elvin Jones. His early recordings showcased a unique approach to bebop, but it was his later work - marked by angular lines and a forward-thinking harmonic sensibility - that cemented his reputation as an innovator.

Green was a dedicated teacher who profoundly impacted jazz education. He taught at Chicago State University from 1972 to 1989, and in 1990 he took up the directorship of the jazz studies program at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, where he mentored students until his retirement in 2011. He is a past president of the International Association of Jazz Education and was inducted into the IAJE Hall of Fame in 1999. In 2003 Green entered the



DownBeat Hall of Fame for Jazz Education.

Despite never achieving mainstream fame, Green remained a musician's musician, admired for his fearless creativity and deep emotional connection to his instrument. His 1989 session Healing The Pain (Delos) commemorates the death of his parents and was awarded a 5-star rating in DownBeat. His 2006 album Another Place also received a 5-star review from DownBeat. His 2008 album Apex, a collaboration with saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa, introduced his music to a new generation and reaffirmed his status as one of the most forward-thinking altoists of his time.

—Ed Enright



Introducing Nanami Haruta

BORN IN SAPPORO, JAPAN, NANAMI Haruta started playing piano at age 5 and gravitated to the trombone when she was only 8 years old. The instrument was taller than she was.

"They do have smaller trombones for kids but I just used a normal one," she recalled from Michigan State University, where she's currently enrolled in the jazz studies program. "What first made me want to play it was that the sound of the name trombone was funny," she added with a laugh.

There was nothing funny about Haruta's prowess, however. At age 13, she began giving concerts in Sapporo and won multiple prizes in summer music competitions before moving to Tokyo in 2020. She made a big splash on the Tokyo jazz scene as soon as she arrived and released her first solo album in 2022.

Haruta continues to hone her skills at MSU, where she's studying with her mentor, trombonist Michael Dease, one of several MSU professors she tapped to contribute to her mesmerizing debut album *The Vibe* (Origin). Among the others were bassist Rodney Whitaker, drummer Ulysses Owens Jr., keyboardist Xavier Davis and composer/producer Greg Hill, who produced the album and wrote the title track.

During a lively conversation, Haruta proved herself remarkably fluent in English just a year after starting to speak it. She discussed everything from her mission to combine free-jazz improvisation with more traditional forms to finding her own voice as a composer to her passion for covering little-known tunes by well known jazz artists like Christian McBride.

The following conversation has been edited

for length and clarity.

Cree McCree: The first track on the album is called "Girlie's World." Is that a reference to being one of the very few female trombone players?

Nanami Haruta: Maybe a little bit. That tune was written by the pianist Renee Rosnes. I really wanted to record it because she played it earlier with J.J. Johnson, and she's a great musician and role model for me as a female.

McCree: My favorite cut on the album is the title track, "The Vibe." It sounds like there's a party going on with hoots and hollers and laughing. Burbling and bubbling. It's a real set piece.

Haruta: That tune was written by the composer/producer Greg Hill, one of my MSU professors, who produced my record. Before I came to Michigan I was gigging in Tokyo, where I played a lot of free-jazz. But I also like straightahead music, so I wanted a kind of combined sound for my album.

McCree: "Algonquin" is a kind of sophisticated swing tune, a little beboppy. Several of the tracks on the album are also named after people, like "Toshi."

Haruta: Toshi was my first mentor in my hometown of Sapporo.

McCree: Where the beer comes from, right?

Haruta: Yes. Toshi was a pianist in Sapporo when I first started playing jazz when I was 13 years old. I literally grew up with Toshi. I played with him a lot. He taught me what jazz is, and I wrote that tune for him.

McCree: There's also "Jamerson's Lullaby," which really sounds like a lullaby. Who is Jamerson? **Haruta:** Rodney Whitaker wrote that tune and Jamerson is his son.

McCree: What about "Sister Rosa"? Is that named after somebody?

Haruta: I don't really know, actually. But it's a Christian McBride tune.

McCree: "How It Goes," which has a strong bass opening, feels like a real combo piece. Was that fun to record?

Haruta: Yes. That's Michael Dease's tune. He wrote it at my lesson in like 15 minutes. We both really liked that tune but we didn't really have arrangements until we went into the recording studio, Troubadour Studio in Lansing.

McCree: Was the entire album recorded live in the studio?

Haruta: Yes, all the tracks.

McCree: "Heartstrings" is very romantic.

Haruta: It's actually my first love song for my partner. I wrote that tune. I also wrote "Woodpecker" because I wanted to write some blues.

McCree: I also love that you covered "Unchained Melody." It took me back to my high school years in 1965, when the Righteous Brothers' song was a hit. What made you decide you wanted to record that?

Haruta: I heard that song in the movie *Ghost*, which I watched when I was in elementary school and always wanted to record one day. And just before we went into the studio, the producer asked me, 'Do you want to record one song with Rodney, just a duo or trio?' And I came up with that song immediately.

McCree: What do you hope people will take away from listening to The Vibe?

Haruta: I made this record as a way of introducing myself in America. I really like free-jazz, and my foundation is '50s and '60s jazz. So I tried to combine all of that music into one album.

McCree: Who are some of your favorite jazz musicians, both current and classic?

Haruta: As a trombonist, I like Curtis Fuller the most. I also like listening to piano trios like Phoenix and Phineas Newborn Jr.'s group. And I love Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers. Some people say musicians need to record or make new original music. I understand and I agree with that. But I also think there is so much great music that never gets recorded by someone else.

That's why I recorded "Sister Rosa" by Christian McBride and "Girlie's World" by Renee Rosnes, great compositions that nobody else recorded.

—Cree McCree



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IARSALIS EXPLORES KEITH JARRETT

BY PHILLIP LUTZ PHOTO BY MARK SHELDON

Branford Marsalis was on the road again. Coffee cup in hand, the saxophonist - sporting a gray hoodie and a look of resignation - was waking up to a Zoom screen on a late-winter morning in yet another town: Ann Arbor, Michigan, the latest stop on a rolling tour that this year alone will take him to at least 24 states, seven countries and the District of Columbia.

are going to be very different."

For now, the parameters are wide, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

here's a shelf life for this shit, indeed. While most of the upcoming and I see it coming," he said, dates are with his longtime jazz quartet cracking a half-smile and tak- — Joey Calderazzo on piano, Eric Revis ing a long swig of the coffee. "I'm carry- on bass and Justin Faulkner on drums ing three instruments because I'm prac- — Marsalis, whose resume includes ticing for upcoming gigs. I'm 64. In 10 turns with prime-time outfits like the years, it's not going to be a tenable situa- New York Philharmonic and the Boston tion. So I'll tour, but the parameters of it Pops, will squeeze in stops with symphony orchestras in places like Nashville and





Extensive as it is, the touring is just one item in Marsalis' vast portfolio. It is a portfolio he began building as a pop-music-loving prodigy and parlayed into probing — and duly honored — explorations undertaken in a remarkably wide variety of disciplines (from playing, composing and bandleading to acting) and venues (from concert halls to television, the movies and the New York stage).

"He's one of the most curious people," said Wynton Marsalis, his younger brother, past bandmate and, as managing and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, occasional employer.

Branford's curiosity informs his quartet work, leading him to draw on many aspects of his creative life to feed it. Scoring, for example, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* — the 2020 film of August Wilson's play set in 1920s Chicago — moved him to try supplementing the quartet's songbook with vintage tunes like "When I Take My Sugar To Tea," "There Ain't No Sweet Man Worth The Salt Of My Tears" and "My Bucket's Got A Hole In It." The result is an impressive synthesis in which the players attain a kind of period authenticity while retaining the very modern cast of their collective identity.

Marsalis has tested the quartet's mettle in

all manner of challenging situations, ranging in recent years from a pop-adjacent jazz project featuring singer Kurt Elling to a folk-adjacent classical project featuring seven Hungarian musicians. In a 2003 performance at Amsterdam's Bimhuis — one predating Faulkner replacing Jeff "Tain" Watts in the drum chair 16 years ago — the band took on the daunting task of covering the John Coltrane Quartet's *A Love Supreme*.

But few undertakings have been weightier than Marsalis' latest album, *Belonging*. His much-anticipated debut on the Blue Note label is a full cover version of Keith Jarrett's 1974 recording of the same name. As one master commenting on another's work, it reveals possibilities in the music that the original — a debut itself, of Jarrett's European Quartet — doesn't.

"He shows the breadth of the songs," said Blue Note president Don Was, adding that he was surprised but thrilled Marsalis had signed on to become his generation's entry into the pantheon of saxophonists, like Charles Lloyd and Wayne Shorter, who made belated debuts on or returns to the label.

Though Jarrett was known to write with his band members in mind, Marsalis said the quality of the material stood on its own: "The

songs are really great. Everybody can learn from listening to them. Every one is singable. You can take the melody home and put it in your pocket, even the avant-garde stuff."

The melodies, and other basic elements of the songs, remained intact as Marsalis produced charts for the band to work off. "If we're good at this," he said, "we don't need to change Keith Jarrett's harmony or change meter or turn his songs into bossas or all this corny shit people do. We're going to play the song as written."

But unlike the Jarrett original — a brilliant but at times attenuated effort — the Marsalis album, which at 64 minutes runs 18 minutes longer than the original, showcases some epic blowing on all six songs. And when in March of last year the musicians settled into the studio for five days at New Orleans' Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, a twist or two awaited.

"The first song, 'Spiral Dance,' I really lament," Marsalis said, noting that extra takes were necessary. "I had just moved to New Orleans that January. I wasn't practicing a lot. It was kind of like, 'Oh, shit, the record's here.' I didn't really figure out how to play that song until after the recording."

Such self-criticism is telling. At an age

when lesser musicians might coast, he does the opposite: making time to practice the knottiest classical material, sometimes without a specific booking in mind, just to maintain maximum control of his instrument. So even a minor disruption in his practice routine would be noticeable to him, if not to others.

Wynton — who has shared much with

said he studied the Jarrett drummer Jon Christensen's beat placement "in an effort to honor where he heard the groove." Then he "married" Christensen's approach — "very clearly rooted in an appreciation for Jon's upbringing" in Norway — with his approach, honed in his hometown of Philadelphia.

"I grew up listening to funk and playing in the church, so backbeat has a different rela"Instrumental music to me is kind of like a play," he said. "Nobody's going to a play because the words are good or because the actors can read well. You have to convince an audience that these words you're saying are the character's words, not the writer's words.

"In music, when you play someone else's song, you have to interpret the song so that you become a character in a play. You have to make that melody believable. That's what great singers do. They know how to control the room with sound."

Seeking the sound best suited to "Blossom," he listened closely to Garbarek. But for Marsalis, born and raised in the hothouse of the Big Easy, the chilly passion of the Norwegian proved less of a reference point than the cozy embrace of Ben Webster ("probably the most beautiful ballad player I ever heard") and Charlie Parker (whose lush record with strings is "one of the greatest album sounds I've ever heard in my life"). Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter and Ornette Coleman (whose ballad playing is "a mashup of all these people") also received nods as influences on what emerged as the singularly warm, witty and — when called for — deeply down-home ballad voice he employs.

"You listen to these people — and I mean listen — and you start to develop the sound in your head," Marsalis said.

Just as Marsalis found his own path forward on "Blossom," so did Calderazzo. "There was a chord in the tune that sounded different the way I was playing it from the way Keith was playing it," Calderazzo recalled. "When I learned the chord, it was absolutely amazing. I remember thinking, 'Man, I'm fucked. It's his music. He's killing it.' So I didn't listen; it just would have gotten in my head."

Preparing for the new Marsalis album, Calderazzo was listening to his past self — specifically on "The Windup," a version of which Marsalis included on the quartet's Grammy-nominated album from 2019, The Secret Between The Shadow And The Soul. On it, Calderazzo delivered a fiercely compelling lead-in to Marsalis' equally urgent improvisation. Anchored by the Revis-Faulkner subunit, the take constituted a model of cooperative music-making so persuasive that recording the entire Jarrett album became a no-brainer.

"Revis said, 'We should just record this whole record, the whole thing's killing,'" Marsalis recalled. "I said, 'Yeah, we should." Truth be told, he added, "'Let's do the Keith record' was a conclusion, not a discovery."

The pandemic intervened. But when it came time to record the tune on the new album, Marsalis' marching orders seemed inevitable: Just wing it. "We knew 'The Windup' really well," Marsalis explained.

"Let's do the Keith record" was a conclusion, not a discovery."

Branford, from a music-filled childhood bedroom; to growing pains inflicted by, as he put it, "ignorant people"; to distinction on the global stage — has been so taken with his brother's continuing dedication to excellence that he recently phoned him just to offer a compliment for achieving the rare feat of getting better after the age of 50.

"Branford's playing has steadily improved," Wynton said. "He's just gotten more and more serious."

Of course, any perceived improvement in Branford's playing must be measured against the high level of virtuosity at which he already operated. Whatever his reservations about his own performance on "Spiral Dance," even a casual hearing makes clear that he and his quartet negotiate the piece — a modal maze packed with tricky intervallic leaps and slick modulations grounded by a B-flat vamp — with aplomb.

To be sure, the Jarrett band's interaction had an improvisatory quality even when laying down the head. But they did not solo as such on "Spiral Dance," save for an open bass improvisation by Palle Danielsson. So Marsalis' musicians were flying somewhat blind on that front.

"I remember talking to Branford," Calderazzo said. "We've got to figure out something to play on,' I told him." The solution they arrived at was to create a form mirroring that of the song, using the harmonic structure but simplified.

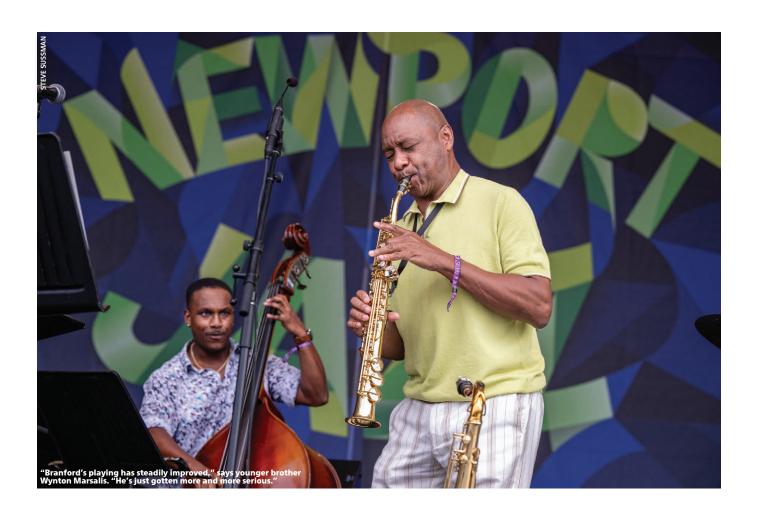
Devising a rhythmic strategy was no less a task, one that fell largely on Faulkner. He

tionship for me," he said. The marriage yielded "a groove which is reminiscent of Keith's but also has our spin on it" — one working in tandem with the song's "cyclical nature that would hopefully allow it to flow."

No issues with flow surfaced on the album's second tune, the ballad "Blossom." The languid pace was established and the improvisatory framework outlined by Jarrett and saxophonist Jan Garbarek. And Marsalis' familiarity with the tune on a cellular level was not in question. He began absorbing it in the late 1980s, when, during downtime from his job playing an onscreen role in director Spike Lee's film *School Daze*, he got hooked on the tune. Repeated listening planted the seed that would, well, blossom in the current album.

"The other actors were asking, 'Hey, man, what's that song? I think it's beautiful," he recalled. "I'd say, 'It's a song by this guy Keith Jarrett.' By the end of the first month, they were knocking on my door. 'Come on, man, play my jam for me.' I was thinking, 'Man, we got to start playing this way.' At that point, your brain goes, 'OK, let's start writing the code for that."

In writing the code, Marsalis has clearly been internalizing the lessons he learned from his part in *School Daze* and others he has played in movies like *Throw Momma From The Train* and on TV programs like *The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air*. Ever curious, he has sought — and drawn — the connection between making words in a script and notes in a score come alive.



"I said, 'Whatever happens in this take, it stands. Don't be worried about mistakes, let's just charge at it."

Heeding that call, Calderazzo said he "made it a point to try to approach the song differently." In doing so, he cut a distinctly sharper edge that ushered in a freewheeling Marsalis moment exceptional in its ferocity, especially for this most urbane of artists. Bracketed by passages of deep-pocket punch, the moment marks the take as a fitting windup to the album.

"It was pretty raucous," Marsalis said. "It went to places I didn't expect."

When Marsalis' music goes to unexpected places, Calderazzo said, that reflects in no small measure his ability to listen as he leads: "We're always pushing one another. And he's unlike a lot of the horn players I've played with. He's at his best when you're throwing things at him."

Marsalis likened the interaction of his band to that of an empathetic string quartet: "The musicians are in contact through their eyes and ears — constant, subtle cues about who has the melody here, who has the melody there. That's kind of how we operate in the group."

But it's a balancing act. As in the string

quartet, basic responsibilities are defined. "For everybody in the band," Calderazzo said, "the main objective is to make sure the role we play is taken care of, at the very least."

Calderazzo, who met Marsalis at a jam session at Berklee College of Music in 1979 and joined the quartet in 1998 after Kenny Kirkland died, enjoys perhaps the least circumscribed role. It is, he said, "that of an accompanist, but a lot of times what I do is lead." Marsalis neatly summarized it with a sobriquet: "The Rover."

The role of Faulkner, whom Marsalis had employed as a teenager, is to light the flame. "The swing beat started in the Pentecostal Church," Marsalis explained. "I'm Catholic, but I hung with the Pentecostals. I went to their church. Good God, the beat, the fire that came out of that. I thought, 'I need some of that." Enter Faulkner. "Justin grew up playing in the church. He still plays in the church."

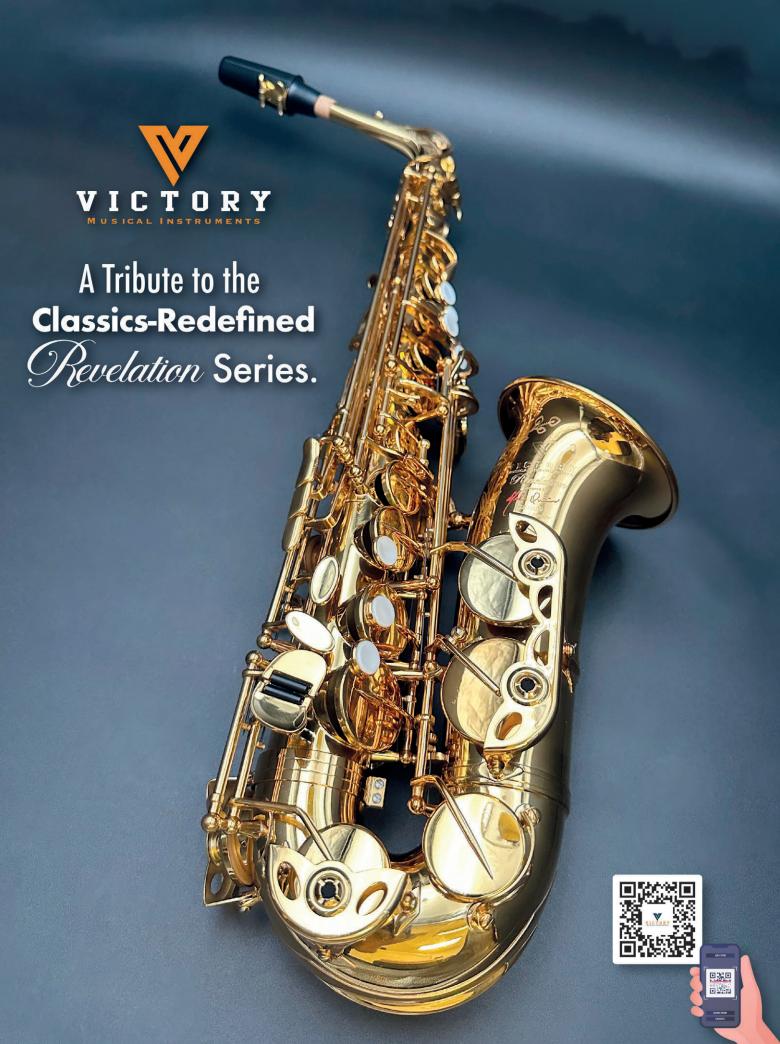
Revis, who joined the quartet in 1997, keeps the flame under control. "The most important note in swing in jazz is the quarter note," Marsalis said. "In modern music, the emphasis is more on the eighth note, so it lacks a certain kind of density that, growing up where I grew up, I need to hear. Revis was perfect because he had this big sound.

He didn't have this super-fast technique so he didn't feel compelled to go on flights of fancy and abandon the quarter note."

Revis said he learned to hold his fire early on, as the band played "The Impaler," a hot number by then-drummer Watts. "Jeff and Branford had this magical dialogue thing," Revis said. "They could go back and forth and almost step out of time. Well, there was a vamp in 7. I'm feeling myself: 'Oh, yeah, they're doing all this really bad shit; I'm going to jump in there.' And I totally let go of what my given role was in the band, and it really hit me: 'Wow, that bad shit they were playing was because I was holding it down."

On leaving the bandstand, he assured Marsalis that nothing like that would happen again. Marsalis, he said, offered a knowing glance and an oblique word. Nothing more has ever been mentioned about it, and that absence of comment, characteristic of Marsalis' understated leadership, speaks volumes about the mutual respect — and beyond — that helps keep the quartet together and on the road.

"I love the band, as people and musicians," Marsalis said, finishing his coffee and gazing straight into the camera. "If this band ceased to exist, I don't see myself trying to get a new one."





MAKING THE MUSIC OF ANTHONY BRAXTON

BY GARY FUKUSHIMA PHOTO BY RI SOUTHERLAND-COHEN

It's a little after noon in Valencia, California, 30 minutes from downtown Los Angeles. Outside on a bench at California Institute of the Arts, shaded from the warm sun by a rather massive building that houses the six schools of visual, performing, media and literary arts under its expansive roof, saxophonist Steve Lehman sits for an interview.

by a light breeze. It might not have been why Lehman moved across the counare enough to affirm the decision.

mind. On Jan. 7 of this year, Southern 30 miles to the east.

t's February, and the weather is nearly California was ravaged by fires driven by perfect, a blue, cloudless sky fanned intense winds to cataclysmic effect. Of the 14 major fires that burned throughout the month, two of them were especialtry from the East Coast, but days like this ly devastating: the Palisades Fire that tore through the affluent area northwest of There was another day six weeks prior Santa Monica, and the Eaton Fire, which that could have changed Lehman's all but destroyed the city of Altadena some



Nearly nine years ago, Lehman, already a Guggenheim Fellow and Doris Duke Award recipient who received a Jazz Album of the Year award from the New York Times in 2009 for *Travail, Transformation And Flow* (Pi), moved across the country, ultimately purchasing a house in Altadena, a quaint, friendly neighborhood and a delightful place to live, with his wife and their two young children.

The alto saxophonist found Altadena to be more akin to the East Coast, one of the more diverse areas of L.A. with its traditionally prominent Black community now blended with people from so many other backgrounds. He has musical acquaintances who lived there, namely saxophonist Bennie Maupin and guitarist Jeff Parker. Bobby Hutcherson grew up just outside Altadena, and upon finding that out, Lehman made a pilgrimage to his childhood home, taking a photo of his kids standing on the sidewalk in front of it. They had only met a few times, but Lehman had long admired the vibraphonist who had played on so many records with Lehman's first great mentor, alto saxophonist Jackie McLean.

Lehman had hoped to study with McLean by attending college where he taught at the time: the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford in Connecticut. "My mom kind of intervened," he says, recalling that she told him, "I want you to go someplace that I consider more academically rigorous.' And she was a college professor, so she was right, she knew best." Lehman ended up at Wesleyan University in nearby Middletown, where he

began his studies with saxophonist and composer Anthony Braxton. Thus began a long and fruitful collaboration with the NEA Jazz Master and MacArthur Fellow.

"Steve Lehman is dedicated to the wonder of creative music," said Braxton in a message to DownBeat. "His work has unique depth and fresh invention. This is the kind of music that can help our citizens reset their experiences and accelerate our curiosity. Steve Lehman is a virtuoso saxophonist, with the ability to create original ideas and new horizons."

Braxton's profound influence on his onetime student is now best epitomized in a recent release by Lehman: *The Music Of Anthony Braxton* (Pi), which features seven Braxton compositions reworked for Lehman's long-standing trio with bassist Matt Brewer and drummer Damion Reid, along with special guest tenor saxophonist Mark Turner. The album was recorded live in Los Angeles, at ETA, the now defunct club in Highland Park, just a 10-minute drive from Altadena.

There are now many jazz musicians who live in the Northeast section of L.A., which includes Echo Park, Silver Lake, Los Feliz, Eagle Rock, Highland Park — and Altadena. Often thought of as the West Coast version of Brooklyn, this once overlooked area has seen an explosion in artistic energy, both from established artists who have transplanted themselves to the area like Parker and Lehman have done, and from younger musicians (many of whom are home-grown) who realize they no longer need to be in New

York to enjoy a vibrant music career.

Evermore, those two groups are coalescing into a burgeoning jazz scene that has brought about a creative renaissance in the L.A. region. "I've had no shortage of encounters and new relationships with people on the West Coast that have been super inspiring and amazing," says Lehman. "I definitely noticed from 2016 to now a radical acceleration of musicians relocating either back or to Los Angeles ... Damion Reid, Justin Brown, Logan Richardson, Gerald Clayton moving back, Mark ... Ben Williams — so that to me has really changed the landscape of the scene from my vantage point."

But at the same time, Lehman has connected with a new generation of artists. "There's a really amazing community of young musicians who are here," he notes. "I've never put anything in front of Paul Cornish or Logan Kane or Devin Daniels ... Jermaine Paul, I can't name everybody, Josh Johnson — that they weren't able to deal with at the highest level, despite the fact that they're involved in a really wide array of musical projects and communities."

Many of those communities were born out of colleges and universities in Southern California that fostered over the years a bevy of talented young people — an emerging bedrock on which the shifting sands of artistic renewal have been steadily accumulating. Lehman moved to Los Angeles to teach at the institution affectionately known as CalArts to those who have had an opportunity to experience the school's innovative learning environment.

(Disclosure: This writer received his MFA

from CalArts in 2005 — for jazz keyboard, not jazz journalism.)

"Steve is one of those who has a total command of the tradition and the history of the music, but he uses that as a springboard to move forward," says David Roitstein, who along with bassist Charlie Haden co-founded the Jazz Program at CalArts in 1983. "He's not one of those people who doesn't have the foundation (of jazz) but does great music, but he's also not one of those who's only interested in teaching people about the foundation.

CalArts, with Haden as the school's first and best example, has developed its reputation on finding an equilibrium between history and innovation.

"He's equally dedicated to being a composer as well as a performer," Roitstein continues regarding Lehman. "He works with a lot of young musicians, people who are really on the front edge of stuff and open to everything. His time with Anthony Braxton really exposed him to a super experimentalist direction."

Just before sitting down for this interview, Lehman was indoors, teaching a class called "Jazz and Urban Experimentalism" to a packed room of students. He played a wide range of sound samples with accompanying transcriptions of the music projected on a screen, analyzing soul/hip-hop artist Georgia Anne Muldrow, the rapper Knxwledge, J-Dilla, Flying Lotus, Outkast. Lehman has long been fascinated with avant-garde tendencies in hiphop, to the point of forming, in 2016, an avantrap collective called Sélébéyone, a group that DownBeat asserted in its review of their debut album "unites voices from avant-garde jazz, electronic music, underground hip-hop and Senegalese rap under the banner of intrepid musical experimentalism."

Lehman is also one of the first jazz artists to seriously explore spectral music, a compositional approach developed in France in the early 1970s, where compositions are made via the sonographic analysis of sound or even mathematically generated spectra. He studied with spectral music pioneer Tristan Murail while pursuing his doctorate in composition at Columbia University, and he recorded his landmark album Travail, Transformation And Flow during that time. The album explores these spectral elements, with the accomplished jazz musicians — trumpeter Jonathan Finlayson, bassist Drew Gress, drummer Tyshawn Sorey, vibraphonist Chris Dingman — engaging in microtonal harmonies that fall somewhere outside and in between the standard 12-tone system.

But what makes this foray into the outer limits of composition personally fascinating for Lehman is that he recognizes some of these spectral harmonic elements in his original mentor, McLean. In an interview with New Music USA, Lehman says McLean's innate "intense focus on

sound and timbre ends up for me having a lot of overlap with the music of someone like Tristan Murail and his kind of extreme focus on timbre and the physics of sound."

Lehman admits that the switch from McLean to Braxton at Wesleyan wasn't easy initially. "The first thing I heard [of Braxton] was a concert at Town Hall with Jeane Lee and Dave Holland, and I was not into it, I couldn't find my way in. But I knew he was very accomplished ... so I met him at college and asked if I could play in his student ensemble."

Lehman remembers that Braxton "in so many words was like, 'You should maybe start to think in terms of a more long-term vision for what you want to do,' and when I was 18, maybe he was just asking too much, but it definitely registered." Lehman found that vision as Braxton encouraged him to pursue higher-level improvisational and compositional concepts. Yet all the while, Lehman continued to study with McLean, going over to Hartt for lessons. Mama might know best, but the heart does what it wants.

Yet it was Braxton who then invited Lehman to be part of his professional group, touring, recording and playing at European festivals alongside a few other of his fellow students, including guitarist Mary Halvorson and cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum. "My nickname, and it was a disparaging nickname when I first joined Braxton's band — not from him but from other people in the ensemble — was Mr. Bebop, which was wild, but because I was too invested in that music for some people's taste," Lehman recalls.

Lehman learned from Braxton how to be a complete musician on top of a burning soloist. He says, "I like his general perspective of being very open and supportive but also trying to be rigorous and to hold everybody, including himself, to a high standard. That definitely helps me a lot at CalArts — [there's a] lot of similarities between CalArts and Wesleyan, actually. ... There's a real emphasis on creativity and a creative spirit here. And so, a lot of time what needs to be reinforced is the notion of craft and technical expertise."

Those dual qualities of creative innovation built on rigorous research and practice of the craft of execution are evident in Lehman's tribute to Braxton. The genesis of the album was a concert of Braxton's music that Lehman performed at REDCAT, the Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theatre, a black box studio attached to the Walt Disney Concert Hall for use by the school. (Walt Disney and his brother Roy had founded CalArts in 1961.) Lehman, rather than hire only those who were already familiar with Braxton's work, decided to reach out to other Los Angeles musicians whom he admired, including many younger artists, to see if they could reveal another facet of Braxton's vision.

After the concert, Lehman began to conceive of a more stripped-down version of

Braxton's compositions that could be performed in a more conventional jazz setting. He explains, "I wanted to document something with Mark [Turner] since we've been able to work together more often, and I thought, let's [take] this pretty challenging repertoire that we already sort of have invested some time into and build off of that."

This involved reworking the pieces into vehicles that accommodated improvising, more like jazz tunes. "I honestly give the lion's share of the credit for that to Damion and Matt, to the rhythm section's approach to the music, because (on the original recordings) the percussionists or the drummer will have a more textural approach and not be as propulsive." Lehman also ended up adding sections for solos, or even a coda, to give the pieces some additional shape, while reducing the scores to something akin to a lead sheet.

