

Shabaka Hutchings: Is the Rising British Saxophonist Jazz's Next Kamasi?

AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

JazzTimes

MAY 2018

GUIDE:
280+
Festivals!

KURT ELLING

On Poetry, Melody,
Fake Twitter Feuds &
Life's Big Questions

WYNTON MARSALIS & ETHAN IVERSON

A Conversation on Jazz & Race

BILL FRISELL

New Documentary & Solo Album
Reviewed

FRANK VIGNOLA

After a Life-Threatening Accident,
the Guitar Virtuoso Returns

PLUS

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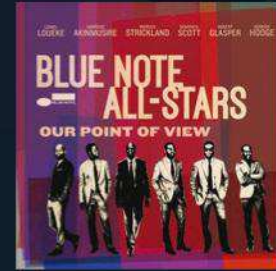
DR. LONNIE SMITH ALL IN MY MIND

The Hammond B-3 organ legend and **NEA Jazz Master** releases a spirited live trio album recorded at the **Jazz Standard** in New York City. *All In My Mind* opens with a powerful rendering of **WAYNE SHORTER'S** "JuJu," while Smith also takes **PAUL SIMON'S** hit "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" for a 10-minute joyride.



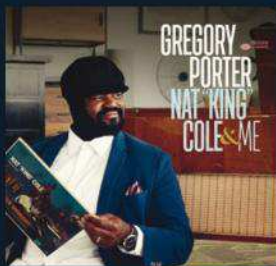
GOGO PENGUIN A HUMDRUM STAR

One of **New York Times'** 12 best bands at **SXSW 2017**, the Manchester-based trio conjure richly atmospheric music that draws from their grounding in classical conservatoires and jazz ensembles, while merging acoustic and electronic techniques. Their latest album builds on the momentum of its acclaimed predecessors, the **Mercury Prize**-nominated *V2.0* and *Man Made Object*, and transports it



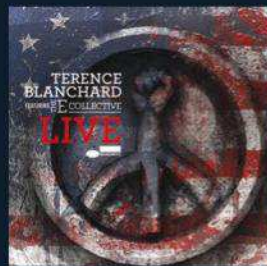
BLUE NOTE ALL-STARS OUR POINT OF VIEW

With its latest iteration, the **Blue Note All-Stars** take listeners on an exuberant musical exploration, while making their mark on the future. The supergroup features modern-day luminaries **ROBERT GLASPER, AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE, MARCUS STRICKLAND, LIONEL LOUEKE, DERRICK HODGE** and **KENDRICK SCOTT**, with guest appearances by **WAYNE SHORTER** and **HERBIE HANCOCK**.



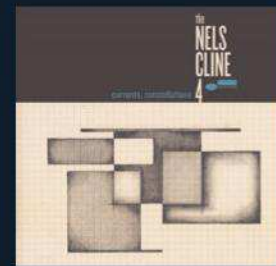
GREGORY PORTER NAT KING COLE & ME

The **GRAMMY-winning** vocalist releases his stunning fifth studio album, a heartfelt tribute to the legendary singer and pianist **Nat King Cole**. With the help of **six-time GRAMMY-winning arranger VINCE MENDOZA**, and the **LONDON STUDIO ORCHESTRA**, Porter revisits some of Cole's most cherished classics such as "Smile," "L-O-V-E," "Nature Boy," and "The Christmas Song."



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THE NELS CLINE 4 CURRENTS, CONSTELLATIONS

Following the release of Nels Cline's Blue Note debut *Lovers*, the Wilco guitarist pares it down to **The Nels Cline 4**. The 4 features Cline alongside fellow guitarist **JULIAN LAGE**, bassist **SCOTT COLLEY**, and drummer **TOM RAINEY** on a set of seven originals plus one piece by composer Carla Bley. It's a showcase of Cline's versatility that veers from rollicking rock energy to ballads of serene beauty.

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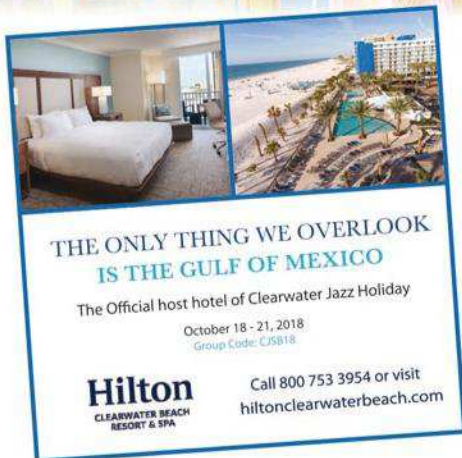


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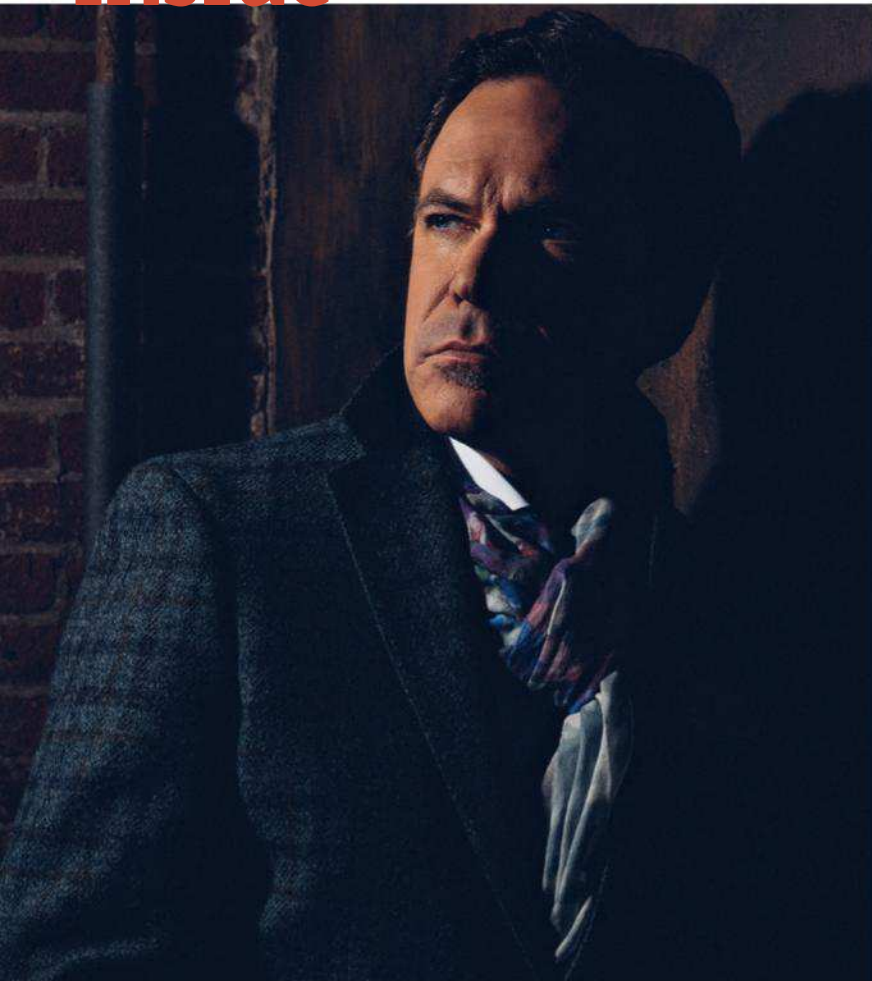
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▶ "As a jazz musician you're always searching for the melody you haven't played yet," says Kurt Elling

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Overlooking New Orleans from the back deck of the Jazz Cruise, **Lee Mergner** chats with one of our greatest jazz vocalists about his searching new album, *The Questions*, the unsung production genius of Branford Marsalis, the life lessons of Rainer Maria Rilke, the challenge of political diplomacy and more.

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The British saxophonist—and recently knighted Impulse! recording artist—speaks his mind and plays with a rugged directness that can evoke rock, funk and EDM. But does he have something to say or is he merely substituting fashion for hard-earned mastery? By **Natalie Weiner**

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Held at Jazz at Lincoln Center as part of the inaugural Jazz Congress, this inspired panel discussion features JALC's **Wynton Marsalis** and pianist **Ethan Iverson**, and is moderated by jazz-industry veteran **Andre Guesz**.

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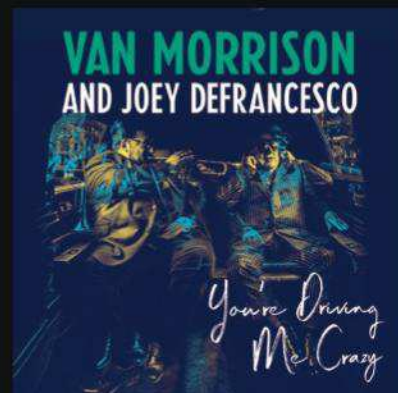
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NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION: National Publisher Services

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Tel: 617-706-9110 | Fax: 617-536-0102

JazzTimes (ISSN-0272-572-X) is published 10 times per year by Madavor Media, LLC., 25 Braintree Hill Office Park, Suite 404, Braintree, MA 02184, USA, Tel: 617-706-9110. Jeffrey C. Wolk, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 1-877-252-8139 | Foreign Subscriptions 1-903-636-1120
1 year (10 issues), US \$29.99, Canada \$34.99, International \$54.99, Digital Only \$20.00

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to JazzTimes, P.O. Box 4300, Big Sandy, TX 75755-4300. Subscribers allow 4-6 weeks for change of address to become effective. Subscriptions ordered are noncancelable and nonrefundable unless otherwise promoted. Return postage must accompany all manuscripts, drawings and photographs submitted if they are to be returned, and no responsibility can be assumed for unsolicited materials. All rights in letters sent to JazzTimes will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and as subject to unrestricted right to edit and to comment editorially. Requests for permission to reprint should be sent to the Permissions and Reprints Department. The title JazzTimes is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Contents copyright © 2018 by Madavor Media, LLC. All rights reserved. Nothing can be reprinted in whole or in part without permission from the publisher. Printed in the U.S.A.

JAZZTIMES FOUNDER IRA SABIN

[JT]Notes

Festival Etiquette

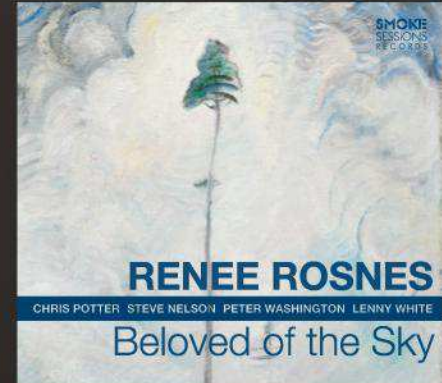
By Evan Haga

As I slink toward middle age, I'm finding less enjoyment at concerts, or at least more frustration, and it has nothing to do with the music. I'm not sure we as humans still have the attention span and decency to responsibly take in performances or films. Last fall, at a fantastic set by the Gary Peacock Trio, a strapping young European tourist began filming with his smartphone, which inspired a guy at a table behind me to walk up behind this stranger, grab his hand and almost throw it down. Sure, many of us wanted to do just that, but a simple tap on the shoulder would have sufficed. The tourist and his buddy proceeded to glare menacingly toward the regulator throughout the hour, which a) anxiously distracted me from the beautiful music and b) made me consider the possibility that *a brawl might go down in the middle of a Gary Peacock Trio gig*. Last issue, I wrote about a thrilling Herbie Hancock show at Walt Disney Concert Hall, but I failed to mention my neighbor—an idiot who showed up late, loudly talked at me during the music about how great the seats were, smoked pot out of a vape pen like he was trying to knock himself out, texted long enough to fire off a novella and then left way early, while special guest Kamasi Washington was still onstage making history. These examples are just two of many, and they're representative of the kind of unnecessary weirdness that can impede the jazz-induced meditation you seek. So, as a companion of sorts to this issue's annual festival guide, I've dug through my decade-plus of fest-going experience to offer a few best-behavior practices. Please, for the good of our

community, take heed. (And write to me at ehaga@jazztimes.com with additional suggestions and stories of offenders.)

Most important, keep your shirt on, because Newport is not Bonnaroo. While a couple of pithy musical observations whispered to a friend never hurt anyone, speaking at length during a set is rotten—and if you blab throughout Charles Lloyd or Wayne Shorter, may God have mercy on your soul. Same with smartphones: A quick “Where you at?” or photo is probably fine, since festival grounds aren't the Village Vanguard; but video and text chats deserve discretion. If you know or even suspect that you're going to drop in for just a bit of a set, stand to the side or grab an end seat rather than making everyone move so you can be dead-center for seven minutes. If you recognize a standard or a mid-solo quote, try not to name it aloud with the smug self-satisfaction of a spelling-bee contestant. Yes, that is “Lonely Woman” or “Song for My Father,” and everyone knows that; you see, us knowing that stuff is why we're all here together at a jazz festival. If you prefer to kick back with lawn chairs and coolers and someone stands directly in front of your encampment, politely asking that person to move a few steps isn't uncalled for. But you aren't entitled to an unfettered sightline for nine straight hours because you choose to bring the culture of Jimmy Buffett's “Son of a Son of a Sailor Tour” to a major jazz event. Finally, if you should meet the organist Dr. Lonnie Smith, don't ask him why he didn't play anything off *Expansions* or *Astral Traveling*. Those LPs are by Lonnie Liston Smith, who is a different dude. Also funky as hell, but not the same guy. **JT**

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Good listeners at Newport 2017



OPENING CHORUS

((Stay in tune))

▶ **Before & After Listening Session:** Frank Vignola



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Given the Gift of Life

GUITARIST **FRANK VIGNOLA** TURNS A DEVASTATING ACCIDENT INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MUSICAL GROWTH

One evening in May of 2017, at home in rural Warwick, N.Y., guitarist Frank Vignola, then 51, made a fateful decision: to go out for a quick pre-dinner spin in the all-terrain vehicle parked in his half-acre backyard. It was something he'd done many times in the past, usually with one or more of his four sons, but this time—luckily, as it turned out—he was on his own. Somehow the ATV went into a skid and hit a tree. The impact was so forceful that it threw Vignola into the air. He blacked out.

“When I woke up,” he recalls on the phone nine months later, “there were a zillion people over me, including my family, saying, ‘Don’t go back to sleep.’ They put me in a helicopter and brought me to St. Joseph’s hospital in Paterson, New Jersey. And thank God they did. My right shoulder was broken in two places,

along with my right arm and four ribs, and both of my lungs had collapsed.”

Vignola—known for his work with everyone from Wynton Marsalis and Bucky Pizzarelli to Jane Monheit and Donald Fagen, as well as his many instructional books, videos and online guitar courses—stayed in the hospital for a week. That, however, was only the start of a long recovery that required four surgeries and was hampered when he developed an infection in his right arm. “I remember lying in bed in agonizing pain,” he says. “I thought the arm might have to be amputated. Luckily, it was a simple infection and it did eventually respond to antibiotics, but even after that there was a lot of doubt. I’d always had an aggressive approach to playing, using my shoulder to kind of throw my arm at the guitar. I just wasn’t going to be able to do that anymore.”