The results manifested in a scintillating live quartet performance of those reimagined Braxton pieces, where Lehman and Turner exchange volleys of eloquent saxophone fire over an exciting, undulating pulse driven by Brewer and Reid, like some wild crossing of Warne Marsh and Lee Konitz with Don Cherry and Ornette Coleman. Lehman notes, "The most pleasant surprise was the extent to which people hearing the music — audience members, other musicians, elder musicians — that the music really felt very contemporary to them, like of 2025, and also they felt like I put my stamp on it." It's as if Lehman was expressing both facets of his musical origins: the composer-protege of Braxton and the bebop-blazing acolyte of McLean.

And so, Steve Lehman has found a home here in Los Angeles, surrounded by a deep well of invigorating talent, teaching at a school where he can influence and inspire a new generation of musicians.

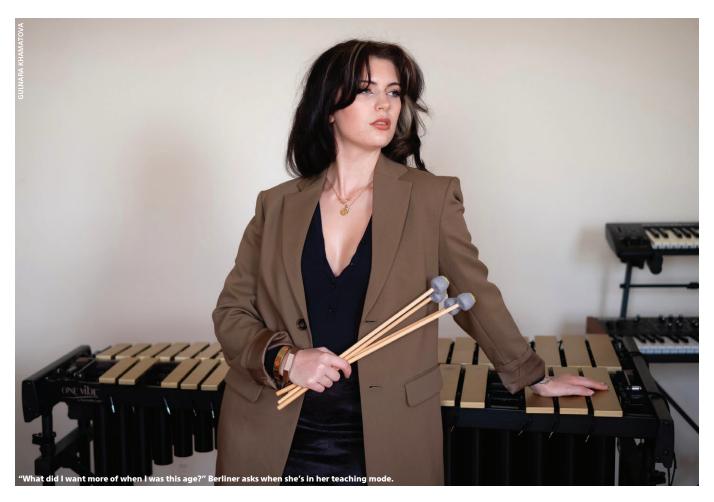
But, to complete the story, he is also literally without a home. The Eaton fire claimed it along with that of his friend Bennie Maupin and so many other musicians, friends and neighbors. It will take years to rebuild, and there is no guarantee Lehman and his family will ever move back to Altadena. The silver lining has been the overwhelming support from both the artistic communities that Lehman and his wife each belong to (she is a successful film and television director) and their inner circles of neighbors, friends and family. After this interview, Lehman emailed some pictures of a recent gathering at his house, where other musicians had come by to eat and play, enjoying the rustic, wooded view from his backyard, congregating next to the trampoline he had set up for his kids. Even though that place is gone, the smiling faces in the photos represent a truer homecoming for the journey he has been on since he made that determining decision to listen both to his mother and to his heart.





BY YOSHI KATO PHOTO BY MARK SHELDON

Part of the jazz vibraphone conversation since her late teens, Sasha Berliner has long come across as a fully formed artist. For the 2020 DownBeat Critics Poll, she was the youngest-ever to top the Rising Star Vibraphonist category when she was 21.



Equally comfortable incorporating straightahead acoustic and contemporary electronic aesthetics into her projects, she's performed solo and led her own groups.

But as the 26-year-old Los Angeles resident prepared to send her third full-length album out to the world in late March, the San Francisco native is humble, with a deep well of self-knowledge and an easy ability to educate extemporaneously. Over a one-hour phone conversation from her home in L.A.'s East Hollywood neighborhood, she's quick to cite her influences and praise her peers as she shares what life is like for a gigging and teaching working musician in 2025.

"It's the first album I've finished that doesn't feature any songs that I wrote while I was in college," she said. "So I do feel like there's a lot of growth in how I'm able to compose a song, and there's more focus. I also think there's more confidence and skill."

Fantôme was released by the Manhattanbased Outside in Music label and features five originals and a Berliner arrangement of Billy Strayhorn's "UMMG."

"Some people have these really remarkable debut albums, and every other album after that is at least just as good," she said. "But for me, I think I get better every time. Sometimes that can be hard to come to terms with, because

the tendency is to think, 'Oh, I wish I was better when I was first starting out.' But that's not always realistic."

French for "phantom" or "ghost," Fantôme advocates for a more incorporeal approach to musical genre categorization and the instrumentations usually found in the jazz world. With a core rhythm section of pianist Taylor Eigsti, bassist Harish Raghavan and drummer Jongkuk Kim, it features trumpeter David Adewumi and saxophonist Rico Jones as well as pianist Lex Corten as guests.

"I wanted to show a little more arrangement skill, even though it's mostly a quartet album," she said. "These people have really remarkable voices on their instruments.

"They don't really sound like anybody who's come before them, but they also have influences that pop out here and there. I feel like that's what I was looking for. And I value people who are excited to play my music and bring it to life."

After a spirited interpretation of the Strayhorn favorite from 1956, Berliner's mournful "Khan Yunis" showcases a rapport between her elegiac vibraphone lines and Kim's sweeping drumming and percussive accents. Written about the devastated second-largest city in Gaza, the piece reflects her incorporating global events among her com-

positional influences.

Expansive and enchanting, "The Worst Person In The World" was inspired by the Norwegian feature narrative film that ranked number 16 in the BFI best 50 films of 2021 poll and was described on its website as a "quarter-life crisis romcom."

"Most people don't know the reference and ask me, 'Oh, who made you so angry?' But I really respond to art and movies." As another example, "NW," from Berliner's previous album, *Onyx* (JMI Recordings, 2022), references superstar author Zadie Smith's 2012 novel of the same name.

"You can hear a lot of different ranges of genres and styles all within her writing," said pianist Paul Cornish, a regular in Berliner's bands. "That's a fun part about it."

Her open ear can be traced back to her musical roots. Born in San Francisco's The Mission District and raised there and also in the city's Potrero Hill neighborhood, she enjoyed life in a music-oriented family. (Her father, John Berliner, co-founded the San Francisco Rock Project, where her guitarist brother Cole is currently a substitute and camp teacher.) A drummer through her high school years, she made a switch of instruments à la jazz vibraphone founding father Lionel Hampton.

"It was something that got introduced to me when I was in high school, because nobody was playing it, and they had so many drummers already," she recounted. "I was interested in getting better at the harmonic and melodic aspect of playing. And I was really interested in writing my own music, but I didn't know how to structure chord progressions or what goes into making a good melody or how to understand the fabric of songs."

Berliner studied vibraphone at the Oakland School for the Arts and is listed with film and television star Zendaya and R&B singer-songwriter Kehlani as notable alumni. She was also a member of the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars, and her bandmates included future collaborators alto saxophonist Nicole McCabe, bassist Kanoa Mendenhall and drummer Tim Angulo.

"It's very cool, because we used to be in the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars together. So when you've known someone for that long and then we get to just see each other working professionally now, it's really amazing," she noted. Summers spent as a student at the Stanford Jazz Workshop led to future teaching opportunities there on the faculty with Cornish.

"Now we both teach there, and that's really special," she said. "So all of those studying and playing opportunities can really work out and pay off later."

Given her own indirect path to playing vibraphone, Berliner seems likely to be especially open to hearing it in atypical settings. Indeed, the legacy of Chicago post-rock heroes Tortoise, with three percussionists switching between drums, vibraphone and marimba, was a familiar one to her.

"I knew Tortoise from when I was starting to play vibraphone," she replied. "I grew up with a lot of rock music, and my dad is really into them. And of course I love [Southern California-based guitarist, composer and Tortoise member] Jeff Parker.

"The way that vibraphone was contextualized within Tortoise is unique," she said. "They're super captivating to watch live and just listen to the sonic space unfold."

While Tortoise's songbook is largely instrumental, there's a different thrill in hearing vibraphone incorporated into music with vocalists. And the playing doesn't need to be purely virtuosic to catch Berliner's ear.

"There are certain bands where I'm like, 'Man, I didn't expect vibraphone in this," she said. "But I love how it played a role in this or that song. I love Brittany Howard and Alabama Shakes, and their album Sound & Color features vibraphone on a few songs.

"Even Tito Puente or Cal Tjader. They

weren't always playing ripping lines, and still the vibraphone was so present and so beautiful in their music," she pointed out. "Same with Roy Ayers. So many of his songs were where vibraphone is just playing a part even though he could totally rip."

A mention of Tjader and also Bobby Hutcherson brings up the topic of great vibraphonists in the San Francisco region. "I don't know if I can say whether or not a style of playing vibraphone is regional or not," she admitted. "Some people can make that argument with certain instruments and maybe overall sounds. I can't say if a vibraphonist style is directly attributed to where they live or don't live. But they both wrote songs about living in the Bay Area. And Bobby has a whole album called San Francisco [Blue Note, 1971]."

"NW" also doubles as an homage to Berliner's own hometown in the U.S. Northwest. "San Francisco (Interlude)" from her 2019 debut album, Azalea, is a more direct titular reference. Her other original compositions have a variety of creative origins, including from her days as a student.

"When you study music in school, you might learn certain compositional or theoretical techniques that you want to try out," she said. "I took a class with Jane Ira Bloom at the New School called 'Linear Composition.'





She would introduce us to exercises where she would say, 'Try writing a song based on this or with these limitations.' Those ideas made their way into compositions that I came up with later.

"I studied a bit with Vijay [Iyer] after I went to Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, and he has all these really interesting ways of dealing with music," she added. "What if you take an interval and you expand or contract it by a certain set amount? How does that produce a new idea? Or what if you take an interval and you mirror it?' It's the same interval. But if you read it the other way, it produces a different note. It inspired me, and I definitely integrated into my compositions, too."

Contemporary musicians also provide

direct inspiration, she said. Eigsti, Jason Moran, Brad Mehldau ("a huge influence"), Walter Smith III ("I don't think anybody writes like him. I feel like he's one of the best") and the late Geri Allen all get a shout-out.

As a graduate of several world-class performing arts schools and jazz programs, Berliner knows where institutional learning settings excel and where they leave room for improvement. In addition to teaching back in Northern California on the Stanford campus during the summer, she's a part-time lecturer in jazz combo and jazz composition at University of California, Irvine.

"As a student, I remember what I really loved from my teachers and also what I felt

like I could have needed more of," she said. "So I take that into my own teaching experience and think, 'What did I want more of when I was this age? And how can I provide that now?"

A typical week for Berliner is anything but. She could be teaching, gigging locally, applying for grants, touring and/or composing. "Or doing management stuff and promotion and ordering CDs, vinyl and merch," she said. "I might be checking mixes, too. It's always something, right? That basically makes up for whatever I didn't get to while I was on tour."

Even performing live involves remaining flexible. She currently plays in the all-star KaSaNiMa quartet with McCabe, bassist Kaisa Mäensivu and drummer Mareike Wiening and leads East and West Coast versions of her groups. As her local friends take on a growing number of gig and teaching commitments of their own, she's constantly expanding her roster of current and emeritus band members.

"She's a great leader," Cornish said.
"Even though it is her band, she is definitely very open in terms of what everyone brings to her compositions and arrangements. So it feels very collaborative. She embraces the experiences and styles everyone else brings to her music."

With money she's raised through grants, Berliner has done low-cost shows at atypical and even pop-up venues. "Or I am doing a free master class in Philadelphia," she said. "It's aimed at students, but it could be for anybody.

"Still, it's hard with music in general right now," she acknowledged. "I know they really invest in the arts and in music overseas, and they really value it over there. The government will actually sponsor or fund a bunch of their engagements. But we don't really have that here as much, so we have to hustle for those things more."

What's gotten a bit better, or at least more visible, is the challenge of being a musician from a marginalized community in the jazz world. Berliner wrote and posted an extensive open letter online back in 2017, when she was 19, about sexism and misogyny she experienced as a young musician.

"I was never really sure about exactly what the impact of something like that is. But it was important for me to say," she said. "I did try to speak as eloquently and intelligently as I could at the time. And last week, I got a comment. The fact that people still bring it up today does make me happy in the sense that it really did resonate.

"There are a lot of students in particular who really related to my experiences," she concluded. "They didn't feel alone, and now people think and talk a lot more about these things."





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bluenote.com

tonepoetsociety.com

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resonancerecords.org recordstoreday.com

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Blue Note/Pacific Jazz

When Blue Note annouced it's new Tone Poet Society subscription service, the label laid out a lofty set of releases coming out this year, including tenor saxophonist Teddy Edwards' Sunset Eyes. Edwards represents the depth of what the series delivers, his legacy is that of a master of jazz deserving wider recognition. Sunset Eves is one of two records Edwards made for the Pacific label in the 1960s and a wonderful document of his art.

bluenote.com tonepoetsociety.com

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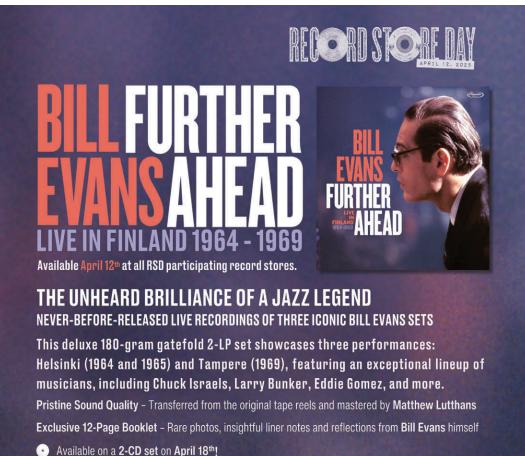
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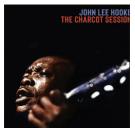


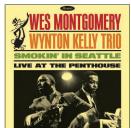










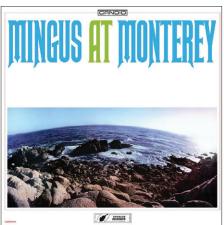












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MORPHINE

Bootleg Detroit

Recorded live at St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit during the band's 1994 Cure for Pain tour, Bootleg Detroit is getting its first release on vinyl. An RSD Exclusive with a limit of 3,500 copies, Bootleg Detroit is pressed on translucent milky clear vinyl.

rhino.com recordstoreday.com

GERRY MULLIGAN/THELONIOUS MONK

Mulligan Meets Monk

Craft

This rare mono mix of Mulligan Meets Monk is an RSD Exclusive with a limit of 3,000 copies. The album was originally released in 1957 on Riverside Records. The set features lacquers cut from the original tapes (AAA) by Kevin Gray and is pressed on 180-gram vinyl at RTI.

craftrecordings.com recordstoreday.com

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN & ELLIS MARSALIS & CORNELL DUPREE

Return To The Wide Open Spaces

SteadyBoy

What happens when this trio of jazz titans get together? An amazing live experience from Caravan of Dreams in Fort Worth, Texas. This 1990 recording date was originally released on Amazing Records and won the N.A.I.R.D. award for best Traditional Jazz Album of the Year. An RSD First, it's a two-album set limited to 950 copies.

recordstoreday.com





IN ARGENTINA: THE BUENOS AIRES CONCERTS



A never-before-released pair of recordings of legendary bassist Charles Mingus captured live in Buenos Aires in June 1977 featuring Ricky Ford, Jack Walrath, Bob Neloms and Dannie Richmond. Transferred from the original tapes recorded by Carlos Melero, the limited-edition 180-g 3-LP set is mastered for vinyl by Matthew Lutthans at The Mastering Lab and pressed at 33 1/3 RPM at Le Vinylist. Includes liner notes by author / jazz historian **Brian Priestley.**

[3LP AVAILABLE 4/12 & 2CD/DIGITAL on 4/18]

KENNY DORHAM

BLUE BOSSA IN THE BRONX: LIVE FROM THE BLUE MOROCCO



Never-before-released recording of trumpet icon **Kenny Dorham** live at the Blue Morocco jazz club in The Bronx, NY in 1967 feat. Sonny Red, Cedar Walton, Paul Chambers and Denis Charles. Transferred from the original tapes recorded by Bernard Drayton, the limited-edition 180-gram 2-LP set includes liner notes by jaz scholar **Bob Blumenthal**; plus interviews with Eddie Henderson, Jeremy Pelt, Steven Bernstein, Reggie Workman, Dan Morgenstern and others.

[2LP AVAILABLE 4/12 & CD/DIGITAL on 4/18]

REDDIE HUBBARD

ON FIRE: LIVE FROM THE BLUE MOROCCO



Never-before-released recording of trumpet icon Freddie Hubbard captured live at the Blue Morocco jazz club in The Bronx, NY on April 10, 1967 feat. Bennie Maupin, Kenny Barron, Herbie Lewis and Freddie Waits. Transferred from the original tapes recorded by **Bernard Drayton**. Limited-edition 180g 3-LP set mastered for vinyl by Bernie Grundman with liner notes by noted producer John Koenig; interviews with Eddie Henderson, Jeremy Pelt, Steven Bernstein and others. [3LP AVAILABLE 4/12 & 2CD/DIGITAL on 4/18]

ONTGOMERY/WYNTON KELLY TRIO

SMOKIN' IN SEATTLE: LIVE AT THE PENTHOUSE



Smokin' in Seattle, with jazz guitar icon Wes Montgomery and the Wynton Kelly Trio, is getting a second pressing with new front and back album cover artwork. Captured live at the Penthouse in Seattle, WA on April 14 and 21, 1966 and features bassist Ron McClure and the legendary drummer Jimmy Cobb. The deluxe 180-gram LP is freshly remastered from the original tapes by Matthew Lutthans at The Mastering Lab, and comes with an elaborate insert.

[LP AVAILABLE 4/12 & CD/DIGITAL on 4/18]

THE CHARLIE ROUSE BAND

[2LP/CD/DIGITAL OUT 5/30]

CINNAMON FLOWER: THE EXPANDED EDITION A Brazilian-inspired reissue of the legendary saxophonist Charlie Rouse's 1977 album, originally released on Douglas Records. Nearly 50 years later, Resonance is proud to present this deluxe edition of Cinnamon Flower, which contains nearly 30 minutes of previously-unissued versions of songs from the original release captured by Resonance founder and engineer, George Klabin, at Sound Ideas studio in New York City. Limited- edition 180g 2LP with liner notes by author James Gavin.

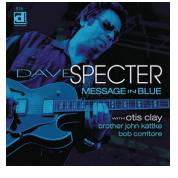
WE LOVE VINYL!













ART PEPPER

Modern Art

Blue Note

Recorded in Hollywood, California, during the 1950s, *Modern Art* was originally released on the Intro label demonstrating the feel of West Coast cool at the time. Another Tone Poet entry on 180-gram vinyl, mastered by Kevin Gray and pressed by Record Technology Inc.

bluenote.com tonepoetsociety.com

DON PULLEN

New Beginnings

Blue Note

A new addition to the label's Classic Vinyl Series, *New Beginnings* represents pianist Don Pullen branching out on his own in the 1980s after runs with Charles Mingus and co-leading groups with George Adams. The trio on this set is jaw-dropping with Gary Peacock on bass and Tony Williams on drums. This edition is stereo, all-analog and pressed on 180-gram vinyl at Optimal. It's mastered by Kevin Gray.

bluenote.com

PHAROAH SANDERS

Izipho Zam (My Gifts)

Strata East/Mack Avenue

Mack Avenue Records has started rolling out

some classic recordings from the Strata East label. An early release is this classic Pharoah Sanders masterpiece from 1973. It's an RSD Exclusive limited to 1,500 copies. The album features a 13-member ensemble and includes the 28-minute exploration of the album's title track. The new release is top-shelf — 180-gram vinyl, pressed at Record Technology Inc. and mastered by Kevin Gray at Cohearent Audio.

recordstoreday.com

GIL SCOTT-HERON

Movina Taraet

IMIR

An RSD Exclusive with a limit of 3,000 copies, *Moving Target* is a Gil Scott-Heron classic that's been out of print. The RSD release features an OBI side strip, cardboard jacket, original artwork, a printed inner sleeve and is pressed on bright red vinyl.

recordstoreday.com

ARCHIE SHEPP

The Complete Live In Antibes

IMID

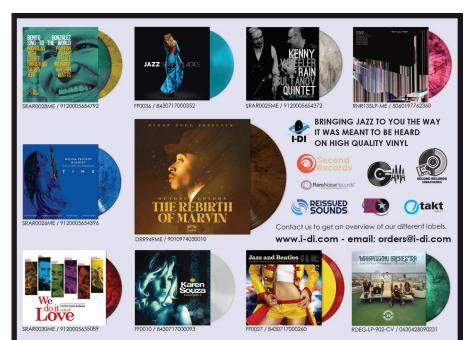
Here's another LMLR release for Record Store Day that comes in as a two-LP set with a limit of 3,000 copies. Unavailable for more than 50 years, the album has been restored and remastered from the original master tapes. Original artwork, archival photography and new essays on Shepp's legacy are all part of the package here. recordstoreday.com

DAVE SPECTER

Message In Blue

Delmark

This thinking-man's bluesman from Chicago has been an artist deserving wider recognition for decades. That may be the reason that













Delmark, also based in Chicago, decided to make this album the first vinyl pressing the company has done since 1991.

delmark.com

SUN RA

Nuits de la Fondation Maeght (DELUXE EDITION) Strut

Here's an RSD First with a limited pressing of 800 copies. Sun Ra's recordings from Fondation Maeght had become the stuff of legend. They were among the first concerts Ra performed outside the North America as he joined a crazy fest lineup that included Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, LaMonte Young and Marian Zazeela. Originally released on the Shandar label in 1971, Strut has expanded the package to a six-album box set complete with a reprint of the festival program and a 12-page, oversized booklet.

strut-records.co.uk recordstoreday.com

SUN RA

Stray Voltage

Modern Harmonic

Here's another Sun Ra release delivered as an RSD First with a limit of 1,000 copies. The album marketing materials hit the mark here with a laugh: "If you're looking for melodies, structured compositions, pleasant harmonies, songs you can whistle, and serenades for social gatherings — seek elsewhere." It's a two-album set of unissued electronic adventures from the 1970s and '80s, pressed on frosted orange vinyl.

sundazed.com recordstoreday.com

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Alts N' Outs: The Other Side Of Blue Note
Blue Note

This is an RSD Exclusive compiling alternate takes from classic Blue Note sessions. The set offers diamonds from Cannonball Adderley, Grant Green, Art Blakey, Jimmy Smith and Sonny Clark. It will be offered on blue vinyl and limited to a pressing of 2,500 copies.

bluenote.com recordstoreday.com

VARIOUS ARTISTS/GILLES PETERSON

Gilles Peterson Presents International Anthem International Anthem

This RSD First release, limited to 1,000 copies, delivers a deluxe double album compilation curated by the renowned London DJ Gilles Peterson, who culle the broadcast archives of BBC 6 Music, Worldwide FM and other syndicated radio programs. The set includes Angel Bat Dawid, Damon Locks with members of Black Monument Ensemble, Junius Paul, Makaya McCraven and more. Pressed on "Frozen Lake Michigan" colored vinyl, it's part of the label's IA11 series.

intlanthem.com recordstoreday.com

TONY WILLIAMS

Civilization

Blue Note

Another entry into Blue Note's Classic Vinyl Series, *Civilization* represents Williams' mid'80s return to Blue Note, which included a return to acoustic music. Featuring trumpeter Wallace Roney, saxophonist Billy Pierce, pianist Mulgrew Miller and bassist Charnett Moffett, *Civilization* offers eight Williams originals. The album is stereo, all-analog and mastered by Kevin Gray from the original masters. It's pressed on 180-gram vinyl at Optimal.

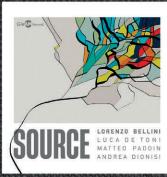
bluenote.com



New Trends in Italian and International Jazz



Best New Italian Tatent 2020" in the annual Top Jazz of Musica Jazz magazine and second place as "Italian Musician of the Year 2023", the Italian bassist Ferdinando Romano presents his new album alone with Finnish accordionist Veli Kujata. Estonian pianist Kirke Karja and Ermanno Baron on drums. The album is a suite in six movements, inspired by stories and legends related to the city of Ottaino. His music blends jazz, contemporary music, experimental, drum'n bass, and rock.



The Lorenzo Bellini Quartet (piano), Luca De Toni (guitar), Matteo Padoin (upright bass) and Andrea Dionisi (drums).

This is an incredibile fresh sound in album, full of surprises, virtuosita and beauty - sa a groupthey shift between coltura effortlessly, and the fluidity of the solos brinasti everything together. Alex Hitchcock



The Israell guitarist & composer Ron Magrit presents his second album along with Yonatan Riklis (hammond organ) and Ofri Nehemya (drums).

"Inspired is an authentic expression of three young musicians who fully embrace the sound they love and return us a swinging sound and full of jay as few in the current jazz music scene."

Spencer Travis



Awarded the Giorgio Gastini International Prize, Daniele Nasi presents his second album recorded live at Parma Jazz Frontiere 2023 along with Jung Taek "JT" Hwang Ipiano), Giacomo Marzi (doublebass) and Mattia Galeotti (drums).

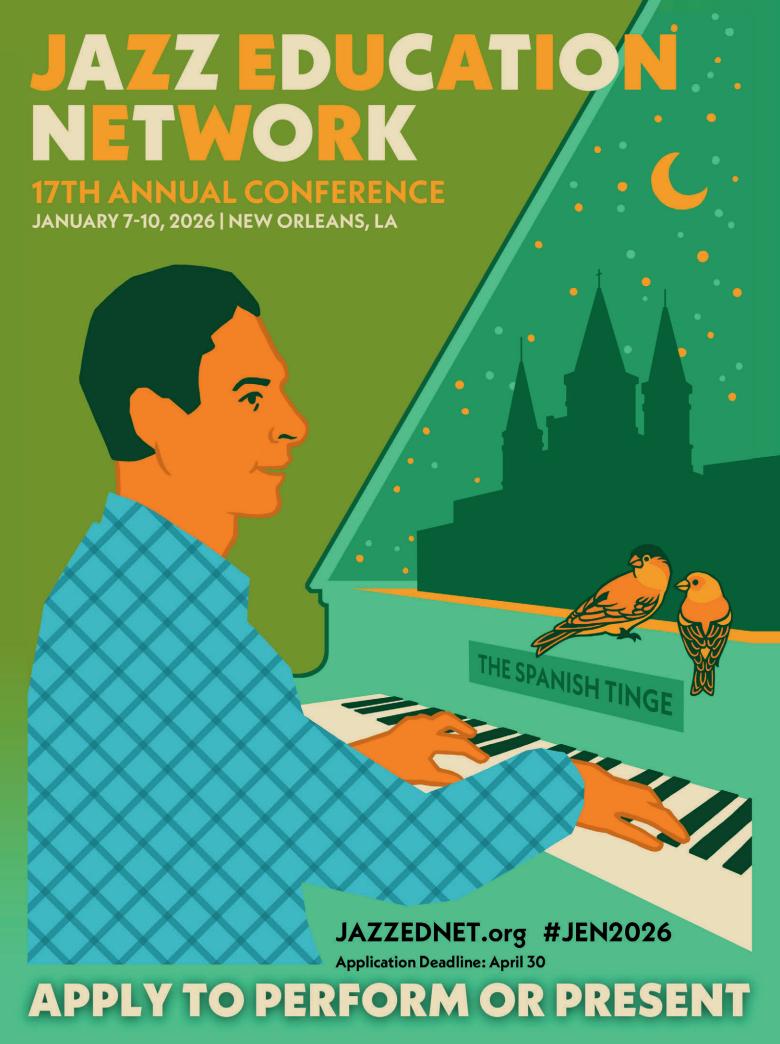


The Italian bassist Giuseppe Venezia, just part of Emmet Cohen Italian trio, presents a post-log assision along with Fabrizio Bosso (trumpet), Attillo Troiano (teor saxophone & Itute). Bruno Montrone (piano) and Pasquale Fiore Idiums)

"This recording is a true honest performan ce of modern jazz with high level of sophi stication and melody." Gerald Cannon



www.gleam-records.com info@gleam-records.com





Vijay lyer/Wadada Leo Smith Defiant Life

ECM

Pianist Vijay Iyer and trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith's sophomore album as a duo, *Defiant Life*, artfully explores themes of grief, hope and resilience. The legendary pair's shared language of angular lines and deliberate pacing provides the perfect vessel to reflect on the current moment of political upheaval and strife across the globe.

There's a spiritual resonance to the opening track, "Prelude: Survival," with Smith's yearning trumpet call in a dialogue with Iyer's dark, brooding piano chords. Named

after the Palestinian concept of steadfast resilience, "Sumud" layers in ethereal electronic waves that expand Smith's languorous blustery trumpet notes into something vast and powerful. Building in heat, the song's tension crests and releases into twinkling, triumphant piano lines. "Floating River Requiem," which Smith wrote to honor the legacy of Patrice Lumumba, the martyred first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is a somber procession in which Iyer's deep timbre and theatrical force meet the robust, throaty call of Smith's trumpet.

Defiant Life's closing tracks hone in on this balance of sorrow and perseverance, one which Iyer and Smith have deftly explored throughout the record. In "Kite," which Iyer wrote in remembrance of Palestinian writer, poet and activist Refaat Alareer, who was killed in Gaza in 2023, Smith's steady trumpet lines and Iyer's bright, mentholated Fender Rhodes give the song a reverent cosmic element.

The album concludes with the achingly poignant "Procession: Defiant Life," a spacious meditation where silence itself feels unyielding, each quiet pause a refusal to surrender. It is a fitting conclusion to a work that grieves deeply yet steadfastly envisions the possibility of a more peaceful future for all.

—Ivana Ng

Defiant Life: Prelude: Survival; Sumud; Floating River Requiem (for Patrice Lumumba); Elegy: The Pilgrimage; Kite (for Refaat Alareer); Procession: Defiant Life. (53:40).

Personnel: Vijay Iyer, piano, Fender Rhodes, electronics; Wadada Leo Smith, trumpet.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Sharel Cassity *Gratitude*

SUNNYSIDE

The future is famously unpredictable, but it's usually a good guess that if an endeavor starts strong, it'll end strong. That turns out to be true for Sharel Cassity's fifth album. On the opening "Magnetism" the saxophonist's squad shares the kind of exuberance that spills through the entirety of *Gratitude*'s program. There's verve to both the piece's start/stop punctuations and alto/trumpet unity; the music is instantly energized. And that's before the leader kicks

off a solo that sounds like Phil Woods and Cannonball Adderly are guiding her from a cloud in post-bop heaven.

Gratitude also arrives with a novel narrative. As a young improviser Cassity was smitten with Christian McBride's 1995 debut, Gettin' To It. As her career unfolded — through pop and R&B work, teaching work, New York club work and a scad of big band gigs — the 47-year-old actively intersected with each member of that disc's stellar rhythm section, pianist Cyrus Chestnut, drummer Lewis Nash and the bassist himself. Purposefully, Gratitude reunites them all, and the vitality of their support is unmistakable.

Rendering overt swing pieces such as "Kenny's Quest" and "Stick Up," the band eloquently reminds us of just how fetching the blues' grammar remains. When the light funk of "Suspect" pops up, it buoys pithy solos by guests Terell Stafford and Michael Dease. But ultimately it's the leader's piquant sound that resonates. Cassity's animation boosts the action around her, and by the time the closing "In The Spirit" subsides, mainstream jazz has another little notch in its belt. —Jim Macnie

Gratitude: Magnetism; Smile; Stick Up; Gratitude; Suspect; Kenny's Quest; The Promise; In The Spirit. (42:45)
Personnel: Sharel Cassity, alto saxophone; Christian McBride, bass; Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Lewis Nash, drums; Terell Stafford, trumpet (1, 5): Michael Dease, trombone (1, 5).

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Chick Corea/ Christian McBride/ Brian Blade Trilogy 3

For decades, Chick Corea always put on a great show. What more can one say about the consistent greatness of Corea, Christian McBride and Brian Blade, three players whose presence on the scene over the collective years have shaped our thinking of music altogether?

Led by the master on the final touring dates of his life — in some of the last concert performances the world saw as a whole before the onset of the pandemic in 2020 — McBride and Blade follow Corea in such a way that matches the pianist's lively energy and signature sound. *Trilogy 3* is a 77-minute collection of smile-giving songs where the first thought that comes to mind each and every listen is "still got it." It's so delightful, one can easily forget it's the last we'll get from this celebrated trio.