After having to cancel 100 concert bookings in the wake of his accident, Vignola toyed with the idea of taking an indefinite break from music. But that lasted only as long as it took for him to be able to lift his right arm over a guitar. By October, he was playing again. “I started picking out melodies I liked,” he remembers. “You don’t have to be a speed demon to play ‘All the Things You Are.’ Then I was like, ‘OK, maybe I can get into one thing I’ve always wanted to do, which is learn more Charlie Parker heads.’ And I mean *learn* them—not just kinda play through ‘em, but really internalize them. So I did. I finally can play ‘Donna Lee’ correctly for the first time in 40 years!”

From learning heads, Vignola quickly progressed to rearranging them. Within a few months, he’d put together about 25 challenging new three-guitar arrangements of compositions by Parker, Duke Ellington and others. “Because I wasn’t touring,” he says, “I had the time to refocus on what I want to do musically.” In November, his string-picking friends David Grisman and Tommy Emmanuel

invited him to a concert they were playing in New Jersey; he ended up staying for hours, talking and playing with his pals backstage, and even going onstage for a few numbers. It was a sign that he was ready to get back to work.

In preparation, he played a couple of low-profile gigs close to home. Then, on Feb. 12, came his first big post-accident engagement, with pianist John di Martino's trio at the Iridium in New York—standing room only. (Vignola told me afterward, with customary self-deprecating humor, that his initial reaction to the sellout was "Wow, I have to hit a tree to pack this place!") As everyone assembled onstage, the guitarist picked out his first notes and ... nothing happened. The amplifier wasn't turned on. Vignola turned to the audience with a big smile and said, "How do you like it so far?"

Such wisecracks continued for much of the next two and a half hours, interspersed with crisp takes of classic tunes. "Moonlight in Vermont," for example,

began with a slow, bluesy statement of the theme before launching into a solo section that ran at a finger-taxing gallop. Although Vignola moved around the stage a bit gingerly, his playing sounded as fluid as it ever had. "I'm not all the way back to where I'd like to be," he said when the show was over. "I could have a little better control. My fingers are still tingly sometimes, but that's improving. The best therapy is to practice as much as I can."

The high point of the evening was when Vignola brought out longtime creative partner Vinny Raniolo and 19-year-old wunderkind Jan Knutson to help him play some of his new three-guitar arrangements. (They've recorded a bunch for an upcoming album, one of two studio projects Vignola's been working on; the other is an album with Di Martino's trio.) A dizzying run through "Donna Lee" sounded like Django Reinhardt, Jimmy Bryant and Les Paul having a late-night jam.

Speaking of Les Paul, that Iridium

show was meaningful to Vignola for reasons that went beyond his accident. "It was the second Monday in February of 2000"—exactly 18 years earlier—"when I started playing with Les Paul at the Iridium," he says. Paul, a good friend of Vignola's, had a legendary Monday-night gig at the club for many years, which continued until his death in 2009, at age 94. "And I know this sounds a little nuts, but I really felt Les' presence. He went through an accident like mine [a 1948 car crash that left his right elbow permanently bent], and it was like he was there putting his hand on my shoulder, saying, 'You got a second chance—go get 'em.'"

"When I was in the hospital," Vignola adds, "the first thing I remember thinking was 'This sucks.' And then I said, 'You know what? I'm going to make this the best thing that ever happened to me.' I don't know how that's going to happen, but I do know that if I was given the gift of life again, it's got to *mean* something."

MAC RANDALL

What's in a Name?

 **Interview:** Alice Coltrane on her life with John Coltrane

SINGER **MICHELLE COLTRANE** OPENS UP ABOUT HER RECENT ALBUM, HER SURPRISING BIRTH FATHER AND THE JOYS OF JAZZ'S WEIGHTIEST LEGACY

She has been singing since childhood and shares one of the most illustrious names in jazz. But, putting family commitments first, Michelle Coltrane, daughter of Alice and stepdaughter of John (who died when she was 6), waited until her mid-30s to record her debut album, *I Think of You*. It has taken almost a quarter-century for Coltrane, now 57, to shape her sophomore release, *Awakening* (Blujazz), a fine collection of covers and originals that honors the Coltrane legacy while remaining true to her own musical vision.

JAZZTIMES: YOUR JAZZ LINEAGE ACTUALLY GOES DEEPER THAN THE COLTRANES. YOUR BIRTH FATHER WAS VOCALIST KENNY HAGOOD.

MICHELLE COLTRANE: Absolutely. I really didn't know him or have a chance to make a bond with him. When I was 15 or 16, Alice told me I had another father. I didn't know what to do with that. Should I be happy or sad? Turned out he was a singer, and he was one of the few Miles recorded with; he sang "Darn That Dream" [from the live *Birth of the Cool* sessions, in 1948].

A FAMOUS NAME CAN OPEN DOORS, BUT IT CAN ALSO SET UP UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS—A BLESSING AND A CURSE.



I've heard that before and possibly used it myself when I was younger. But now I say it's a blessing and a blessing. To be the baby in the room, or in the studio ... to look back at that and be so grateful for that opportunity. John left us really young, and I have only little glimpses of him. But I remember being [with him] with music all around. And I got to grow up with Alice and travel with her. She taught me life lessons not only as a mother but as a person working in the spiritual ilk; [I grew up] with someone who didn't compromise her principles, no matter what.

LIKE ANOTHER SECOND-GENERATION VOCALIST, NATALIE COLE, YOUR SOUND HAS STRONG UNDERCURRENTS OF POP AND SOUL.

I did a lot of soul searching, and as much as I would love to be the John Coltrane of vocals, and not to disappoint people, but you're a product of your environment and you love what you love. I love the [America] song "Tin Man" [covered on *Awakening*]. I needed to pick something that was relevant in my lifetime. I love lots of songs written in the 1920s, but I wanted to pick a few songs where I was here when they were here, including Foreigner's "I Want to Know What Love Is."

"WHEN I WAS 15 OR 16, ALICE TOLD ME I HAD ANOTHER FATHER. ... TURNED OUT HE WAS A SINGER, AND HE WAS ONE OF THE FEW MILES RECORDED WITH."

YOU NOD TWICE TO JOHN, WITH "MY FAVORITE THINGS" AND "MOMENT'S NOTICE."

When we would have family music festivals, Alice wanted everyone to participate. My younger brother Oranyan played alto at the time, Ravi played tenor and I'd sing. And if I only had one number in the show it would be "My Favorite Things." We weren't going to do it, and then I talked to [arranger/multi-instrumentalist] Gerry Gibbs, and we met in New York with [co-arranger/keyboardist] Alex Collins and came up with an arrangement that we thought was a good one.

I wrote the lyrics for "Moment's Notice." We've had a lot of requests through the years for every Coltrane song that was [popular], and people have sent in their versions of [lyrics for his compositions]; it became a rule that we didn't do them. I wanted to humbly do a good job, and I thought I should learn the solo and scat it. I like the way it turned out.

RAVI MAKES GUEST APPEARANCES ON TWO TRACKS.

He's younger than me but more experienced. I respect him so much as a musician and was honored that he would [participate]. But I had to catch him; it was like, "Yeah, yeah. Send me the tracks." But then he was in L.A. and I booked that studio! He didn't have any airs. He was totally cool and I was totally happy. He took direction well!

YOU WROTE OR COWROTE FIVE OF THE ALBUM'S 11 SELECTIONS.

I feel that songwriting is the strongest part of myself. I feel confident with it and have for a long time. I love [creating] stories. I have more songs in the queue for the next album.

THE CLOSING TRACK, "OUT OF THE SHADOWS," OPENS WITH A PRAYER READ BY ALICE.

I thought maybe I'd write something for one of Alice's pieces. Then I thought I'd use this prayer that she taught us that was always sung at the end of Sunday services. It says, "Lead us from the darkness to the light." It isn't about me in the shadows of the Coltrane name; it's about getting out of my own way, an expression of self-awareness and finding the right path. **CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**

The Quiet American

IN A NEW DOCUMENTARY AND SOLO-GUITAR ALBUM, **BILL FRISELL** FEATURES HIS TRADEMARK SENSE OF DECEPTIVE SIMPLICITY

Midway through Emma Franz's charming but weirdly structured documentary *Bill Frisell: A Portrait*, the director is following the guitarist with a camera as he walks down 5th Avenue in Greenwich Village. As they get to the corner of 8th Street, Frisell takes note of the passersby who are staring at him quizzically, wondering if he might be, you know, famous or something. "Little do they know," he confides to Franz with a somewhat embarrassed grin, "I'm one of them."

And yet he's not, quite. At this point, it's beyond argument that Frisell is one of the leading jazz guitarists of his generation; given that his generation also included John Abercrombie, Pat Metheny and John Scofield, that's not a bad claim to fame. It's also indisputable that his influence on music of multiple genres over the past 35 years has been enormous. The only big question now is where he stands among the all-time greats. Franz clearly believes that he deserves a prime spot in the pantheon (a belief I

share), and she makes a decent case for that, but not in the most compelling way.

The main problem is that the focus of her inquiries is such a shy, unassuming guy. Frisell spends a lot of time talking about how difficult it is for him to talk about what he does, never a recipe for excitement in a film. (Key line: "It seems like the best things I do are the things I do before I figure out what they actually are.") He comes across as a kind of savant who goes through life and music wide-eyed and naïve. Perhaps this characterization is true, but it seems a little too simple.

Luckily, other people are able to explain his significance with more acuity on camera, including now-departed mentors and colleagues Abercrombie, Jim Hall and Paul Motian. A few anecdotes stand out, particularly Joey Baron's long, hilarious retelling of how he and Frisell got their first duo gig at New York's Jewish Guild for the Blind. Interviews with Frisell's wife, Carole d'Inverno, and his live-sound engineer of more than

-  **Trailer:** *Bill Frisell: A Portrait*
-  **Interview:** Bill Frisell & Jim Hall

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20 years, Claudia Engelhart, make his loyal, caring nature abundantly clear. And there's wonderful footage of him playing in diverse situations (although a brief, typically abrasive snippet from a Naked City performance made me wish the movie featured more clips from the '80s and '90s). The best moment of the bunch comes from the last Village Vanguard run by the epochal trio with Motian and Joe Lovano: Frisell taps on an effects pedal that takes his guitar line down an octave into bass territory, and Lovano cries out in pure joy.

There are many similar bliss-inducing moments on *Music IS* (Okeh/Sony), Frisell's first solo album in 18 years.

Given his heavy use of looping devices, the term "solo" means something different here than it ordinarily might. Take, for example, the blues "Winslow Homer," which starts off with unaccompanied electric guitar, played in typical Frisellian style—rustic yet hip, with lots of unexpected pauses, dissonant tritones and chucklesome string bends—then suddenly blossoms into something much bigger, revealing several more beautifully harmonized parts.



Bill Frisell

Frisell has become such a master at playing with effects units that whatever he does with them sounds natural. Unless, of course, he doesn't want it to, as on the brief "Think About It," where his gnarly single-note lines suddenly go into reverse midway through. Perhaps the best classification for gorgeous meditations like "Change in the Air" and "What Do You Want?" is ambient—not in the boring aural-wallpaper sense but in the quietly emotional so-drenched-with-atmosphere-you-almost-can't-believe-it's-real sense.

All 16 tracks on *Music IS* are originals, new and vintage. One chestnut, "Rambler," originally the title track of Frisell's second ECM disc in 1985, gets

two versions. The first, the album's longest track at six and a half minutes, is a space-age treatment with an oddly processed blip-and-bleep backdrop. The second is a short, sweet excursion into rubato C&W, with a closing homage to the rhythm-guitar style of Mother Maybelle Carter. Between the two, you get some sense of Frisell's enviably broad musical range. But only some. For, like another great American, Walt Whitman, Bill Frisell contains multitudes. **MAC RANDALL**

For the Love of Latin-Jazz

BESTSELLING AUTHOR AND RECENT NIGHTCLUB CURATOR **T.J. ENGLISH** ON THE MUSIC THAT CHANGED HIS LIFE AND CONTINUES TO INSPIRE HIS WORK

Back when I drove a taxi in New York City, in the mid-1980s, the cabs had not yet been outfitted with air conditioning. In the spring and summer, I left the windows open to create cross-ventilation. That meant that the noise from the street was a constant presence, an orchestral cacophony dominated by honking horns, sirens, jackhammers and music. The music that pierced through all the other sounds and soothed my urban soul was Latin-jazz.

I had come from the West Coast and grown up on a mushy amalgam of mostly soft rock and whatever else was being played on local radio stations—music concocted by one corporate entity (the re-

cord companies) and peddled to another (radio stations that were often owned in part by those same corporations). American teenagers listened to what they were fed, and I was no different. Eventually, as I began developing my own tastes, I gravitated toward soul music, blues and R&B. By the time I was in my late teens, I had discovered jazz.

When I was 22, I arrived in New York with a burning desire for the cutting edge—new cuisines, new languages, new sounds. By then I had cultivated a deep appreciation of jazz in all its many forms, though jazz was not exactly flourishing commercially. If you were a lover of this music, you had to seek it out. At a used record store, I came across a double



album from Verve Records entitled *Afro-Cuban Jazz*. It included the seminal live recordings of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, along with Chico O'Farrill and Machito, playing the *Afro-Cuban Suite*, the *Manteca Suite* and other early masterpieces of what would eventually be called Latin-jazz. The music was recorded in the late 1940s and early 1950s; the double

FROM TOP: MONICA JANE FRISSELL, ILYA YAMASAKI

album was released in 1977, with insightful liner notes by Bob Blumenthal and a gorgeous cover design complete with watercolor illustrations by José Reyes.

The packaging was seductive, and the music was a revelation. Gillespie, O’Farrill and many others took the tonal complexity of bebop and mixed it with lush orchestral arrangements and elements of Cuban folk and roots music. The results were a revolution as sonically profound as rock and roll or hip-hop. By the time I was driving a taxi, what I was hearing emanating from the streets was a new variation. Forms and styles from Puerto Rico and other Caribbean locales had taken the music on an evolutionary ride from bebop to a place of greater emphasis on the Latin side of things, utilizing not only Afro-Cuban rhythms such as *son* and *guaguancó* but also *bomba* and *plena* from Puerto Rico, *cumbia* and *tango* from South America and a host of other influences from *el barrio*.

I was fortunate that my emerging love of the music happened to coincide with Salsa Meets Jazz, the legendary concert series at the Village Gate. Initiated by the club’s owner, Art D’Lugoff, the series took place every Monday night and continued from the ’70s until the club abruptly closed its doors in 1994. It was at the Village Gate that I saw many of the great practitioners of Latin-jazz, including Mongo Santamaria, Tito Puente and Ray Barretto. I vividly remember hearing Dizzy Gillespie play a searing version of “Manteca” on trumpet; I remember hearing pianist Eddie Palmieri play his compositions “Chocolate Ice Cream” and “Café.” I remember seeing and hearing the inimitable saxophonist and clarinetist Paquito D’Rivera, not long after he first defected from Cuba and settled in the U.S. I also saw the Fort Apache Band, led by two brothers from the Bronx, conguero and trumpeter Jerry Gonzalez and bassist Andy Gonzalez, as they brought the music to a new generation of players and listeners.

Thanks to Salsa Meets Jazz, my love of the music deepened, and through the viewing of live performances at the Gate and elsewhere, it became a living, breathing thing. This love affair continued as I left cab driving behind and became immersed in my career as a journalist and writer of books. My writings about organized crime and the criminal underworld were informed by my love of

Latin-jazz. The music was sultry, insinuating and sometimes dangerous; for me, it had come up from dark alleyways, and it reflected the romance and sensuality of urban landscapes from Havana and Miami to New York.

Imagine, then, the sheer pleasure of my being contracted to write a book on the legendary era of the Mob in Cuba during the 1950s (*Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba ... And Then Lost It*

to the Revolution, released in 2008). On research trips to Havana, I soaked up the sights and sounds of a city that has contributed invaluable to the evolution of Latin-jazz. It was there that Pérez Prado turned the mambo into an international craze, while composer-conductors Mario Bauzá and Machito, along with the singer Graciela, adapted Afro-Cuban rhythms to the syncopation of jazz from the States. In 1950s Havana the seeds were planted for

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all that would come, and to explore this musical history was part of an ongoing seduction that was as sweet as any late-night assignation I had known.

It continues to be an enduring passion, one that found fertile soil during the research and writing of my new book, *The Corporation: An Epic Story of the Cuban American Underworld*. In subject and tone, it is a sequel to *Havana Nocturne*. Set in the nightclubs, restaurants and back alleys of barrios in Union City, N.J., New York and Miami, the soundtrack for this story, in my mind and over my home-office streaming devices, is a great-hits of Latin-jazz.

Recently, Charles Carlini, who books groups at Zinc Bar, a club in the Village,

asked if I would be willing to curate and host a Latin-jazz series at the club. He knew of my love for the music and thought that it might make an interesting tie-in with the release of my new book.

Zinc is located a block away from the old Village Gate. I get to choose the musicians from among some of the best practitioners of contemporary Latin-jazz, to be showcased at the club every other Thursday. It began in April and, if the series proves successful, will continue indefinitely. Calling on a lifetime of appreciation for the music, this assignment is a dream come true.

Latin-jazz and the musicians who play it have added incalculable joy to my existence. The music has provided

solace and cultural enlightenment. I have explored its roots and felt the excitement and inventiveness of those who breathe new life into this tradition.

Music can be as essential to the writing process as breathing or thinking. Long stretches of isolation can weaken the soul, and music may be the writer's sole companion. Listening to and feeling the music can provide peace of mind, or inspiration, but sometimes the writer's connection to the music can be even more expansive. Music is an expression of the soul, both for those playing it and those listening. If the musicianship is highly skilled and soulful, and the appreciation on the part of the listener is informed and profound, it is a cosmic relationship. **JT**

T.J. English is the author of eight nonfiction books, including Havana Nocturne, The Westies and The Savage City. His latest book, The Corporation: An Epic Story of the Cuban American Underworld, was published this year by William Morrow. The music series "Dangerous Rhythms: T.J. English and His Latin Jazz Explosion" takes place every other Thursday night at Zinc Bar (82 W. 3rd Street in Manhattan). See zinbar.com for more information.



Streets of Baltimore

IN AND OUT OF JAZZ, MUSICIAN AND ACTIVIST **TODD MARCUS** WORKS TO BUILD A COMMUNITY

Feature: Geoffrey Himes on the bass clarinet in jazz

composing and performing.

"Over the past seven or eight years, there's been a merging of my two careers," Marcus says last fall, at his office in the middle of Sandtown. "I've committed my adult life to living here and working to make it better—and I realize that I can do that not only as a community activist but also as a musician. Even an instrumental musician like myself can create a mood or evoke an emotional response with a performance, and then use the title of a piece or the discussion before and after a piece to connect that mood to an idea."

Marcus, a stocky man with short, reddish-brown hair and a goatee, sits behind his desk in khakis and a dark green shirt. From his third-floor office window, he has a view of Pennsylvania Avenue, Sandtown's main thoroughfare. On April 27, 2015, eight days after Gray's death from a spinal-cord injury that led to a coma, and 15 days after Baltimore police dragged his reportedly limp-legged body to a van, Gray's funeral sparked rock-throwing by high school students corralled by cops at the Mondawmin shopping center. The kids broke through the police cordon and headed down Reisterstown Road, which soon became Pennsylvania Avenue.

He turns his laptop around so I can see the photos he took from his office windows that day. First you see a battalion of blue-helmeted, body-armored cops marching north. Then you

Rising jazz star Todd Marcus lives just three blocks from Gilmor Homes, the Baltimore housing project where Freddie Gray lived and was arrested in 2015. Marcus didn't grow up in the poverty-plagued Sandtown neighborhood, but the New Jersey native started volunteering there as a 19-year-old college student, moved in two years later and is still at it as a 42-year-old activist. Today he is the executive director of Intersection of Change, a non-profit group working to improve the neighborhood's quality of life.

In the jazz world, Marcus is best known as an advocate of the bass clarinet as a fulltime, mainstream instrument, not just something to double on in novelty or avant-garde situations. Inspired by his Egyptian-born father, the younger Marcus is also known for integrating the music of the Nile into modern jazz. What most members of the jazz world don't realize, however, is how much Marcus' day job as a community organizer in one of America's most troubled urban neighborhoods informs his

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see out-of-control teenagers heading south. Then the looters come behind the teenagers. Then you see smoke rising a half mile to the north, where a CVS drugstore went up in flames—the fire that was shown over and over on cable news. That one burning drugstore obscured not only the preceding weeks of articulate, well-organized demonstrations but also the more crucial issue of why the neighborhood had suffered so much neglect and repression for so many decades.

“What’s important is not those weeks after Freddie Gray died,” Marcus insists. “It’s about years and years of police brutality, limited job opportunities, substandard schools and substandard housing. When you live with that every day, you feel tense all the time. The frustration builds up and any flashpoint will let it burst out. Sometimes it comes out in good ways, like the demonstrations, and sometimes it comes out in bad ways, like the looting. But it’s not about one incident concerning Freddie Gray in Baltimore; it’s about these challenges faced by him and every other resident of neighborhoods like this across America.”

He clicks on the laptop again and plays “PTSD in the Hood,” a composition from his new album, *On These Streets: A Baltimore Story*, which was released in April near the three-year anniversary of Gray’s death. A stop-and-go bass clarinet motif introduces the feeling of frustration Marcus was just talking about. The solos by Marcus and guitarist Paul Bollenback, over the rumbling rhythm section of pianist George Colligan, bassist Kris Funn and drummer Eric Kennedy, ratchet up the tension, but for all its turbulence, the piece is surprisingly melodic and propulsive. The whole album is devoted to similar reflections on Sandtown, with vibraphonist Warren Wolf sometimes replacing Bollenback as the guest soloist.

The tension in the piece evokes the way life in a redlined, poverty-encased neighborhood can mimic the circumstances that give soldiers post-traumatic stress disorder. Similarly, compositions such as “An Intersection of Change” and the title track reveal how vibrant and optimistic the sidewalks of Sandtown can be on certain days. Marcus’ richly melodic writing provides the material for Colligan’s piano and Bollenback’s guitar to swagger and strut down the street. By contrast, Marcus’ relaxed bass-clarinet theme and Wolf’s vibraphone embellishments on the late-night ballad “It Still Gets Still” capture how surprisingly peaceful Sandtown can be when you least expect it.

Marcus’ organization does what it can. It hosts a Jubilee Arts program so local youngsters can get involved in dance and hands-on art-making, which has led to vibrant murals on walls all over Sandtown. Intersection of Change also hosts Martha’s Place, a series of five row-houses that help women recovering from addiction and homelessness. The group runs the Strength to Love II urban farming program, which operates 16 greenhouses to provide employment for ex-offenders and fresh produce for the surrounding food desert. And the organization maintains three welcoming green spaces near the office.

But Marcus isn’t content to organize only the Sandtown community; he also strives to organize Baltimore’s jazz community. Every Wednesday, he hosts the jam session at the HomeSlyce Pizza Bar on Charles Street, just a block south of the city’s best jazz venue, An Die Musik Live!, and just four blocks south of the Peabody Conservatory. On a recent Wednesday, after three tunes by Marcus and that week’s rhythm section, guest soloists were welcomed to the stage. They ranged from professionals like Marylander Alex Norris, who plays with the Mingus Big Band and Eddie Palmieri, to beginners like a young woman who sang an affecting version of “Moody’s Mood for Love” while battling an obvious case of nerves.

“I call it my jazz community service,” Marcus says during the break. “I’m more established now, but I still want to connect with younger, less established players, because that’s who I was not so long ago.”

GEOFFREY HIMES

Farewells

Didier Lockwood, a French violinist who was a former protégé of French jazz legend Stephane Grappelli but became an acclaimed and innovative musician in his own right, died suddenly in Paris in the early hours of Feb. 18, after a concert at the city's Le Bal Blomet jazz club. He was one week past his 62nd birthday. The cause of death was a heart attack. While Lockwood acknowledged Grappelli as his hero, he by no means limited himself to the Gypsy-jazz milieu. Lockwood achieved stardom as a member of the progressive-rock band Magma before studying with Grappelli, and would proceed from his tutelage to a career heavily identified with jazz fusion. In addition, Lockwood was a composer of violin concertos as well as two operas, and created a musical with his first wife, singer Caroline Casadesus.

Robert Barry, a veteran Chicago drummer who spent several years in the Sun Ra Arkestra; collaborated with Ken Vandermark, Fred Anderson and many other great Windy City musicians; and once shared a bandstand with Charlie Parker, died in his hometown on Jan. 8. He was 85.

Buell Neidlinger, a bassist, cellist and educator who worked within a wide spectrum of jazz styles, from Dixieland to the avant-garde, suffered a heart attack and died on March 16 at his home on Whidbey Island, Wash. He was two weeks past his 82nd birthday. Neidlinger was best known for his early collaborations with pianist Cecil Taylor; they appeared together on six albums made between 1956 and 1961. He also recorded frequently with saxophonists Steve Lacy and Archie Shepp and trombonist Roswell Rudd; played in a trio with pianist Herbie Nichols; was the accompanying bassist on Tony Bennett's hit 1962 recording of "I Left My Heart in San Francisco"; and collaborated prolifically with saxophonist Marty Krystall over a period of nearly 50 years.

Heiner Stadler, a pianist, composer, arranger and record producer who worked in various idioms and made vital contributions to contemporary classical music and jazz, died Feb. 18 in Silver Spring, Md. The cause was complications of pneumonia. He was 75. Among the highlights of Stadler's discography is the inventive sextet session *Tribute to Bird & Monk*, from 1978. Stadler also founded and/or worked for several labels, including Labor, Tomato, Arcadia and Concord.

News from JazzTimes.com

► Bassist and composer Ben Williams will serve as the first-ever artist-in-residence of the DC Jazz Festival. As part of the residency program, the Washington, D.C., native will perform "I Am a Man," a conceptual project promoting protest and uplift; participate in a "Meet the Artist" conversation; honor Keter Betts in a pop-up performance with local artists; and lead master classes. The DC Jazz Festival takes place at various venues throughout the nation's capital June 8-17.

The 40th annual Playboy Jazz Festival will be held June 9-10 at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, Calif. The program includes two concerts by Charles Lloyd to celebrate his 80th birthday, the Ramsey Lewis Quintet, Snarky Puppy, Lee Ritenour and Dave Grusin, an all-star set honoring the late Freddie Hubbard and much more.

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REZ ABBASI

ALL TRAILS LEAD TO JIM HALL

By Brad Farberman

Despite his important work as part of groups like Rudresh Mahanthappa's Indo-Pak Coalition and Adam Rudolph's Go: Organic Guitar Orchestra, the New York-based guitarist Rez Abbasi is best known as a leader. Over the course of more than 10 albums, he has engaged with the sounds of South Asia; employed standout players like Vijay Iyer and Bill Ware; and reached a sharp, exultant place on his ax, as heard on his latest album, 2017's spacious and fusion-y *Unfiltered Universe* (Whirlwind), featuring Mahanthappa on sax and Iyer on piano, plus cellist Elizabeth Mikhael, bassist Johannes Weidenmueller and drummer Dan Weiss.

At Abbasi's Harlem home in February, the guitarist, 52, reflected on the importance of being both an improviser and a composer; the singular combination of steel-string acoustic guitar, vibes and ride cymbal; and the time he got busted for taping an Ella concert.

1. Jim Hall/Ron Carter Duo

"Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise" (*Alone Together*, Milestone). Hall, guitar; Carter, bass. Recorded in 1972.

BEFORE: You can turn that up. Jim Hall. I don't think I've even heard this before, but I can just tell.

How can you tell?

He's essentially inimitable; no one can sound like Jim Hall, even if they tried. That's not the case with other famous, well-known guitarists. You can hear the influence of a lot of other people in many young guitarists, but this, this is Jim Hall. I knew that, what, two notes in, right? I don't know what record this is. Maybe it's with Ron Carter?

Yeah, I can't say enough about Jim Hall. Out of everybody who's influenced my own playing, he's absolutely on top of the list. And even to a high degree, like, to the point that it's beyond the list. It's not actually number one, it's zenith on the list. I've listened to him for 30 years—or however long I've been playing—after I started playing jazz, and he still sounds as fresh as day one, and that's really difficult to say about any other player [laughs]. Because I hear idiosyncrasies that someone's developed over the years. With Jim Hall, it's just all music, all the time.

 Profile: Rez Abbasi



2. Joe Pass

"Here's That Rainy Day" (*Virtuoso*, Pablo). Pass, guitar. Recorded in 1973.

BEFORE: It sounds like someone from the era of Jim Hall. But it could be someone like Jack Wilkins, and I'm not saying it is, but it's sort of that masterful, conventional sound that I'm hearing here, coming from that era—'50s, '60s. Blossoming from that era. Beautiful. The tone is already brighter than someone like Jim, yet still so beautiful. God, it's so close to the tip of my tongue. I almost hear Benson in there, but I'm so hesitant to say that because if it is George Benson, it would be really early George Benson. It could be many players. I hear hints of Joe Pass, too. Oh, it's Joe. OK, there you go.

Is this on the *Virtuoso* records? I heard those when I was 16 years old, and I never really listened back to them, because at the time everybody was listening to those, and I didn't want to

be everybody. Yeah, that kind of gave it away right there, too—that little chromatic thing. It's refreshing to hear this because it's so incredible, man. I think I'm gonna have to go backwards at this point and listen more to these old-timers. Yeah, that was beautiful. Thank you for playing that.

Did you see him live?

The first jazz concert I saw was Joe Pass accompanying Ella Fitzgerald. I was 16 years old and it was at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles, and I was taping it and I got caught. Remember those days? And then security actually came by and took my tape and said, "We'll ask Ms. Fitzgerald if this is OK or if she wants to," I think they said, "if she wants to press charges." It scared the heck out of me, but I knew she wouldn't do that. So I said, "Here's my tape, go ahead." So I never got that. But that was the first concert I went to that was considered quote-unquote jazz. And that was pretty much the end of my rock band at that time. I jumped ship big time.

3. The Sheryl Bailey 3

"The Lioness" (*A Meeting of Minds*, Cellar Live). Bailey, guitar; Ron Oswanski, organ; Ian Froman, drums. Recorded in 2013.

BEFORE: The guitarist has some beautiful precision. It's that kind of vocabulary that sounds in the mold of bebop, so I

really can't tell who it is. When people start using different vocabulary, then I start hearing more personality when they're playing. Not that touch has nothing to do with it, because, actually, touch has a lot to do with the way something comes off. But I'm not familiar with this player—at least aurally; I'm sure I've heard this player. And it sounds beautiful. Band sounds good.