To that degree, hearing Blade unwind at length in the middle of "You'd Be So Easy To Love" or McBride take the confident lead and run "Spanish Song" rampant reminds you that these two surviving members will continue to



serve as the same stalwarts with consistent chops for the next few decades as we've relied on them to be for the last score-and-a-half.

I never got to hear Corea perform live, but I've seen McBride and Blade. And we, along with future generations of listeners, can give these current legends their flowers in this time, just as audiences did for each part of this trio just six faraway years ago.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Trilogy 3: Humpty Dumpty; Windows; Ask Me Now; You'd Be So Easy To Love; Trinkle Tinkle; Scarlatti: Sonata In D Minor K9, L413 Allegro; Spanish Song; Tempus Fugit. (77:11)

Personnel: Chick Corea, piano; Christian McBride, bass, Brian Blade, drums.

Ordering info: shop.chickcorea.com



Brandon Woody For The Love Of It All

BLUE NOTE

There's a lot to love in Brandon Woody's trumpet playing — the sure-footed agility of his 16th notes, the conversational cast of his phrasing, the deft attention to dynamics — but it's his tone that ultimately seals the deal. Rich and expressive, it's a bit like the trumpet equivalent of Laurence Fishburne's character in *The Matrix*, offering warmth and strength in equal measure, fleshed out by harrumphing growls, half-valved moans and breathy half-whispers.

Of course, a commanding voice is useless without having something to say, but Woody is solid on that end, too. Not only is his writing resolutely tuneful, with a melodic sense that owes more to mainstream pop than postbop jazz, his solos are blessed with a remarkable sense of narrative. The 16-bar structure of "Wisdom; Terrace On St Paul St." is pretty simple, relying on just four chords and six notes, but the slow build Woody gives it makes it feel almost epic, arching like a Hokusai wave. Woody doesn't try to dazzle with a cascade of chromatics, preferring instead to emphasize rhythmic variation using a limited number of notes. It's the sort of playing that both fuels and feeds off the rhythm section, with Woody and drummer Quincy Phillips regularly sparking off one another.

As such, even though Woody plays more or less constantly, the others in his band never seem overshadowed, with Troy Long's keyboards serving as canvas for Woody's swirling lines, while Michael Saunders' dark, chewy electric bass provides incisive counterpoint. A spectacular debut on all fronts.

-J.D. Considine

For The Love Of It All: Never Gonna Runaway, Beyond The Reach Of Our Eyes; Wisdom; Terrace On St Paul St.; Perseverance; We, Ota Benga; Real Love, Pt. 1. (44:52)

Personnel: Brandon Woody, trumpet; Troy Long, keyboards; Michael Saunders, bass; Quincy Phillips, drums; Imani Grace, vocals (1); Vittorio Stropoli, auxiliary synth (6).

Ordering info: bluenote.com



Critics	Ivana Ng	Jim Macnie	Anthony Dean-Harris	J.D. Considine
Vijay lyer/Wadada Leo Smith Defiant Life	***	****	***	***
Sharel Cassity Gratitude	★★ ½	***	***	***
Corea/McBride/Blade Trilogy 3	***1/2	***	****	***1/2
Brandon Woody For The Love Of It All	***	***1/2	****	****

Critics' Comments

Vijay Iyer/Wadada Leo Smith, Defiant Life

The momentum of these investigations is occasionally slack, but the magnetic bond that is the duo's ultimate signature continuously makes up for it. Whether drifting or floating, they're in deep conversation.

—Jim Macnie

lyer and Smith's latest excursion remains moody, introspective and grounded as always, spacey (more sparse than cosmic) like the rumble of a distant thunderstorm. —Anthony Dean-Harris

Having a handwritten score as the cover image is really on point, because what powers this conversation between master improvisers is the compositional framework. Smith, as always, is abstrusely lyrical, but lyer's coloristic framing is on another level entirely.

—J.D. Considine

Sharel Cassity, *Gratitude*

This record swings hard with bouncy bebop melodies and effusive reeds. Gratitude and abundance often spring from hardship, but that nuance gets lost amidst the exuberant overtones.

—Ivana Ng

Cassity pleasantly accomplishes all she's going for with a workman-like straightahead album.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Solid though the solos by altoist Cassity, trombonist Michael Dease and trumpeter Terell Stafford may be, the key here is the rhythm section, particularly bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash, who elevate the straightahead blowing into something deeply swinging.

-J.D. Considine

Chick Corea/Christian McBride/Brian Blade, Trilogy 3

Precision and fluidity meet in this effervescent celebration of Corea's kinetic piano and timeless compositions. The trio deftly explores the dynamic interplay between discipline and spontaneity to create musical alchemy.

—Ivana Ng

Two Monks, a Bud and a smidge of Scarlatti: Chick was showing us his scope right 'til the end. This date is all about the profound insights driving the trio's slip, slide and swing antics. A total pleasure.

—Jim Macnie

The trio re-arrangement of Scarlatti's "Sonata In D Minor K9 L413" is a delicious trifle, the sort of thing that will have you wishing John Lewis and Milt Jackson were still alive. The rest, though less exceptional, will merely leave you wishing Corea were still alive.

—J.D. Considine

Brandon Woody, For The Love Of It All

A soulful meditation on love and humanity. Romantic horns and sultry percussion keep things smooth, but the record could use a bit of edge to deepen the emotional impact. —Ivana Ng

His horn dominates the mix, so each utterance carries a lot of weight. But foregrounding the brass boosts the program's singularity. It grows more balanced and compelling with each listen.

—Jim Macnie

It's astounding how masterfully Woody releases tension one never even noticed he built, like a frog in a pot just noticing it's been boiled to perfection.

—Anthony Dean-Harris





Jesse Davis - Yardbird Hard Rubber Alto





Immanuel Wilkins - New York Model Alto





Seamus Blake - Tonamax Hard Rubber





Mark Turner - Florida Model Hard Rubber





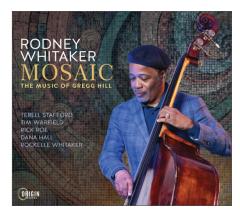
Abraham Burton - New London Model

Those who play them, know!

NAMM Booth #9734

www.tedklum.com
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Rodney Whitaker *Mosaic*

ORIGIN



From the opening title track, this album is a declaration of mastery. It's also a formidable showcase to the collective strength of this combo as well as of Gregg Hill's compositions: It's all killer, no filler. "Mosaic" is a bouncy, juicy number held down by the alchemy present in the interplay between Whitaker's walking bass line that's sharp as a fresh straight razor and Dana Hall's simply effervescent drumming style. Each solo on the track is a disclosure unveiling its own respective revelation, from Terell Stafford's

crooning horn and Tim Warfield's Middle Eastern-drone-tinged sax to Rick Roe's sweet key communications. With such an opening, one should expect a deeply multifaceted presentation, and this record certainly delivers.

"Moonscape" is as otherworldly as the name suggests. "Katie's Tune" is a slightly tipsy and entirely enjoyable waltz. "Ray-Dias" feels like a lost track from Donald Byrd's mid-1960s classic Mustang, while "Stargazer" (not to be confused with the 1970s Dexter Wansel chestnut) is another cut wrought in sparkle and moonbeams that somehow recalls Roy Ayers' "Miles (Love's Silent Dawn)." In short, this album, part of a larger series showcasing the compositions of Gregg Hill in collaboration with Whitaker (which also includes 2022's Oasis, 2021's Outrospection and 2019's Common Ground), displays Hill's uncanny feel for "Rhythm" changes that feel downright luxurious. It also displays preternatural ability of Whitaker (who was honored in 2024 with an induction into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences) to bring those changes to life.

-Ayana Contreras

Mosaic: Mosaic, Unknown Ballad, Claxilever, Katie's Tune, Moonscape, Ray-Dias, Still Life with Tuba, Sloe Gin Fizz, Stargazer, Sunday Special (55:14).

Personnel: Rodney Whitaker, bass, Dana Hall, drums; Terell Stafford, trumpet, flugelhorn; Tim Warfield, tenor, soprano saxophone; Rick Roe, piano; Rockelle Whitaker, vocals (2, 5, 7, 9).

Ordering info: originarts.com



Justin Tyson The Paper Doors INDEPENDENT RELEASE

**

During COVID, numerous musicians did what they could to express themselves while working in isolation. In post-pandemic times, some musicians, including percussionist Justin Tyson — a Midwesterner best known for his work with Robert Glasper and esperanza spalding — have continued to create alone. Results varied.

A 21-part tone poem, *The Paper Doors* is obviously a deeply felt work, one that shifts from doomy atmospherics to pulsing electronics, but its sludgy mix leaves the listener pondering what it all means. With vocals — including a guest appearance by spalding — mixed so low as to be all but unintelligible, the lyrical intent remains a mystery, although Tyson claims it's about "the balance between solitude and community." Solitude definitely wins out.

Some movements engage more than others: "Place 3," which introduces the album's first counter movement and tempo shift, strikes a mildly hypnotic note; "Door 5" lightens the mood with shimmering atmospherics. It's not until "Place 7" that Tyson performs what might truly be called a "song," and even then his vocals are so low in the mix that it's difficult to tell what he's try-

ing to communicate. The most successful movement is "Place 8," which begins with a fast pulse of percussion melded to electronics and culminates with a big beat, but here again the only discernible lyrics concern "being swept away."

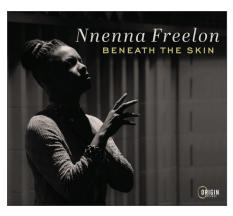
An ideal headphones recording? Sure, but under 43 minutes long, *The Paper Doors* is a disappointing debut from a drummer who has shown exceptional promise as a sideman.

—James Hale

The Paper Doors: Door 1; Place 1; Door 2; Place 2; Door 3; Place 3; Door 4; Place 4; Door 5; Place 5; Door 6; Place 6; Door 7; Place 7; Door 8; Place 8; Door 9; Place 9; permit me voyage...; love; into your hands... (42:42)

Personnel: Justin Tyson, all instruments, vocals; esperanza spalding, vocals (7).

Ordering info: too.fm/d364qae



Nnenna Freelon Beneath the Skin

ORIGIN



There's an unrelieved lament to Nnenna Freelon's latest release, and only occasionally do the songs break from a slow, mournful narrative.

The expressive range of Freelon's voice — and its versatility from tune to tune evokes Aminata Moseka (Abbey Lincoln), Nina Simone and Billie Holiday — soars brilliantly on "Changed," but she quickly settles back into a gloomy sphere, almost tearful on "Widow's Song." On "Dark and Lovely," her vocal timbre morphs pleasantly with Evan Roberson's trombone, and that blend of the two voices continues on "Black Iris" before they give way to Alan Pasqua's elegant solo on piano. His technique on the keyboards is at times a plaintive echo of Freelon's lyrical probing.

The deep blues tendency emerges most longingly on the "Last Dream Home," and Keith Ganz's guitar is an emotional balance to Freelon's heartfelt interpretation. Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit" is referenced on the album's title song, with mention of willow and sycamore trees standing in place of the poplar, and there's a hint of Lady Day's haunting intonation and elongated phrasing.

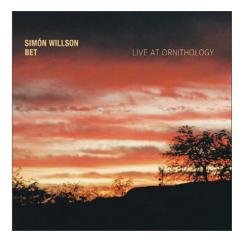
Freelon and crew even apply a lilting sadness to the usually folksy uptempo "Oh! Susanna," particularly when she moans, "Don't you cry for me." A forlorn shadow hovers over both this date and a singer whose effervescence has won her a galaxy of fans. Perhaps this is just another element of connecting personally with her audience, or merely the lingering effects of a healing process. Whatever: Hers is an indomitable musical spirit.

-Herb Boyd

Beneath the Skin: Journey of the Heart; Dark and Lovely, Black Iris; Changed; Widow Song; Here's Your Hat; Beneath the Skin; Oh! Susanna; These Stories We Hold; Last Dream Home. (46:33)

Personnel: Nnenna Freelon, vocals; Alan Pasqua, piano, keyboards; Keith Ganz, guitar, Jonathan Richards, bass; Steve Hass, drums; Evan Roberson, trombone; Shana Tucker, cello.

Ordering info: originarts.com



Simón Willson Bet: Live at Ornithology **ENDECTOMORPH**

Simón Willson's sophomore album presents a quartet in command of demanding, often delightful jazz. Willson is an original bassist. He also composes daring, distinctive music.

Recorded at a Brooklyn club, Bet: Live at Ornithology captures the risk in great jazz improvisation, a quality Willson says is a theme in his music. Taking risks pays off on all seven tracks, from the bluesy "Three Legged Stool" to the high-pressure cityscape "Get a Room" conjures.

Willson, drummer Kayvon Gordon, pia-

Yellowjackets Fasten Up MACK AVENUE

In a couple of years, Russell Ferrante will have racked up half a century of being a Yellowjacket. That doesn't make the other members greenhorns. Dane Alderson has only been in place for a decade, but even that is long-service-medal stuff in relation to current standards of promiscuity. What's immediately clear, right from the take-off of Ben Tucker's "Comin' Home Baby," is that the Yellowjackets still sound like no one but the Yellowiackets.

That's great news if you are a fan, less so if a skeptic. For a time, this was the sound that represented an industry standard for fusion - and, remarkably, that time is still ongoing. Mintzer's tenor doesn't come out of the Michael Brecker mold, but squishes together a lot of earlier voices — Jug, Lockjaw, Dex — and he even makes the EWI characterful. Ferrante's a greatly underrated piano player, only switching to electric keys on two tracks here, which sharpens up and differentiates that all-purpose background that so much fusion relies upon.

The material is crisp, played with renewed conviction - previous Mack Avenue recordings have sounded a little tired — and absolute-

nist Evan Main and tenor saxophonist Neta Raanan navigate tricky territory, particularly in "Business Card," "Three Legged Stool" and "Get a Room."

Raanan launches this with the assertive "Business Card," coaxing Gordon and Main to join her; eventually, the band achieves a brittle, shared fluidity, as Willson's pulsations and Gordon's drumming keep the tune together. With Willson as goad and Gordon as release, this dynamic track comes to a sharply tailored close.

Raanan also begins "Three Legged Stool," a bluesy beauty that sets Willson's chocolate tone in high relief. Each musician digs deep on this romantic, pretty tune.

Willson starts "Get a Room," shushing the crowd to unveil its evocation of city life. Raanan's tenor is taut, pushy; the inventive Main, meanwhile, chases her while Gordon and Willson keep the temperature high. Midway, "Stool" accelerates dramatically as Main darts and probes, trying to get out of Willson and Gordon's way. The piece weaves in and out of tempo as it secures home ground.

Willson's fresh recording is more than live. It's vital. —Carlo Wolff

Bet: Business Card; Jog; Feel Love; Have Cereal; Three Legged Stool; Get a Room; Bet. (47:12)

Personnel: Simón Willson, bass; Neta Raanan, tenor saxophone (1, 2, 4-7); Evan Main, piano; Kayvon Gordon, drums.

Ordering info: simonwillson.net



ly idiomatic, with no self-conscious tweaks or experiments. "The Lion," with guest guitarist/ vocalist Raul Midon, is something of an outlier and tends to divide the album into two distinct halves, but that's OK. They're not so much back as still very much here and, as we say to old friends at a reunion through smilingly gritted teeth (pure envy), not sounding a day older.

-Brian Morton

Fasten Up: Comin' Home Baby; Fasten Up; Will Power; November 8th; The Truth Of You; The Lion; Swingmeister General; An Interesting Dream: Broken: The Unresolved Question: Xemeris (67:24) Personnel: Bob Mintzer, tenor saxophone, EWI; Russell Ferrante, piano, keyboards; Dane Alderson, bass, MIDI sequencing; Will Kennedy, drums; Raul Midon, guitar, vocals (6).

Ordering info: mackavenue.com



Jonah David Waltz for Eli

SWISH TAP



For his debut album as a leader, drummer and currently Hawaii-stationed Navy Officer Jonah David has assembled a handsome and no-nonsense set of mostly standards, with a few tasty originals (penned with keyboardist Ettienne Stadwijk) in the unpretentious mix. At the core of the musical enterprise are David's trusty trio-mates, pianist Joel Sanford and bassist Joe Bussey, who the drummer connected with while he was rooted in the Virginia Beach area.

For the 2024 album sessions, guests included trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, guitarist Jake Stich, saxophonist Jason Arce (with whom David embarks on a ferocious drums/horn tete-atete on the original "Pretenderly") and vibraphonist Bryan Carrott, who shines softly on the burnished Brazilian turf of Jobim's "How Insensitive." Other stops along the intentionally varied standards path are Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower," Monk's "Rhythm-a-Ning" and Mancini's "Days of Wine and Roses."

Clear-toned vocalist Anna Perkins lends her sweet interpretive style to the affectingly lyrical title track and a fresh take on "Sunrise Sunset," which slips out into some slippery metric territory. Davis pays respects to a seminal influence on his drumming, Ted Reed, author of the drummer's exercise book Syncopations with the original "The Genius." Yes, the tune boasts a spidery, syncopated head easing down into a medium swing solo section featuring both Sanford on piano and Stadwijk on B-3.

If short on norms-challenging ideas or creative stretching, David's debut in leader mode is a solid example of mainstream jazz, cleanly delivered and adding up to an enjoyable ride of —Josef Woodard a song set.

Waltz for Eli: Little Sunflower; How Insensitive; Pretenderly Rhythm-a-Ning; The Genius; Waltz for Eli; Days of Wine and Roses; Sunrise Sunset. (44:38)

Personnel: Jonah David, drums; Joel Sanford, piano; Joe Bussey, bass; Ettienne Stadwijk, Rhodes, organ (5); Jake Stith, guitar; Jason Arce, tenor saxophone and flute; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet (3); Bryan Carrott, vibraphone (2); Anna Perkins, vocal (6, 8).

Ordering info: jonahdavid.bandcamp.com

When Things Go Wrong (or Right)

Candi Staton: Back To My Roots (Beracah; *** 50:10) The "roots" in the title of singer Candi Staton's latest album are the Baptist gospel music and secular blues she grew up on in rural Alabama in the 1950s and '60s. Today, her legendary reputation as singer of gospel, blues, R&B, soul and disco relies on the same qualities that have long underpinned her career: a distinctive personality, a combination of strength and grace, intelligence and an emotionally perceptive heart. In a voice not yet tarnished by time, the 83-year-old Georgian invests originals and covers of Al Green, Rolling Stones and Elvis Presley with a special spirit that speaks of the power of love and faith. Standout tracks include her originals "Hang On In There," featuring bluesman Larry McCray's vocal, and "Love Breakthrough," a catchy merger of 1960s Motown pop and 1980s Malaco soul-blues.

Ordering info: candi-staton.com

Andrew Duncanson: California Trap (Run It Back; ★★★½ 51:23) Nothing like a visit to multi-instrumentalist/producer Kid Andersen's Greaseland Studios in San Jose to bring out the best in a musician. Andrew Duncanson, of Kilburn Alley Blues Band and Dig 3 trio renown, made the trek from Illinois and found the tone of his husky, lived-in voice veering between exhilaration and exasperation with more ease than ever before in a studio. Duncanson, who plays guitar on occasion here, wrote almost all the songs: a good thing. He and his more-than-capable helpmates sweep the dust off Woody Guthrie's folk anthem "This Land." Saxophonist Michael Peloquin perfectly integrates a horn section into the arrangements.

Ordering info: andrewduncanson.com

Geoff Achison: Don't Play Guitar Boy (Juniper 2; **** 42:02) Geoff Achison shatters the presumption that Australia isn't home to fine blue players. His 14th album is a solo acoustic live-in-the-studio affair where the 59-year-old matches the emotions of his easy, unstrained singing to the level of the virtuosic guitar technique on display. A dozen originals, among them a train blues and a homage to an old street performer, point out the depth of his songwriting.

Ordering info: geoffachison.bandcamp.com

Andy Fairweather Low: The Invisible Bluesman (The Last Music Company; *** 122) Long before getting noticed in Eric Clapton's band, Andy Fairweather Low recorded several outstanding solo rock albums. Back then, in the 1970s and 1980s, he summoned musical fun that had blues edginess and desperation around its edges. Finally, a new album has the Welchman's blues convictions revealed in full light. His



trademark high voice holds up well; his guitar never falters. Accompanied by various U.K. sidemen, Low gives a new lease on life to certifiable classics.

Ordering info: mvdshop.com

John Lee Hooker: The Standard School Broadcast Recordings (BMG: ★★★★ 58:36) Looking down from his throne in blues heaven, John Lee Hooker must be pleased with a glowing legacy that includes a steady slow stream of collections, reissues and new volumes of previously unreleased music. Among the latter is Broadcast, a 1972 session recorded for an educational radio series that was (mostly) rejected for airplay after being deemed inappropriate for the tender ears of students. Indeed, the would-be schoolmaster troweled doom-and-gloom thick on signature songs and variants, menacingly offering up emotional states of misery due to divorce, loneliness, hoboing, salacity, sinfulness writ large. All the same, the Boogie Man, through pained singing and barbed guitar work, finds a measure of self-containment about the possibility of forgiveness. Piano-plaving son Robert, a bassist and a drummer follow Hooker's musical unorthodoxies with more success than most other sidemen.

Ordering info: johnleehooker.com

Elmore James: Hits & Rarities (Sunset Blvd; ****½ 103:03) Postwar Chicago blues of the highest order is evidenced everywhere on this collection starring the genius slide guitarist and singer Elmore James: Here are 36 priceless sides cut for producer Bobby Robinson's Fire and Enjoy labels from 1959 to 1963. Whether in a New York studio with studio pros or in Chicago alongside his remarkable Broomdusters band or in New Orleans with a little big band, James intensely plumbs the depths of emotional involvement. The man's authority is uncanny.

Ordering info: sunsetblvdrecords.com



Peace Flag Ensemble *Everything is Possible*

WE ARÉ BUSY BODIES

★½

In *Mood Machine*, her deftly reported examination of Spotify and the culture of playlists, Liz Pelly devotes significant attention to work designed as background music, generic playlists that aren't supposed to attract attention. An increasing amount of that hipster elevator music is commissioned cheaply by the company to squeeze out the presence of real artists.

With its third album, Peace Flag Ensemble, a group from Saskatchewan that has alternately called itself a free-jazz band and an ambient jazz group, seems to be vying for a spot on one of those vacuous playlists, creating music so toothless, so bland, and so uneventful that giving it one's full attention is a serious challenge.

While flugelhornist Dalton Lam and saxophonist Paul Gutheil each take lengthy solos on most of the tracks, it's hard to tell how much of their lines are composed and how much improvised. When Lam opens up "The Past is What Changes the Most" it appears that his lines are spontaneous, but he soon locks into unison patterns with pianist Jon Neher, and that lack of spark sinks the entire affair.

Most of the music feels like a watered-down soundtrack from a forgotten B-movie from the '70s, drenched in reverb to disguise the total lack of dynamic variation. Mike Thieven's drumming resembles a leaden drum machine, cycling endlessly without any fluctuation.

The group's first album was assembled piecemeal through overdubs, and that certainly seems like it could be the case here, as there's no appreciable interaction between the musicians whatsoever.

—Peter Margasak

Everything is Possible: Paint Drying; The Past is What Changes the Most; Hot Mic; Le Souvenir, Ann Hodges Asleep on the Sofa; General Strike; Ley Lines; Raised Among Catalogs; Flamingo Heights; Lover's Spat; I Am Not the Gaugin I Used to Be. (44:53)
Personnel: Dalton Lam, flugelhorn; Paul Gutheil, saxophone; Jon Neher, piano; Mike Thieven, drums; Travis Packer, electric bass; Michael Scott Dawson, electric guitar, electronics.

Ordering info: wearebusybodies.com



Tom Teasley/ Charles Williams Wisdom: Tom Teasley Remembers Charles Williams INDEPENDENT RELEASE

Tom Teasley/ Dave Ballou Lunch Break

INDEPENDENT RELEASE

***1/2

Virginia-based percussionist, composer and cultural diplomat Tom Teasley has spent his innovative career interweaving the worlds of jazz and world percussion. His two newest records, *Wisdom: Tom Teasley Remembers Charles Williams* and *Lunch Break*, featuring Teasley and trumpeter Dave Ballou, display Teasley's passion for synergistic duo collaborations and the surprising places they can lead.

The first of Teasley's two recent duo records, *Wisdom*, features the multi-instrumentalist with his longtime collaborator and mentor Charles Williams, lauded opera baritone and bard. When Williams passed away at the age of 86 a week after the pair recorded the final tracks for *Wisdom* in December 2022, Teasley shaped this record into a tribute.

Throughout *Wisdom*, Williams and Teasley the pair's creative bond shines through in inspiring and uplifting ways as they explore messages of joy and connection from cultures

all over the world. Much of the record involves Williams speaking ancient truths from proverbs and poetry while Teasley responds sensitively on a variety of percussion instruments, including djembe drum, tambourine, Native American flute and melodica.

On "African Proverbs," Williams enunciates gems like, "Anticipate the good so that you may enjoy it," to the tones and chimes of Teasley's RAV drum, shaping a tender container for optimism and healing. Williams sings a few tracks, too, in his rich, deep baritone. Blending seamlessly with Teasley's high-energy percussion stylings, Williams performs rousing renditions of African American spirituals like "Wade in the Water" and "Oh, Freedom," highlighting perseverance and hope with his emotive vocals.

As they express kind, loving truths, the pair's long-standing friendship, which began when they met as cultural ambassadors through the U.S. Department of State, anchors the record with tenderness.

In February, Teasley also independently released another duo album, *Lunch Break*, this time with New York-based trumpeter Dave Ballou, who's collaborated with Dave Leibman and Joe Lovano. *Lunch Break* was inspired by the duo projects of artists like Don Cherry/Ed Blackwell, Max Roach/Clark Terry, and Lester Bowie/Phillip Wilson and came about after the two musicians met and recognized a shared desire to expand on what a trumpet/drums duo could be

Ballou, with a full, vibrant tone, converses boldly with Teasley in this adventurous collaboration, which thrives on morphing textures and surprising hybridizations. On "Tips in Baghdad," Ballou dances frenetically overtop Teasley's inventive percussion, which combines his knowledge of Mesopotamian frame drumming gained while traveling in Iraq and the funky, backbeat rhythmic patterns he heard and studied in New Orleans. On the free rubato piece "Prayer for the Ancestors," Ballou sails emotively on the waves of Teasley's sensitive Russian RAV drum and drumkit cymbal splashes.

Wisdom leans more into meditation and spoken word, highlighting African and African American cultural elements, with some jazz-based improvisation. Meanwhile, Lunch Break is more centered on free, sometimes meandering, improvisations, and pushing beyond musical comfort zones. Both records pack a strong punch and underscore Teasley and his collaborators' musical fearlessness.

—Alexa Peters

Wisdom: Tom Teasley Remembers Charles Williams: Funga Alafia; African Proverbs; Tambourines to Glory; The Blues; Cherokee Tale; Motto, Acceptance, Evil; IStill Believe; Wade In The Water; Mother To Son; I Dream a World; Oh Freedom; Haikus For The Seasons.

Personnel: Tom Teasley, percussion and RAV drum; Charles Williams, voice.

Lunch Break: Tips in Baghdad; Four or Six; When the Wind Cries; For Max; Rush Hour; Lullaby; Jongo; Mop Shake And Roll; Prayer For The Ancestors; Riqq Talk; Gratitude. (39:54)

Personnel: Tom Teasley, drums and percussion; Dave Ballou, trumpet

Ordering info: tomteasley.com



Abide In Love

Gregory Tardy's newest offering is a collection of his beautiful original ballads. Joining him on this recording is Marcus Printup, Keith Brown, Sean Conly and Willie Jones III.

Release date is May 30th, 2025

wj3records.com



Historical / BY TED PANKEN

A Collection Long in the Making

If ever a recorded corpus was tailor-made for a Mosaic box set, it's the 15 albums contained on the seven-CD *Classic Vanguard Small Group Swing Sessions* (Mosaic; **** 499:37) and the 11 albums on its prospective six-CD follow-up, tentatively titled *Vanguard Piano Jazz Showcase*.

Each one was the brainchild of John Hammond (1910–'87), who'd spent his 20s producing the sides that introduced Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Lester Young and Benny Goodman to the world. He served in World War II, then produced classical albums for Keynote Records and its purchaser, Mercury Records, which he left in 1952. All the while, Thomas Cunniffe observes in the excellent booklet essay, Hammond was functioning as a jazz journalist, expressing his dyspeptic views on bebop and the pervasiveness of newfangled recording techniques like echo effects and multiple microphones.

Hammond received an opportunity to implement his views in November 1953, when the founders of Vanguard Records, who were using a single overhead microphone to make classical recordings that impressed audio connoisseurs, approached him to add jazz to their catalog. He set to work immediately, settling on the Brooklyn Masonic Temple in Fort Greene.

Over the next four years, Hammond recruited a cross-generational cohort of idiosyncratic masters who, as "fellow supervisor" Nat Hentoff put it, were "caught in no man's land, somewhere between the people who think jazz died with Johnny Dodds and the people who think it began with Stan Kenton." These included the immortal Basie drummer Jo Jones, who propels seven of the sessions contained herein, five of them — including one leader date featuring tenor giant Lucky Thompson in kinetic synchronicity with bassist Walter Page, once the leader of the Blue Devils, from which the Count Basie Orchestra emerged in Kansas City. Trumpeter-arranger Buck Clayton and clarion singer Jimmy Rushing, crucial in the band when Hammond met Basie in Kansas City in 1936, lead two and three sessions, respectively; tenorist Buddy Tate plays on four of them. Trombonist Vic Dickenson, a Basie member in 1940-'41, leads two. Basie himself hosts a 1957 location date from his eponymous Harlem nightclub, playing on one tune behind his then-current vocalist Joe Williams. Basie's contemporaneous "New Testament" band is represented by a 1954 sextet by trumpeter Joe Newman with bandmates Frank Wess and Frank Foster on saxophones and bassist Eddie

Sir Charles Thompson, a fluid, Southwest-oriented, swing-to-bop pianist-arranger,

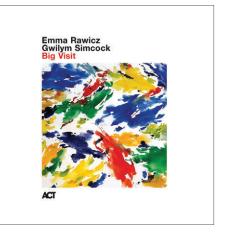


helms two dates: a 1953 sextet with Newman and Basie trombonist Benny Powell, Kansas City bassist Gene Ramey and the impeccable drummer Osie Johnson; and a 1954 ensemble with "Old Testament" lead altoist Earle Warren and trombonist Benny Morton, with trumpeter Emmett Berry and tenor sax immortal Coleman Hawkins on the front line. Hammond also allotted two sessions to Ruby Braff, whose poetic assimilation of Louis Armstrong, Bunny Berrigan and Bix Beiderbecke into his own argot was already turning heads.

Hammond's hands-off in-studio comportment probably facilitated the relaxed quality of the Vanguard sessions, long scarce and fragmentarily distributed over the years, and much valued by swing connoisseurs for their musicality and sonic presence, which is illuminated by Mosaic's characteristically superb remastering. Perhaps a more hands-on approach would have tightened up Rushing's final Vanguard date, where pianist Clarence Johnson's eccentric comping and the cheesy organ-electric guitar blend of Marlowe Morris and Roy Gaines contrast harshly with his delivery. Then, too, some may prefer the results of the multiple miking techniques that Rudy Van Gelder was contemporaneously establishing to Hammond's single mic practice.