AFTER: I'm glad you played a female guitarist. I'm really happy you did that. And I swear, it was on the tip of my tongue. ... I met Sheryl, like, 28 years ago, when we were in New York and we played duo, and immediately I recognized that she's really wonderful. I always knew she was going to take the mantle and run with it. And she has.

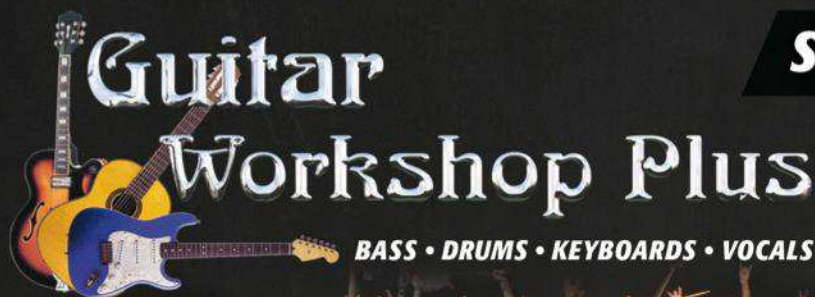
4. Sonny Sharrock

"Little Rock" (*Ask the Ages*, Axiom). Sharrock, guitar; Pharoah Sanders, tenor saxophone; Charnett Moffett, bass; Elvin Jones, drums. Released in 1991.

BEFORE: The composition is so simple but powerful. Very cool. This might be ... Sonny Sharrock. Yeah? I haven't really heard a lot of him, but again, there's a unique player who phrases differently, who has put his influences at bay and come up with something of his own. I've never heard this before, so I can't say I'm into Sonny, but I love what I'm hearing. We

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all need more of this in our lives—in other words, imperfection that equals this notion of perfection. And most guitar players are trying to be so perfect with their phrasing, perfect with everything, that sometimes it sounds like practice on the bandstand. I really love how he's just so him. It's so human—like, “We're not perfect, but I have a lot of things to say.” I miss that in today's world, actually.

5. Grant Green

“Somewhere in the Night” (*Street of Dreams*, Blue Note).

Green, guitar; Bobby Hutcherson, vibraphone; Larry Young, organ; Elvin Jones, drums. Recorded in 1964.

BEFORE: I'm not keen on the tuning element. It seems a little out, the tuning. Guitar and the vibes [*laughs*]. I mean, it's a pretty old recording, right? But those notes are cool. Ooh, nice. Is it Grant Green? Yeah, of course. It's a giveaway when he does this trill or tremolo thing on the left hand. It's really beautiful.

“AND THEN SECURITY ACTUALLY CAME BY AND TOOK MY TAPE AND SAID, ‘WE’LL ASK MS. FITZGERALD IF THIS IS OK OR IF SHE WANTS TO PRESS CHARGES.’”

Are you big into Grant?

I wasn't big into him, because, it's weird, when I discovered Jim Hall, I discovered people like Grant Green as well. I think I was more drawn to Jim's tone, right away—and of course the compositional aspect of Jim's playing—so I just went into the shed with that. But that's not to say I overlooked Grant; I mean, I definitely have some of his records, and it's profound. What he plays is profound. And I know Jim Hall was very influenced by Grant, too. At one point he actually wanted to play like Grant Green—I *think*, as I recall. I think it was just one of those things that didn't last too long for me. What I really love about him, just listening right now, is the solidified downbeat. He's like James Brown on the downbeat. It's right there.

He's in the pocket.

Well, in the pocket, but even on the downbeat. He's in control of the band, and that's something that's really great.

I chose this specifically because you have a band with guitar and vibes.

Oh, right, right. Yeah. That's with an acoustic guitar.

I thought you might have something to say about the meeting of guitar and vibes, and how to do it.

I do it the only way I know how to do it. But that band with Bill Ware on vibraphone, and Eric McPherson on drums and Stephan Crump on bass, yeah, we've done two records. That's an acoustic guitar project, and specifically steel-string acoustic guitars, which really have this unique quality with the vibraphone and the ride cymbal. If you put those three together, you get this very interesting hybridity of high-end, yet it's very musical. It's not just high-end; it's attack of high-end, with all three. I'm very proud of those records; I want to do more with that. But I love vibes with electric guitar as well. Of course, Grant Green brings out the acoustic nature of even an electric guitar. It's a [*thinline hollowbody*] electric guitar. So I don't really miss any acoustic-ness from his tone. It's still amazing.

6. Mary Halvorson

“Platform” (*Meltframe*, Firehouse 12). Halvorson, guitar.

Recorded in 2014.

BEFORE: Whoa. I like the confidence, that's for sure. I like the way they're separating the heavy low-end distortion with a melody on top. That's really hard to do with all that overdrive. A little Nirvana influence [*laughs*]. I really appreciate that they, whoever it is, knows what the heck they want to say. It's very direct. Yeah, I'm down with it. Not everything is my aesthetic choice, but it's not me playing it. It's really captivating for what it is. I don't know if I'd listen to it on a Sunday afternoon—but maybe; you never know. It's really hard to tell, for me, who this can be.

AFTER: Oh, OK. Right, right, right. That makes sense. Interesting. I haven't heard her play solo-guitar before, but I know she uses a lot of effects. I actually like her compositions a lot; it's this wide range of material that she enjoys playing with. That was interesting. The overdrive sound kind of shook me up a little bit at times; it wasn't, aesthetically, always pleasing. But I think her whole gamut of ideas is ... she's onto something. Big time, you know.

7. Jeff Parker

“Jrified” (*The New Breed*, International Anthem). Parker, guitar; Josh Johnson, alto saxophone; Paul Bryan, bass; Jamire Williams, drums. Recorded in 2015.

BEFORE: Great vibe, right off the top, man. It almost sounds like an old CTI record. But there's no one who played like this back then, I don't think. But yet it does sound of the present day. Somewhat. I really like the searching quality of the guitarist. And there's definitely that tradition in his playing, him or her. It's funny, because the vocabulary's not what defines this person for me, because the vocabulary sounds somewhat conventional. It's more the quirkiness, and the articulations, and

the phrasing, although I don't know who it is. But those are the things that stand out to me. It almost sounds like it's from the '80s, man. I really don't know. The saxophonist is very similar, in the sense that it's very traditional vocabulary but there's a quirkiness about he or she that is defining that sound. And I really like that. But I have no idea who this is. Must have been a record that I just really overlooked.

AFTER: It doesn't sound dated or anything like that, but I think because of all the woodwinds in the back, for some reason, these big orchestral arrangements, it almost sounds like the CTI era, but more modern. And his playing doesn't sound of that era, actually. It sounds very much now. It's cool. It's a very cool atmosphere. Yeah.

8. John Scofield

"Blackout" (*Bump*, Verve). Scofield, guitar; David Livolsi, bass; Eric Kalb, drums; Johnny Durkin, percussion. Recorded in 1999.

BEFORE: It's a modern-sounding recording. Is this a Basie recording? I'm used to that bass sound on a Basie record. Is that Butch Miles? I want to hear some drum fills. Is that Dennis Mackrel? I heard a couple of little pops there, and I'm like, "Dennis!"

It almost sounds like a Scofield thing or something. Oh, is this Scofield? Well, man, I didn't even hear the [guitar] notes yet. I get the vibe and ... now I can tell it's Scofield, now that he plays a few high notes.

I can't say enough about John Scofield, man. My friend just took me to the Blue Note last year, and I haven't seen Sco in many, many years. Decades. Because at one point, when I first moved to New York, I would see him all the time. And so my friend took me to the Blue Note, and I was blown away. It takes a lot to blow a guy like me away, who's heard a lot already. I was still like, "My God, this guy is unbelievable." He's in a realm of his own. He's a profound human being. One thing I love about Sco is—same thing I love about people like Bill Frisell and Pat Metheny and John Abercrombie—that they've taken their styles and also composed as a reflection of their improvisation. So they carry these two torches, of composition and of playing; they're not simply jazz improvisers or soloists. And another thing that I love about Sco, he's so versatile. You can hear him over rhythm changes play like nobody, and then you can hear him play like this. And he brings this bluesy, almost country-ish sound to all this. It's mind-blowing. And maturity—that whole factor of restraint, and space, and being spontaneous. Using your intuition. He came out of a Jim Hall impression also. I've said it before: It doesn't matter what your tone is, you can hear that Jim Hall approach in someone like John Scofield, taking it to an entirely different place. **JT**

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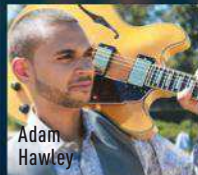


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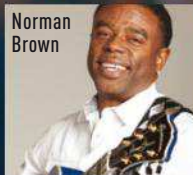
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Guitar Player's profile of Chuck Hammer



CHUCK HAMMER

ORNETTE, LOU REED & THE ART OF IMPROVISATION

By Brad Cohan

The musical path traveled by Chuck Hammer, a forward-thinking player who fits neatly into the niche of “most influential guitarists you’ve never heard of,” has been chock full of twists and turns. From his beginnings as an improviser in the 1970s, under the influence of Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman, to high-profile sideman gigs with Lou Reed and David Bowie and, later, a lower-key career as a composer for TV documentaries, Hammer’s life has been nothing short of memoir-worthy. And his narrative is still very much in progress, with two new albums since 2016 and one in the can.

His work on two 1980 LPs, Reed’s *Growing Up in Public* and Bowie’s *Scary Monsters*, solidified his place in the rock history books, and the roots of those contributions can be traced to jazz. As an improviser playing in free-fusion groups during his early college years, and with John Coltrane, Davis and Coleman on heavy rotation, Hammer experienced the ultimate eye-opener while attending the University at Buffalo: a class in the black studies department taught by free-jazz pioneer Archie Shepp. “That was a rude awakening for me,” recalls Hammer, now 62 and based in New Jersey, about an hour outside New York City. “I was walking in there as a kind of blues guitar player. It was the first time I got exposed to the black studies perspective of things and the music and art side of it. I learned a lot from him.”

With Jimi Hendrix as his first love and exploratory jazz on his radar thanks to Shepp and Trane’s *A Love Supreme* and *Ascension*, Hammer was intent on converging the two styles into his own vision. “When you’re younger, you make connections between different art forms and people that just aren’t obvious but are natural to you,” Hammer explains. “I saw a connection between Hendrix and Coltrane from my perspective as a young guitarist—Coltrane trying to get those layers in real time out of the horn, with one note trying to create the illusion of a chord.

Then Hendrix is doing it in a non-real-time way, with layering by using multi-track. That to me was a very natural connection, and those were my influences. It was all about improv and I just carried that forward.”

That amalgam of styles landed Hammer a job playing beside Reed from 1978 through 1980. The punk pioneer steered Hammer further into free-improvisational territory through deep talks on tour and onstage. “Backstage, Lou often spoke about his admiration for Ornette,” Hammer recalls. “The idea of group improvisation is what Lou was shooting for. He spent hours talking about how to further develop that aspect within the band while playing large venues. Especially with the stuff from [Reed’s trailblazing band the Velvet Underground] that we were doing, he really wanted to push the group-improvisation aspect. His thing about Ornette wasn’t

about Ornette specifically, but it was really about that band with Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell and how they improvised as a group at the same time.”

Touring with Reed provided clinics in improvisation and interplay, with the texture-based twentysomething guitarist learning on the fly. “Virtually every dynamic and arrangement within each song changed night to night live,” Hammer says. “Lou would often not end a concert until he felt that something authentic occurred onstage. He kept pushing the ends of songs into extended improvised guitar sections.” Hammer’s credibility and profile were on the rise. He had already studied under Shepp and become a go-to sideman for Reed, and he was about to share a stage with another legend. “When I got into Lou’s band, the album that he just was working on was *The Bells*, which had Don Cherry on it,” Hammer recalls. “That was a completely different extension, because Don Cherry was playing things that were so abstract to the music itself. It was definitely a window, a learning point for me.”

As Hammer tells it, the watershed moment in which he fully understood Ornette’s concept of improvisation took place at the Bottom Line, a long-defunct downtown New York club where Reed gave a legendary run of concerts. “When I sound-checked with Don Cherry at the Bottom Line is when I actually grasped what that music was. He stood on the other side of the stage from me, playing pocket trumpet, and he seemed to be shooting Morse code over and outside the band. The band was playing ‘Sweet Jane’ or something, but I’m hearing, like, Morse code being woven inside the music. The weaving line thing was like a balance. That hit me and gave me a window into what Ornette and Lou were selling.”

After a years-long dry spell following a groundbreaking stint with Bowie—on *Scary Monsters*, he introduced the guitar synthesizer into the icon’s palette—Hammer eventually found his way to a career as a score composer, soundtracking documentary TV series including A&E’s *The First 48* and TLC’s *Trauma: Life in the E.R.* But about five years ago, he got the itch to make a comeback of sorts. “At some point I did everything I could in that [film-scoring] zone,” he says. “I became interested in making albums again.”

The experience and wisdom culled from the likes of Shepp, Reed and Cherry, combined with “Guitarchitecture,” his signa-



Hammer (far left) backs Lou Reed

ture process of layering multiple improvised guitar tracks, has so far resulted in two excellent albums. They find Hammer traversing similar sonic planes as guitarist peers Nels Cline, David Torn, Bill Frisell and Marc Ribot. On 2016's self-released *Blind on Blind*, Hammer joins forces with pianist/keyboardist Jamie Saft, of John Zorn's groups; bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma, of Ornette's Prime Time; and drummer Billy Martin, of Medeski Martin & Wood. The album is a marathon 80-minute set of free-ambient vibes and monolithic soloing, all guided by downtown funk and bluesy boogie.

Just last fall he released a follow-up. *Path Heart Traverse*, featuring Saft with bassist Andy Hess, an alum of Gov't Mule and John Scofield's Überjam Band, and drummer Steve Decker, stands at a more compact 38 minutes but is no less thrilling. Throughout, Hammer showcases his masterful ability to craft airy, slow-burning jams that are still somehow groove-intensive and harmonically complex; think a hybrid of MMW's cosmic trips, the lyricism and warmth of John Abercrombie and the avant-garde edginess of Zorn.

For Hammer, *Path Heart Traverse* was about avoiding genre,

paying tribute to his heroes and finding the perfect tone. "I felt that the current community of guitarists was overly focused on pedals, genres and looping, and had lost touch with hand-played tone," he explains. "In terms of tone, [the album] can be viewed almost as an homage to some of my earliest personal influences." While Hammer namedrops Hendrix and Reed, he also credits B.B. King, Brian Eno, Charlie Christian, Mike Bloomfield, John McLaughlin and Cream.

With *Blind on Blind* and *Path Heart Traverse* still fresh, Hammer's late-coming career as a solo artist is at full throttle. In February he reconvened Saft and Tacuma with drummer Gene Lake for live sessions that he'll take back to his studio, fine tune with his Guitarchitecture elements and release as the third and final installment in his trilogy. Like Hammer's previous two efforts, Miles Davis looms large over the recording. "It's wilder and hits harder because everyone is playing together at the same time," he says. "We went in thinking we were going to do something close to *On the Corner*. That's kind of where it's headed. A very live, funky, badass thing." **JT**

Recommended Listening:

- David Bowie *Scary Monsters* (RCA, 1980)
- Lou Reed *Growing Up in Public* (Arista, 1980)
- Blind on Blind* (Chuck Hammer, 2016)
- Path Heart Traverse* (Chuck Hammer, 2017)

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Kurt ELLING

Living the Questions

By Lee Mergner

On a frigidly cold night in January, Kurt Elling opened his showcase set at Birdland in New York City by singing the first few verses of Bob Dylan's "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall," a cappella.