Still, an abundance of well-wrought riff and blues tunes and ballads by these mid-career individualists is what really counts. Four highlights among many are Coleman Hawkins' operatic declamation on "It's the Talk of the Town"; Jo Jones' trapset solo feature on "Caravan"; Buddy Tate's solo on "Evenin"; and Lucky Thompson's informed signifying on Lester Young during a brisk reprise of "Shoe Shine Boy," the 1936 Hammond-produced flagwaver that introduced Young, Basie, Page, Freddie Green and Jo Jones — and thereby Kansas City/Southwest Swing — to the world.

Ordering info: mosaicrecords.com



Emma Rawicz/ Gwilym Simcock Big Visit

ACT

This duo confrontation between saxophonist Emma Rawicz and pianist Gwilym Simcock has been billed as a multi-generational one. Those who are looking for evidence of a generational sound might find it hard to identify what is unique in Rawicz, newer to the European music scene, or in Simcock's much longer experience there.

Duo dates can lack chemistry, but due to their common influences, Rawicz and Simcock did not suffer in that department. Fans familiar with the work of Keith Jarrett and Pat Metheny might find much in *Big Visit* that resonates. Both are cited as significant influences, and Simcock has been part of Metheny's recent bands.

The jazz musician and scholar David Ake writes about Jarrett and Metheny's relationships to the pastoral in his 2011 book, *Jazz Matters*. This might be what is common and apparent in *Big Visit*, an album that was recorded in what their press kit describes as the "quietly idyllic" setting of West Sussex, England. Some of the original compositions — two of which each member of the duo contributes — are rooted in the relationship between setting and the biographical.

Though these are not the only compositional directions present, one gets the sense that calm and easy chemistry and that suffuses this record is a question of the personal and perhaps the nostalgic associations we have with place. With a cover of Stevie Wonder's "Visions" and the standard "You've Changed," the confrontation ends with a glimpse of the magic of togetherness.

—Joshua Myers

Big Visit: His Great Adventure; The Shape of a New Sun; The Drumbledrone; Optimum Friction; Visions; You've Changed. (45:10) **Personnel:** Emma Rawicz, saxophones; Gwilym Simcock, piano.

Ordering info: actmusic.com.



Benjie Porecki All That Matters FUNKLOVE PRODUCTIONS

**

If there's an original melodic idea played on D.C.-based keyboardist-composer Benjie Porecki's *All That Matters*, I missed it. This is a well-intentioned, meant-to-be-deep, thoroughly derivative compilation of six self-penned, mostly reflective themes and four covers interpreted with enthusiasm if not imagination.

Porecki claims a long, varied career during which he's played many instruments, worked

as a sideman across genres and released six previous albums of his own. Here he leans into pop-balladry, gospel and soul tropes on songs by Roberta Flack, Sam Cooke and Hall & Oates; copious blue notes and rock cliches; a mix suited to smooth playlists, virtually all medium-tempo. "Home at Last" has a nice groove and the pianist dances a line connecting bittersweetness with unalloyed joy; the trio becomes fervent on "Bring It On Home." But despite organ beds and swirls that add an undercoat of drama to the several pieces aspiring to anthemic climaxes, they arrive instead as inflated, MOR pop piano, sans swing, bop, heat or edge.

In general, Bowie and Prince serve Porecki well, the bassist by offering occasional variations to his basic chores and drummer by providing colors when he's not directed to simply tap time. In promotional materials Porecki says, "All that matters is love." It's a fine if familiar sentiment, and I believe this pianist expresses it from the heart. But considering 100 years of jazz piano recordings, or even the past decade's, this album strikes me as some ado about not much. Of course, that may be as you like it.

—Howard Mandel

All That Matters: Passage of Time; Just When I Needed You; Wise Decisions; Home At Last; Sonora; All That Matters; Intermezzo; Bring It On Home; Letting Go; She's Gone. (50:56)

Personnel: Benjie Porecki, piano, organ, pads; Mark Prince, drums; Michael Bowie, bass.

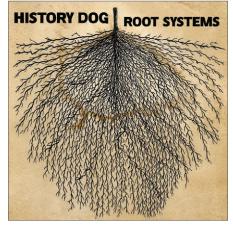
Ordering info: benjieporecki.bandcamp.com

History Dog Root Systems OTHERLY LOVE

**1/2

The combination of jazz and poetry challenges the listener. Sometimes — one thinks immediately of Moor Mother's fire-breathing exhortations with Irreversible Entanglements, and on her solo records — it's impossible to imagine the music without the words. Other times, as with legendary pianist Cecil Taylor's abstruse recitations and play with language, it's received as a self-indulgent annoyance. During his lifetime, many reviewers seemed to wish he'd shut up and play.

Vocalist Shara Lunon's performances with History Dog, a group that includes Irreversible Entanglements bassist Luke Stewart in its ranks, fall somewhere between these two poles, then lurch sideways. On the album's opening track, her voice is warped by echo and reverb as Stewart's bass guitar booms and skritches and Lesley Mok's drums rattle and click. She emits wordless sounds like yelps of guileless joy, then begins repeating a single mantralike phrase over and over ("he she we us they them") until it achieves a hypnotic power. On a later track, "Chaotic," she hisses and whispers non-words into the microphone as the music comes in and out in electronically transformed waves, like it's



being remixed by DJ Spooky or NikNak in real time. Eventually, trumpeter Chris Williams emerges as a second lead voice, his horn lines full of sputters and "wrong" sounds, like a descendent of Lester Bowie minus the irreverent tweaking of tradition. At times, the electronics and production effects become the entire sum of the music, recalling the work of 1990s post-rock duo Main more than anything one could call "jazz." —*Phil Freeman*

Root Systems: He She We; Hilarity; Chaotic; Honest; Best Believe; Field Recordings; Hilarious; Buried. (38:43)
Personnel: Chris Williams, trumpet, electronics; Shara Lunon, vocals, electronics; Luke Stewart, bass guitar, electronics; Lesley

Mok, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: otherlyloverecords.bandcamp.com



Lucía Lucía LA RESERVE

Lucía Gutiérrez Rebolloso, known professionally as Lucía, has an impressive background. She performed with Son de Madera, a son jarocho band fronted by her parents, since she was two. In 2022, she became the first Mexican artist to win the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. She was also a member of four-time Latin Grammy winner Natalia Lafourcade's ensemble. Lafourcade is known for blending pop, rock, jazz and folk; on her debut recording, Lucía takes a similar path, adding hints of African rhythms to her style.

She sings the first verses of album opener "What A Difference A Day Makes" in English, with a mellow feel, backed by Edward Simon's quiet piano. The band comes in as she delivers the original Spanish lyrics, "Cuando Vuelva A Tu Lado," a bolero popular since the '30s. The rest of the album balances standards from the American Songbook and well known Spanish compositions from Mexico, Spain and Latin America. Lucía's warm vocals give the lyrics she delivers an understated emotional force.

Standouts include "La Llorona," a traditional song about a woman mourning for her dead children, with Lucía's scatted asides and Juancho Herrera's bandola adding to the song's disquieting atmosphere; "Speak Low," with Lucía's soft, passionate vocal complemented by the quiet Latin pulse played by the band; and "Veracruz," an ode to her birthplace, written by the eminent Mexican composer Agustin Lara. Her vocal improvisations play off of the meandering saxophone line of David Sánchez, celebrating her love for her hometown.

—i. poet

Lucia: What A Difference A Day Makes (Cuando Vuelva A Tu Lado); Silencio; You Taught My Heart To Sing; Lacy, You Must Believe In Spring; Exactly Like You; La Llorona; Mi Niña Lola; Speak Low; Blame It On My Youth; Veracruz; Alfonsina Y El Mar. (60:08) Personnel: Lucia, vocals; Edward Simon, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass; Antonio Sánchez, drums; David Sánchez, saxophone; Juancho Herrera, guitar, bandola; Felipe Fournier, percussion.

Ordering info: lareserverecords.com

Ivo Perelman / BY MARTIN LONGLEY

Profile in Partnered Prolificity

Brazilian tenor saxophonist **Ivo Perelman** has long dwelt in New York, where he has become something of a serial collaborator. Even when a team-up becomes regular, he still finds fresh ways to keep switching courses. Ever-prolific, the latest time-slice of Perelman releases happens to focus on horn meetings, or other duo settings, not least with Tyshawn Sorey providing both piano and drums, or Nate Wooley on the trumpet. Each album is released by a different label.

Perelman is closest to his birthplace home with the São Paulo Creative 4, a reed quartet dedicated to incisive thoroughness and virtuoso travelling, on this occasion into the far reaches of the cosmos. Supernova (Tratore: ★★½ 46:57) is a concept album that deals with the nebula, dwarf, black hole and dark matter aspects of grand existence, coming across as a suite-like experience. It's recorded in what sounds like a basic fashion, just miked up in a hard-acoustic room, treated like a gig-performance. Even though low horns such as the baritone saxophone and bass clarinet are present, their enfolding tones aren't properly captured, and this session would have benefited from some closer microphone placement and a more organic depth. As a result, the convergent tones are narrower than they should be, harshly delineated, even though they span the sonorous and the biting. This sounds like improvisational searching, and the quartet members are tight in their moves from abstraction to sudden staccato stutter-rhythms. "Planetary Nebula" features intense breath-rounds, and a vocal quadro-logue, sputtering contrasts with sustained tones. There's an Albert Ayler pliability to "Black Dwarf," the players jostling and jumping on each other's shoulders.

Ordering info: ivoperelman-spc4.bandcamp.com

Halving the horns to a pair, Perelman is joined by fellow tenor saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock for Duologues 3: Crystal Clear (Ibeji; ★★1/2 48:51). Their tactics are to shadow and mirror each other, finding rounded iazz tones in their involved escapades. Perelman and Laubrock both excel in anticipating and linking up with each other's moves, to the extent that the pieces often sound composed. It's a calmer, more concentrated set; the duo are frequently in a running chase, preferring linear conversation to the disruption of surprise. "Three" slows down and opens out, lowering the tone (literally), then "Four" gets restless and agitated. "Seven" reaches for higher sounds, Laubrock on soprano, in another logical strategy for this very rational program. Ordering info: streaming only

The next two releases in this fruitful batch, both duo sets, possess a greater aura of ex-



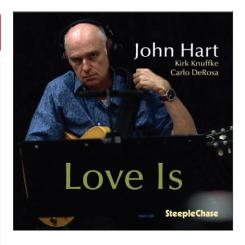
citement. Perelman invites trumpeter **Nate Wooley** for *Polarity 3*, the final disc of a trilogy (**Burning Ambulance**; *** 62:45), for an exposed interaction that's playful and precise, its progress like that of a prickly serpent, the players intertwining with a compacted variety of tones. The sonics are firm yet slender, with an enjoyable contrast between the trumpet and tenor tones, ascending gradually with a contained intensity. The tonal architecture is sometimes surprisingly close to that of classic jazz, even if this is a free-form encounter.

Ordering info: burningambulance.com

The most striking set spans two discs, as Tyshawn Sorey teams up with Perelman for Parallel Aesthetics (Fundacja Słuchaj; ★★★½ 92:29). Sorey shifts between drums and piano, lending this meeting a particular sonic dynamism. Perelman becomes audibly aroused, the pair sparking together in an intense and prolonged sequence of deep investigation, over two discs, with six pieces spanning between 11 and 23 minutes. There's a big, bold drum sound and a full piano panorama as Perelman offers purring and high yowling, exploring the lower and higher potential of his horn. When Sorey's piano enters on "Two," it's a striking surprise, inhabiting calmer pools of shimmering notes. Perelman gets feathery and low on "Four," but he increases speed and attack when riled up.

Ordering info: sluchaj.bandcamp.com

Perelman is a master of partner selection, setting his own stage for abstract developments, but here we find him mainly in a duo state. It would be very satisfying if a subsequent spread of releases found him in quartet or quintet surroundings: not so immense that his contributions would be subsumed, but sufficient to catch him interacting with drums, bass, guitar, electronics, violin, or perhaps tuba, accordion or turntables, without careening off the tracks.



John Hart Love Is STEEPLECHASE ****

The guitarist John Hart finds himself in an unusual trio setting here, accompanied only by bassist Carlo DeRosa and cornetist Kirk Knuffke. The results are perhaps more subdued though no less swinging than any of Hart's five previous SteepleChase outings.

The rapport between Hart and Knuffke in their first-ever meeting is apparent from the outset. They spin tight unisons on the tricky head to Bud Powell's "Hallucination" while DeRosa sets the pace with walking bass lines. And when Hart launches into his solo on this bop staple, with neither the rhythmic support of drums or any chordal instrument, it becomes an intimate duet with bass that showcases the guitarist's improvisational gifts. And he responds with the elegance and flair of a Jimmy Raney before engaging in some rapid-fire exchanges with Knuffke on this harmonically intriguing tune.

Though Knuffke may affect an old-school sound on cornet, his more provocative instincts come to the fore on Hart's originals like the angular "Infamy," "Lazy Thirds" (based on John Coltrane's "Lazy Bird") and the intricate title track (a fidgety contrafact on "You Don't Know What Love Is"). Other highlights include a gorgeous meditation on Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower is a Lovesome Thing," an inventive 5/4 reading of Bill Evans' "Blue in Green" and a dreamy take on Tony Williams' shadowy waltz, "Pee Wee." They close in relaxed, swinging fashion on Jimmy Van Heusen's "I Thought About You," with Hart and Knuffke conjuring up memories of Ruby Braff trading off bluestinged licks with George Barnes.

—Bill Milkowski

Love Is: Hallucination; Infamy; A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing; Love Is; Blue in Green; Pee Wee; Lazy Thirds; Never Let Me Go; Be My Love; I Thought About You. (69:37)

Personnel: John Hart, guitar, Kirk Knuffke, cornet; Carlo DeRosa, bass.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk



Butcher Brown Letters from the Atlantic CONCORD JAZZ

All musicians have a theme in mind when plotting a recording. Butcher Brown, a collective from Virginia, wanted their new project to give listeners the feeling of "floating on a trip up and down the coast — from the Chesapeake Bay to New York, down to Florida and over to Europe." Hence the project's title Letters from the Atlantic, a '70s-style mix of jazz, hip-hop, rock, funk, R&B, soul and bossa nova that Butcher Brown likes to call solar music.

Randal Despommier South SUNNYSIDE

***1/2

Randal Despommier is originally from New Orleans, where he gained important experience playing in groups that sometimes included his father or brother, both drummers. He left town to attend New England Conservatory in 2007 but returned in the spring of 2024 to record South. Despommier's tone on alto saxophone occasionally recalls Paul Desmond and, at his most passionate, late-period Art Pepper. But his choice of notes is very much his own.

South pays tribute to various aspects of New Orleans music. Half of the set has the altoist joined by three New Orleans veterans (pianist David Torkanowsky, bassist James Singleton and drummer Johnny Vidacovich); the others find him interacting with a younger but similar-sounding trio.

The opener, Professor Longhair's "Go To The Mardi Gras," is a party piece with Vidacovich's infectious parade rhythms and Singleton's danceable bass lines contributing quite a bit of joy. After the leader's melancholy "Round 3 AM (A Blues Nocturne)," he performs Sidney Bechet's haunting "Si tu vois ma mére" and a tribute to Jelly Roll Morton and his colorful storytelling. There are three

The collective has an affinity for DJs and musicians like D'Angelo, Robert Glasper and hybrid jazz ensembles Weather Report and Headhunters, so they created 11 feelgood tunes, perfect for upcoming summertime parties.

There are a few upbeat, club infused tracks like "Unwind," featuring vocalist Melanie Charles, and the psychedelic "Something New About You" where the groove is Lower East Side New York meets rock with electronic keys. But the bulk of the tunes are on the chill side. The track "Ibiza" is imbued with a deep house music vibration with sleek saxophone lines from MC Marcus "Tennishu" Tenney. Captured on the song is the essence of how DJs chop up old-school samples, which the collective does here with live instrumentation.

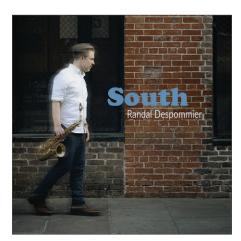
There are also interesting collaborations, including trumpeter Nicholas Payton, who lends his chops to the jazzy "Montrose Forest." Butcher Brown wanted this album to be a laidback addition to their eclectic sound. It's safe to proclaim the mission accomplished.

-Veronica Johnson

Letters from the Atlantic: Seagulls; Unwind; Backline; Right Here; Change in Weather; Dinorah Dinorah; I Remember; Ibiza; Hold You; Montrose Forest; Something New About You; Infant

Personnel: DJ Harrison, keyboards; Corey Fonville, drums; Andrew Randazzo, bass; MC Marcus "Tennishu" Tenney, trumpet, saxophones; Morgan Burrs, guitars; Melanie Charles, flute, vocals (2); Leonor Wolf, electronics, vocals (4); Mia Gladstone (5), Yay Bey (7), Victoria Victoria (9), Neal Francis (11), vocals; Nicholas Payton

Ordering info: butcherbrownmusic.bandcamp.com



departures from the New Orleans theme: a heartfelt treatment of "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," Edgar Winter's rock ballad "Dying To Live" and the gloomy "Blues Rheumatica." However, South concludes with happy feelings on "Just A Closer Walk With Thee," which has father Phil Despommier sounding quite fine on drums.

-Scott Yanow

South: Go To The Mardi Gras; Southern Nights; 'Round 3AM (A Blues Nocturne): Si Tu Vois Ma Mere: Jelly Roll's Living Room: Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; Dying To Live; Blues Rheumatica; Just A Closer Walk With Thee. (46:43)

Personnel: Randal Despommier, alto saxophone; David Torkanowsky (1, 2, 5, 7, 9), Jason Yeager (3, 6, 8), piano; James Singleton (1, 2, 5, 7, 9), Aaron Holthus (3, 4, 6, 8), bass; Johnny Vidacovich (1, 2, 5, 7), Rodrigo Recabarren (3, 4, 6, 8), Phil Despommier

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



Sarah Belle Reid + Vinny Golia Accidental Ornithology

INFREQUENT SEAMS

Vinny Golia was born one year after the end of World War II, and he has played an immense variety of woodwinds and reeds in jazz and modern classical settings. Sarah Belle Reid was born the year that the Berlin Wall came down, and she has branched from early training as an orchestral trumpeter into education, composition, instrument invention, and improvisation using brass and electronic instruments. What better choice would there be for two musicians of different generations who straddle worlds than to make up one of their own?

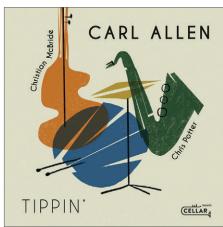
The duo improvised the music on Accidental Ornithology by extrapolating from the calls of imaginary birds, whose names they made up over breakfast on the morning of the session. The latitude afforded by such a premise allowed them to draw upon sounds that were overtly birdlike (goosy clarinet brays, trilling flute tones) and brazenly fictional: Reid can obtain a creditable Donald Duck voice with her trumpet.

But if the duo's unconventional sound palette and unabashedly playful chemistry provokes suspicion that they're just joking around, think again. Golia and Reid are instant composers who manage timbres and tensions with a cohesive inner logic. Their brief interactions are packed with event, shifting abruptly from the concord of paired long tones to contrasting juxtapositions of differing extended techniques and processed sounds. Eric Dolphy used to practice with the birds; Reid and Golia are simply taking up his example. -Bill Meyer

Accidental Ornithology: Yellow Speckled Pond Grouse; Pixie Goose; Red Crested Floo Bog; Mud Diver; Great Ghost Crane; Silent Gray Presck (but no one knows why that's its name); Lesser Evening Hiding Ploute; Laughing Grumblostt; Bartlett's Secret Owl; Talbot's Silver Moonbird; Autumn Bog Fowl; Miniature Cave Sparrow; Queen Waterfleck; The Royal Graffer. (48:31)

Personnel: Sarah Belle Reid B-flat trumpet quarter tone flugelhorn, MaxMSP, modular synthesizer; Vinny Golia, piccolo, quarte tone contrabass flute, alto clarinet, A clarinet, E-flat clarinet, bass

Ordering info: sarahbellereid.bandcamp.com



Carl Allen Tippin' **CELLAR MUSIC** ***

It's been a long time we've heard drummer Carl Allen lead a band of his own on a recording — almost 30 years, excepting a pair of co-leader dates with Rodney Whitaker but he's making up for lost time on his latest, Tippin'. It's a trio date that finds the veteran drummer in the good company of bassist Christian McBride and saxophonist Chris Potter. They convivially amble through 12 tunes, many of which shout out key moments

Perceptions Trio The Wicked Crew

INDEPENDENT RELEASE

Here we have three sound magicians closely attuned to each other, whether playing brisk and fanciful, starting with the rhythmically floating "Radio Goose Bumps," or through a series of more open-ended pieces that not only do without a pulse but also allow for a fair amount of space that blows through elongations that all three let drift into songs that can be both melodic and entrancing.

A sense of serenity abides as this, their first album, moves into a stillness with the otherwordly "Ubarto," followed by the eponymous "Perceptions" - a piece that, perhaps, signals an essence of what might be this group's raison d'etre. Charley Rose's horn is lilting, ever so gentle, while guitarist Silvan Joray provides just the right amount of chordal support and texture as Almeida surrounds them both with delicate drum fills on mostly tom-toms.

But then, suddenly, the trio seems to give themselves away with the spritelier, cooking title cut. Here, there's another floating pulse, yes, combined with a hint of mayhem, however soft-focused. Alas, we then return to a place where time once again stands still with the in his 40-year career.

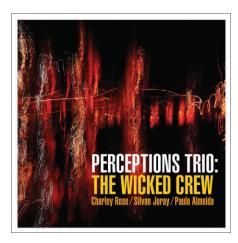
The remarkable thing is that neither ace sideman overshadows the leader. Allen has always been the consummate team player, as much glue guy as wannabe star. His tasteful approach may account for his hundreds of sideman gigs: He has a knack for knowing when to push his mates and knowing when to hold back.

The album kicks off with Bird's "Parker's Mood." Allen has led tributes to his idols Art Blakey and Elvin Jones, but here he salutes to Max Roach in his hi-hat work behind McBride's solo. Allen's nod to Elvin is most apparent in the band's take on "The Inchworm" as Potter, on soprano, channels his inner Trane. The bustling "L's Bop" is by Lenny White, another drummer Allen admires, and features his most flamboyant

Elsewhere on the recording are tunes by James Williams, McBride and Kenny Barron, as well as an original paean to Roy Hargrove. The program closes with "Put on a Happy Face," which Allen says is the aim of the recording. -Martin Johnson

Tippin': Parker's Mood; Happy Times; A Morning Story; Hidden Agenda; Alter Ego; The Inchworm; L's Bop; Song for Abdullah; Roy's Joy; James; They Say It's Wonderful; Put On a Happy Face. (70:12) **Personnel:** Carl Allen, drums; Christian McBride, bass; Chris Potter, saxophones; John Lee, piano (8).

Ordering info: cellarlive.com



appropriately titled "Lit Candles." "Sombra" gives us a fuller "picture" of Almeida's swift, delicate touch as he breathes yet more life into the quietude heard, a drumming combination of stillness amidst some rapid-fire propulsion from everyone. An edge is never far away. Everything ends, appropriately, with the bouncy "Peaceful Departures" followed by more serenity with "Nebulosa." Are they really that wicked? —John Ephland

The Wicked Crew: Radio Goose Bumps; Ubarto; Perceptions; Andromeda; The Wicked Crew; Lit Candles; Sombra; Flashlights and Sewers Explorations; Peaceful Departure; Nebulosa. (53:00) Personnel: Charley Rose, saxophone, effects; Silvan Joray, guitar, effects: Paulo Almeida, drums

Ordering info: perceptionstrio.com



Matthew Muñeses & Riza Printup Pag-ibig Ko Vol. 1

IRABBAGAST

Saxophonist Matthew Muñeses and harpist Riza Printup are both Americans of Filipino descent who first met a decade ago. Muñeses explored his heritage on his quintet album, Noli Me Tángere, via the 19th-century love songs (known as kundiman) of Filipino national hero José Rizal.

Muñeses wanted to more fully dig into the idiom but in a more intimate setting. This time around he recorded a full set of kundiman as duets with Printup. The wife of trumpeter Marcus Printup, the harpist has worked and/ or recorded with Kenny Werner, Frank Wess, Paquito D'Rivera, Meg Okura and Sharel Cassity, in addition to making a duet album with her husband.

Pag-ibig Ko (which means "my love") Vol. 1 is filled with romantic music and rich melodies. All eight pieces are taken at fairly slow tempos with Muñeses and Printup adding subtle improvising while mostly staying close to the themes. The most adventurous performance is "Canto De Maria Clara," one of two Rizal pieces that Muñeses had recorded previously. Particularly memorable is the opener, "Dahil Sa Ivo" ("Because Of You"), which has a very beautiful melody. "Minamamal Kita (I Love You)," which has a nice cadenza by Muñeses, and "Nahan" are also quite pretty.

The blend of alto saxophone and harp works quite well throughout the set and, while Muñeses is often in the lead, Printup is an equal in these duets, showing that she should be taken seriously as one of the few major soloists on her instrument around today. -Scott Yanow

Pag-ibig Ko Vol. 1: Dahil Sa Iyo; Nahan; Kundiman Ni Rizal; Minamamal Kita; Maalaala Mo Kaya; Nasaan Ka, Irog?; Canto De Maria Clara; Sampaguita. (46:40)

Personnel: Matthew Muñeses, alto and tenor saxophones; Riza

Ordering info: jonirabagon.com

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WOODWINDS Woodshed > MASTER CLASS BY CALEB WHEELER CURTIS



The Wild West of Woodwinds

Finding and Developing a Personal Perspective

ne of the biggest challenges musicians face is creative longevity. There's the physicality of it — the years of practice, the commitment to refining technique — but perhaps more pressing is the question of how to stay engaged, how to remain curious, excited and deeply in love with the process. For me, the key has been nurturing anything that sparks that kind of childlike wonder. There were times I felt lost, practicing what I was told mattered rather than forging my own path.

But as I moved forward, I realized that sustained artistic momentum means chasing fascinating things. That philosophy led directly to my new double album, *The True Story Of Bears And The Invention Of The Battery* (Imani Records), where I navigate stritch, trumpet, sopranino saxophone and a bit of tenor saxophone — sometimes switching mid-take, sometimes overdubbing, always in search of awe and mystery.

Many years ago, early on in my formal studies at Michigan State University,

my teachers Diego Rivera and Wessell "Warmdaddy" Anderson stressed never sacrificing my sound. I took the lesson to heart, and began about 20 years (and counting) of daily tone development practice, exploring resonance and the physics of sound production. A lesson with Dr. David Demsey at William Paterson University on Joe Allard's overtone teachings, and long tones à la Dewey Redman with Bill McHenry all contributed to my approach. Conversations with Darius Jones about resonance, intention and flexibility refined it further.

Throughout all of this ran my love for the sounds of altoists who emphasize a vocal quality in their sounds: Johnny Hodges, Ornette Coleman, Benny Carter, Eric Dolphy, Arthur Blythe, Thomas Chapin and more. Eventually, I arrived at the deceptively simple but essential question: What is the sound of the music I want to make?

The Stritch

The records that excited me before I started playing music played a crucial role in developing my enthusiasm. A formative childhood memory is listening to Rahsaan Roland Kirk's music and monologues on *Bright Moments*, recorded live at the Keystone Korner in 1973. The album was hypnotic and overflowed with joy, soulfulness, and imagination; and he played these mysterious instruments called the "stritch" and the "manzello." I want music to grow from this sense of excitement and curiosity. It is a guiding light that can create a positive feedback loop and very personal music.

About 10 years ago, I learned that what Rahsaan called a "stritch" was a Buescher "True-Tone" Straight Alto, made in Elkhart, Indiana, in the late 1920s. Rahsaan ended up making some modifications, but the horn can be seen clearly in photos and videos, and features prominently in the cover photo for the 1967 album *Now Please Don't You Cry, Beautiful Edith* (Verve). Without realizing it, that small piece of knowledge sent me on a years-long journey that required big leaps into the unknown.

I spent about five years searching for a Buescher straight alto. When one finally appeared, I bought it immediately — sight unseen, unplayed. From the first note, I heard a new and striking sound. Committing to the stritch clarified my artistic direction in a way I hadn't expected. It was challenging when bandleaders asked

me to play my curved horn, and when faced with technically demanding compositions, the temptation to switch back was real.

Over time, I've learned to play the stritch in every musical situation. This has meant navigating a full-size jazz orchestra, extremely challenging music, delicate intonation, microphone placement and becoming more sensitive to room acoustics.

For many years, I had been pushing my technical limits on a Selmer Mark VI alto, a beautifully efficient instrument. The stritch, with its mechanical and ergonomic challenges (American horns from the '20s, say no more), forced me to shift my focus away from digital facility and toward sound. That shift led me to explore dynamics, timbre, articulation, resonance, and emotional impact as the driving forces behind my improvisations and compositions.

Often, I am asked if the stritch sounds different than a curved alto, and my response is always the same: "If it wasn't for the sound, I'd be playing the Mark VI, it's a lot easier and more accurate, not to mention convenient and compact." This commitment to a unique instrument wasn't just about aesthetics or nostalgia, it fundamentally changed how I thought about sound.

The stritch opened up new sonic possibilities, and revealed new answers to that question about how my music should sound. As a straight horn, its projection in a room is quite different from a curved alto. Pointing the horn towards the band versus pointing the horn at the audience alters how the sound propagates throughout the room. When I play loud, I feel like I am filling the room up from the bottom instead of blasting the sound forward.

When playing above a soft surface like a carpet or rug many of the high frequencies of the sound are absorbed, making the sound darker and quieter, whereas on a hard and smooth surface the brightness bounces right back to your ears. This forced me to listen differently, to be acutely aware of the room, to pay attention to how the sound was interacting with the space. It deepened my relationship with the act of making music itself. This shift in listening made me hyper-aware of my surroundings, ensuring that my playing was always in conversation with the space, and the sound of the music, not just the band and the facts of the song like the chord changes.

Trumpet

I'm not sure when the idea of doubling on a brass instrument first took hold, but I played tuba for a year in middle school and later regretted not sticking with it. There's a lot of freedom in picking something up as a kid and falling on your face over and over again without worrying about how it looks or sounds. By the time I thought seriously about playing a brass instrument, I had long since lost that particular freedom. But the idea stuck with me.

I rejected the common claim that switching between brass and saxophone would be impossible due to wildly differing embouchures. After all, I had learned saxophone through slow, patient practice — why couldn't I do the same with trumpet? I thought about what 10 years of consistent effort might yield and decided to get to work with long tones and a few lessons from trumpet-playing friends.

There's a long history of saxophonists doubling on trumpet including Benny Carter, Ornette Coleman, Ira Sullivan and the Woodman Brothers and Lloyd Reese in 1930s Los Angeles. These days we have Scott Robinson, Stacy Dillard and Peck Allmond in New York; Jay Thomas in Seattle; Robbie Smith in Michigan; Marcus Tenney of Butcher Brown and more. So, I knew it was possible. It would require the formation of a new daily practice habit, and the willingness to be embarrassingly bad for a long time. My perfectionist tendencies turned repeated failure into a challenge: embrace the unknown, accept imperfection and resist the judgment that comes with the territory of failing as a beginner.

In my trio and with Ember, the trumpet has become a powerful tool. When the music demands a new sound, the trumpet can disrupt expectations, and suddenly a trio transforms into an almost-quartet. My relatively limited ability allows me to access a different side of my musicality, forcing me to play deliberately and rely on my ears instead of muscle memory. This has been a musical lifeline, and has strengthened my saxophone playing as well.