*Oh where have you been my blue-eyed son?
Oh where have you been my darling young one?*

Although the choice of that Dylan tune, or any Dylan tune, might seem a stretch for a jazz vocalist, somehow the song and arrangement appropriately encapsulated Elling's approach to jazz singing: a love of words and poetry, a passion for politics and social issues, and an affinity for drama.

I sat with Elling a month later, during the Jazz Cruise, when the ship was docked in New Orleans for a day and a half. He has become a regular on that week-long festival on the water, where he serves as a de facto artist-in-residence—performing multiple sets with his own group, sitting in with a big band, doing interviews and offering surprises, like an unrehearsed duo performance of a piece from pianist Ted Rosenthal's upcoming jazz opera, *Dear Erich*.

Sitting on the back deck of the ship, overlooking the city's harbor and skyline, Elling talked about his new album, *The Questions* (Okeh/Sony Masterworks), which was co-produced by Crescent City native Branford Marsalis, with whom Elling has been touring and recording over the last few years. He also discussed their over-the-top Twitter feud, the wisdom he finds in poetry, the challenge of being compassionate in a troubled world and the importance of asking unanswerable questions.





Elling performs on the Jazz Cruise in February

JAZZTIMES: THE QUESTIONS IS A REALLY TUNEFUL AND MELODIC ALBUM. WAS IT A CONSCIOUS, PURPOSEFUL THING TO HAVE BEAUTIFUL MELODIES?

KURT ELLING: I always start from stuff that's already in the band, and then I always have 10 more lyrics that are waiting for their moment. Then I look at who the musicians are going to be and what's going to make the most sense out of that—maybe they've got a tune, maybe he's got a tune. In this case, if I'm going to have Joey Calderazzo on a record, I'm not just going to make him play stuff that he didn't write, because he's such a great writer. So, OK, let me write a lyric to one of his things.

WHICH TUNE DID HE WRITE?

It's called "The Enchantress"; it's the sort of samba one. He recorded it in the past, under the title "The Lonely Swan." That's Joey's beautiful, beautiful composition, and it was for me to write a [lyric]. When Branford and I were touring, his mother passed—and of course my mother is in assisted living now—so that lyric really comes home for us.

I don't consciously think, "We need more melody!" Unless we've done a resolution or something like that, then I'm going to want to balance it from there. But in this case, I felt like I was just trying to get to whatever was the best material for this group. It wasn't until after we had recorded it and I listened back to things that I realized I've been living up to one of my core principles. I came from religious people, very pious people. And here are the answers. I have been going down my road of inquiry and searching. I realized that I am actually living through what Rainer Maria Rilke subscribed, which was to try to live the questions and be humble in the face of all that can't be understood or articulated. That is so much propulsion for me, from my natural befuddlement at life.

RILKE HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION IN YOUR MUSIC GOING ALL THE WAY BACK TO YOUR DEBUT ALBUM, 1995'S *CLOSE YOUR EYES*. IN SOME WAYS HE NAMED THIS ALBUM.

Probably his best-known work is a very small volume called *Letters to a Young Poet*. This teenager in a boarding school started sending his poems [to various

writers] and asking for advice, asking, "What do you think?" This book has really been valuable to generations of sophomore or armchair philosophers like me. In it there are many words of wisdom about relationships, about love, about art, about the reaction of people to art, about growing up to be a person of value. It's not preachy. It's extremely sweet in its compassion. The piece [by Rilke] that comes to mind, and I'm paraphrasing now: "Don't look for the answers to these big questions. Instead, try to live the questions themselves as though they are a great treasure in a room that is forever locked. Live the questions and perhaps, someday, if you give enough dedication and attention to them, you may live your way into an answer." That sounds very wise and beautiful to me. It's appropriately humble for a human being. This is why I could never be a minister in a pulpit.

ALTHOUGH, IN A WAY, AS A PERFORMER WITH AN AUDIENCE, YOU'VE GOT THE MIC. SO YOU'RE NOT FAR OFF FROM THAT MINISTER. HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN A POETRY GUY? YOU'VE USED POETRY IN MUSIC, NOT JUST IN TERMS OF WRITING POETIC LYRICS BUT ACTUALLY ADAPTING POETRY TO MUSIC.

I guess so. I grew up with a visceral experience of heightened language because of going to church so much. The liturgy is a form of poetry. It's a heightened-language experience. You develop a taste for it and an ear for it because one wants to have a heightened experience, and one wants to have the companionship of the mystery. You want to have that magical experience over and over again, where something that's really beautiful and true and mysterious is said. Then there's the quiet that's just after it when you—what do they call that in Japan? Satori? When you get that little moment of enlightenment; when you say, "Aahh!" That's what the poetry that I love does. It makes your day more beautiful, and more mysterious, and more compelling.

SPEAKING OF POETRY, YOU OPEN THE ALBUM AND YOUR LIVE SETS WITH DYLAN'S "A HARD RAIN'S A-GONNA FALL." WHY THAT TUNE? THE LYRICS ARE ALMOST SURREALISTIC—LIKE POETRY, I GUESS.

For me it's just like out of the headlines: "Guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children." That's like vocal *haram* right there. It's all there. "And the pellets of poison are flooding their waters." I've got a near relation who is a starving lawyer, and the reason he's starving is because he's been fighting a battle with a mining company up in the Pacific Northwest for the last 30 years because they dumped all their waste into the river, and now the river's spoiled, and that was the chief source of water for an entire town up by Eureka. And that's him fighting the fight. That's just real. And there's Flint, Michigan. This is just real. And one of the questions right now is "What the fuck is happening to us and what are we going to do?" I wonder if there's something in human beings that there's just a death wish. We, as a race, have suicidal tendencies. We want to devour everything and grasp at everything and rule everything. To our own demise.

AND TO THE DEMISE OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.

Yeah, as the Right likes to say, "The planet will still be here." And we won't. The questions are not just, "Does meaning have being? Where is love?" It's also, "How do we face the challenges of our time? How do I act compassionately toward people who have such a warped and

twisted view of what politics is supposed to do and who it's supposed to serve? How can I be a good citizen? What can I do from my meager platform?"

I posted some stuff online out of anger, and it just brings more anger, from both sides. So then what should I post? Because I don't want to do nothing. And posting is such a flaccid response to everything, and yet it's kind of the marketplace of ideas. It's the reality of how we're communicating. It's the town hall or town square. I gotta say something. I gotta post something. It was only in retrospect that I said, "Oh! Well, this is what I'm trying to do. I'm actually just trying to live. This is me, trying to live up to Rilke's notion of living the questions." And it's unideal; it's a very uncomfortable way to live. And my poor wife has to put up with me.

It's a unique position, because as a jazz musician you're always searching for the melody you haven't played yet. I'm trying to dig deeper into the music that is the most compelling from the greatest of our forefathers and foremothers. The past is where there's so much wisdom and so much love.

HOW DID YOU AND BRANFORD FIRST GET TOGETHER?

The initial thing was that we would bump into each other at festivals. We were over at the North Sea Jazz Festival and he was in the bar—that's where you meet as jazz people—and he got up and gave me a huge hug, and he's like, "I'm making a record with you, man." I said, "Me?" And then I said, "Man, any day of any week." And he was serious.

HAD HE EVER DONE ANYTHING WITH VOCALISTS BEFORE?

Well, he did the Buckshot LeFonque project. With me, he was, and is, gracious. He's been so ... really, I get emotional talking about Branford.

I'VE SEEN YOU WITH THAT BAND, AND THEY PLAY HARD AND FAST. I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN A JAZZ BAND LIKE THAT WITH A VOCALIST. I HAVE TO IMAGINE THAT IT WAS PRETTY ROUGH AT FIRST, OR AT LEAST CHALLENGING.

I don't know about rough, no. I definitely wanted to bring my A-game. It's been a while since I've had to open a set with blowing every single time. I'm fortunate, because the earliest guys I was interact-

ing with in a live setting and a professional scene, they were all throw-down: Get up and hit it, and blow and blow and then blow some more. With Von Freeman. With Ed Petersen, his band was incredibly challenging from a new music standpoint. The only guy I ever got a break from in terms of the first note I could sing was Eddie Johnson, where I could get up and I could do a ballad or I could do a slower tempo. But that was because that was the whole vibe of that scene. But all those early experiences, I wanted to figure out how to be in with the cats.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH BRANFORD IN THE STUDIO, WITH HIM AS PRODUCER?

We worked on it together. We put a Dropbox file together with three times as many tunes as we needed, and I put them in order of my preference. The top 10 were the top 10, and a lot of them were things that I've written lyrics for that I hope will see the light of day on the right session. And also just tunes that I like. Some of them didn't fit; some of them were too this, too that, whatever. We didn't really hash through stuff so much. It winnowed itself down until we got to the ones that I knew were going to be the right ones.

Branford had some suggestions, and two of them are on the record. One was the Peter Gabriel thing, which I wouldn't have even known about, called "Washing of the Water." And the other one is the Leonard Bernstein one, "Lonely Town." He sent me four or five things, and I'd be like, "Man, I don't know about this," and he's like, "Hey, it's your record." Me: "I think this one." Him: "It's your record."

He really led the studio sessions. Bryan [Farina, Elling's manager] and I came up with the plan based on availability of musicians, so we had to get certain things done on certain days. Joey [Calderazzo] was only in for one day, Marquis [Hill] was only in on one day, so we had to get those things done. Branford would say, "We've done the takes. Moving on." And I'd say, "Man, are you sure?" And he'd be like, "We're going."

I really trusted him. If we hadn't gotten it, sometimes he'd be like, "Well, *c'est la vie*." He was definitively in on the mix. He put the drums where he knew they were best, he put the piano, he put things

where they belonged. He's got such a remarkable and diverse career, above and beyond playing and producing his own records and writing compositions.

And the sweetness. He's so funny. Anybody who's that smart is going to be so funny. And that Twitter war we got into was so funny. We had so much fun. [Shows tweets on his phone.] And we were standing next to each other when

was it! Branford was on the floor with that. He's like, "You gotta push that!" [laughs]

WHOSE SONGS FROM OUR TIME WILL ARTISTS BE INTERPRETING 30 OR 40 YEARS FROM NOW?

Paul Simon's stuff will keep going. Dylan's stuff will keep going for a while, but I think it will self-select. I expect people are going to continue to do Dave Frishberg tunes. Again, it'll be

are always covering Stevie, myself included. I did "Golden Lady." I think we've got to do that on this tour and on the boat here, because we've already had a couple requests.

WHEN I SAW YOU IN D.C. LAST YEAR, IT WAS RIGHT AFTER TRUMP GOT ELECTED AND YOU OPENED WITH JACKSON BROWNE'S "DOCTOR MY EYES." I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT TUNE AS HAVING THAT KIND OF POLITICAL MESSAGE BEFORE. ARE YOU STILL DOING IT?

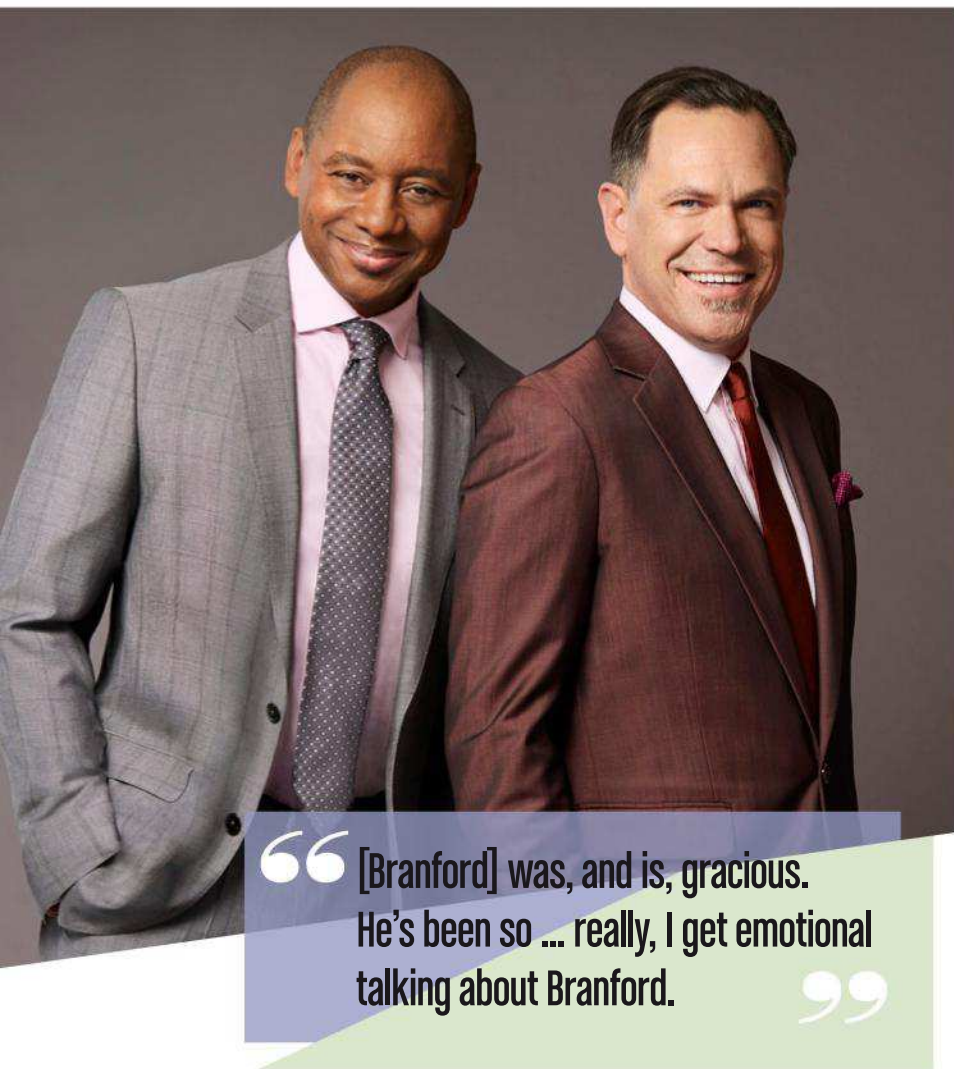
I put it on the shelf for a minute because we've been focusing on the stuff that made the cut. I was like, "Well, how about this, Branford?" And he listened to it and [said], "The song just doesn't stand up—the structure just doesn't stand up to the quality. OK?" It's good to have somebody you can really trust.

TALK ABOUT HOW YOU ADAPTED THE BEAUTIFUL JACO PASTORIUS TUNE "THREE VIEWS OF A SECRET," WHICH YOU TURNED INTO "A SECRET IN THREE VIEWS." WHAT ARE THE LEGALITIES OF THAT PROCESS?