There's nothing like earnestly improvising on a secondary instrument during a concert with a band of incredible musicians that you would like to impress. At first, I would literally shake with nerves, sometimes putting the horn to my face only for no sound to come out. My trumpet-playing friends nodded knowingly: Now you know what it's like.

These moments of fear and uncertainty became opportunities for growth. The instant I think that I can't, that's when I know I must. Just as the trumpet forced me to think differently about improvisation, the sopranino presented an entirely new set of challenges and opportunities.

Sopranino Saxophone

I first heard the sopranino saxophone

in college when Wessell Anderson played it: high-pitched, fun and incredibly challenging. Years later, I heard Ravi Coltrane play it in a way that sounded good, too, warm and mellow despite the register.

The question of the instrument lingered in my mind until, after seeing Hermeto Pascoal's band explore infinite sonic possibilities at Pioneer Works in 2023, I finally bought one online sight unseen. It turned out to be a prototype made by Buescher for Conn in the same era as my stritch, promising endless challenges and the resonant sound, for which the '20s American horns are known.

I had lost much of my interest in soprano saxophone, it felt too similar to the straight alto. But I realized the sopranino could be to the stritch what the soprano is to the tenor: a higher-pitched counterpart with its own distinct personality.

The 'nino offers a vast sonic world in a tiny package: a beautiful low register and an almost comically high upper range. In a trio setting it allows me to play a completely different role by comping for the bass or floating above the rhythm section like a flute.

The real magic of the sopranino lies in discovery. It's an instrument full of surprises. My setup — a custom SYOS mouthpiece with a very wide tip opening and extremely soft E-flat clarinet reeds (strength #1) — lets me explore wildly flexible pitches, getting lost and finding my way by ear. Accepting everything that comes out makes the process deeply personal and endlessly fascinating.

Each of these instruments has forced me to rethink how I play, how I listen and how I express myself. They are more than just tools; they are reminders of risk, curiosity, discovery and the freedom to make personal choices. Every time I open the cases, I'm reminded of and grateful for how unpredictable this path has been.

After all these years, I find myself more excited than ever to learn, practice, and explore what's still ahead. Bright moments, indeed.

Saxophonist, trumpeter and multi-instrumentalist Caleb Wheeler Curtis is an improvising musician, composer and collaborator known for his "intensely focused and garrulously inventive" style, which draws from a wide range of influences including progressive bop and post-Coltrane/Ornette free improvisation. Originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, and based in Brooklyn, New York, for the past 16 years, Curtis has been called "one of the more daring musicians in jazz today" (All About Jazz) and his music has been described as "a masterpiece — we cannot find a term that defines it more precisely" (Musica Jazz, Italy). In addition to bandleading, and Curtis' four releases as a leader, he can be heard in the collaborative trio Ember, and with the three-time Grammy-nominated Orrin Evans and the Captain Black Big Band. Curtis is an Imani Records and D'Addario Woodwinds artist. Find out more at his website: calebcurtis.com, or on Instagram @calebwcurtis.

WOODWINDS Woodshed > SOLO BY JIMI DURSO



Wayne Escoffery's Tenor Sax Solo on 'The Ice Queen'

his isn't a head-solos-head type of tune, which is one of the things that's endearing about "The Ice Queen," written by saxophonist Wayne Escoffery and appearing on his 2024 album Alone released on the Smoke Sessions label.

over a B7 starting about two minutes into the track, but it's unclear (at least to me) how much of the preceding material is written or improvised. After this, there is clearly a composed melody played before pianist

Presented here are the 16 bars he plays Gerald Clayton takes over. Though recorded on tenor saxophone, we've opted to present this transcription in concert pitch for all musicians to study.

> The piece is for the most part in E minor (dig that opening and closing E riff on the

piano), and so this bit is based on the V chord. But since it stays on this chord for the entire 16 bars, it can create the sense of a modulation.

To help with this, Escoffery plays mainly within the B double harmonic major scale (also called freygish, phrygian dominant, Spanish phrygian and possibly some other things). This scale is a phrygian with a major third (or mixolyidan with flatted second and

Escoffery tempers this by adding in a few D naturals (bars 5, 10 and 16). This can help bring our ears back to E minor, but I think it's elucidating that he plays one toward the beginning and one at the very end of his solo. (The middle one is more of a passing tone between the third and flat second of B, a bit of a weaker gesture than the other two.) The first instance reminds us that although we're

The solo stays on the V chord for the entire 16 bars, creating the sense of a modulation.

sixth): R-\$\partial 2-3-4-5-\$\rightarrow 6-\$\rightarrow 7\rightarrow 7

This scale occurs quite a bit in Middle Eastern forms of music and so can produce an exotic flavor. It also makes B sound like the tonic (incidentally, this scale is a mode of E harmonic minor, so it has a lot to do with bassist Ron Carter leaning on the B that creates the sense of being in B, as well as Escoffery not emphasizing the E or G much).

venturing into B, we shouldn't lose sight (or sound) of E minor; the final one brings our ears back.

I enjoy how Escoffery's solo emphasizes chord tones, such as when he ends the phrases in measures 3, 5, 7, 11, 14 and 16. In fact, with the exception of bar 14, they all terminate on the root. This furthers the effect of a modulation.

There are also more subtle emphases on chord tones, such as how the first phrase rests briefly on the triad notes on its way down, or the arpeggios in measure 12.

But there are equally subtle ways in which Escoffery stresses non-chord tones. At the end of his first phrase, in measure 3, the E natural is held for over two beats before resolving to the root. (The fact that this note is the tonic we've modulated from is also significant, I feel.)

In bar 4, the C natural that has been resolving to the B is held for the full third beat, even though the other C's and B's are all triplets.

And during the blistering descending licks in measures 12–14, he occasionally pauses on the G natural. In all the above examples, these non-chord tones are resolved to parts of the triad

And as for those repeated descending figures: It makes sense that he waited until almost the end of this section to play them. The density of his playing had been increasing since the beginning, starting with longer notes in between short leading phrases, then a long string of 16ths (bars 9–11) before the "heavy metal" style 32nd notes. And then, after unleashing this salvo, we have a couple of bars of relative calm before ending this section. What a dramatic 16 bars!

I often talk about range in this column, so let's not make an exception. This improvisation is atypical in that Escoffery restricts his range to two octaves, from the B below the staff to the B above it (there's that emphasis on B again). He plays mostly in the altissimo range, a register that is higher than his playing on most of the rest of this track. So, as just a solo, there's not an extensive amount of range being covered, but it creates a contrast to the sections around it. To my ear, this adds to the emotional power of not just this section, but the entire song.

And most of the sections stay in their lanes: The first three measures define an octave, from root to root, no less (OK, plus a half-step). Again, making sure our ears hear this as B. After a bar of half-steps, the next phrase spans a sixth and the next a major third. The descending riffs starting in bar 12 only cover a seventh, and then back to about an octave in measure 14 (plus a half-step again). The final two bars cover a sixth again.

I did skip over measures 9–11. This is the exception, where Escoffery runs the entire two-octave range of his improvisation, in three bars. This occurs a bit more than half-way through his improvisation. It serves as a sort of climax, or precursor to the 32nds. He's adding energy in different ways to lead us through this section.



Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. He can often be witnessed performing/rehearsing/teaching/pontificating online at twitch.tv/CoincidenceMachine. Find out more about Durso's music at jimidurso.bandcamp.com.

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JodyJazz DV HR Baritone Model Mouthpiece

Sweet Highs, Booming Lows, Meaty Midrange & Extreme Versatility

odyJazz's winning DV HR series of hard-rubber saxophone mouthpieces wouldn't be complete without the newly introduced DV HR Baritone model. In fact, the DV HR Baritone is an absolutely essential inclusion in the line, which has become increasingly popular with jazz saxophonists and represents the first hard-rubber mouthpieces to feature JodyJazz's classic DV design. The baritone model is available in size 6, 7, 7*, 8, 9 and 10 tip openings.

As a bari player by trade, my gut told me to go with the 9. My instincts proved to be spot-on: This mouthpiece did it all for me. On the low end of my horns (a vintage low-B-flat King Zephyr and a P. Mauriat PMB-301 with low A), I found myself producing a huge sound loaded with vibrant overtones and a commanding, husky "bark." Using a medium-hard reed, the highest notes of the baritone's natural range were remarkably easy to articulate, with plenty of resonant body that was noticeably void of any thinness or constriction that often plagues the upper registers of the big pipe. But the most rewarding territory to explore on the DV HR was the meaty midrange from low D up to top-of-the-staff G, where my baris responded with juicy tonal fatness, more than ample power and even a cello-like sweetness when circumstances called for dynamic restraint, section blending and balladic soloing.

Like the other mouthpieces in the DV HR series, the Baritone model has the patented DV secondary window design on the reed table, which adds mid and low harmonics, resulting in an authoritative tone with extra low-end presence. A long, straight, slightly high baffle gives the mouthpiece superb cutting power and strong projection — and it opens and stabilizes the altissimo register considerably.

The DV HR Baritone also features JodyJazz's newest bite-plate technology, where a slightly malleable-feeling, easy-to-grip bite plate is embedded into the beak of a hard rubber mouthpiece. This made the mouthpiece super comfortable to play and allowed for superb chops control. I could consistently impose my will upon it with more confidence, and definitely less fatigue, than my metal JodyJazz DV (size 8), another excellent mouthpiece with very similar tonal characteristics and response. The DV HR Baritone has a gold-plated brass ring on the shank, which adds mass for increased stability, enhanced body and boosted harmonics.

All in all, I found the JodyJazz DV HR Baritone to be extremely versatile and appropriate for everything from old-school big band and modern large ensemble settings to straightahead jazz quartet gigs.

—Ed Enright

jodyjazz.com

Victory Revelation Series Pro Alto Saxophone

Instant Response, Meticulous Design & Stylistic Versatility

he Revelation series of professional alto and tenor saxophones from Victory Musical Instruments are meticulously built from exacting design specifications using premium materials. The high-performing, precision-built, eye-catching instruments — currently in their second generation after some careful fine-tuning of the keywork — are the fruits of a quality-control engineering mandate that becomes obvious the minute you pick one up and play it.

I test-drove the Revelation series alto, which is available in two different finishes: Majestic Gold, a traditional gold lacquer (pictured), and Silver Nightfall, a silver-plated body with dark honey lacquer accents. I went with a Silver Nightfall demo model and enjoyed taking an up-close look at its distinctive appointments upon opening the case.

What I found even more striking about the Revelation alto, though, was its lively, instant responsiveness. The horn sang out with power and projection that I could feel instantly, its immediate feedback making for a truly energized playing experience. The Revelation series is designed for versatility — it's capable of excelling in any genre, from jazz and pop to traditional genres and classical settings — but I decided I wanted to burn and wail from the get-go.

The horn's advanced keywork design, which feels about as even as you can possibly get under your fingers, made it surprisingly easy to fly through fast passages with remarkable accuracy. As I tore through a bunch of scales and bebop heads, I noticed how clearly and cleanly the individual notes popped out of the instrument. I found myself stay-

ing securely on the rails as I rode the "gliding" sensation I was feeling. Intonation was excellent; I got the sense that the manufacturer took great care to position and level the extruded toneholes properly and set the key heights just right.

Another distinguishing and innovative feature of the Revelation series alto is the screwless design of its spring mechanisms, which hold their tension and don't come loose. It's a major improvement, and technicians and players can get replacement parts and rods, should they ever need them, directly from Victory upon request.

The Revelation series offers many professional features, including Pisoni Italian leather pads with metal resonators, blued steel springs, white abalone key inlays, a metal adjustable thumb hook, a reinforced octave key mechanism, enhanced protection on low C#, an optimized key fit to prevent G# and low C# from sticking, elegant hand-engraving, a custom body-to-bow stabilizing ring and high-quality Japanese brass.

—Ed Enright

victorymusical.com

1. Clip-On Condenser

Audio-Technica's ATM355VF compact cardioid condenser clip-on microphone is designed for use with flutes, woodwinds, violins and violas. The microphone's high sensitivity ensures clear, balanced audio with a sound pressure level handling up to 148.5dB. Its cardioid polar pattern enhances frontal sensitivity, minimizing ambient noise and feedback, making it ideal for solo or ensemble settings.

More info: audio-technica.com.

2. Virtuoso Technique

Zinn and The Art Of Saxophone is jazz musician, composer, arranger and educator Dann Zinn's magnum opus for the teaching of technique. Encompassing more than 40 years of study and training, it's designed to provide a course of technical study for a lifetime of improvement. The six books in the series are designed in a "martial arts" format, moving from the beginning white level to the advanced black level. The format is consistent for each book. with exercises for tone, chromatics, scales, intervals, arpeggios and extended techniques.

More info: dannzinn.com

3. Mouthpiece Patch

Designed for clarinetists and saxophonists, the RMP01 Reserve mouthpiece patch from D'Addario Woodwinds prevents players' teeth from sliding on the mouthpiece, stabilizing embouchure. The patch uses a special material to adhere to the mouthpiece yet can be easily removed or transferred for a secure, residuefree fit. Patches come in sets of five and are available in multiple thicknesses.

More info: daddario.com

4. Electronic Clarinet Coming

Odisei Music introduced Travel Clarinet, an electronic instrument that allows musicians to practice silently, at this year's NAMM Show. Building on the success of the company's Travel Sax, Travel Clarinet uses the traditional fingering of an acoustic clarinet while offering modern features such as MIDI integration and plugand-play functionality. It also features a built-in artificial intelligence that learns from the user's movement and refines the expression sensors. Now available for pre-ordering, Travel Clarinet has 50 internal sounds, USB-C connection for MIDI out and battery charging, an internal speaker and a mini headphones jack.

More info: odiseimusic.com

5. Titanium Projection

Vandoren has launched its first-ever titanium mouthpieces. Designed for alto saxophone and B-flat clarinet, the mouthpieces offer a way to explore a new sonic palette and enhanced projection while benefiting from the durability of medical-grade titanium. The Titanium BD and Profile mouthpieces retain the tonal qualities of Vandoren's original ebonite models while offering more durability and better projection than the company's standard and HD versions. Vandoren Titanium mouthpieces are available in four models: BD4 and BD5 for B-flat clarinet, and AP2 and AP3 for alto saxophone.

More info: dansr.com





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FESTIVAL GUIDE





Γ SEASON, Y'ALL!

f great art is made in chaos, get ready for some killer festivals this year. In digging into the 2025 festival scene while crafting this guide, one thing is for certain. There are many festivals wondering what's going to happen, and maybe worrying what the effects things like trade wars — the realm of politics, not art — will play on the summer music travel season.

But festival directors DownBeat spoke with have put up a unified front: Control what you can control, and put on an amazing show.

With that, get ready for some great tours and performances at festivals large and small. As the 120-plus festivals listed in the following pages can attest, each has its own charm and sparkle.

We're continuing to witness the next gener-

ation of jazz expansion, local scenes and artists being promoted in dramatic ways in places where jazz interest, education and tradition are growing. Just look at the four festivals featured in this year's guide. The Denver Jazz Festival will shine a floodlight on the great tradition of musicians who either came from or currently live in the Denver area. The same is true with the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, which has a fantastic DIY scene. Down at the Amelia Island Jazz Festival, Les and Bonnie DeMerle have fashioned a festival that perfectly vibes with the island life. And up in Massachusetts, the Northampton Jazz Festival offers a quaint, hometown touch to go with great music.

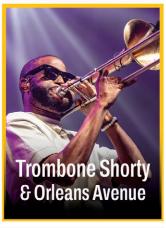
So, soak it up. It's festival season, y'all! Time to get up, get out and get down!

INSIDE

- **70 East Listings 78 Northhampton Jazz Festival** 79 **South Listings** 82 **Amelia Island Jazz Festival** 84 **Midwest Listings**
- 90 **Denver Jazz Festival** 92 **West Listings**
- 99 **Vancouver Intl. Jazz Festival**
- 100 **Canada Listings**
- 106 **International Listings**

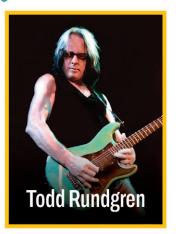


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Pittsfield CityJazz Festival

Pittsfield, Massachusetts April 24-May 4

Spanning two weekends, the Pittsfield CityJazz Festival kicks-off with an open jam session. Festivities include a Jazz Crawl, a swing dance, a jazz prodigy concert, two iazz brunches, and two headline concerts.

LINEUP: Dawning Holmes with Grammy-winning pianist Jeff Holmes and bassist Avery Sharpe, the Legendary Count Basie Orchestra, bassist Esteban Ruiz.

berkshiresjazz.org

Delaney Chevrolet Westsylvania Jazz and Blues Festival

Indiana, Pennsylvania May 24

The music goes from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and beyond with food trucks and visual arts vendors on site.

LINEUP: To be announced, past performers have included Joe Saylor, Sean Jones, Dwayne Dolphin, Reggie Watkins, Benny Benack III, Trudy Lynn, and Johanna Connor. westsylvaniajazzandblues.org

Vision Festival 2025 Brooklyn, New York June 2-7

Produced by Arts for Art, the New York Citybased organization dedicated to advancing creative music, prepares for its latest incarnation under the banner of "heART to Resist." Held at Brooklyn's famed Roulette Intermedium, this year's festival will celebrate Roscoe Mitchell, a cornerstone of the Chicago creative music scene, a founding father of the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and the leader of a wide variety of music ensembles.

LINEUP: To be announced. **artsforart.org/vision**

Burlington Discover Jazz Festival

Burlington, Vermont
June 4-8

Produced by The Flynn with presenting sponsor New England Federal Credit Union, this fest celebrates its 42nd edition with dozens of free concerts and

festivities in downtown Burlington. **LINEUP:** To be announced. Last year's lineup included Robert Glasper, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Seun Kuti

& Egypt 80, Big Freedia and more.

flynnvt.org

Jazz in June Camden, Maine

Camden, Maine
June 13-15

A full weekend of live jazz in beautiful Midcoast Maine waterfront town. Ticketed feature concerts are held at the historic Camden Opera House. Free community concerts in Village Green, a local church and intimate clubs, all within walking distance of windjammer-filled harbor.

LINEUP: Spyro Gyra, Julia Keefe Quartet, Greg Abate Trio and more, plus local performers. <u>jazzinjunecamdenme.com</u>

√ Clifford Brown Festival

Wilmington, Delaware
June 18-21

Organizers call the Clifford Brown Jazz Festival, in its 38th year, the largest free jazz festival on the East Coast. The main stage opens on Wednesday with star-studded lineups performing through Saturday. Each night after the main stage performances, late night jam sessions hosted in local establishments showcase talent throughout downtown Wilmington.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included Diane Reeves, Kenny Barron, Roy Haynes, Kirk Whalum, Jazzmeia Horn, Chief Adjuah, Terri Lyne Carrington, Chucho Valdes, Chien Chien Lu and more. cliffordbrownjazzfest.org

Rochester International Jazz Festival Rochester, New York

June 20-28

Now in its 22nd edition, the Rochester International Jazz Festival is one of the world's leading jazz festivals. The nine-day event draws some 200,000 fans to see 1,750-plus legendary artists and rising stars from around the world in 300-plus ticketed and free shows, nightly jam sessions and jazz workshops. Attendees can walk to all 20 venues. The festival has a new title sponsor in Rochester Regional Health.

LINEUP: Wynton Marsalis & The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Smokey Robinson, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Thundercat, The Wood Brothers, Rickie Lee Jones, Los Lonely Boys, Lettuce, Ekep Nkwelle, Terell Stafford Quintet, Joe Locke Group, Wycliffe Gordon Quartet, Matt Wilson & Good Trouble, Veronica Swift, an Oscar Peterson Centennial Quartet with Celine Peterson Doreen Ketchens' New Orleans Jazz, Caity Gyorgy, Sullivan Fortner Trio and more.



The 2025 CLIFFORD BROWN JAZZ FESTIVAL is the largest free jazz festival on the east coast. The main stage opens on Wednesday with star studded line-ups performing through Saturday.

Each night following the main stage performances, LATE NIGHT JAM SESSIONS are showcased throughout DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON hosted in local establishments.

PAST PERFORMERS

Diane Reeves, Kenny Barron, Roy Haynes, Kirk Whalum, Jazzmeia Horn, Chief Adjuah, Terri Lynn Carrington, Chucho Valdes, Chien Chien Lu and more. For a Full List of Past Performers: wikipedia.org/wiki/Clifford_Brown_Jazz_Festival

For Updates and News, Visit:

cliffordbrownjazzfest.org









Syracuse International Jazz Fest Syracuse, New York June 25-29

In its 39th year, admission is free for all events and performances.

LINEUP: 2025 Clinton Square Outdoor Stage: Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, The Spinners, Todd Rundgren, Ada Rovatti Quintet, The Furious Bongos w/spg Chad Wackerman performing the music of Frank Zappa, Steve Smith & Vital Information, Al Chez & The Brothers of Funk Big Band, Gunhild Carling (Sweden's Queen of Swing), NEA Jazz Master Donald Harrison, Akiko Tsuruga Quartet and more. The Downtown Syracuse Club lineup is to be announced.

syracusejazzfest.com



Saratoga Jazz Festival presented by GE Vernova

Saratoga Springs, New York
June 28-29

Two days, two stages and 22 electrifying artists from jazz to roots, funk, blues, pop, and indie, including artists Gary Clark Jr., Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Cory Wong, Gregory Porter and more. Experience good times and great vibes — enjoy craft beer, tasty eats, a fine arts fair, family fun and more.

LINEUP: Gary Clark Jr., Gregory Porter, Lettuce, Veronica Swift, Michel Camilo Trio, Kenny Garrett, Artemis, Nicole Zuraitis, Keyon Harrold, Julius Rodriguez, C.J. Chenier & The Red Hot Louisiana Band, The String Queens, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Cory Wong, Cassandra Wilson, Al Di Meola Acoustic Band, DJ Logic & Friends (featuring Vernon Reid, Cyro Baptista, Emilio Modeste, James Hurt, Felix Pastorius & Terreon Gully), Gary Bartz, Bria Skonberg Quintet, Brandee Younger Trio, La Excelencia, Skidmore Jazz Institute Faculty All-Stars Celebrate their Heroes featuring Clay Jenkins, Jimmy Greene, Steve Davis, Dave Stryker, Bill Cunliffe, Todd Coolman & Dennis Mackrel. spac.org/saratoga-performing-arts-center/saratoga-jazz-festival

Springfield Jazz & Roots Festival

Springfield, Massachusetts

July 11-12

The 12th Annual Springfield Jazz & Roots Festival brings world-class music, culture and community to downtown Springfield. This free, two-day event celebrates the music of the African diaspora, featuring national and local artists, youth performances, arts activities, cultural education, nonprofit and artisan booths and global cuisine.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included Taj Mahal, Sweet Honey in the Rock and Pedrito Martinez. springfieldjazzfest.com

Jazz in July The 92nd Street Y New York, New York

July 15, 16, 19, 22, 23 & 26

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DC



Galena-Yorktown















on Diehl, New York's long-running Jazz in July festival returns for six concerts on July 15, 16, 19, 22, 23 and 26. Jazz in July features one-night-only concerts encompassing a range of jazz styles in one of New York's most acoustically acclaimed venues.

LINEUP: Aaron Diehl; Darcy James Argue's Secret Society; Carlos Henriquez Nonet; Marta Sanchez Quartet; Terri Lyne Carrington and more celebrating Geri Allen and Mary Lou Williams; and a tenor sax extravaganza with Melissa Aldana, Walter Smith III and more. **92y.org/jazz**

Litchfield Jazz Festival

Washington, Connecticut July 25-27

The Litchfield Jazz Festival celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Nestled in the scenic Berkshire foothills, Litchfield has been showcasing jazz legends with a flair for beautiful surroundings. Experience world-class music, art as well as an exclusive Opening night Gala and a Sunday jazz brunch that's sold out for three years running!

LINEUP: Emmet Cohen Trio, Matt Dwonszyk Sextet, Frank Vignola & Pasquale Grasso, Anat Cohen Quartetinho and the Champian Fulton Trio.

litchfieldjazzfest.com

Hamptons JazzFest

The Hamptons, New York
July through September

(specific dates to be determined)

Hamptons JazzFest is an annual celebration of jazz and world music, featuring more than 30 world-class events spanning 10 weeks. The festival showcases performances by emerging and acclaimed artists, blending innovation with community engagement for a fantastic cultural experience.

LINEUP: To be announced. hamptonsjazzfest.org

Jazzmobile's SUMMERFEST

New York, New York

Wednesday through Friday evenings/July through September

New York City's parks and outdoor spaces come alive with jazz, courtesy of Jazzmobile's annual SUMMERFEST series which brings jazz throughout the city's five boroughs with an assemblage of nearly 30 jazz stars and emerging talents. Jazzmobile's return provides audiences with exceptional musical performances that reflect New York City's dynamic diversity. All SUMMERFEST concerts are free and weather permitting.

LINEUP: To be announced. Recent performances have included been Arturo O'Farrill, Jason Moran, Orrin Evans, Danny Mixon, Craig Harris, Wycliffe Gordon, Bobby Sanabria, Winard Harper, Darrell Green, Camille Thurman, Antonio Hart, T.K. Blue, Donald Harrison, Houston Person, Jeremy Pelt. Paul West, Tammy McCann,



Lezlie Harrison, Antoinette Montague, Allan Harris, Dianne Reeves and more. jazzmobile.org

Newport Jazz Festival

Newport, Rhode Island August 1-3

One of the true granddaddies of the jazz festival world, Newport prepares for its 71st installment of sea air and sizzling sounds at its classic Fort Adams locale. The last two years were sellouts, so book it fast!

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's lineup included André 3000, Kamasi Washington, Brittany Howard, Cory Wong, PJ Morton, Galactic with Irma Thomas,



Chief Adjuah, Bill Frisell Four and more. newportjazz.org

The Scranton Jazz Festival Scranton, Pennsylvania August 1-3

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Scranton Jazz Festival takes place in downtown Scranton. This international festival presents award-winning jazz, blues and world beat artists featured on a main stage, clubs, restaurants, bars and coffee houses. The city resembles a mini New Orleans for three days.

LINEUP: Tower of Power headlines this year. Past performers include Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Take 6, Spyro Gyra, Manhattan

Transfer, Joe Lovano, The Average White Band, Dave Liebman, Stanley Clarke, Chuck Mangione, Shemekia Copeland, The Scranton Jazz Festival Big Band and more.

scrantonjazzfestival.org

Provincetown Jazz Festival

Cape Cod, Massachusetts August 4 &12

The Provincetown Jazz Festival is held in the oldest continuous Art Colony in the United States. The festival is presented by a non-profit organization donating a portion of the proceeds to worthy causes including jazz in the schools. Musicians from the United States, Canada, Cuba, Brazil, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and Japan have been featured.

LINEUP: Shawnn Monteiro, Kieran Brown, Matt Baker, Michael Rocha, Fred Boyle, Ron Ormsby and Bart Weisman. provincetownjazzfestival.org

Donald Harrison's Quantum Leap Music Festival Borghese Vineyard, Cutchogue, New York August 14-17

North Fork-based NOLA 2 NOFO presents NEA Jazz Master Donald Harrison's second annual Quantum Leap Music Festival in the serene summer setting of Long Island's oldest winery, Borghese Vineyard, with more than a dozen award-winning artists from across

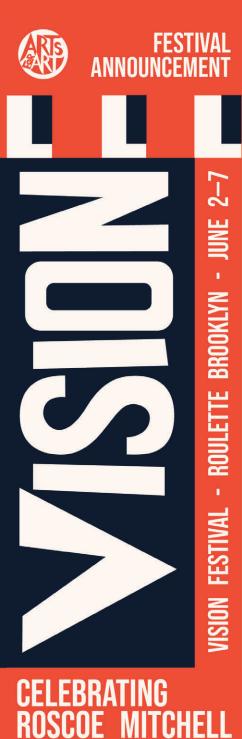


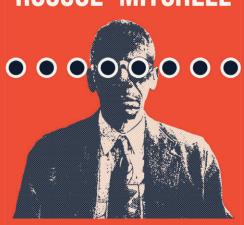
DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER | BRANFORD MARSALIS | KEITH DAVID | BILAL CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM | GEORGE BENSON TRIBUTE BY DAN WILSON TARBABY-ORRIN EVANS, ERIC REVIS, NASHEET WAITS | JAZZMEIA HORN KANDACE SPRINGS | JOHN SHANNON | THERON BROWN | MICHAEL MAYO EKEP KWELLE | NATHAN PAUL DAVIS & THE ADMIRABLES | AND MORE



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LINEUP: Donald Harrison, Leo Nocentelli of The Meters, The Headhunters, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Cyril Neville, Preservation Hall Legacy Band, Kyle Roussel, Vasti Jackson, CJ Chenier & The Red Hot Louisiana Band and more.

Jazz in the Valley

Poughkeepsie, New York

August 17

Jazz in the Valley, dubbed upstate New York's premiere festival, returns to its scenic riverfront home for its 25th anniversary. Presented by TRANSART & Cultural Services and produced by its founder Greer Smith, the festival celebrates the legacy, history and future of jazz, with a blend of young and legendary musicians. Artistic director and saxophonist Javon Jackson and Smith have put together a stellar event that includes the dynamic vocalist Jazzmeia Horn as well as a project titled "Echoes of an Era," which will feature a mixture of timeless jazz selections coupled with original compositions. The ensemble will include Jackson, Lenny White, Lisa Fischer, Orrin Evans, Dr. Eddie Henderson and John Patitucci. This "Echoes of an Era" project revisits and pays loving tribute to the initial recording project of the same name that included Chaka Khan, Lenny White, Chick Corea, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson and Stanley Clarke.

LINEUP: Javon Jackson, Jazzmeia Horn, Lenny White, Lisa Fischer, Orrin Evans, Dr. Eddie Henderson, and John Patitucci. <u>jazzinthevalleyny.org</u>



New York, New York
August 22-24

The Charlie Parker Jazz Festival is New York City's annual salute to the legendary saxophonist in the Harlem and East Village neighborhoods where he lived and



worked. This vibrant, and free, celebration brings together stories, veteran players and the next generation of jazz artists.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included the Christian McBride Big Band, the Wallace Roney Jr. Quartet, Carmen Lundy, Louis Hayes and The Cookers. cityparksfoundation.org/charlieparker

DC Jazz Festival Washington, DC

* Washington, DO August 27-31

DC JazzFest, a five-day jazz explosion in the nation's capitol over Labor Day Weekend, features rising stars and world-renowned artists at dozens of venues citywide. Don't miss DC JazzFest at The Wharf, Aug. 30-31, on multiple indoor and outdoor stages along DC's vibrant waterfront.

LINEUP: Eddie Palmieri, Ron Carter, Branford Marsalis, Lalah Hathaway, Cecile McLorin Salvant, Sun Ra Arkestra, Emmet Cohen Trio, Gary Bartz Ntu Troop, The Baylor Project, Keyon Harrold, The String Queens, Jazzmeia Horn, Matthew Whitaker, Birckhead, Corcoran Holt, The JazzDC All-Stars Orchestra directed by Allyn Johnson, Steve Wilson, Christie Dashiell, Akua Allrich, Paul Carr, Vanessa Rubin, John Scofield, Tony Martucci, Lyle Link and the DC JAZZPRIX Finals.