I try to keep it as close as I can, but legally you've got to come up with something. You need to have a different title for a composition that has already been recorded as an instrumental under a certain title. So even with "Minuano (Six Eight)" [by Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays], we had to do "Minuano (vocal version)." You've got to have some other way to designate it so that ASCAP or BMI can keep the royalties stuff straight. You definitely have to clear it to record it. Either you have to get [the clearance] from the publisher or from the artist him or herself. But we always go through channels. Keith Jarrett is the only guy that turned me down. But it's cool—it was because I took the theme in another direction than what he had in mind for the thing.

ALL SONGWRITERS GET THE QUESTION "WHAT CAME FIRST, THE MUSIC OR THE LYRICS?" IT'S EASIER WITH YOU, WITH SONGS LIKE "A SECRET IN THREE VIEWS."

Yes, the music definitely came first. And thank God there's this great version with Wayne [Shorter] playing the melody, because then it's the paraphrase of the melody. And then you get all the Wayne-ish stuff, which is so beautiful and so important. I hadn't done Jaco before. I did Pat [Metheny], I hit with



“ [Branford] was, and is, gracious. He's been so ... really, I get emotional talking about Branford. ”

we were writing them. It was so funny because people thought we were really going after each other, and we're standing next to each other trying to outdo [the other]. We were just doing the dozens, man! I did one about [Branford having] the worst soprano sound since Florence Foster Jenkins [the tone-deaf socialite portrayed by Meryl Streep in 2016]. That

self-selecting, because how many people can really do "My Attorney Bernie" and have it work? Though there are "Peel Me a Grape" and "I'm Hip" and "A Little Taste." I hope that people continue to do Jon Hendricks' stuff. There certainly is an avid assortment at present, but it's still fresh in people's minds. Stevie Wonder for sure. People

Yellowjackets, but I don't think I've written a lyric to a Jaco tune. You've got to have a story to tell. I went back to [the 13th-century mystic] Rumi because, again, you're asking questions. It's the secret—the three ways of looking at a secret, or three or more. I just tried to steep myself in those ideas. I think it's kind of self-explanatory, if you read the lyric, what it's about and where it's coming from and what it's trying to say. It's just a pleasure to sing it. And it makes people really happy, which I like.

WHO DID THE ARRANGEMENT OF "SKYLARK" THAT CLOSES THE ALBUM?

The band and I came up with that over years of touring. I would just toss it to [guitarist] John [McLean] and he would come up with some intro. We didn't ever really arrange it; we just played it a million times, which is the best way. John arranged "I Have Dreamed," which also worked out great, and then Branford takes that gorgeous solo on it. That's fantastic. That's what makes that shit go. All I've got to do is sing then.

YOUR PIANIST STU MINDEMAN IS A BIT OF A SECRET WEAPON.

He's really smart, and he's very, very collaborative. If I need to edit something or whatever, he'd be like, "Yeah, OK, let's try that." It's great. He wrote the melody and all the music for "A Happy Thought." I just gave him the Franz Wright poem and I said, "Man, what do you think of this?" And he's like, "I can do that." You should check out some of his records, because he did a whole thing with Langston Hughes' poetry [2014's *In Your Waking Eyes*]. He's a gifted little [fellow] in his late 20s. And Stu's got a really cool backstory, too, because he spent many years in South America growing up. It's not even Brazilian; it's like Chile and Peru and stuff—he can name all these different rhythms.

You've got to have the right assortment. As Branford says, "You don't need the best players in the world, you just need the right players." And I need the right guys to play the thing that I want to do. And you have to get on the plane together and get off the plane together. That's one of the things about Branford's group that's so fantastic, that camaraderie. **JT**

JT ESSENTIALS: KURT ELLING

By Christopher Loudon



This Time It's Love (Blue Note, 1998)

Elling's two most consequential influences, Frank Sinatra and Mark Murphy, are skillfully balanced in this standards-heavy set of elegant readings subtly bent with keen interpretive experimentation. Provided lean support from a core quartet of pianist Laurence Hobgood, guitarist Dave Onderdonk, bassist Rob Amster and drummer/percussionist Michael Raynor, Elling travels from the romantic depths of "My Foolish Heart" to a lighter-than-air "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing" and, propelled by violinist Johnny Frigo, a puckish "I Feel So Smoochie." Highlight: Elling shaping a paean to wife Jennifer with a roiling vocalese reworking of "She's Funny That Way."



Nightmoves (Concord Jazz, 2007)

Elling's penchant for mixing works by poets of all stripes first reached full stride with *Nightmoves*. A band featuring Hobgood, Amster, drummer Willie Jones III and, on six of 11 tracks, bassist Christian McBride is augmented by assorted guests. Elling commingles Walt Whitman, Roethke, Betty Carter, Michael Franks, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin and Randy Bachman, and twice navigates exquisite pairings: "Change Partners" with "If You Never Come to Me," featuring Jobim-worthy accompaniment from guitarist Guilherme Monteiro; and a heartbreaking interweaving of a Keith Jarrett improvisation and "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning."



Dedicated to You: Kurt Elling Sings the Music of Coltrane and Hartman (Concord Jazz, 2009)

Following nominations for seven previous albums, Elling at long last nabbed the Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Album with this stunningly insightful reimagining of 1963's landmark *John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman*. Recording live at Jazz at Lincoln Center, Elling and co-producer Hobgood remain respectfully true to the original arrangements while coloring outside those lines. The Coltrane-Hartman album spanned six standards; Elling digs deeper into their respective repertoires to add five more, while showcasing a sumptuous mélange of a Hobgood-led trio, the string quartet ETHEL and, filling Coltrane's tenor berth, Ernie Watts.



Passion World (Concord Jazz, 2015)

Elling's first studio session following his professional split with pianist Laurence Hobgood, after close to two decades of living in one another's musical pockets, understandably finds him traversing new vistas. Following nods to endings (John Clayton's "The Verse") and fresh beginnings ("After the Door," Elling's reinvention of Pat Metheny's "Another Life"), he ventures from Björk's Iceland and U2's Ireland to Dori Caymmi's Brazil, Arturo Sandoval's Cuba, even Brahms' Vienna, never looking back. He ultimately lands—softly, cerebrally—back in Ireland, melding composer Brian Byrne's "Where Love Is" with the verse of James Joyce.



The Questions (Okeh/Sony Masterworks, 2018)

Never one to shy away from profound philosophical musings, Elling pairs with co-producer Branford Marsalis to ponder life's eternal questions. Even when the quest turns romantic it's unresolved, as Elling plumbs the yearning ache of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "I Have Dreamed." As expected, he draws upon many sources—Dylan, Paul Simon, Peter Gabriel, Carla Bley, Wallace Stevens, Johnny Mercer, Sara Teasdale—to help define his search for answers. And perhaps he finds a definitive one in his redefinition of Jaco Pastorius' "Three Views of a Secret," transformed via Rumi-inspired lyrics into "A Secret in Three Views," positing that love is all that matters.

SHABAKA HUTCHINGS WANTS A REVOLUTION

BY NATALIE WEINER

▶ Q&A: Shabaka Hutchings

The British saxophonist likes his jazz streamlined and rugged, and is poised to become the music's next crossover star. But can simplicity and energy ever truly replace virtuosity?

Shabaka Hutchings' new album is about what you think it's about. Its title, *Your Queen Is a Reptile*, is not a metaphor or an allegory: The record's goal is to challenge what Hutchings views as the mythology of the monarchy. Instead of a lizard Queen Elizabeth—a queen who “does not see us as human,” as he describes in the liner notes—Hutchings, alongside his band Sons of Kemet, proposes a list of black women he'd be OK with bowing down to: Angela Davis, Mamie Phipps Clark, Harriet Tubman. For the lattermost, his tribute takes the form of an almost six-minute jam that's half rhythm (drummers Eddie Hick and Tom Skinner) and half contrapuntal harmony (Hutchings and tuba player Theon Cross). It has the danceability of soca, the angularity of grime, the abrasive textures of punk and—somehow—the freedom of jazz.

The 34-year-old saxophone and clarinet player has spent the last decade cultivating this sound via a series of high-concept, party-ready bands around his native London, in addition to playing in groups led by friends like Kamaal Williams, Yazz Ahmed and Nubya Garcia. As the U.K. scene becomes harder and harder to ignore Stateside, so too does Hutchings and his colleagues' perspective—one rooted in the broader African diaspora instead of American history, and targeting an audience that wants to dance and think at the same time. For Hutchings, marrying his jazz background with music suited to London clubs has required that he eschew another hierarchy: “I don't want to sound like Mark Turner or Joe Lovano. ... They're too good. I want to take the saxophone and just get ignorant,” he said on the writer Phil Freeman's *Burnin' Ambulance* podcast earlier this year.


It's fair to be skeptical of artists vocally distancing themselves from their immediate ancestors; after all, rejecting what came before is the oldest coolness cheat code in the book. We've heard similar proclamations that *this* time things will be different, from other art-

ists who have recently Saved Jazz, like Robert Glasper and Kamasi Washington. It's Hutchings' global perspective, though, that sets him apart from other artists using pop literacy as a way to reach new audiences. Obviously African and Caribbean sounds have long had a place in jazz, but filtered through London's current melting pot, that aesthetic feels totally new. Reliably rough around the edges, the music resists the smoother tendencies of Stateside fusion. “London is a tense place,” he told *JazzTimes* last year. “We're not going to try to counteract that by being serene, and it feels like the audience just resonates with that.”

Hutchings' take on fusion also represents a more essential repudiation of jazz's Western leanings. In practice, his rejection of Turner and Lovano as “too good” is about completely revamping the genre's critical hierarchy to place rhythmic communion at the center instead of improvised melody. Repeated, percussive licks dominate, with a few soaring runs sprinkled throughout; mostly, though, Hutchings is blending into the complex rhythmic interplay between other bandmembers.

He argues that spontaneity and urgency, achieved through small ensembles, loose compositions and abbreviated recording sessions, can and should replace academic complexity. In 2016, Hutchings told *Bandcamp* that he declined to give pianist Nduduzo Makhathini, of his group the Ancestors, the music prior to a day-long session because he “didn't want him to play all the shit that he knows.”

To dwell on the fact that Hutchings practices Dizzee Rascal riffs on Instagram and incorporates dub, spoken word and rap in his latest album is to do a disservice to what he's trying to achieve. This is an artist who views shedding as a tool of capitalism (why do we need to play harder and better and faster?) and gives lectures on “decolonizing the mind from a [modern] jazz musician's perspective.” The revolution he's articulating on *Your Queen* is less about a self-conscious integration of pop elements than it is about stripping away the technical and compositional traps that have helped make jazz a property of the conservatory. As a result, his sound—especially with Sons of Kemet—bears a stronger resemblance to early New



Hutchings' sound—especially with Sons of Kemet—bears a stronger resemblance to early New Orleans jazz than it does to the music of his peers, even if on the surface it bears the same festival-ready inflections as artists like Kamasi Washington.

Orleans jazz than it does to the music of his peers, even if on the surface it bears the same jam-band, festival-ready inflections as artists like Washington.

So how do we gauge his success, if the music self-evidently rejects the things jazz heads normally view as metrics of quality? Is the intentional repetitiveness an example of damning unoriginality or an exciting rebuttal against so much sprawling free improvisation? Is the commitment to danceable grooves acquiescing to pop or subverting the rhythmic ambiguity that defines so much current jazz? Regardless of how you answer these questions, you'll probably be confronted with much more Shabaka Hutchings in the near future. (His recent signing with Impulse!, who released *Your Queen*, can't hurt his profile, and the move seems to attempt to place him in the context of artists he's modeled himself after, like John Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders.) Already prolific between his three bands and countless sidegigs, he's tapped into the moment in a way that's crucial to crossover success. Afrobeats and Caribbean rhythms are driving plenty of today's pop music, just as they are the music of Hutchings and his cohorts, albeit in an entirely different way. Washington found the crux of a spiritual-jazz revival, not to mention powerful allies in Kendrick Lamar and Alice Coltrane's nephew, the electronic musician and producer Flying Lotus. Gasper also worked with Lamar, but long before that he'd engineered his signature meld of postbop with J Dilla and neosoul. Like those two crossover successes, Hutchings is making the right sound at the right place at the right time. Unlike them, he wants to turn jazz on its head, and he's poised to get it at least a little off-balance. **JT**

Hutchings leads his Sons of Kemet at NYC Winter Jazzfest in January

At the inaugural Jazz Congress, co-produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center and *JazzTimes* in New York City on Jan. 11-12, among the most anticipated events was a conversation on jazz and race featuring JALC managing and artistic director **Wynton Marsalis** and **Ethan Iverson**, a founding member of the Bad Plus, an important jazz blogger and a pianist with a deep reverence for jazz history. Moderated by artist manager/consultant **Andre Guess**, the hour-long conversation in JALC's the Appel Room moved swiftly through ideas and anecdotes while never losing its feeling of diplomacy and mutual respect. Here are some highlights.

Playing the Turnaround

ANDRE GUESS: We know historically that, in jazz's heyday, the country was dealing with race in a much different way than it is right now. So I want you both to respond to [these questions]: When we were a segregated society, how did jazz help to move forward the conversation on race, and then, conversely, in a contemporary setting, what if anything is jazz doing to not advance the agenda?

ETHAN IVERSON: No problem, I got this. [*audience laughter*] Thank you, Wynton, for inviting me into your house, by the way. A couple of my friends were like, "What are you doing?" [*laughter from audience and panel*]

To respond to the question, I think jazz was the greatest 20th-century music. I'm actually fairly adept at music that has more of a European framework. I know it pretty well; I've played Schumann with Yo-Yo Ma. I'm not at Wynton's level at dealing with that stuff, but I've dealt with it, and I'm a composer. The older I get, the more I think, man, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, John Coltrane—those were the best. It was the best music of the 20th century, and almost always, the best musicians of this greatest music were black. End of story.

WYNTON MARSALIS: I want to start by saying something about "black." First, "black" is not anthropological; it's social and it's political. Once they decoded the genome, it's clear—that's the science. So the concept of race itself is not real. And jazz symbolically is a unifier, the result of hybridization of cultures. You cannot separate Irish jigs and forms of European music, theme and variation—those things cannot be taken out of jazz or diminished because it also adds African sounds. Those things came together in our music. For us to try to separate them is like punching water.

So I think that, for our purposes, we're not talking about whether a musician is black or not. Your chance of playing like Charlie Parker is zero whether you're white or black. [*audience laughter*] My father used to make this point to me when we were growing up: "Who somebody is is always more important than what they are." And you don't know what they are anyway. So I want us to consider the fact that maybe race might be something that's only made real by the politicization of it in our country.

A Conversation on Jazz & Race



GUESS: In Eddie Glaude's book *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*, he coins two phrases. One is "the value gap" and the other one is "racial habits." The value gap is the fact that in America white people are valued more than non-white people, and racial habits are the things that we all do—white, black, yellow, red or brown—to perpetuate that, knowingly or unknowingly. Wynton, you've been on a crusade of dealing with swing as the foundational aspect of jazz, rhythmically. Why is there no consensus that swing is the foundational rhythm of jazz, and is there a value gap or racial argument inside of that as to why that may not be the case?

MARSALIS: It's always interesting what you get taught in a school. I had the benefit of a lot of really good teachers, but I know that with some teachers it was always "Don't learn what Louis Armstrong played." Or the choice of music that we would play—we'd say, "Why don't we play one of these?" "We don't need to play that music." It was always kind of selective along racial lines.

We have not only taken the swing rhythm out of our culture, which was a mistake, but also the ability to dance. In the '90s, when I went to schools, the schools I went to, which would have to be close to a thousand, were always black or white; every now and then you'd see an integrated school. One thing that I would do with the white kids was ask them, "Can white people dance?" And they would say, "No." [laughter from audience and panel] And I'd say, "Why? The United States was one of the most dancing countries in the world. Why do y'all think now, 30 or 40 years later, white people can't dance? Is it a racial thing? Is it cultural?" "Oh, we don't really know." "Do y'all think it's important to be able to dance?" "Well, no. Maybe. Yeah, I guess." Why are we not teaching them? Speaking specifically of the swing rhythm, I think that there's something in it that the nation has been against.

IVERSON: You know what? I just left the Bad Plus and I have some more time on my hands. And one thing I said to my wife was, "Finally! Let's take some swing-dancing classes, 'cause I want to learn how to dance."

It feels like there's the personal and then there's the institutional. I've gotten to know some jazz masters: I've gotten to talk to Ron Carter, play some gigs with Billy Hart; there was one night here in your house [JALC], at Dizzy's, that I got to talk to Frank Wess for a bit. If you're in the presence of someone who actually played this music for real, all the questions sort of vanish. There I'm totally on your side: Race is a construct, it's just about the language, and this sort of stuff.

But that's the personal level, and then there's this institutional level. I think you [Marsalis] must have had some very interesting experiences going into institutions that only dealt with European music, and you're there having to be like, "OK, guys, you want me to talk about the shuffle?" I don't know how you have the patience for it, frankly, 'cause every time I'm around some of those cats and jazz comes into the conversation, it's like a brick wall. It's probably better now than it was 20 years ago, but still—just getting institutional respect for the most beautiful and esoteric elements of jazz is difficult.

MARSALIS: Well, in my neighborhood, all my friends were the most ignorant group of people about jazz that I ever encountered in my life. So if I go to my real experience, the truth of what we [African-Americans] all know about our music is very thin.

When I went to Juilliard—first, for me, just to be here [in New York] ... I mean, New Orleans had one skyscraper at that time, and it wasn't really a skyscraper; it was like a ... scraper. [laughter] And to be at Juilliard, I had come from playing only funk, so it was enlightening for me to be around that many serious students. I didn't really care whether they knew about jazz. I was used to being in an environment where nobody knew about the music. I'm from New Orleans. What did we know about the music? Nothing. I had less of an excuse 'cause I had a father who would say, "Listen to Louis Armstrong." Did any of my friends ever listen to Louis Armstrong? We didn't know; he was just a guy with a handkerchief. It's like what you said about taking swing-dance classes with your wife. Can I swing dance? Hell no. My brother

would laugh at me just for my funk dancing. He'd be like, "Damn, man, you gonna get out there with *that*?" [laughter] And we had dance rehearsals once a week. So it's just for us to come to grips with the absoluteness of the ignorance of our form.

For years I would try to beat the students over the head with the swing, which they weren't going to accept anyway, 'cause they had the kind of attitude about the funk and the pop like we all had. They grew up with it; it's easy for them to play. So I just went through a roll call of rhythms in the beginning of the class. I said, "If I ask y'all to sing a clave, what would that be?" They were singing it. I said, "New Orleans march." I said rock, funk, hip-hop, bossa nova—they started playing all these rhythms. Then I said, "OK, what's the rhythm of jazz?" Once we got to that rhythm, they realized that that rhythm was going to have to be swing. I took the funk and the rock and the hip-hop from them. They enthusiastically sang all those rhythms, and then when they realized swing was the rhythm, this is what they did. [turns head to the side and looks sheepishly at the floor, to much laughter from the panel and audience]

So then I asked them a question.

"Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, John Coltrane—those were the best. It was the best music of the 20th century, and almost always, the best musicians of this greatest music were black. End of story."

— ETHAN IVERSON

I said, “If we were in Brazil, and this was a group of Brazilian musicians, and I asked, ‘What is the rhythm of samba?’ would they drop their heads? If we were in New Orleans and I asked a group of musicians, ‘What’s the rhythm of New Orleans?’ would they drop their heads? If we were in Cuba and we started talking about their music, would they drop their heads? Why y’all dropping your head?”

IVERSON: I have something to say related to this that I’ve been thinking about lately. This anecdote might already be outdated, ’cause jazz education has come a long way, in no little part thanks to Wynton Marsalis.

MARSALIS: Thanks to a lot of us.

IVERSON: When I was a kid trying to learn about the music in Wisconsin in the ’80s, the one textbook that seemed universally to be the secret text you needed to find was something called *The Real Book*. Now *The Real Book* is still around; people still have it. In fact, last night I played a gig and the cat was playing “Turn Out the Stars” from the *Real Book* chart. It’s fine; the chart’s accurate. But *The Real Book* sort of came into

existence around the same time [the 1970s] as a certain movement in jazz education centered on Berklee in Boston, and some really brilliant musicians too: Gary Burton, Pat Metheny, Steve Swallow, Carla Bley. But it’s striking that, if you look at the [original] book, sort of notey, even-eighth, “compositionally advanced” white-people composers are perfect: just like the record, an absolute gateway into understanding something about complexity and writing a thorny piece of modern jazz. And if you look at the charts of Thelonious Monk or Duke Ellington, Wayne Shorter, Bobby Hutcherson, they’re essentially worthless: totally inaccurate, and they’ll give you no help in trying to understand how to play that music.

I think jazz education, the focus of it, people always have their personal fiefdoms. Apparently, when the Lenox Music Inn started in the ’50s, Max Roach said, “We shouldn’t teach anybody this stuff,” because he was worried about it just becoming a vehicle for people to have their fiefdoms and make some money as educators. And Stan Kenton, God bless him, great musician, great band, some very important jazz—there’s a sort of thing that goes into North Texas State [now the University

of North Texas] and a certain way of thinking about the music which is ... it’s not about swing, not really. They might be trying to do it sometimes, but they’re far more confident with “music of the future” than with the music of New Orleans. And then with Berklee and that *Real Book*, I think it’s telling about some mistakes that were made in the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s: There was too much confidence from people in power [who said], “Yeah, we’ve got this,” rather than being like, “Well, what does Ron Carter actually have to say about this? What does someone who’s a consecrated, confident musician in all sorts of genres, what would *they* say is important to learn about jazz?”

GUESS: That leads me to a quote by Harold Cruse, from his book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*: “Without a cultural identity that adequately defines himself, the Negro cannot even identify with the American nation as a whole. The fact of the matter is that American whites as a whole are just as much in doubt about their nationality, their cultural identity, as are Negroes. Thus the problem of the Negro cultural identity is an unsolved problem within the context of an American nation that is still in the



Ethan Iverson, Andre Guss and Wynton Marsalis (from left) at Jazz at Lincoln Center in January



process of formation.” He wrote that 50 years ago. In essence, what he’s saying is nobody knows who they are, this country’s so young, and until you begin to understand that you’re inextricably tied culturally, then we cannot move forward. I want both of you to respond, starting with Ethan: [Tell us] whether you agree with this or not and how you think jazz can bring this problem of identity to a head.

IVERSON: I feel like I need to come out here and say we’ve gotta deal with black music. That’s part of my job, and it’s part of my job as an educator when I’m talking to my white piano students. At the same time, man, it’s the *mixture* of all the stuff that made this music that I personally think is the greatest 20th-century stuff. ... I can love myself as a white Wisconsin boy better, you know what I mean? I can have some pride in where I’m from. ... It’s American music.

MARSALIS: I grew up in absolute segregation. I remember we went to some white people’s house. It was a piano player; his name was Chuck Berlin. Now to kind of put you in the South, the level of segregation was so absolute, we had never actually been to any white person’s house. Maybe I was nine years old then, or 10. And I was like, “Why are we going to his house?” My mama said, “That’s your daddy’s friend.” I said, “My daddy got a white friend?” So we went to the man’s house. It was a house. It had toilets [laughter], a TV, you know. It wasn’t like our house necessarily, but it was a house. And then he came to our house, and one of my friends said, “Man, is your daddy in trouble? [laugh-

ter] I saw that white man came to y’all house. Is he going to jail?”

Now we’re laughing at it, because it’s funny. But the fact that race is a construct and that it’s not real doesn’t mean that we don’t live in the non-reality of it. There are always stand-ins for reality, and those stand-ins then become what we misconstrue as reality, so it becomes difficult for us to get back to reality. People who can play come from anywhere. But this kind of desire to take the achievements of a few people and make it be a representation of a group—now all these groups are gonna battle.

I’m just gonna tell y’all a couple of stories, funny things that stuck out in my mind. Me and Gerry Mulligan—you know, I always loved him and we would always argue about race. He’d say, “I notice you got all black guys in your band.” I’d say, “I notice you got all white people in your band.” [laughter] He’d say, “Man, why would I get some black guys who can’t play in my band to tell me I can’t play ‘cause I’m white?” I’d say, “Why would I get some white dudes that can’t play in my band *because* they’re white?” He said, “I want you to listen to this recording of Adrian Rollini.” I said, “Adrian Rollini? Pssh.” He said, “You ever heard him play?” I said, “No, but I know he’s white.” [laughter] He said, “Well, can I ask you a question?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “Are you a better musician because you don’t know who he is?” Now, that’s a good story, and he was right. I listened to Adrian Rollini, and damn, he could play vibes, he could play bass saxophone. But did I have a white person in my band and did he have a black one? No.

Albert Murray, I would always have

stories for him when I was growing up about white people I fought with, racism, teachers that cheated me out of stuff, stuff that I had to go through that I didn’t like. One day he said, “Man, of all the experiences you had that you didn’t like, that I’ve heard you chronicle for the last 15 years ad nauseam, did a white person ever do something that you liked? [laughter] Who was your teacher?” I said, “Oh yeah, George Jansen. I loved him.” He said, “Why is he not ever a part of these stories you’re telling me? Why is the actual totality of your experience never a part of how you’ve decided to construct your view of the universe?” So the question for America is, why is this universe never inclusive of all the things black people contributed to this country?

GUESS: Ethan, have you experienced a value gap for yourself or other white musicians playing this music that is considered to have come from—that *does* come from—the Afro-American experience and is born out of slaves and the descendants of slaves?

IVERSON: The Bad Plus had this incredible breakthrough in 2003. We got signed to a major label and sold 100,000 copies of our first record. And it was stylistically diverse. There were influences that were non-jazz. And I stand by that music. But once I had a platform that I felt had some light on it, I thought, “I want to make sure that anyone who’s following me knows that other people built this house that I’m living in now.” Which is why I started writing about the music, with an emphasis on people I considered jazz masters and who were often black. I think when you’re young and you’re good, you want to emulate the people you feel like you can be. So I have to turn the question around on you a little bit. I’ve never seen a creative, good white jazz musician questioned about whether they can play or not. In fact, it’s a tragedy to look at a *DownBeat* from the 1950s and ’60s. I actually wrote a letter one time to *DownBeat* because I was thinking about doing a story about who’s on the cover and who’s in the advertisements. It’s straight-up racist. Not that they aren’t all worthy musicians, but all you need to know is that [Dave] Brubeck was the first [jazz musician] on

the cover of *Time* [actually the second, after Louis Armstrong].

I'm pretty sure that Wynton and I don't share the same tastes in this music. There's a lot of stuff that doesn't sound like jazz to him that I think is great. It's "improvised music," whatever. [Marsalis laughs] But I think part of what I'm here to do, in my role as a writer or as an educator, is to be like, "I hear you, I'm glad you're checking out Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett and this kind of thing, but you should also make sure to check out James P. Johnson and Thelonious Monk and Sonny Clark and Kenny Kirkland. Just because this feels good to you and you feel like, 'Oh, I can see myself in the image of Brad Mehldau more easily than in the image of Marcus Roberts,' that doesn't mean you should just take that and run with it to the exclusion of thinking about the whole parameter of this American music."

GUESS: I'm not a musician; I'm a lover of the music. But when I hear the blues, when I hear the turnaround, the turnaround to me is the most palpable sense of hope in the blues. And where we find ourselves as a country, with the line of demarcation that's being drawn for us to make a false binary choice, Obama in 2008 symbolized the turnaround—the aspect of hope for the country in general and for blacks in particular. What do you guys think? Is the turnaround coming? [laughter from panel and audience]

MARSALIS: Let me tell you, I don't see it. But I believe in it, and sometimes that belief is seeing it.

IVERSON: Well, the blues is strangely optimistic. [And although] there's this adolescent period when you're really into sad music—you think Mahler has all the answers or something...

MARSALIS: Mahler? Who'd he play for? [laughter]

GUESS: Bob Mahler, the reggae guy? [laughter]

IVERSON: I do believe in optimistic music. And frankly, most of the music I consume as a fan, I do feel optimism from that. One of the beautiful things about classic jazz is that there's a lot of

complex textures. The blues is a complex texture. A lot of music can be straight-up—it's just telling you what this is and this is how you're supposed to feel. But the blues, man, there's warp and woof in that. And the jazz masters that I've gotten to talk to—I'll say some of the same names again, Ron Carter, Billy Hart, Tootie Heath—whatever they say, it's complicated. It's funny, it's sad, it's the whole thing, in these sort of pronouncements about life. It's circular.