Montclair Jazz Festival Downtown Jamboree

Montclair, New Jersey
September 13

Billed as the largest free jazz festival in the NYC region, attracting 26,000 attendees, with artistic director Christian McBride and produced by JAZZ HOUSE KiDS features multiple stages, 250 curated food and artisan vendors. Following eight hours of live jazz, DJ Brother Mister (aka Christian McBride) takes the stage spinning old time funk and soul dance party tunes.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included Jazzmeia



Horn, Kenny Garrett, Lisa Fischer, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Christian McBride Big Band, Person to Person and more. montclairjazzfestival.org

Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival Co-presented by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

September 18-21

Celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival, co-presented by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, as it returns to Pittsburgh's Cultural District featuring free concerts along Liberty Avenue. The festival kicks off with The Jazz Train making stops in New York, Newark and Philadelphia before arriving in Pittsburgh for concerts at area venues on Thursday, followed by ticketed concerts and the popular Taste of Jazz Party at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center on Friday and then takes the music to the streets on Saturday and Sunday.

LINEUP: Dee Dee Bridgewater, Branford Marsalis, Kandace Springs, Jazzmeia Horn, Etienne Charles Creole Soul, Tarbaby, Michael Mayo and Be'LA Dona Go Go Band. pittsburghjazzfest.org

Northampton Jazz Festival

Northampton, Massachusetts
September 26-27

Northampton Jazz Festival offers an intimate jazz experience. Walk to venues in charming and eclectic Northampton, Massachusetts, for a chance to hear world-touring and rising-star artists. All of this while feasting on the sounds of regional jazz musicians over drinks, dinner and dessert at breweries, bars and restaurants.

LINEUP: New York Voices Farewell Tour; other artists to be announced. northamptonjazzfest.org

Looking Ahead Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival

Annapolis, Maryland
November 7-16

Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival brings world music and jazz artists to Maryland's historic city on the Chesapeake Bay. Free and ticketed concerts and jazz talks are held at multiple sites in Eastport, downtown and West Annapolis. Led by artistic director Paulina Phillips, the festival is presented by a team of venue partners and volunteers.

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's line up included Veronneau, Fran Vielma & Venezuelan Jazz Collective, Alfred Yun and The JoGo Project. The 2025 theme is World Travelers & Hometown Heroes. annapolisjazzandrootsfestival.com





Northampton Jazz Festival Small Town, Big Jazz Heart

MENTION THE WORD "FESTIVAL" TO JAZZ ly lost its funding. fans and chances are they'll first think of legendary annual events at Newport, Monterey, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, Montreal or Montreux. However, quality jazz festivals take place in a variety of lesser-known locales as well. Although these festivals are smaller in scale, they can pack plenty of quality musicianship into intimate, comfortable surroundings — and create memorable experiences for jazz aficionados.

Case in point: the annual Northampton Jazz Festival in western Massachusetts. In 2025, the fest will run Friday, Sept. 26, and Saturday, Sept. 27. It's a free event, except for a concluding Saturday evening concert that has featured headliners such as Anat Cohen & Quartetinho, Ron Carter, Kurt Elling and Paquito D'Rivera.

The Northampton Festival debuted in 2011 but stalled out after the 2015 event. It returned in 2018 under the leadership of Ruth Griggs and has expanded to include additional jazz concerts and educational events year-round in Northampton and the surrounding area. In a recent conversation, Griggs traced the 2011 debut of the Northampton Jazz Festival, its shutdown, the renewal and subsequent expansion.

"Northampton is my hometown, but I spent three decades in New York City as a marketing professional," Griggs said. "I'm a jazz fan, so I went to the festival concerts, got to know the producers of the event and helped advise them. During the early years of the fest, it was blended with a food event, so there was no single focus on music. And it all happened in a tent on a parking lot behind Main Street. There was too much going on in a small space, and the event eventual-

"In 2017, Amy Cahillane, the executive director of the Downtown Northampton Association, told me the merchants were really missing the Jazz Festival and having live music downtown. She asked me if I'd be interested in trying to restart it, and since I had really gotten involved in the local jazz scene at that point, I said, 'Yes."

Griggs was able to renew the 501(c)(3) from the previous festival, pull together a new board and manage a successful restart with a new mission: a focus on bringing live jazz into businesses throughout downtown Northampton, including educational events for young people, and expanding the impact of the festival throughout the year. So far, even battling through the pandemic, it's worked.

The two-day festival begins on Friday with a kickoff musical performance at Northampton's centrally located Pulaski Park, followed by the Friday Night Jazz Strut, which features solo, duo and trio performances in a variety of venues restaurants, bars and breweries. All these downtown performances - on Friday evening and during the afternoon on Saturday — are free.

"Northampton only has 30,000 people, so it's a very walkable, eclectic town with many individually owned restaurants and artisan shops," said Griggs. "It makes sense to have music happening in different environments rather than just one place like a large hall or under a tent. We switch it up and have staggered starting times so people can move around and catch different performances throughout Friday night and Saturday day.

"Different group sizes and instrumentation

are arranged to fit what each venue can accommodate. We even schedule a solo artist into a space like an art gallery that can only seat 80 people. The art gallery happens to have a beautiful baby grand, so we've had pianists like Emmett Cohen in 2019 and Sullivan Fortner in 2021 play there. At the 800-seat Academy of Music Theatre, we conclude the fest with our only ticketed performance. The ticketed event for the 2025 festival will feature the farewell tour of New York Voices."

Griggs said she is especially proud that the Northampton Festival has greatly expanded its educational offerings as well as other events and jazz-related activities — not only during the fest, but also throughout the year.

"We have an educational program with four related components," she explained. The latest is "Ask Me about Jazz," which debuted last year during the festival. Professional jazz musicians led by Richie Barshay present a concert for elementary school children — basically, an introduction to jazz. The musicians then answer questions from the students, who then join a march to Pulaski Park with a brass band."

Additional educational programs featuring musicians from the Northampton Jazz Workshop working with middle school and high school music students. In addition, a program directed at high school art students had them create artwork related to jazz after attending a high school iazz band performance.

"Paul Arslanian, who is on the festival board, runs the Northampton Jazz Workshop, and has musicians coming in from Boston, New York, Philadelphia and other cities," explained Griggs. "Paul asks them to come in a day earlier and stay a day later to go into schools and work with students. So we've been able to have noted jazz musicians like Gary Smulyan, Don Braden and Camille Thurman work with these students. And with the Student Art Project, art students at the high school attend a jazz concert, then each of them creates a mixed media artwork related to what they've experienced about jazz. We used one of these artworks as the cover for our 2024 festival program."

The festival also presents a Jazz Film Night in April as well as a Jazzy Art Night Out in early September leading up to the full festival. Pianist Sean Mason and his quartet appeared at the Drake in Amherst in March and the festival co-promoted the performance. Collaborations are also in place with the record label Signature Sounds to co-promote an upcoming concert by the Sun Ra Arkestra in May at the Academy Theatre of Music in Northampton.

"Partnerships and collaborations will keep you alive," said Griggs, who was named a 2025 Jazz Hero by the Jazz Journalists Association. "And an important aspect for me is creating and growing these partnerships and building a positive reputation for jazz and the festival in the community." -Terry Perkins

SOUTH

This trumpet denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.







French Quarter Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana
April 10-13

The largest free celebration of Louisiana's music, food and culture returns to the French Quarter. Four days of grooving to more than 300 musical acts, savoring over 65 culinary delights and reveling at special events and anniversary celebrations.

LINEUP: Featuring Chapel Hart Band, The Original Pinettes Brass Band with Mia X, Little Freddie King and Rockin' Dopsie Jr. & the Zydeco Twisters. Returning favorites include Anders Osborne, BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet, Irma Thomas, George Porter Jr., Soul Rebels, John Boutté, Kermit Ruffins and more. Festival debuts include Roi Anthony and Jelly Joseph. frenchquarterfest.org

Main Street Jazz Fest by ColaJazz Columbia, South Carolina

Columbia, South Caronna

May 10-11

The free Main Street Jazz Fest, hosted by

award-winning ColaJazz Foundation, showcases local and national jazz talent. Since 2017, the festival has featured such artists as Chris Potter, Fred Wesley and more.

LINEUP: Kenny Garrett, Tia Fuller, Alphonso Horne & the Gotham Kings, Jessy J, Alex Cuba, Amos Hoffman and more. **colaiazzfest.com**

Jacksonville Jazz Festival

Jacksonville, Florida May 22-25

For 40-plus years, the fest has brought high-octane jazz to Northern Florida over Memorial Day weekend kicking off with the Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition presented by Yamaha followed by three days of free, live music in Jacksonville's Sports & Entertainment District.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers include Brian Culbertson, Joss Stone, Gregory Porter, Robin Thicke, Keiko Matsui, Jamison Ross, Rick Braun, Richard Elliot and more. jacksonvillejazzfest.com











Spoleto Festival USA

Charleston, South Carolina

May 23-June 8

A veritable smorgasbord of the arts, Spoleto features a stellar jazz lineup to go with theater, dance and other forms of music.

LINEUP: Phillip Golub, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Branford Marsalis, the Vijay Iyer Trio, Etienne Charles and Ambrose Akimusire. spoletousa.org

Atlanta Jazz Festival

Atlanta, Georgia May 24-26

One of the largest free-of-charge jazz festivals in the country, the Atlanta Jazz Festival is an annual celebration of culture and community.

LINEUP: Robert Glasper & Friends, Derrick Hodge, Ravi Coltrane, Russell Gunn & Blackhawk Quartet, Brandon Woody, Tyreek McDole, Charles McPherson, Diane Reeves, The Joe Gransden Big Band and more.

atliazzfest.com

Satchmo SummerFest

New Orleans, Louisiana

August 2-3

One of the only festivals in the world that honors jazz pioneer Louis Armstrong takes place in New Orleans each summer. Enjoy two stages with stellar musical acts, a delicious food lineup, and a lecture series that walks you through Satchmo's rich history and lasting impact.

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's lineup included Kermit Ruffins, Catherine Russell, The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Rickie Monie and Jamil Sharif. John Boutté. Steve Lands. Detroit Brooks, Treme Brass Band and more. satchmosummerfest.org

John Coltrane International Jazz and Blues Festival

High Point, North Carolina

August 30-31

The John Coltrane International Jazz and Blues Festival is held each year in the city where Coltrane's musical journey began.



PARK WEST T GALLERY





The festival honors Coltrane's legacy with world-class performances in a lush lakeside setting. It's a weekend where history, music and nature harmonize.

LINEUP: Jesus Molina, Incognito, Samantha Fish, Bilal, Brian Culbertson, the Bill Charlap Trio with Dee Dee Bridgewater and Nicolas Payton, the Lao Tizer Band and Gregory Porter.

coltranejazzfest.com

Lake Anna Jazz Fest

Mineral, Virginia September 6-7

Approximately 100 musicians gather in Central Virginia each summer, this year under the theme "A Celebration of Vocal Jazz." This year's highlights include a performance by the LHR Project, which includes former Manhattan Transfer members Janis Siegel and Trist Curless, and a farewell appearance by the New York Voices.

LINEUP: The New York Voices. The LHR Project featuring Janis Siegel and Trist Curless, The Harry Wilson Group, PumpHouse Blues, Archosaurs of the Archtop (Rovce Campbell, Jeff Massanari, and Steve Herberman), Tina Hashemi Quartet, Michael Hawkins & The Brotherhood with special guest Vanessa Rubin Antique Melody Show, The Joe Baione Vibraphone Experience with special guest John D'earth, Good Shot Judy, Alan Blackman & Max Murray, Beltway Brass Quintet, Carol Covel Quartet, Fredericksburg Big Band, Uptown Vocal Jazz Quartet, Elle Jay & Spanglish and Stephnie Nakasian & Friends.

lakeannajazz.org

Savannah Jazz Festival

Savannah, Georgia September 17-21

With 15 free shows at Savannah's Forsyth Park, the fest marries great music and food with Southern hospitality.

LINEUP: To be announced, but the festival will include a 25th anniversary celebration of JodyJazz mouthpieces, a Savannah area company founded by Jody Espina. Past performers have included Nicole Zuraitis, The Airmen of Note, Bernie Williams, Ed Calle and more.

savannahjazz.org

Amelia Island Jazz Festival

Ameria isiana Fernandina Beach, Florida September 28-October 5

Situated on the Atlantic Coast, just 30 minutes from Jacksonville, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival presents world-class jazz — from swing, bebop and Dixieland to big band, Latin and contemporary. Performances are staged in several venues around Amelia Island, including the historic seaport village of Fernandina Beach.

LINEUP: Monty Alexander Trio, Jane Monheit, Les DeMerle Band featuring Bonnie Eisele, Tony Cruz Latin Jazz Legends, UNF Jazz Ensemble 2, Longineu Parsons, Bill Prince. Mike Levine. Dennis Marks and more. ameliaislandjazzfestival.com

Clearwater Jazz Holiday

Clearwater, Florida October 16-19

Back to its roots in beautiful Coach-

man Park. this collaboration between the Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation, City of Clearwater and Visit St. Pete/Clearwater sets the stage for this year's 46th Celebration. Crowds relish in the fest's colorful musical lineup.

LINEUP: To be announced. Previous artists include Brandi Carlile, Alison Krauss, Sheryl Crow, The Doobie Brothers, Earth, Wind & Fire and more. clearwaterjazz.com





Amelia's Island Jazz Vibe

LES DEMERLE LEARNED BY DOING. DeMerle toured around with the Harry James Big Band for more than a decade and put together groups with tenor saxophonist Don Menza, trumpeter Randy Brecker and others, but the drummer first gained some notoriety around the age of 14 with a review in this very publication. Across countless gigs over the years, DeMerle picked up a lot of hands-on experience in the lessons of jazz programming and putting on a jazz festival.

Along the way, he also tapped folks like George Wein for advice.

His most memorable conversations with the impresario happened during a cruise full of supper-time chats that turned into a master class in how to run a jazz festival.

"I took my notepad to dinner every night and was taking notice of how to do this and what not to do and what to be aware of — from George Wein!" DeMerle recalled.

"It's a passion for me to keep jazz alive. I want to keep playing it; I want to keep presenting it; and I want to give as many musicians as I can the opportunity to work."

DeMerle's career worth of festival experiences crystallized in 2003 with the first Amelia Island Jazz Festival, held on Fernandina Beach. Each year, the festival is built around a major jazz headliner. For the 2025 festival, held Sept. 28 to Oct. 5, DeMerle is bringing in Monty Alexander to join the fun. (The Manhattan Transfer helped DeMerle celebrate the festival's 20th anniversary

in 2023, and Grace Kelly appeared in 2024.)

He's still very much a working musician himself. Two years ago, the drummer even released *Once In A Lifetime*, a long-shelved recording of that early band with Brecker that had been "lost in the shuffle at Atlantic Records." He was a 20-year-old jazz prodigy back then. Now, at 78, he's still promoting and living jazz.

For each festival, DeMerle works to blend together the diverse array of music under the jazz umbrella. That means listeners might hear classic big band charts from his group one night, with a little New Orleans jazz from a small ensemble the next. He likes to highlight groups from the University of North Florida, who might bring with them some more contemporary sounds.

"It feels like the whole town is a jazz festival that week," he said. "It feels to me kind of like New Orleans, even though it's much smaller." (The Les DeMerle Dance and Jazz Party Cruise, a seven-night tour of the high seas, serves as a wind-down, or perhaps a continuation, of the festival.)

DeMerle and his wife, singer Bonnie Eisele, first moved from Chicago to Amelia Island a decade before starting to dream up the festival as a non-profit event. A job as the house band at the Ritz-Carlton convinced them to head to the 18-square-mile island 45 minutes east of Jacksonville. While the island is a popular vacation destination today, DeMerle admits they arrived at a pretty rural Amelia Island. So the two would perform in the band while programming one-off concerts to increase jazz awareness

and accessibility on the island. After Sept. 11, the Ritz-Carlton gig dried up, and the two decided to fully embrace DeMerle's festival destiny.

"We started small," he said, prioritizing bringing jazz to small venues throughout the island to create a more intimate listening experience. One of the most intimate every year is the Jazz and Wine night, which caps attendance at 120. The headlining gigs can seat around 1,000 listeners. That wine night is one of the most popular weekday concerts, he said. DeMerle works with a local sommelier to present wine pairings to go with tunes the ensemble performs.

"The band loves it," he said, "because they get to taste, too."

He programs a week of events, but he acknowledges the focus for most out-of-towners are the weekend headliners. Still, he's glad to program activities that mostly cater to the locals, keeping the music present on the island.

DeMerle looks for acts that he said are "visually cool and entertaining" to get audiences that might not be familiar with the music interested in what's going on. In the past, he said, it hasn't taken much to get the audience in the groove.

"Once they hear the vibe and the virtuosity of what all the artists bring to the table, they're blown away," he said.

DeMerle also looked to other festivals when crafting what he wanted the Amelia concerts to represent. One source of inspiration: the neighboring Clearwater Jazz Holiday, now in its 46th year.

"There's a lot of times I'll run down there because their festival is right after ours," he said. "That's kind of the same audience we will get here; they want to hear good music."

Jazz is still hard to come by on the island — there's no jazz club, after all — but DeMerle works hard to present semi-regular concerts to keep the music front and center in the minds of locals and tourists. Community outreach is an important component of the jazz machine DeMerle has built on Amelia. Every year, the festival awards scholarships, and year-round programs include bringing jazz into area schools and nursing homes.

"We give out scholarships, thousands of dollars each year to one player, but if they stay in school and keep their grades up, they get that scholarship each year," he said, noting that the festival currently supports past winners at Julliard, the New School and Berklee School of Music.

The association between the scholarship winners, who receive the award as 17-year-olds, and DeMerle can be even more permanent. One previous winner now plays fourth trumpet in DeMerle's big band.

"I like to have young people in my life," he said. "We learn from them, and they learn from us. And that's the best feeling in the world."

—Jon Ross



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CHICAGO GOSPEL MUSIC FESTIVAL JULY 12
CHICAGO HOUSE MUSIC FESTIVAL AUGUST 23

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ChicagoJazzFestival.us



The Chicago Jazz Festival is produced by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and programmed by the Jazz Institute of Chicago and the Chicago Jazz Festival Committee.



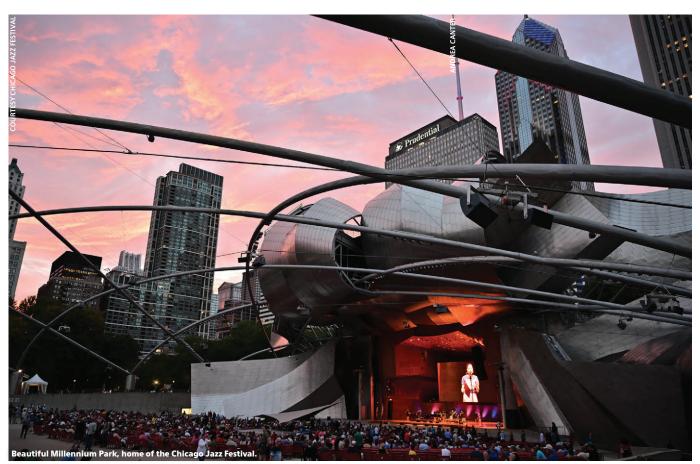




MIDWEST

dib.

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Chicago Blues Festival

Chicago, Ilinois
June 5-8

The Chicago Blues Festival is billed as the largest free blues festival in the world featuring the best blues has to offer from the city's beautiful Millennium Park. June 5 events will be held at

the Ramova Theatre on Chicago's South Side.

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's performers included Buddy Guy, Shemekia Copeland, Mr. Sipp, Southern Avenue and tributes to Jimmy Rogers, Dinah Washington and Otis Spann. **chicagobluesfestival.us**

Ravinia Festival

Highland Park, Illinois
June 14-July 17

Ravinia Festival's summer lineup features more than 40 artist debuts and more than 100 concerts ranging from rock/pop, R&B, classical, jazz and country to movie 2025 ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

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LINEUP: The jazz and blues lineup this summer includes Taj Mahal & Keb' Mo', Kurt Elling celebrating Weather Report, David Foster and Chris Botti featuring Katharine McPhee, Diana Krall and Ronnie Baker Brooks.

Twin Cities Jazz Festival

Saint Paul, Minnesota

June 20-21

ravinia.org

Celebrating its 27th anniversary, Twin Cities Jazz Festival is a two-day celebration of jazz with headline acts on multiple public stages in and around Lowertown Saint Paul. Recognized as one of the region's premier music festivals, TCJF features world-class musicians along with youth education and performance opportunities. Admission is free.

LINEUP: Doreen Ketchens, the Emmet Cohen Trio, The Four Freshmen, LA Buckner & BiG HOMiE, and Catherine Russell & Sean Mason. Also, Some of the best professional and youth musicians from the Twin Cities and the region. twincitiesjazzfestival.com

Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland presented by KeyBank

June 26-28

Cleveland, Ohio

The 2025 Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, presented by KeyBank, features acts spanning the jazz spectrum including a centennial tribute to Oscar Peterson with the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and Benny Green, the Sun Ra Arkestra, Stanley Clarke, Trombone Shorty, Dianne Reeves, Pedrito Martinez, Taylor Eigsti, Dominick Farinacci and more.

LINEUP: Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, John Clayton, Jeff Hamilton, The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Benny Green, Dan Wilson, Sun Ra Arkestra, Stanley Clarke N-4EVER, Kirk Whalum, Jonathan Butler, Dianne Reeves, Romero Lubambo, Dominick Farinacci & Friends, Taylor Eigsti, Christian Tamburr and the Pedrito Martinez Group.

lowa City Jazz Festival

lowa City, lowa July 4-6

Come to downtown lowa City for three

days of live performances on two stages that showcase well-known musicians and up-and-coming talent alongside national and international artists. The fest features food vendors, beverage garden and artist booths onsite. Jam sessions Friday and Saturday night. Don't miss the fireworks on Saturday evening or the brunch fundraiser on Sunday morning.

LINEUP: Stefon Harris and Blackout, Ryan Middagh Big Band (featuring Joel Frahm), SRT Trio (featuring JR Robinson), Alyssa Allgood Quartet, BYOBrass and Saul Lubaroff Quartet and many performers from across the state. summerofthearts.org

JazzFest Michigan

Lansing, Michigan
July 30-August 2

Since 1994, JazzFest Michigan has hosted hundreds of top-shelf jazz acts in Michigan's capital city. This year's 31st anniversary follows suit with Walter Blanding and dozens more on three stages in Old Town, Lansing's diverse, inclusive creative hub.

LINEUP: Walter Blanding and more to be announced. Past performers include Nicole Mitchell, Marbin, Tim Cunningham, Elden Kelly, Bill Cessna, Lansing Big Band, School of Rock, Reuben Stump Trio, Minor Element and more. micharts.org/jazzfest-about

Chicago Jazz Festival

Chicago, Ilinois August 28-31

The Chicago Jazz Festival has been a key part of the city's free summer music festival lineup for more than 40 years, celebrating the City of Chicago's iconic jazz scene. The festival features a diverse range of artists, including jazz legends, influential modern masters, and emerging talent that contribute to the ongoing evolution of the genre.

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's performers included Amina Claudine Myers, Jason Adasiewicz, Catherine Russell, the Billy Harper Quintet, The Tomeka Reid Quartet, Lakecia Benjamin, James Brandon Lewis, Kenny Garrett and René Marie & Experiment in Truth. chicagojazzfestival.us

Detroit Jazz Festival

Detroit, Michigan August 29-September 1

In its 46th year, the Detroit Jazz Festival is hailed as the largest free admission jazz festival in the world. The annual Artist-In-Residence is a staple of the week-





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end. Past honorees have included Joshua Redman, Terence Blanchard, Regina Carter, Stanley Clarke, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Chick Corea, among others.

LINEUP: To be announced. The 2024 lineup featured Monty Alexander, Christian McBride, Carmen Lundy, Joshua Redman, Cameron Graves, Mimi Fox and Melanie Charles. detroitjazzfest.org

South Haven Jazz Festival

South Haven, Michigan September 12-13

The 8th annual event features regional jazz big bands and combos. It is free within a beautiful Lake Michigan beach town.

LINEUP: To be announced. southhaveniazzfestival.com

Indy Jazz Festival

Indianapolis, Indiana September 17-20

The 27th annual Indy Jazz Fest celebrates artists throughout the world of jazz with a special focus on Indianapolis' rich jazz heritage.

LINEUP: Brian Culbertson and more to be announced. **indyjazzfest.net**

Hyde Park Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois September 27-28

The Hyde Park Jazz Festival has quickly become an annual must-see event on Chicago's South Side. The festival remains a grassroots project presenting the most creative artists in improvised music.

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's performers included Ambrose Akinmusire, the Bobby Broom Trio, Brandee Younger & Courtney Bryan, Geof Bradfield & Colossal Abundance, Immanuel Wilkins' Blues Blood, the Jason Roebke Quartet, the Jon Irabagon Trio, Nate Smith and more.

hydeparkjazzfestival.org

CU Jazz Festival

Champaign-Urbana, Illinois
October 16-19

CU Jazz Festival continues with its 11th annual event including jam sessions, daily featured performers and the fan favorite Sunday jazz brunch. Highlighting local talent alongside national stars performing in intimate venues, it promises an exceptional experience.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included Myra Melford, Matt Wilson, John Moulder and Menjunje. **cujazzfest.org**



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Denver Jazz Fest An Event is Born

FROM SISTERS TIA FULLER AND SHAMIE Royston, Kneebody co-founders Shane Endsley and Kaveh Rastegar and the late Ron Miles to historic figures like Paul Whiteman and Jimmie Lunceford, Denver has been called home by a plethora of jazz talent.

Now that home has its own festival. Scheduled to run April 3-6, the inaugural Denver Jazz Fest celebrates the storied past and vibrant present of the metro area's jazz scene.

Hosted at a dozen different sites between Denver and Boulder, and featuring 32 concerts, the debut of the festival opens with a performance by guitarist and native son Bill Frisell's new In My Dreams band featuring violinist Jenny Scheinman, violist Eyvind Kang, cellist Hank Roberts, bassist Thomas Morgan and Denver-raised drummer Rudy Royston.

Star vocalist Dianne Reeves, who grew up in Denver and returned to live there in 1991, headlines the final day of the DJF in a duo setting with guitarist Romero Lubambo. Pianist/composer Annie Booth, a faculty member of University of Denver's Jazz and Commercial Music program who earned bachelor's and master's degrees from University of Colorado-Boulder's music department, closes out the festival with her trio.

"We felt for the first year that it was important to reach out to great artists who have roots here but have gone well beyond the regional scene," said David Froman, Denver Jazz co-founder. "But we also thought it was important to have a good balance in terms of local and national artists, especially given the number of

really top musicians that we have here."

Saxophonist (and April 2025 DownBeat cover artist) Isaiah Collier makes his Denver debut as part of the DJF. Pianist/composer Art Lande, a Boulder resident since 1987, brings his Future History trio with son Aaron Lande on electric violin and guitarist Tim Wendel to Muse Performance Space, an artist-run non-profit stage located in the Boulder suburb of Lafayette. Vocalist Danette Hollowell and the DJF Allstars quartet will showcase some quality locally based swing in an event co-presented by the festival.

"We set out to develop partnerships with every venue here that presents great music throughout the year," Froman said in a conference call from his home in the Denver bedroom community of Pine. "Each partnership has taken a unique form based on the needs of both parties and the manner in which they operate. Denver Jazz Fest is producing all shows at the Newman Center, Dazzle, the Denver Performing Arts Center (DPAC) Galleria and the Mercury Cafe on our own. And we are co-producing the shows at the other eight venues. In most cases, that involves both curation and marketing."

And making all this happen is a labor of love for the area's jazz scene.

"Denver has been opening more rooms for music," said Dianne Reeves. "So the community that was always there is really starting to come together in a way that's really beautiful. When I'm in Europe, I perform at these festivals that last for four days. That part is the thing that makes the music hip and good; it allows artists to go see other artists."

Reeves mentioned being excited about tenor saxophonist/multi-reedist Joe Lovano bringing his new Paramount Quartet with guitarist Julian Lage, bassist Asante Santi Debriano and drummer Will Calhoun to the Boulder Theater for the DJF. She's also enthused that The Headhunters will be on a bill with Ghost Note and Superimposition.

"Growing up in Denver, I went up to Red Rocks and saw the original incarnation of The Headhunters," she said, by phone from her home in Denver.

"We've been working on this project for the past two years," explained Froman, a three decade-plus area resident who is president of Gift of Jazz, a nonprofit education and concert production organization. He co-founded DJF parent organization Denver Jazz, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, with jazz publicist, festival programmer and recent Denver transplant Don Lucoff. "Don was relatively new to the community, but obviously has a long history in producing jazz festivals and promoting jazz artists and record labels."

"There was no national festival in Denver," Lucoff pointed out. "We have a major airport with a hub for Southwest and United and artists coming through from the West Coast or down from Chicago or Minneapolis."

"It's a really healthy scene," said Lande. "I feel like we have wonderful players, good mentoring for the high school students and several excellent colleges and universities. It feels not competitive at all but rather very supportive."

The DJF plans to honor the annual Five Points Jazz Festival (FPJF), which ended its two decade-plus run last year. Held in Denver's Historic Black Five Points neighborhood, it was free, outdoors and presented on multiple stages. "We're setting up a free open air stage at the Galleria at the DPAC," explained Froman, who served on the FPJF board for its final 12 years. "We're also putting on a smooth jazz show at Spangalang Brewery in Five Points because we felt we needed to check that box.

"Some of the clubs that we're partnering with are jazz clubs in a pure sense," he continued. "Others are kind of jazz-adjacent clubs that produce music more along the lines of jam bands and are catering to a younger audience but will occasionally do a jazz show." ALO and Garaj Mahal are likely to have audience members alternately standing and dancing.

"It's always a fine line where you say it's a 'jazz' festival, and then you have to be the arbiter of what jazz is," Froman observed. "But jazz is a house with many rooms, as has been said."

"Denver's just a beautiful place," Reeves concluded. "April should be the beginning of spring, so there'll be a whisper of green. And it's very easy to get around."

—Yoshi Kato

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OVERSHINE





Healdsburg Jazz Festival

Healdsburg, California
June 13-22

Healdsburg Jazz presents its 27th Annual Healdsburg Jazz Festival in beautiful and historic venues throughout wine country. The festival features an array of some of the most celebrated artists like Dianne Reeves, Jason Moran, Kenny Barron, Terri Lyne Carrington, Nicholas Payton, Jake Shimabukuro and more.

LINEUP: Dianne Reeves, Jason Moran, Kenny Barron, Terri Lyne Carrington, Nicholas Payton, Jake Shimabukuro, Melissa Aldana, Orrin Evans, Tyreek McDole, Faye Carol, Bruce Forman, Amina Scott, the Marcus Shelby Orchestra, Allison Miller, Howard Wiley, GLIDE Memorial Choir, Melba's Kitchen Big Band, Lorca Hart, Sylvia Cuenca, Healdsburg Jazz Collective, Tiffany Austin and the Healdsburg Jazz Freedom Jazz Choir, Los Tangueros del Oste and more. healdsburgjazz.org

San Francisco Jazz Festival Presented by SFJAZZ

San Francisco, California

June 13-15

Under the direction of SFJAZZ Executive Artistic Director Terence Blanchard, this year's San Francisco Jazz Festival enters a new chapter as a neighborhood event featuring 35 concerts across multiple venues. The three-day bash will also include DJs, food and drink vendors, vinyl merchants and more.

LINEUP: Terence Blanchard, Stanley Clarke & Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Patrice Rushen, Charles Lloyd Sky Quartet, Lakecia Benjamin, The Soul Rebels, Cimafunk, Idris Ackamoor & The Ankhestra, Dave Holland & Lionel Loueke, SFJAZZ Collective w/ Kurt Elling, Sullivan Fortner & Ambrose Akinmusire, Lisa Fischer, Nicholas Payton, Don Was & The Pan Detroit Ensemble, Braxton Cook, Sachal Vasandani, SOMI, New Jazz Underground, Jahari Stampley Trio, Orrin Evans, Kiefer Trio, Brandon

Woody, the Zig Zag Power Trio, Mohini Dey, SML, Kassa Overall, the Mark Lettieri Group and Salami Rose Joe Louis. sfjazz.org

Blue Note Jazz Festival

The Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles
June 14-15

The Hollywood Bowl's annual two-day celebration is back with a new partner: Blue Note. Some of the best artists in jazz and beyond descend on the Bowl for this non-stop party hosted by Arsenio Hall.

LINEUP: Grace Jones, The Isley Brothers, Willow, De La Soul, Stanley Clark, The Soul Rebels (with special guests Rapsody, Goapele & Brandy Younger), Derrick Hodge (with special guest D Smoke), Dee Dee Bridgewater & Bill Charlap, Joe Lovano's Paramount Quartet (featuring Julian Lage, Asante Santi Debriano & Will Calhoun), Keyon Harrold, Lakecia Benjamin and more. hollywoodbowl.com/bluenote

CHARLES LLOYD SKY QUARTET

w/ JASON MORAN, LARRY GRENADIER & ERIC HARLAND

LAKECIA BENJAMIN & PHOENIX QUARTET KURT ELLING w/ SFJAZZ COLLECTIVE

DON WAS & THE PAN-DETROIT ENSEMBLE KASSA OVERALL · SALAMI ROSE JOE LOUIS

MARK LETTIERI GROUP · BRAXTON COOK · SACHAL VASANDANI

SATURDAY - JUNE 14

STANLEY CLARKE & GONZALO RUBALCABA

LISA FISCHER • THE SOUL REBELS
ZIG ZAG POWER TRIO • NICHOLAS PAYTON
SOMI • THEO CROKER • NEW JAZZ UNDERGROUND
SML • JAHARI STAMPLEY TRIO

SUNDAY - JUNE 15

PATRICE RUSHEN

CIMAFUNK · DAVE HOLLAND & LIONEL LOUEKE

AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE & SULLIVAN FORTNER

IDRIS ACKAMOOR & THE ANKHESTRA · ORRIN EVANS

KIEFER TRIO · TYREEK MCDOLE · TATIANA TATE

BRANDON WOODY'S UPENDO

ARTIST-AT-LARGE

TERENCE BLANCHARD

TICKETS

SFJAZZ.ORG



PRESENTS

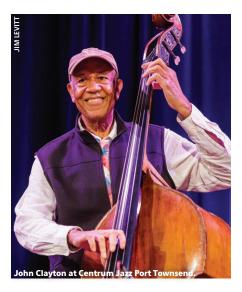
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JUN 13-15 2025

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Stanford Jazz FestivalStanford, California
June 22-August 1

For more than 50 years, the Stanford Jazz Festival has been a home for legends and rising stars. This summer, experience six weeks of world-class performances on the beautiful campus of Stanford University.

LINEUP: The Fred Hersch Trio, Lizz Wright,

John Pizzarelli, Jeremy Pelt and more. stanfordjazz.org

Jazz Aspen Snowmass JAS June Experience

Aspen, Colorado
June 26-29

Experience jazz, blues, soul, funk, world music, gospel and more with 12 ven-

ues and more than 20 performances nightly. Diverse music, intimate venues, great artists and audiences flowing from show to show, venue to venue, tasting and listening while moving between venues in downtown Aspen.

LINEUP: Tank & The Bangas, Samantha Fish, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Dumpstaphunk, Marcia Ball, Morgan James, Cool Cool Cool, The JAS Academy Band Big Band (conducted by Christian McBride, featuring Jose James & Alicia Olatuja), Matt Schofield, Shayna Steele, Remembering Russell Malone (featuring Christian McBride & Benny Green), Sasha's Bloc, Salin, Parlor Greens, Takuya Kuroda, OLATUJA, Alex Cuba and more.

jazzaspensnowmass.org/ june-experience-2025

Centrum Jazz Port Townsend

Port Townsend, Washington
July 21-27

Experience the enchantment of jazz at the Port Townsend Jazz Festival in Washington. Led by the acclaimed Dawn Clement in her inaugural year as artistic director, this year promises an extraordinary lineup of world-class musicians.

LINEUP: Terell Stafford, Buster Williams. Sara Gazarek, Matt Wilson, Camila Meza,



26 Lizz Wright 27 Paul Cornish Trio 31 Taylor Eigsti Quartet featuring Ben Wendel

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George Cables, Jon Hamar, Helen Sung, Steve Kovalcheck, Gary Smulyan, Ivan Malespin, Shane Endsley, Johnathan Blake, Christine Jensen, Pat Bianchi. Jim White. Anisha Rush, Jeff Lederer, Johnaye Kendrick, Kelby McNayr, Randy Halberstadt, Ben Allison, George Colligan and more. centrum.org/program/jazz

San Jose Jazz Summer Fest San Jose, California

August 8-10

Featuring international stars and new discoveries, celebrate 35 years of jazz, blues, R&B, Latin jazz, and more. It's the quintessential summer experience featuring tasty food, wine and micro-brews; family fun; a Club Crawl and more.

LINEUP: Common, Ghost-Note, Mavis Staples, PJ Morton, Femi Kuti & The Positive Force, David Binney Action Trio with Pera Krstajic & Louis Cole with more to announced. summerfest.sanjosejazz.org

√ Montavilla Jazz Festival

Portland, Oregon
August 29-31

The 12th Annual Montavilla Jazz Festival celebrates local jazz in a village-style event for the whole family. The festival presents three days of concerts in iconic locations within the historic Montavilla neighborhood. Award-winning restaurants showcase what makes Portland, Oregon, special, with nightly specials and live music.

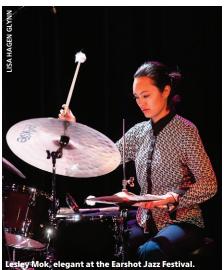
LINEUP: To be announced. Past lineups have included Nicole Glover, Joe Kye, Darrell Grant, Mel Brown, Tivon Pennicott, Billy Childs, George Colligan, Kerry Politzer, the Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble, Dan Balmer, Matthew Shipp, Wayne Horowitz and Gary Versace.

The Vail Jazz Festival

Vail, Colorado August 29 - 31

One of the premier jazz festivals in the country, Vail Jazz brings world-class musicians and





a vibrant audience from all over the globe to this beautiful mountain community. Spanning three days over Labor Day weekend, the Vail Jazz Festival brings together classic jazz and contemporary sounds.

LINEUP: Rene Marie, Byron Stripling, Gerald Clayton, Joel Frahm, Bobby Floyd, Niki Haris, John Clayton, Tim Green, Terell Stafford, Bill Cunliffe, Wycliffe Gordon, Lewis Nash and more. vailiazz.org

New Mexico Jazz Festival

Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico September 4-28

In its 19th year, The New Mexico Jazz Festival is a collaborative project of the Outpost Performance Space in Albuquerque and The Lensic Performing Arts Center in Santa Fe. A true destination event, the festival features local and world-renowned artists performing at the Outpost, the Lensic, and many other indoor and outdoor venues throughout the state. The fest also



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BUTCHER BROWN - TOM SCOTT & THE LA EXPRESS
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LA MARISOUL & THE LOVE NOTES ORCHESTRA
NIDIA GÓNGORA - MARY STALLINGS
RICARDO LEMVO & MAKINA LOCA
SACHAL VASANDANI - PACIFIC MAMBO ORCHESTRA
TYREEK MCDOLE - JONATHAN DELY
SAUL SIERRA QUINTET - ZOHAR & ADAM
AND MORE HEADLINERS TO BE ANNOUNCED!

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JULY 20-27, 2025

Join us for Jazz Port Townsend, a vibrant, week-long immersion into jazz, crafted for high school students and beyond. Engage in dynamic workshops, performances, and mentorship, surrounded by a community of fellow jazz enthusiasts. Singers and instrumentalists alike are welcome to experience a transformative journey into the heart of jazz.

2025 FACULTY: Terell Stafford,
Matt Wilson, Christine Jensen,
Buster Williams, Pat Bianchi, Steve
Kovalcheck, Gary Smulyan, Helen
Sung, Camila Meza, George Cables,
Jeff Lederer, Shane Endsley, Sara
Gazarek, George Colligan, Jon
Hamar, Johnaye Kendrick, Jim White,
Johnathan Blake, Anisha Rush, Ben
Allison, Ivan Malespin, and more!!!

CENTRUM.ORG/PROGRAM/JAZZ



features art exhibits, films and more.

LINEUP: Jimmy Bosch, John Scofield's Combo 73, Dianne Reeves, David Sanchez, Claudia Villela-Vitor Gonçalves, Fred Frith, Joe Fonda-Barry Altschul-Jon Irabagon, the Billy Childs Quartet, Sun Passion for Bach & Coltrane (featuring the Harlem Quartet, Imani Winds, Jazz Trio and A.B. Spellman), Linda May Han Oh, Nate Smith and more. newmexicojazzfestival.org

Monterey Jazz Festival

Monterey, California
September 26-28

The Monterey Jazz Festival is the longest continuously-running jazz festival in the world. Performances take place over three days and nights on five stages at the oak-studded Monterey County Fairgrounds. Sullivan Fortner serves as the 2025 artist-in-residence and Christian Sands will be the 2025 Commission Artist.

LINEUP: Dianne Reeves, Trombone Shorty, Gregory Porter, Christian McBride, Ledisi, Mr. Sipp, Keyon Harrold, Delfeayo Marsalis & the Uptown Jazz Orchestra, Christian Sands, Pete Escovedo (featuring Juan & Peter Michael Escovedo), René Marie, Echoes (with Javon Jackson, Lenny White), Dr. Eddie Henderson, John Patitucci & Lisa Fischer and more to be announced. montereyjazzfestival.org

Oregon Coast Jazz Party Newport, Oregon October 3-5

For more than 20 years, the Oregon Coast Jazz Party has celebrated the best in live jazz on the beautiful shores of Nye Beach in the "Dungeness Crab Capital of the World." Enjoy a lively, music-focused weekend in an idyllic coastal location filled with charm, shopping, local brews, and don't forget the fresh seafood.

LINEUP: Music director and fan-favorite Ken Peplowski is confirmed to return in 2025. Other performers to be announced. Past lineups have included Diego Figueiredo, Randy Brecker, The Monty Alexander Trio, Wycliffe Gordon, Randy Porter, Ada Rovatti, Clairdee, Roxy Coss, Terell Stafford, Kenny Washington, Holly Hoffman, Mike Wofford, Dena DeRose, Houston Person, Nick Caldwell, Dave Captein and more. oregoncoastjazzparty.org

Earshot Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington
October 10-November 2

The Earshot Jazz Festival celebrates Seattle's jazz scene with performances, premieres, and special projects by esteemed resident artists alongside international masters.

LINEUP: Arooj Aftab, Makaya McCraven, Kris Davis and Ghost-Note. **earshot.org/festival**



Vancouver International Jazz Festival Still Scrappy & Creative at 40

DURING SEVEN GLORIOUS DAYS IN JUNE 1986, a fledgling jazz festival in Vancouver, Canada, burst into the consciousness of local and international jazz fans.

The du Maurier International Jazz Festival had a stunning lineup: Miles Davis, Wynton Marsalis, Ornette Coleman, Abdullah Ibrahim, Tony Williams, Jay Clayton, Roscoe Mitchell and many more sublime artists performed. As if that wasn't enough to put the festival on the global jazz map, an infamous incident happened. Marsalis — with trumpet in hand — strode uninvited onto the stage during Davis' concert. The Prince of Darkness sharply told Marsalis to leave, the much younger trumpeter complied, and the festival got a massive publicity boost.

Cole Schmidt missed all of it; he had a good excuse. "I was 1 year old," said Schmidt. He was born five months before Coastal Jazz & Blues Society founders Robert Kerr, John Orysik and Ken Pickering presented — with help from some fellow music aficionados, but almost no funding — the modestly programmed Pacific Jazz & Blues Festival in 1985. So the renamed festival's second edition in 1986, supercharged by a title sponsor, was a gigantic leap.

The festival took off from there, building in size and diversity and presenting memorable concerts: Sun Ra and his Arkestra (1989), Caetano Veloso (1999), Oscar Peterson (2004), Diana Krall (multiple years), Wayne Shorter (2003 and 2012) and many other epic shows.

Fast-forward to 2025. Schmidt is a key player in Vancouver's bustling improvised music/jazz/DIY scene as a guitarist with a sonically absorb-

ing palette. His main gig: Schmidt and Jeremy Page are co-artistic directors at the Coastal Jazz & Blues Society.

Their focus has been programming the 40th anniversary Vancouver International Jazz Festival, happening June 20 to July 1.

The anniversary is a meaningful milestone that Schmidt and Page approached with respect for the festival's immense artistic legacy that Pickering and Rainbow Robert shaped, and an eye toward the future. "We're definitely mindful of the legacy of the festival, and thinking about people who have played it and who are still involved, and making sure that there's still a lot of excitement from the younger generation," said Page.

At the 2025 festival, a marquee headliner will be the always-engaging Bill Frisell with his trio. It's a hat tip to the past; the guitarist performed in the iconic 1986 edition and in other years. Another headliner: prodigious bassist Richard Bona, who will play with his Asante Trio.

Other international artists performing in ticketed and free shows include Makaya McCraven, Kneebody, Marquis Hill, Immanuel Wilkins with Poland's Lutosławski Quartet, New Jazz Underground, Susie Ibarra (who will be part of an artist-in-residence program) and a collaboration in the improvisational spirit of mixing and matching the fest dreamed up over the years: Gerry Hemingway, Izumi Kimura and Vancouverites François Houle and Gordon Grdina.

While some additional international musicians will be in the festival, the overall list of artists from outside of Vancouver won't be akin to

the extensive lineups the annual event offered back in the day. There are hard realities behind presenting an international jazz festival on Canada's West Coast these days. "It is stable, but challenging," said Nina Horvath, Coastal Jazz & Blues Society executive director, about the festival's financial situation. "The whole global temperature and climate right now is challenging."

On top of coping with the past pandemic, the festival lost its title sponsor in 2022. The weak Canadian dollar hasn't helped. Still, attendance at the 2024 festival was strong. An exception was a show at one of the city's main theatres featuring rapper Killer Mike, which didn't sell as well as expected and was scrutinized by some with an age-old question: Did it belong in a jazz festival?

Regardless of the challenges, the 2025 festival offers a lot, with a focus on Vancouver's thriving local jazz scene at the heart of it. Shruti Ramani, Bruno Hubert and other musicians in the scene will perform. "We can definitely say that Vancouver is pretty activated right now, yearround, with all the gigs and all the venues and promoters helping the scene go, and we're leaning into that," said Schmidt. "So there are a lot of pieces honoring all generations of the scene right now that we're trying to balance in the mix."

Feven Kidane, a trumpeter and bassist who has emerged as one of Vancouver's most compelling younger musicians, first played in the festival in 2021. Since then, she's progressively had a bigger role in the event, including a show this year with her sextet. "It's a great way to make art accessible," Kidane said about the free performance. "I feel happy knowing that I can be like, 'This is where I am, this is how I sound,' and nobody has to worry about money to come see it."

Tim Reinert — through his Infidels Jazz company — along with Cory Weeds, other presenters and Coastal Jazz & Blues, have provided enormous support for the local scene by providing countless playing opportunities. Reinert has sympathy for the festival's adversities and admiration for its resilience. "The fact that people have always been willing to stand up and be part of this incredibly challenging, difficult experience is a real testament to how much passion this music brings up in people," said Reinert.

Horvath: "It's really uncertain times for all of us, and I think that's when you want music and art the most, to connect people and to bring people together into community, and to honor the roots of jazz as an art form that's grounded in protest and equity. I think that message is more important than ever right now."

Given the uncertainty, which an unfolding U.S.-Canada trade war is exacerbating, one wonders if this could be the last Vancouver International Jazz Festival Horvath unequivocally said no. "And if you want to make sure that it's not the last festival, I hope that you come on board and come to shows," she said. "Come and celebrate what we are able to do." —Chris Wong









Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville

Victoriaville, Quebec May 12-18

The Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville returns for its 41st edition. The fest will offer a smaller, but carefully crafted program, focused on musical quality and joyful experiences. It will feature two significant concerts including bold collaborations between local and international artists. FIMAV will return to a full edition in 2026

LINEUP: Mats Gustafsson Fire!, Orchestra CBA, Sleepytime Gorilla Museum, more to be announced. **fimav.qc.ca/en**

TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival

Winnipeg, Manitoba June 18-22 Dubbed the ultimate summer kickoff, the TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival is the city's largest music event of the year held in downtown's historic Exchange District. FIMAV will return to a full edition in 2026.

LINEUP: The Béla Fleck-Edmar Castañeda -Antonio Sanchez Trio, Madeleine Peyroux, Jimmie Herrod & George Colligan, Richard Bona and more to be announced jazzwinnipeg.com

Ottawa Jazz Festival

Ottawa, Ontario June 20-29

Celebrating its 45th anniversary, the Ottawa Jazz Festival showcases world-class jazz and diverse genres in downtown Ottawa. A premier Canadian event, it offers both ticketed and free performances across multiple venues, creating a special summer tradition in the heart of the nation's capital.

LINEUP: Allison Russell, Richard Bona,

Carl Mayotte Quintet, Tanika Charles, The Bros. Landreth, Christine Jensen Quartet, François Houle, Mayis Stanles, Seymoh

François Houle, Mavis Staples, Sexmob, Marc Copland Trio featuring John Hebert and Colin Stranahan, Anna Webber's Simple Trio, Marc Ribot's Ceramic Dog, SNACK-TIME, Pony Girl, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Kneebody, Prime Rib Big Band, Polky, Balkan Paradise Orchestra, Peter Van Huffel's "CALLISTO," Marc Copland & Roddy Ellias and more.

ottawajazzfestival.com

Toronto Jazz Festival

Toronto, Ontario June 20-29

Now in it 38th year, the Toronto Jazz Festival celebrates the best in jazz and jazz-related music, showcasing artists from Toronto, across Canada and around the world.

LINEUP: Confirmed artists include Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Broken Social Scene, Mavis



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SAMARA JOY • DIANNE REEVES • DHAFER YOUSSEF
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Shuffle Demons • Peter Van Huffel's "CALLISTO" Canadian Jazz Collective Septet • Kepler Utopia Ontario • Thanya Iyer • Carn Davidson 9 Tony D • Carl Mayotte Quintet • Prime Rib Big Band

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Staples, Arooj Afab, Makaya McCraven, Jeff Goldblum and more. torontojazz.com

Vancouver International Jazz Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia

June 20-July 1

The 40th annual Jazz Fest kicks off summer in the city with 150 free and ticketed shows from downtown Vancouver to Granville Island and the North Shore.

LINEUP: The Bill Frisell Trio, the Richard Bona Asante Trio and more to be announced.

coastaljazz.ca

TD Victoria International JazzFest

Victoria, British Columbia June 20-29

Experience 10 hot days and nights of the coolest music in town at the 41st anniversary of TD Victoria International JazzFest. This multi-day music festival on Vancouver Island features more than 55 performances of jazz, blues, world music and more on stages around Victoria.

LINEUP: Madeleine Peyroux, Alex Cuba, Richard Bona Asanté Trio, Eliane Elias, ARTEMIS, Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio, Sungazer, The Rumble f. Chief Joseph Boudreaux Jr., Lowdown Brass Band, Kneebody, Brekky Boy, Makaya McCraven, New Jazz Underground, Marquis Hill, Christine Jensen, Pierre Bensusan, Lorraine Desmarais, Farah Siraj, Anthony D'Allesandro, MusicMusicMusic, Ayla Tesler-Mabe, Tina Leon, Carl Mayotte, and many more, including free performances. jazzvictoria.ca

Festival International De Jazz De Montréal

Montreal, Quebec June 26-July 5

Recognized by the Guiness World Records as the largest jazz festival on the planet, Festival International de Jazz de Montréal has been synonymous with musical passion and memorable moments for 45 years. It's where living legends rub shoulders with the finest up-and-coming artists, and jazz explodes at the crossroads of genres and influences.

LINEUP: Jeff Goldblum & The Mildred Snitzer Orchestra, Natalia Lafourcade, Thundercat, Branford Marsalis, Rhiannon Giddens, Madeleine Peyroux, Marcin, Dhafer Youssef, Holly Cole, Mike Stern, Django Festival Allstars, Wynton Marsalis, Chris Botti, Samara Joy, Avishai Cohen Trio, Men I Trust, Oscar Peterson Centennial Gala: Canadiana Suite, George Thorogood & the Destroyers, The Cat Empire, Madlib and more. montrealjazzfest.com

SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan July 3-12

For 10 days each summer, the city of Saskatoon bursts into song as the SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival plays host to hundreds of world-class artists. Thousands of music fans devour the sounds of jazz, blues, funk, pop and world music each year with a program that spans as many genres as it does continents.

LINEUP: To be announced.

saskjazz.com

The Markham Jazz Festival

Unionville, Ontario

August 15-17

The annual Markham Jazz Festival is an admired presenter of top Canadian and international talent. Join fans in historic Unionville, Ontario, for 24-plus performances of jazz, blues, Latin and world sounds on multiple stages. Enjoy the wine & beer garden, craft ven-

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JUNE 20-JULY 1, 2025



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dors, superb shopping and dining, plus free parking and shuttle service into Unionville.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers include Catherine Russell, Maceo Parker, Hilario Duran and Matt Stevens. markhamjazzfestival.com

Port Hope Jazz Festival

Port Hope, Ontario August 21-24

Port Hope Jazz presents free and ticketed shows in venues all over town, showcasing the best of Canadian jazz. Previous lineups have featured Grammy- and Juno-award-winning artists.

LINEUP: Molly Johnson with Robi Botos, Mike Downes and Davide Direnzo, Dizzy and Fay, Nancy Walker Quartet with Tara Davidson, Lauren Falls and Ethan Ardelli, Oakland Stroke, André Valérios Quartet, Angela Pincente Big Band, Michael Shand and more. porthopejazz.com

Harbour Blues 'n Roots Festival

Victoria, British Columbia August 22-24

Celebrate the end of summer on a high note at the Harbour Blues 'n Roots festival, showcasing the best live music in the genres of blues, roots, world and more on the outdoor stage at Ship Point in Victoria's Inner Harbour.

LINEUP: Shemekia Copeland and more to be announced, including free performances. jazzvictoria.ca

The Pentastic Hot Jazz and Music Festival

Penticton, British Columbia
September 5-7

The Pentastic Hot Jazz and Music Festival will bring its 27th edition of everything from swing to zydeco, rockabilly, New Orleans jazz and more.

LINEUP: Tom Hook & The Hounds, Dave Bennett & the Memphis Speed Kings, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, After Midnight, Groovus, Todd Morgan and the Emblems, Slim Sandy and the Atomic Cocktails. **pentasticjazz.ca**

The Guelph Jazz Festival

Guelph, Ontario September 12-14

The Guelph Jazz Festival is a celebration of adventurous music. Held over the second weekend in September, the festival presents world-class artists in ticketed and free performances. Unique collaborations, community workshops and immersive experiences have helped

make Guelph a vibrant hub for creative improvised music-making for over 30 years.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past lineups have included Angelica Sanchez, Darius Jones, Witch Prophet, Susan Alcorn, Satoko Fujii, James Brandon Lewis and DJ Shub. **guelphjazzfestival.com**



JUNE **AUGUST 10**

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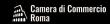
HERBIE HANCOCK | BRANFORD MARSALIS JOSHUA REDMAN JOHN SCOFIELD KENNY BARRON DAVE HOLLAND / CHRIS POTTER "KISMET" MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO | AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE JOE LOVANO KNOWER ISAIAH COLLIER THE FEARLESS FLYERS | EMMET COHEN ENRICO RAVA / PAOLO FRESU / STEFANO BOLLANI / **ENZO PIETROPAOLI / ROBERTO GATTO** FABRIZIO BOSSO / ROSARIO GIULIANI FRANCO D'ANDREA | RITA MARCOTULLI | STEFANO DI BATTISTA DANILO REA GEGÈ TELESFORO FRANCESCA TANDOI and many others

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Menorca Jazz Festival

Menorca, Balearic Islands, Spain March 6-May 3

The Menorca Jazz festival reaches its 27th edition with a lineup that spans the globe. Names like Cécile McLorin, Chicuelo & Mezquida, Richard Bona or Alfredo Rodríguez will fill the halls of the island. But the festival also includes its own Menorca Lindy Exchange, concerts on the beach and plenty of activities related to jazz.

LINEUP: Cécile McLorin Salvant, Chicuelo & Marco Mezquida, Jazz Al Cinema, Victor Carrascosa Quintet, Daahoud Salim Quintet, Vermut Jazz, Richard Bona Trio, Alredo Rodriguez Trio, Menorca Lindy Exchange 2025, Novissims Del Jazz, Picnic Vega Jazz and Jazz Didactic. menorcajazzfestival.com/es

MIT Jazz Festival

Merida, Extremadura, Spain March 20-June 30

Preparing for its second edition, the festival is hosted in Merida, known as the "Second Rome." Over 2,000 years old, it has some of the nicest venues in the world such as the Roman Theatre and Diana Temple. Clinics, master classes, a week for youth big bands and open-air concerts are just a few treats to go along with stunning historic views.

LINEUP: To be announced. mitjazz.org

Jazzfest Bonn

Bonn, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany May 1-24, June 29 & September 27

Jazzfest Bonn presents a broad range of improvised music pairing international stars with exciting newcomers in more than 15 double bill concerts. The festival takes place in culturally significant locations all over Beethoven's birth town Bonn. Established in 2009, Jazzfest Bonn has become a well-known melting pot for sophisticated music from Germany, Europe and beyond.

LINEUP: Hiromi's Sonicwonder, Michael Wollny Trio, Richard Galliano & Paolo Fresu, Rymden, The Norwegian Wind Ensemble featuring Marius Neset, China Moses, Yellowjackets, Eva Klesse Quartet, Wolfgang Muthspiel, Norma Winstone & Kit Downes, Dominic Miller, Arbenz X Krijger/Osby/Churchill, Louis Sclavis & Benjamin Moussay, Camille Bertault, Florian Weber Quartet, Olivia Trummer, Jasper van't Hof Trio, Andreas Schaerer, Sarah Chaksad Large Ensemble, Medna Roso, Marie Kruttli Trio, Simone Zanchini, Vana Gierig Trio, Botticell Babby, James Carter Organ Trio, Seamus Blake & Alessandro Lanzoni and more. jazzfest-bonn.de

Ravenna Jazz

Ravenna, Italy
May 2-12

One of the oldest established jazz festivals in Italy, the 52nd edition of Ravenna Jazz will feature a lineup showing jazz acts from South Africa, France, Great Britain, New York, Chicago and, of course, many Italian artists.

LINEUP: Richard Galliano, Mark Guiliana, Famoudou Don Moye, Tatiana Eva-Marie and more to be announced. **crossroads-it.org/ravenna-jazz**

Trondheim Jazz Festival

Trondheim, Norway May 6-10

Since 1980, this fest has served up great music, restaurants and fun from this bustling seaport city. It's a great mix of sound, sea and history from a town that dates back to before the 1st century.

LINEUP: Superblue: Kurt Elling & Charlie Hunter, Phønix, Aileron featuring Emma Rawicz, Trondheim Jazz Orchestra 25 Years, Building Instrument, Siril Malmedal Hauge-Rhiza Song, Holberg & Kawaguchi, Shake Stew, Hedvig Mollestad Trio, Tora Dahle Aagård, The Core, Amadou & Miriam and more. jazzfest.no/en

Jazz in the Park Festival

Ethnographic Park, Cluj-Napoca, Romania June 6-8

Jazz in the Park isn't just a festival, it's a vibe — place where jazz flows freely under the open sky, bringing people together for real, unfiltered moments. Thoughtfully curated,

rooted in connection and shaped by community, its location in Romania's oldest open-air museum makes it even more special.

LINEUP: Ibrahim Maalouf, Kokoroko, Mammal Hands, Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, Bireli Lagrene Quartet, Alabaster De-Plume, Amphitrio, Jazzbois, Sorvina, New Fossils, Berti Barbera & Sebastian Burneci Quintent, Transylvania Jazz Orchestra. jazzinthepark.ro

moers festival

Moers, Germany
June 6-9

The moers festival, one of the most significant international festivals for jazz, avant-garde and experimental music as well as culture in Germany has taken place every Pentecost since 1972. In 2025, tickets are offered in five fixed price categories, but buyers have the option to choose the price tier that suits them best.

LINEUP: Ellen Arkbro, The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters, Koshiro Hino, Hayden Chisholm's Kinetic Chain, Multiple Voices (Terry Wey & Ulfried Staber), William Northlich aka BlipVert, orchestre d'occasion, Caspar Brötzmann and more to be announced. moers-festival.de

Summertime

Casa del Jazz Park, Rome, Italy June 6-August 10

This year Casa del Jazz celebrates the 20th anniversary of this unique jazz venue created by City of Rome and managed by Fondazione Musica per Roma. Held in the former estate of a mafia boss, the venue was confiscated and transformed into a cultural center dedicated to jazz. Summer activity takes place in a large park with the stunning visual impact of towering majestic pines a covered stage an excellent sound system, and a fantastic restaurant and bar. The atmosphere is magic for both audiences and performers.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock, Branford Marsalis, Joshua Redman, John Scofield, Kenny Barron, Dave Holland/Chris Potter Kismet, Meshell Ndegeocello, Ambrose Akinmusire, Joe Lovano, Knower, Isaiah Collier, Fearless Flyers, Emmett Cohen, Enrico Rava/Paolo Fresu/Stefano Bollani/Enzo Pietropaoli/Roberto Gatto, Fabrizio Bosso/Rosario Giuliani, Franco D'Andrea, Rita Marcotulli, Stefano Di Battista, Danilo Rea, Gegè Telesforo, Francesca Tandoi and more. casadeljazz.com

JazzAscona

- The New Orleans Experience

Ascona, Switzerland
June 26 - July 5

One of the main international events dedicat-







Perugia, July 11-20 2025

ARENA SANTA GIULIANA

ANGÉLIQUE KIDJO "HOPE" • THEE SACRED SOULS • STEFANO BOLLANI NEW BAND • I PATAGARRI • DIANNE REEVES • HERBIE HANCOCK • SAMARA JOY • GREGORY PORTER • LEDISI • K U R T ELLING & THE YELLOWJACKETS CELEBRATE WEATHER REPORT • LEE RITENOUR • SATCHVAI BAND FEATURING JOE SATRIANI & STEVE VAI • MARCUS MILLER • JACOB COLLIER • CANDY DULFER WITH SPECIAL GUEST SHELBY J. • KAMASI WASHINGTON • MIKA • LIONEL RICHIE

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CÉCILE 06/03 CHICUELO & MCLORIN | MARCO 15/03 SALVANT | MEZQUIDA

JAZZ AL CINEMA "BLUE GIANT" 18&20/03

VÍCTOR CARRASCOSA 29/03
OUINTET GANADOR CONGURSO JM ESPAÑA DE JAZZ

DAAHOUD 05/04 SALIM QUINTET GANADOR PREMIO JAZZ ESPAÑA

DOCUMENTAL + CONCIERTO

13/04

RICHARD BONA TRIO 19/04 ALFREDO RODRÍGUEZ TRIO 25/04

MENORCA LINDY EXCHANGE 2025 1,2,3&4/05

NOVÍSSIMS DEL JAZZ

10/05

PICNIC VEGA JAZZ 24/04 JAZZ 31/04 DIDACTIC





DESTILERÍAS XORIGUER



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Menorca Jazz Festival

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www.menorcajazzfestival.com

ed to jazz and the New Orleans beat, JazzAscona attracts an enthusiastic audience that appreciates the richness of the program, the relaxed atmosphere of the festival and Lake Maggiore as a wonderful background to great open-air concerts. JazzAscona offers some 15 concerts a day and an interesting musical mix.

LINEUP: Bazil Meade with Alberto Marsico, Corey Henry and The Treme Funktet, NOJO 7 featuring Philip Manuel, the Tony Momrelle/Claus Raible Trio, Mathias Rüegg's European Songbook, Swiss Armed Forces Big Band, The Big Five featuring Nicolle Rochelle, a.m.m., and more jazzascona.ch

Jazz à Vienne

Vienne, France June 26 – July 11

Celebrating its 44th anniversary, Jazz à Vienne attracts more than 200,000 music lovers each year to the beauty of Vienne, France. The main stage is Théâtre Antique, a 1st century, open-air beauty that brings history into modern music and moments. Live music, DJ sets, jazz for kids programs and more.

LINEUP: Avishai Cohen, Anne Pacheco, Parov Stelar, Gallowstreet, Thomas Dutronc, Biréli Lagrène/Martin Taylor/Ulf Wakenius, Arooj Aftab, Ben Harper & the Innocent Criminals, Cécilia Kameni, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dhafer Youssef, Diane Reeves, Donny McCaslin, Jamie Cullum, Kamasi Washington and more.

jazzavienne.com

Istanbul Jazz Festival

Istanbul, Türkiye

July 1-17

The Istanbul Jazz Festival, established in 1994, serves up a vibrant celebration of jazz featuring international legends and local talent. With venues across the city, it fosters cultural exchange and creative collaborations, making it a must-see event.

LINEUP: Chucho Valdés Royal Quartet,
Hermanos Gutiérrez, Max Richter, Meshell Ndegeocello, Kerem Görsev Quintet, Grégory Privat
"Phoenix," Chiara Civello, Mehmet Ali Sanlikol
Quintet, Jazzmeia Horn, Meltem Ege & Friends,
Berke Can Özcan & Jonah Parzen-Johnson,
Brassist, Cari Cari, Çagil Kaya, Ghost-Note,
Hakan Basar Trio featuring Michelangelo
Scandroglio, Hav Hav!, Istanbul West Side
Collective, Jungle By Night, Kaan Arslan Co,
Kamucan Yalçın And Friends, MY BABY, Rogê,
Seda Erciyes, Selût, Senkop, Su Güzel Insanlar,
Tolga Bilgin, Tugçe Senogul, Zeynep Oktar.
caz.iksv.org/en

Kongsberg Jazzfestival

Kongsberg, Norway
July 2-5

Established in 1964, Kongsberg Jazzfestival is one of the leading jazz events in Scandinavia. The festival presents a varied lineup with a strong dose of Norwegian, Nordic and International acts within modern jazz, experimental/free jazz and more

commercial genres. Concerts are held at 15 different venues all over the city.

LINEUP: Maria Kannegaard Trio featuring Deathprod, Les Amazones d'Afrique, KNOW-ER, Hedvig Mollestad Trio, Gard Nilssen's Supersonic Orchestra, John Scofield's Long Days Quartet, Grace Jones, Karin Krog & The In-Between-Times, Pat Thomas & Kitchen Orchestra, Tuva Halse featuring Håkon Kornstad, Møster!, Ellen Andrea Wang: Closeness, Real Ones, Dave Douglas Quartet and more. kongsbergjazz.no

Rīgas Ritmi Festival

Riga, Latvia July 2-5

The Rigas Ritmi Festival celebrates its 25th anniversary with artists at the forefront of the American new wave of jazz — the jazz-funk band Kennedy Administration and singer Shayna Steele with the premiere of Latvian Maestro Raimonds Paul's song program — will also celebrate together with the festival team and other artists including Senegalese singer and kora player Momi Maiga and the Gospel Choir of Riga Cathedral Choir School.

LINEUP: Kennedy Administration, Shayna Steele, Momi Maiga, Gospel Choir of Riga Cathedral Choir School and more. **rigasritmi.ly**

A to JazZ Festival

Sofia, Bulgaria

July 4-6

Sofia's iconic South Park II welcomes back A to JazZ Festival, the nation's biggest free event for jazz, funk, soul and beyond. Branded "the Woodstock of Bulgaria" by some and even celebrated as a must-do reason to visit Sofia by British Airways, this year's lineup offers headliners such as Adi Oasis and Kennedy Administration, with lots to discover for fans of local, regional and international stars alike.

LINEUP: Adi Oasis, Kennedy Administration and more to be announced. **atojazz.bg**

Canarias Jazz & Más International Festival

Canary Islands, Spain

July 4-26

The Canarias Jazz & Más International Festival celebrates its 34 edition with 59 concerts in 29 stages of the main theaters, auditoriums and squares of Canary Islands, with a lineup featuring some of the most important artists from nowadays, spreading jazz among different generations of canarian people and its thousands of tourist visitors.

LINEUP: Take 6 & OFGC, Dee Dee Bridgwater, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Aymée Nuviola, Vijay lyer, Melissa Aldana, Lakecia Benjamin, Kennedy Administration, Alain Pérez & Orquesta Cuba, Rita Payés, Matteo Mancuso, Sicilian Jazz Orchestra, The Bamboos, Arin Keshishi, Ellister van der Molen, Zuco 103 and more. Canariasjazz.com

Montreux Jazz Festival

Montreux, Switzerland

July 4-19

Montreux Jazz Festival is a renowned music festival founded by Claude Nobs and held annually in Montreux, Switzerland, across two weeks in July. Now in its 58th year, the festival draws 250,000 music lovers from around the world to the Lake Geneva shoreline. Montreux Jazz Festival celebrates the industry's emerging and contemporary acts, whilst paying homage to music's legendary acts. Artists that have graced the stage of Montreux include Etta James, Quincy Jones, Bob Dylan, Elton John, Ms. Lauryn Hill, Aretha Franklin, David Bowie, James Brown, Kendrick Lamar, Leonard Cohen, Marvin Gaye, Miles Davis, Nina Simone and more.

LINEUP: Lionel Richie, Santana, Leon Bridges, Brandi Carlile and more to be announced. montreuxjazzfestival.com

Jazz Festival Ljubljana

Ljubljana, Slovenia, Europe **July 2-5**

The 66th edition of the oldest non-stop running jazz festival in Europe will feature 25 concerts, a photo exhibition, an artist residency and more. The program takes place in the Cankariev dom Park. CD Halls and Križanke Theatre. Winner of the Europe Jazz Network Award (EJN) For Adventurous Programming 2018.

LINEUP: Cécile McLorin Salvant, Tarbaby & David Murray, Nduduzo Makhathini and more to be announced. ljubljanajazz.si

Gent Jazz Ghent, Belaium July 4-19

Embark on a journey to the outer sounds and colours of live music at Belgium's coziest festival. The 24th edition of Gent Jazz takes place at the historic, beautiful Bijloke site in the heart of Ghent. Gent Jazz is set to showcase the diversity of jazz music with a lineup of legendary as well as up-and-coming talented artists.

LINEUP: Herbie Hancock. Norah Jones. Branford Marsalis Quartet, Bonnie Raitt, Leon Bridges, Max Richter, Kamasi Washington, Massive Attack, St Vincent, The Roots, Melody Gardot, The Waterboys and more. gentjazz.com

Bohemia JazzFest

Prague, Plzen, Prachatice, Hluboka and Brno in the Czech Republic **July 8-15**

Bohemia JazzFest celebrates its 20th anniversary with concerts at the Royal Gardens of Prague Castle, Pilsen, Prachatice, Hluboka and Brno. The program focuses heavily on the guitar virtuosos of today — Jakob Bro, John Scofield, Mike Stern — but also features great singers such as Sinne Eeg and Veronica Swift and more. All concerts are free.

LINEUP: Jakob Bro, John Scofield,

Mike Stern, Sinne Eeg, Veronica Swift and more to be announced.

bohemiajazzfest.com

Jazz A Juan

Antibes Juan-les-Pins Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, France July 10-20

The international jazz festival of Antibes Juan-les-Pins is Europe's longest-running jazz festival. Enjoy amazing concerts in the Gould pine grove with the Mediterranean Sea as a backdrop.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included Charlie Mingus, Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald and many more. jazzajuan.com

Aarhus Jazz Festival

Aarhus, Denmark July 11-20

Aarhus Jazz Festival is a popular annual event presenting all types of jazz, whether you are looking for traditional, swing, experimental, modern or jazz for children. Expect more than 300 concerts with many free options.

LINEUP: Norah Jones, Marilyn Mazur, Marcus Miller, Marcus Miller, Madeleine Peyroux, Aarhus Jazz Orchestra and many others <u>jazzfest.d</u>k

NN North Sea Jazz Festival

Rotterdam. The Netherlands **July 11-13**

NN North Sea Jazz Festival, the world's largest indoor jazz festival, celebrates jazz alongside blues, soul, funk, hip-hop and more. Visitors enjoy top artists and discover new talent. Highlights include an artist-in-residence, educational programs, the Paul Acket Award, an art exhibition, a festival market, and Rotterdam's pre-festival Round Town.

LINEUP: Avishai Cohen Quartet, Branford Marsalis Quartet, daoud, Emmet Cohen Trio featuring Patrick Bartley, Ezra Collective, Herbie Hancock, Jacob Collier (artist-in-residence), Jonathan Blake & Pentad, Julian Lage, Julie Campiche Quartet, Madeleine Peyroux, Mary J. Blige, Melissa Aldana Quartet, Omah Lay · Sullivan Fortner Trio, Zoh Amba Sun Ensemble and more. northseajazz.com

Pori Jazz

Pori, Finland July 11-20

One of the granddaddies of European jazz festivals, Pori packs large crowds and top acts — both inside and out of jazz — in this beautiful coastal town.

LINEUP: Sting, Ultra Bra, Roxette, Liro Rantala Hel Trio, Gregory Porter, MRCY, Jazzmeia Horn, Knower, Kurt Elling & Yellowjackets celebrate Weather Report, 30 Years of e.s.t-Tribute to Esbjörn Svensson Trio, Lady Blackbird, Makaya McCraven and more. porijazz.fi/en



Norwegian Wind Ensemble feat. Marius Neset & Erlend Skomsvoll **China Moses**

Richard Galliano & Paolo Fresu

Wolfgang Muthspiel

Louis Sclavis & Benjamin Moussay

Thomas Krüger & Anke Lucks Fümms Bö Brass

James Carter Organ Trio Konstantin Reinfeld & Benyamin Nuss

Simone Zanchini

Vana Gierig Trio

Botticelli Baby

VOLO - Sofia Will Large Ensemble

Stefano di Battista Quintet

Rainer Böhm Quintet

Ida Sand Trio

Florian Weber Quartet

Yellowjackets

Arbenz X Krijger/Osby/Churchill

Medna Roso

Camille Bertault

Dominic Miller

Olivia Trummer

Seamus Blake & Alessandro Lanzoni

Marie Kruttli Trio

Norma Winstone & Kit Downes

Eva Klesse Quartet

Markus Stockhausen Group feat. Nguyên Lê Jasper van't Hof Trio feat. Christof Lauer Andreas Schaerer: A Novel Of Anomaly

Sarah Chaksad Large Ensemble

Hiromi's Sonicwonder

Becca Stevens

Michael Wollny Trio

Rymden

may 1-24 | june 29 | sept 27 jazzfest-bonn.de













Umbria Jazz Perugia, Italy July 11-20

Umbria Jazz returns with a formula refined progressively over years. The Arena Santa Giuliana serves as the main evening stage for major events, including "digressions" into other genres. Afternoon concerts at the Teatro Morlacchi feature great jazz. Daily concerts at Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria and a nightclub offer resident bands and jam sessions. Free outdoor music fills stages in Piazza IV Novembre and Giardini Carducci bringing out the crowds for drinking, dancing and enjoying life. Moreover, Umbria Jazz promotes its fun-loving identity. After all, this is how Umbria Jazz was born in 1973 — free music in the town's squares. Good music as a pleasant soundtrack for those who want to enjoy Umbrian cuisine in the old town's restaurants: the one open at the Arena before the evening concerts, and the two usual ones: Bottega del vino and La Taverna.

LINEUP: Lionel Richie, Herbie Hancock, Kamasi Washington, Dianne Reeves, Gregory Porter, Stefano Bollani, Samara Joy, Sullivan Fortner, Enrico Rava, Fred Hersch, Paolo Fresu, Jazzmeia Horn, Ambrose Akinmusire, Ledisi, Kurt Elling, Joe Satriani & Steve Vai, Lee Ritenour, Angelique Kidjo, Jacob Collier, Marcus Miller, Christian McBride and more. umbriajazz.com



Moldejazz

Molde, Norway July 14-19

Founded in 1961, Moldejazz delivers some 120 concerts in six days in this city with great hiking and stunning views that brings 60,000 music lovers to the festival each year.

LINEUP: Youssef Dayes, Trondheim Jazz Orchestra with Jason Moran, the Goran Kajfes Sutropic Arkestra, Best Western Swing, Sigrid Aftret, Aja Monet, Fagernes Yacht Club, Klossmajor, ULD, Dianne Reeves, Plassen Takeover, Aer/Nilssen-Love/ Bø, Ghost-Note, Hillari, Makaya McCraven, Julian Lage, Knower and more. moldejazz.no/en

Festival de Jazz de Vitoria-Gasteiz

Vitoria-Gasteiz, Araba, Spain July 14-19

The Vitoria-Gasteiz Jazz Festival is a captivating celebration of jazz music held annually in the capital of the Basque Country. Renowned for its diverse lineup, the festival offers performances across a variety venues, a vibrant atmosphere and a blend of nature, culture and gastronomy.

LINEUP: Kenny Barron Trio, Al Di Meola Trio, Jose James, Jazzmeia Horn, Toquinho featuring Yamandú Costa, Clasijazz Big Band–Epitaph and more. jazzvitoria.com

Birmingham Jazz & Blues Festival

Birmingham, Sandwell and wider West Midlands, England July 18-27

Since 1985, The Birmingham Jazz & Blues Festival is one of Europe's biggest jazz parties — and most of it is free. The festival presents more than 200 performances alongside workshops, talks, exhibitions and master classes. Performances take place in shopping centres, streets and squares, bars, restaurants, clubs, hotels, art galleries, markets, libraries, parks, railway stations, canal boats, and sometimes even on buses and trains! The Festival is organized by Big Bear Music, the U.K.'s longest-running independent record label and booking agency.

LINEUP: To be announced. birminghamjazzfestival.com

San Sebastian Jazz Festival (aka Jazzaldia)

San Sebastian, Basque Country, Spain July 22-27

The Jazzaldia or the San Sebastian Jazz Festival was founded in 1966, one of the oldest in Europe. It hosts around 100 concerts on stages across the city, some are free and others are ticketed; and some are in the open air and some others are indoors.

LINEUP: Jamie Cullum, Melody Gardot, The Beach Boys, Brad Mehldau, Marc Ribot, Dave Holland, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Hermeto Pascoal, The War and Treaty, Oscar Peterson Centennial Concert, Kurt Elling, The Yellowjackets, Chis Potter, Steve Coleman, Marco Mezquida, Yerai Cortés, Judith Hill, Crystal Murra, Ray Anderson, Kirk Knuffke, Chicuelo, Bojan Z, Baptiste Trotignon, Pierre de Bethman and more. jazzaldia.eus/en

Langnau Jazz Nights

Langnau, Bern, Switzerland July 22-26

The Langnau Jazz Nights are a unique festival in the heart of Switzerland. For over the last 32 years, it has impressed with an international, highly acclaimed lineup as well as an amazing atmosphere. With its incorporated jazz workshop it is a popular meeting point for musicians from all over Europe and the U.S.

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's performers included the Aaron Goldberg Trio (featuring Reuben Rogers and Gregory Hutchinson), Butcher Brown, Donny McCaslin, The Bad Plus, the Melissa Aldana Quartet, the John Scofield/ Dave Holland Duo, Kendrick Scott & the Nau, Artemis, the Ethan Iverson Trio and more.

Ystad Sweden Jazz Festival

Ystad, Sweden
July 30-August 2

The festival is located in Ystad, a cozy town dating back to the 1200s, on the Swedish Riviera. Concerts are held in an intimate theatre, medieval churches, private courtyards and a luxurious seaside spa hotel. The festival ends with a full day in a castle park.

LINEUP: Dave Holland, Chris Potter, Mike Stern, Richard Galliano, Paolo Fresu, Kevin Eubanks, Leni Stern, Catherine Russell, Leszek Mo d er, Lars Danielsson, Marcus Gilmor, Wolfgang Haffner, Dennis Chambers, Anders Jormin, Jimmy Haslip and more. ystadjazz.se

Jazzfestival Saalfelden

Saalfelden, Austria August 21-24

This festival presents 60 concerts in town, in the woods and fields as well as along musical hikes amidst the beautiful mountains of Saalfelden Leogang will once again be on offer — 40 of which are even free of charge. More than 200 great musicians from 18 nations will whisk the audience away.

LINEUP: Orchestra of Good Hope, Bida Orchestra, Leonhard Skorupa and more to be announced. jazzsaalfelden.com/en

Reykjavík Jazz 2025 Reykjavík, Iceland August 26-31

The 2025 edition of the Reykjavík Jazz Festival offers six days of music, focusing on jazz and improvised music, performed by musicians from all over the world. Reykjavík Jazz is the second-oldest music festival in Iceland.

LINEUP: O.N.E., Brekky Boy, Sunna

Gunnlaugs, Arve Henriksen, Skúli Sverrisson. Hilmar Jensson and more. reykjavikjazz.is

Angrajazz Festival

Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal October 2-4

This 26th edition of Angrajazz will present six concerts in three days. It is certainly an excellent occasion to visit the classified World Heritage City of Angra do Heroísmo, the Azores Islands and listen to great jazz.

LINEUP: Orquestra Angrajazz (festival big band), David Murray Quartet, Stefano Di Battista Quintet, Artemis, plus two other groups yet to be announced — one Portuguese and one American and more angrajazz.com

Baloise Session

Event Hall Basel Fair, Switzerland October 16-November 6

The Baloise Session is a boutique music festival of a special kind. Sit in an exclusive, feel-good ambience at a candlelit club

table, just like in the classic, legendary New York music clubs, intoxicatingly close to the music stars from all over the world.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included Seal, Gary Clark Jr., Robert Plant, Suzi Dian and Jacob Collier. baloisesession.ch

Jazzfest Berlin

Berlin, Germany

October 30-November 2

One of Europe's most renowned jazz festivals, Jazzfest Berlin bridges past, present and future through innovative programming. Featuring global jazz legends, experimental projects and groundbreaking collaborations, it also fosters community engagement.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past lineups have included artists such as Sun Ra Arkestra, Marilyn Crispell, Joe Lovano, Otomo Yoshihide, Joachim Kühn, Lakecia Benjamin and many others. berlinerfestspiele.de/jazzfest-berlin

OTHER INTERNATIONAL 2025

The Cape Town International Jazz Festival

Cape Town, South Africa **April 25-26**

Africa's premier music festival celebrates over two decades of world-class performances. This year, a mix of international and local talent will be featured with more than 30 artists performing across four stages. With diverse genres and a variety of cultural experiences, the festival delivers.

LINEUP: Black Coffee and Nduduzo Makhathini, Ari Lennox, Benjamin Jephta and Kujenga, Thandiswa Mazwai, Nomfundo Xaluva. Linda Sikhakhane, The Kyle Shepherd Trio,





Victor Masondo fteaturing Bheki Khoza & Thembi Mtshali and more to be announced. capetownjazzfest.com

Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival

Jakarta, Indonesia May 30-June 1

The Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival celebrates its 20th anniversary. Globally renowned, the festival features performances by across multiple stages and genres, continuing its legacy as a major event on the Indonesian calendar. Previous editions have hosted legendary names like James Brown, Chick Corea, John Legend and Natalie Cole.

LINEUP: Jacob Collier, Adikara, Bilal Indrajaya, Busty and the Bass, Dreane, Jane Monheit, Justin Lee Schultz, Munir Hossn & Elas, Straight No Chaser, The Philharmonik, The Yussef Dayes Experience and more to be announced. javajazzfestival.com

Rio das Ostras Jazz & Blues Festival

Rio das Ostras, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil June 19-22

The 21st Rio das Ostras Jazz & Blues Festival brings together up to 130,000 people over four days of music. With more than 30 national and international acts, it's the largest free festival of its kind.

LINEUP: Alfredo Rodriguez Jazz Quartet, José James, Mike Stern, Bob Francischini, Dennis Chambers, Coco Montoya, Mitch Woods, Ozma, J.J.Thames & Igor Prado,

Amaro Freitas, Arthur Menezes, Rosa Marya Collin In Blues, Banda Black Rio and more. riodasostrasjazzeblues.com

Devonport Jazz

Devonport, Tasmania, Australia July 24-27

Devonport Jazz is a vibrant four-day festival showcasing Australian artists in scenic venues across Devonport and Tasmania's North West. Enjoy world-class music, dining and social events, including the dazzling vintage vibes of the Prohibition Party with Norway's hot trad band, Swing'lt. Experience an exciting mix of acclaimed musicians and emerging talent at this beloved annual event.

LINEUP: To be announced. devonportjazz.com.au

Distrito Jazz

Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil August (Dates to be announced)

Distrito Jazz is a festival that breathes the timeless elegance, transforming one of Porto Alegre's most iconic spots into a district of sound, encounters and flavors. Distrito Jazz returns to the capital of Rio Grande do Sul. The festival takes place in a multi-stage space in the city, the new Multipalco, with more than 20 artists, from different parts of Brazil and the world, anchored on five stages offering parallel activities such as workshops, listening parties and great food.

LINEUP: To be announced. Past performers have included Camille Bertault, Patricia Lopez, Gard Nilssen Acoustic Unity, Alfredo Rodriguez Trio, 60 Miles and Thomas Stronen. instagram.com/distrito.jazz

Jazzmandu 2025

Kathmandu, Nepal October 3-15

Jazzmandu is an annual gathering of worldclass musicians and music-hungry audiences in one of the most unique cities on the planet. Now into its second decade, Jazzmandu has a growing renown as a hidden gem of the international festival scene. Those who are in on the secret are treated to a week of shows in stunning venues, with traditions of jazz and improvised music from all continents crossing paths.

LINEUP: To be announced. Previous performers have included Erik Truffaz. Ari Hoenig, Marlow Rosado, Trilok Gurtu, Claudia Quintet, Magda Giannikou and many more.

jazzmandu.com

Melbourne International Jazz Festival

Melbourne Australia

October 17-26

Celebrating its 27th annual event, this is Australia's largest jazz festival with 130-plus performances and 60,000 attendees annually. The fest takes place in a variety of iconic spaces around the the capital of the state of Victoria.

LINEUP: To be announced. Last year's performers included Antonio Sánchez, Audrey Powne, Brandee Younger, Circadian Rhythms, esperanza spalding, FaceSoul, Herbie Hancock + Marcus Miller, Jazzmeia Horn, Makoto Ozone, Nicole Zuraitis and more.

melbournejazz.com

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Amelia Island Jazz	Iowa City Jazz Festival87	Rovner MC LLC
Amelia İsland Jazz Festival 80	summer of the arts.org	rovnerproducts.com
ameliaislandjazzfestival.com	Jacksonville Jazz Festival 81	
Benjie Porecki 4		Festival93
benjieporecki.com	Jazz in June72	
Blue Note Records5		San Jose Jazz Summer
bluenote.com	Jazzfest Bonn109	
	jazzfest-bonn.de	summerfest.sanjosejazz.org
Festival111		Scranton Jazz Festival74
canariasjazz.com	Network 46	scrantonjazzfestival.org
Cannonball Music7	jazzednet.org	Second Records 44
cannonballmusic.com	JodyJazz116	second-records.com
Casa Del Jazz	jodyjazz.com	Snug Harbor36
Summertime Festival 105	jodyjazz.com John Coltrane International	snugjazz.com
casadeljazz.com	Jazz & Blues Festival79	Stanford Jazz
Casio 21		Workshop 94
casio.com	Légère15	stanfordjazz.com
Catfood Records8		Syracuse Jazz Festival 69
catfoodrecords.com	Mack Avenue 17	syracusejazzfest.com
Centrum Jazz Port	mackavenue.com	Ted Klum 49
Townsend 98	Marimba One37	tedklum.com
centrum.org	marimbaone.com	Tri-C Jazz Festival 88
Charlie Parker Jazz	Menorca Jazz Festival108	
Festival74	menorcajazzfestival.com	Turn Table Tickets 12
cityparks foundation.	Montavilla Jazz 98	
org/charlieparker	montavillajazz.org	Umbria Jazz Festival 107
Chicago Jazz Festival83	Monterey Jazz Festival 89	umbriajazz.com
chicagojazzfestival.us	montereyjazz festival.org	University of Missouri
Clifford Brown Jazz	Montreal Jazz Festival 101	Kansas City35
Festival71		conservatory.umkc.edu
cliffordbrownjazzfest.com	North Sea Jazz Festival 111	USA Horn10
Conn Selmer11		usahorn.net
connselmer.com	Oregon Coast Jazz Party 96	Vancouver Jazz
DC Jazz Festival73		Festival103
dcjazzfest.org	Ottawa Jazz Festival 102	
Detroit Jazz Festival85		Vandoren3
detroitjazzfest.org	Outside In Music10	
DownBeat 38, 59,112	outsideinmusic.com	Victoria Jazz Fest104
downbeat.com	P. Mauriat115	jazzvictoria.ca
ECM Records14	pmauriatmusic.com	Victory Musical
ecmrecords.com	Pittsburgh Jazz Festival75	
Elemental Music41	pittsburghjazzfest.org	victorymusical.com
elemental-music.com	Quantum Leap Music	Vision Festival76
GleAM Records45	Festival72	
gleam-records.com	nola2nofo.com	WJ3 Records53
Healdsburg Jazz Festival 91	Resonance Records43	
healdsburgjazz.org	resonancerecords.org	XO Brass2
Hollywood Bowl – Blue Note	Reykjavik Iceland Jazz	xobrass.com
Jazz Festival95	Festival 110	
hollywoodbowl.com/bluenote	reykjavikjazz.is	usa.yamaha.com

Blindfold Test > BY TED PANKEN

Bill Goodwin

rummer Bill Goodwin, who turned 83 three days after taking his first Blindfold Test, has played with, known and heard just about anyone who's anyone during a 65-year career in the jazz business that launched with a 1959 engagement with Charles Lloyd in Los Angeles, Goodwin's hometown.

Best known for his 40-year tenure propelling Phil Woods' various ensembles, Goodwin has also excelled as a bandleader, producer and educator. He sat down on the first Sunday of 2025 at the home of drummer Billy Drummond, who graciously provided one of his audiophile sound systems to help DownBeat administer the test.

Frank Butler

"Urbane" (*The Stepper*, Xanadu, 1981) Butler, drums and drum solo; Dolo Coker, piano, composer; Jack Montrose, tenor saxophone; Monty Budwig, bass.

It's an achievement to turn a simple melodic fragment into a beautiful long solo. The drummer is influenced by Jo Jones, though it's not Ed Thigpen or Chico Hamilton, who played fantastic solos. Sounds like studio drums, but well-recorded. I don't know the other musicians. [Afterwards] I was going to mention Frank, who has Kansas City roots. Every drummer who knows anything knows about Frank's Jo Jonestype solo titled "A Fifth For Frank" on Curtis Counce's Landslide album. Frank was one of my primary Los Angeles influences.

Sonny Criss

"After You've Gone" (*Go Man!*, Imperial, 1956) Criss, alto saxophone; Larance Marable, drums; Sonny Clark, piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass.

"After You've Gone." The alto sounds great. Phil Woods? Sonny Stitt? Frank Morgan? Who else is it not? I forgot about Sonny Criss. The drummer played very well, stayed out of the way. On the solo, the snare drum sounds like Kenny Clarke. No? It's copped heavily from Kenny. Roy Haynes? [Hint: You're on the wrong coast.] So it's Larance Marable, who was called "the West Coast Philly Joe," though he's closer to Kenny. A beautiful, compact player. Not fabulously creative, but very swinging. He didn't really stretch. He had a thorny personality. The pianist was a real bebopper. Al Haig? Barry Harris? [This is L.A., mid-'50s.] Sonny Clark. I was in high school when he was at the Lighthouse in 1956 or 1957. He was a remarkable player, very young.

Kim Cass

"Time" (Levs, Pi, 2024) Cass, bass, composer; Matt Mitchell, piano; Tyshawn Sorey, drums.

That sounds like Paul Bley. Don Pullen? Impressive piano playing, but take a breath! The drummer is good. The bassist is rushing. Nobody left any space. [Afterwards] On this one, Tyshawn was just doing the job. He was my student, under my so-called supervision for three years. He played piano, played trombone in the concert band, and played drums. When we met, he was 19. He said, "I don't want to learn any licks or anything that anybody else ever played. Where should we start?" He told me he'd already written 500 compositions. He did a trio record with Corey Smythe and Chris Tordini that sounds like an orchestra. Brilliant. I've met very few people I could call a genius. He's one of them.

Chico Hamilton Quintet

"Passin' Thru" (*Passin' Thru*, Impulse!, 1962) Hamilton, drums; Charles Lloyd, tenor saxophone, composer; George Bohannon, trombone; Gabor Szabo, guitar; Albert Stinson, bass.

It started with a message. Morse code. I don't recognize the guitar play-



er. Oh, is that Charles Lloyd with Chico Hamilton? I hear the Coltrane influence. We go back a long time. Is Gabor the guitarist? His sound is so clean. He'd dirtied it up by the time I worked with him. I recommended Albert Stinson for this gig. I saw this group a lot. Chico had a drum setup like Jo Jones, two tom-toms on the floor, and then he sat over them, positioned in front of the band. Very graceful. He took the bottom heads off his drums, or had them made that way, so they'd have a certain shallow sound, more contemporary then — being a purist, I didn't like it, of course. I never loved Chico's swing playing; there wasn't much swing in it.

Gary Burton

"Falling Grace" (The Time Machine, RCA, 1966) Burton, vibraphone, piano; Steve Swallow, bass, composer; Larry Bunker, drums.

Steve Swallow's tune "Falling Grace." This is Chick Corea and Gary Burton, who brought me to New York to play with his group in January 1969. [Not Corea.] Makoto Ozone? [The bassist is Steve Swallow. This is the first version of the song.] I'm sure I heard the group. Oh, Larry Bunker. They recorded this album without a deal, just before Gary started to really hit it with his own group. Larry was a modern player and a fantastic musician. He's on many records I bought when I was a kid, and I often heard him play around Los Angeles. Then he became super engaged in the studios. He played all the percussion instruments, excellent vibes and marimba, and was a great reader. He hardly got to play drums at all. He didn't like it.

Cedar Walton's Eastern Rebellion

"Shoulders" (Mosaic, MusicMasters, 1990) Walton, composer, Billy Higgins, solo drums. Fast double strokes. The drummer was fluid without being overly technical; they took the elements and used them musically, with some space. I chuckled at the passage on cymbals. I didn't get much information from the tuning or the cymbal sound. [Afterwards] Billy had a lot more chops than people thought. He wasn't doing Buddy Rich single strokes and all that. He was playing drum sounds. Somebody asked Billy, "How do you tune your drums?" He said, "I tune them so they sound like a family." Billy was very friendly to me when I was young. One of my greatest inspirations.

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 text.

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