One of the greatest, perhaps the greatest book on jazz for me is *Notes and Tones* by Arthur Taylor. It's really the only time the cats spoke to each other. 'Cause in interviews where some white critic is talking to them, it's OK, but *this* is the people that really made this music talking to a great drummer. And maybe I'll just close my part here with something about the complex emotion of this music, and how there's optimism in the blues moment. [picks up book and opens it]

This is Don Byas talking, and Don Byas was one of the greats, a key person for harmony. Anyway, Art Taylor says [reading from book], "Have you ever felt any kind of protest in your music?" Byas

says, "I'm protesting now. If you will listen, you will notice I'm always trying to make my sound stronger and more brutal than ever. I shake the walls in the joints I play in. I'm always trying to sound brutal without losing the beauty, in order to impress people and wake them up. ... My form of protest is to play as hard and strong as I can. In other words, *you* did this and *you* did that, so now take *this!*" [applause]

MARSALIS: That's great. I always say that, with Gerry Mulligan and Marcus Belgrave and Lew Soloff and all the unbelievable, great musicians I knew like I was a part of the family, people like Elvin Jones and John Lewis ... I feel like we want to create the world they were trying to create. They were people of great reality, like what Ethan read of what Don Byas said. They weren't like, "OK, we had this history in the country, we got messed over, but let's all smile and have a Coke and it's gonna work out." We had eight years of that, hope and change. Now we see what that led to. So we're not saying non-constructive engagement, we're saying constructive engagement. **JT**

Jamey Aebersold's
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2018- 2019 International JAZZ Festival GUIDE



INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY

April 30, 2018
St. Petersburg, Russia and
Sydney, Australia (2019)
(and all around the world)
jazzday.com

United States

NORTHEAST

BOSCOV'S BERKS JAZZ FEST

April 6-15, 2018
Various venues,
Reading/Berks County, PA
berksjazzfest.com

EXIT O INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL (SPRING)

April 20-22, 2018
Cape May, NJ
exit0jazzfest.com

CENTER CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 28, 2018
Various venues, Philadelphia, PA
ccjazzfest.com

ALLENTOWN JAZZFEST

Dates currently unconfirmed
Various venues,
Allentown, PA
allentownjazzfest.org

CELEBRATE

MARY LOU WILLIAMS

May 5, 2018 at 7:00PM
Kennedy Center,
Washington, DC
kennedy-center.org

BERLIN JAZZ & BLUES BASH

May 5, 2018
Historic Downtown
Berlin, MD
berlinchamber.org

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL

May 10-12, 2018
Jazz at Lincoln Center,
New York, NY
academy.jazz.org/ee/

VISION FESTIVAL

May 23-28, 2018
509 Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn, NY
artsforart.org/vf23.html

HAPPY VALLEY MUSIC FEST

June 1-2, 2018
Various venues, downtown,
State College, PA
happyvalleymusicfest.com

CAPITAL JAZZ FEST

June 1-3, 2018
Merriweather Post Pavilion,
Columbia, MD
capitaljazz.com

DOLLAR BANK THREE RIVERS ARTS FESTIVAL

June 1-10, 2018
Point State Park, Pittsburgh, PA
traf.trustarts.org/

BURLINGTON DISCOVER JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 1-10, 2018
Various venues, Burlington, VT
discoverjazz.com

BLUE NOTE JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
Various venues, Harlem,
New York, NY
bluenotejazzfestival.com

CAMBRIDGE ARTS RIVER FESTIVAL

June 2, 2018
Central Square, Cambridge, MA
cambridgema.gov/arts/
programs/riverfestival

GREAT GRAPES! WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

June 2, 2018
Oregon Ridge Park,
Hunt Valley, MD
uncorkthefun.com

M&T SYRACUSE JAZZ FEST

2018 dates are unconfirmed
Onondaga Community
College Campus
Syracuse, NY
syracusejazzfest.com

DC JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 8-17, 2018
Various venues, Washington, DC
dcjazzfest.org

TAKOMA PARK JAZZFEST

2018 Dates TBD
Old Town, Takoma Park, MD
tpjazzfest.org

BERKSHIRE GATEWAY JAZZ WEEKEND

June 14-17, 2018
Downtown Lee, MA
berkshiregatewayjazz.org

PITTSBURGH JAZZLIVE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

June 15-17, 2018
Various venues, Pittsburgh, PA
pittsburghjazzlive.com

MANASSAS JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 16, 2018
Manassas Museum lawn,
Manassas, VA
visitmanassas.org

DUPONT CLIFFORD BROWN JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 17-24, 2018
Rodney Square,
10th and Market Streets,
Wilmington, DE
cliffordbrownjazzfest.com

XEROX ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 22-30, 2018
Various venues, Rochester, NY
rochesterjazz.com



FREIHOFFER'S SARATOGA JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 23-24, 2018
Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs, NY
saratoga.com/summer/jazz-festival/

WINDJAMMER DAYS

June 24-30, 2018
Boothbay Harbor Waterfront and other locations, Boothbay Harbor, ME
boothbayharbor.com

DJANGO REINHARDT NY FESTIVAL

July 10-15, 2018
Birdland, New York, NY
djangobirdland.com

CENTRAL PA JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 5-8, 2018
Mt. Gretna, PA
friendsofjazz.org

BANG ON A CAN SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 9-29, 2018
MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA
bangonacan.org/summer_festival

92Y JAZZ IN JULY FESTIVAL

July 17-26, 2018
92nd Street Y, New York, NY
92Y.org/Jazz

GREATER HARTFORD FESTIVAL OF JAZZ

July 20-22, 2018
Downtown Hartford
Bushnell Park
Hartford, CT
hartfordjazz.org/

ARTSCAPE

July 20-22, 2018
Mount Royal Avenue Corridor, Baltimore, MD
artscape.org/

CARAMOOR JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 21, 2018
Caramoor Center for Music & the Arts
Katonah, NY
caramoor.org/events/jazz-festival-2018/

MARYLAND SUMMER JAZZ

July 25-28, 2018
Richard Montgomery High School
Rockville, MD
marylandsummerjazz.com

FLOYDFEST

July 25-29, 2018
Blue Ridge Parkway, Floyd, VA
floydfest.com

LITCHFIELD JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 28-29, 2018
Goshen Fairgrounds, Goshen, CT
litchfieldjazzfest.com

JACKSON HEIGHTS JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 dates are unconfirmed
Jackson Heights, NY
joeknipes.com

NEWPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 3-5, 2018
International Tennis Hall of Fame, Fort Adams State Park, Newport, RI
newportjazz.org/

MUSIKFEST

August 2, 3, 10 & 12, 2018
Downtown, Bethlehem, PA
musikfest.org

ROCKPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 dates are unconfirmed
Shalin Liu Performance Center, Rockport, MA
rockportmusic.org

PROVINCETOWN JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 9 & 13, 2018
Aug 9: The Crown & Anchor
Aug 13: Cotuit Center for the Arts
Provincetown, MA
provincetownjazzfestival.org

HUDSON VALLEY JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 9-12, 2018
Warwick, NY
hudsonvalleyjazzfest.org

MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 11, 2018
Nishuane Park, Montclair, NJ
montclairjazzfestival.org

MORRISTOWN JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

August 19, 2018
On the Green, Morristown, NJ
morristownjazzandblues.com

2018-2019 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL GUIDE

CHARLIE PARKER JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 23-26, 2018
Marcus Garvey Park,
Tompkins Square Park,
New York, NY
cityparksfoundation.org

MONTY ALEXANDER JAZZ FEST

August 31-September 2, 2018
Avalon Theater,
Easton, MD
jazzonthesapeake.com

ROSSLYN JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
Gateway Park,
Arlington, VA
rosslynva.org

DELAWARE WATER GAP CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS

2018 Dates TBD
Delaware Avenue,
Delaware Water Gap, PA
cotajazz.org

ALBANY RIVERFRONT JAZZ FESTIVAL

September 8, 2018
Albany Riverfront,
Albany, NY
albanyevents.org/events/
Albany_Riverfront_Jazz_Festival_6_event_main.htm

BERKLEE BEANTOWN JAZZ FESTIVAL

September 29, 2018
South End: Columbus Avenue,
Boston, MA
beantownjazz.org

PITTSFIELD CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
Various venues,
Pittsfield, MA
berkshiresjazz.org

CAPITAL AUDIOFEST

November 2-4, 2018
Hilton Hotel at Twinbrook Metro
Rockville, MD
capitalaudiofest.com

EXIT O INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL (FALL)

2018 dates are unconfirmed
Various venues, Cape May, NJ
exit0jazzfest.com

JAZZ CONGRESS

January 2019
Frederick Rose Hall,
Jazz at Lincoln Center
New York, NY
jazzcongress.org

NYC WINTER JAZZFEST

January 2019
Various venues, New York, NY
winterjazzfest.com

MID-ATLANTIC JAZZ FESTIVAL

February 2019
Rockville Hilton,
Rockville, MD
midatlanticjazzfestival.org

VILLANOVA JAZZ FESTIVAL

2019 Dates TBD
Villanova University
Villanova, PA
villanova.edu

SOUTHEAST

SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL

March 29 – April 14, 2018
Various venues,
Savannah, GA
savannahmusicfestival.org

PENSACOLA JAZZFEST

April 7-8, 2018
Historic Seville Square,
Pensacola, FL
jazzpensacola.com

FRENCH QUARTER FESTIVAL

April 12-15, 2018
French Quarter,
New Orleans, LA
fqfi.org

SEABREEZE JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 18-22, 2018
Pier Park Outdoor
Amphitheatre,
Panama City, FL
seabreezejazzfestival.com

JAZZANOOGA

Various Events
Throughout the Year
Chattanooga, TN
jazzanooga.org

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 14, 2018
Vicksburg Convention Center,
Vicksburg, MS
alcorn.edu

GREAT GRAPES! WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

May 5, 2018
Booth Amphitheatre,
Cary, NC
uncorkthefun.com

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LOUISIANE

April 25-29, 2018
Outdoor; Downtown,
Lafayette, LA
festivalinternational.org/

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FEST

April 26-28, 2018
Various venues, Miami, FL
miamiinternationaljazzfest.org

ART OF COOL FEST

April 27-29, 2018
Downtown, Durham, NC
aocfestival.org

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ & HERITAGE FESTIVAL

April 27-May 6, 2018
Fair Grounds Race Course,
New Orleans, LA
nojazzfest.com

SUNFEST

May 3-6, 2018
Flagler Drive waterfront,
West Palm Beach, FL
sunfest.com

MAIN STREET JAZZFEST

May 4-5, 2018
Murfreesboro Public Square,
Murfreesboro, TN
jazzfestmainstreet.com

ARTSPLOSURE

May 19-20, 2018
Moore Square Park,
Raleigh, NC
artsplosure.org

JACKSONVILLE JAZZ FESTIVAL

May 24-27, 2018
Various venues, Jacksonville, FL
jacksonvillejazzfest.com/

ATLANTA JAZZ FESTIVAL

May 26-27, 2018
Piedmont Park, Atlanta, GA
atlanta.net/events/atlanta-jazz-festival/

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA'S WELLS FARGO JAZZ SERIES

May 25 – June 10, 2018
Various venues in historic
theaters, churches and
outdoor spaces,
Charleston, SC
spoletousa.org

STEEL CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 1-2, 2018
Downtown,
Birmingham, AL
steelcityjazzfestbham.com

HAMPTON JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 22-24, 2018
Hampton Coliseum,
Hampton, VA
hamptonjazzfestival.com

FESTIVAL FOR THE ENO

July 4 & 7, 2018
West Point on the Eno
Durham City Park, Durham, NC
enofest.org/

AT&T NORFOLK JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 24-25, 2018
Town Point Park,
Norfolk, VA
festevents.org/
events/2018-season-events/
norfolkwaterfrontjazzfestival/

W.C. HANDY MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 20-29, 2018
The Shoal, Florence, AL
wchandymusicfestival.org

SATCHMO SUMMERFEST

August 3-5, 2018
Louisiana State Museum's
Old U.S. Mint,
New Orleans, LA
satchmosummerfest.org/

ALABAMA WOMEN IN JAZZ FESTIVAL

September 8, 2018
Insanity Skate Park,
Huntsville, AL
valleyartsandentertainment.org

LOUISIANA SHRIMP & PETROLEUM FESTIVAL

August 30 – September 3, 2018
Downtown, Morgan City, LA
shrimppandpetroleum.org/
future-dates

HOT SPRINGS JAZZFEST

August 30 – September 3, 2018
Uptown Hot Springs
National Park,
Hot Springs, AR
hsjazzsociety.org

LOW COUNTRY JAZZ FESTIVAL

September 1-2, 2018
North Charleston Performing
Arts Center,
North Charleston, SC
lowcountryjazzfest.com

GREAT GRAPES! WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

October 6, 2018
Symphony Park at SouthPark
Mall,
Charlotte, NC
uncorkthefun.com



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Kamasi Washington
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**Ólafur Arnalds
Jean-Michel Blais**
June 29
Maison symphonique de Montréal



Snarky Puppy
June 28
MTELUS



Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band
July 3
Monument-National



Béla Fleck and the Flecktones
July 1
Théâtre Maisonneuve, PdA



Holly Cole
July 5
Maison symphonique, PdA



Mike Stern with Randy Brecker, Tom Kennedy and Dennis Chambers
June 30
Monument-National



François Bourassa Quartet
July 3
L'Astral



Keyon Harrold
June 28
Gesù



Gogo Penguin
A Humdrum Star Live
July 1
Club Soda

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2018-2019 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL GUIDE

RED RIVER REVEL ARTS FESTIVAL

September 29 – October 7, 2018
Festival Plaza,
Shreveport, LA
redriverrevel.com

JAZZ ON THE CUMBERLAND

May 13, June 17, July 15,
August 19, September 16,
October 21, 2018
Granville Veterans Park,
Granville, TN
granvilletn.com

DUCK JAZZ FESTIVAL

October 6-7, 2018
Duck Town Green, Duck, NC
duckjazz.com

LES DEMERLE AMELIA ISLAND JAZZ FESTIVAL

October 7-14, 2018
Amelia Island,
Fernandina Beach, FL
ameliaislandjazzfestival.com

CHARLESTON INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

2019 dates are unconfirmed
Charleston, SC
chsjazzfest.com

SARASOTA JAZZ FESTIVAL

2019 Dates TBD
Sarasota, FL
jazzclubsarasota.org

MIDWEST

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY JAZZ & WORLD FESTIVAL

April 9-24, 2018
Various venues,
Columbus, OH
capital.edu/jazz-and-world-
music-festival/

KNOX-ROOTABAGA JAZZ FEST

April 12-14, 2018
Galesburg, IL
knox.edu

GLENN MILLER FESTIVAL

June 7-10, 2018
Various venues,
Clarinda, IA
glennmiller.org

TWIN CITIES JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 21-23, 2018
Mears Park, St. Paul, MN
twincitiesjazzfestival.com

TRI-C JAZZFEST CLEVELAND

June 28-30, 2018
Various venues,
Cuyahoga
Community College,
Cleveland, OH
tri-c.edu/jazzfest

SUMMER SOLSTICE JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 22-23, 2018
Albert Street, Downtown,
East Lansing, MI
eljazzfest.com

ELKHART JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 22-24, 2018
Six downtown stages,
Elkhart, IN
elkhartjazzfestival.com

IOWA CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 29-July 1, 2018
Downtown Iowa City, IA
summerofthearts.org

SIoux FALLS JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

July 20-21, 2018
Yankton Trail Park,
Sioux Falls, SD
siouxfallsjazzfest.com/

LANCASTER FESTIVAL

July 19-28, 2018
Various venues,
Lancaster, OH
lancasterfestival.org

COLUMBUS JAZZ & RIB FEST

July 20-22, 2018
The Arena District,
Columbus, OH
hotribscooljazz.org

BIX BEIDERBECKE MEMORIAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 2-4, 2018
Waterfront Center and Isle of
Capri Hotel and Convention
Center, Bettendorf, IA
bixsociety.org

LANSING JAZZFEST

August 3-4, 2018
Old Town, Lansing, MI
jazzlansing.com

CHEESE CAPITAL JAZZ CRAWL FOR THE ARTS

August 10, 2018
Plymouth Arts Center,
Plymouth, WI
plymoutharts.org

CHICAGO JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 30 – September 2, 2018
Grant Park, Chicago, IL
cityofchicago.org/
specialevents

DETROIT INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 31 – September 3, 2018
Hart Plaza, Woodward Ave.,
Campus Martius, Detroit, MI
detroitjazzfest.com

GRAND HOTEL LABOR DAY JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 31 – September 3, 2018
Grand Hotel,
Mackinac Island, MI
grandhotel.com

FOX JAZZ FEST

September 1-2, 2018
Jefferson Park, Menasha, WI
foxjazzfest.com

SOUTH BEND JAZZ FESTIVAL

October 5-6, 2018
Century Center, South Bend, IN
southbendjazzfestival.com

WEST

CHANDLER JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 6-7, 2018
Historic Downtown Chandler,
Chandler, AZ
chandleraz.gov/jazz

SFJAZZ POETRY FESTIVAL

April 5-8, 2018
SFJAZZ Center,
San Francisco, CA
sfjazz.org

OCEANSIDE JAZZ FESTIVAL

Vocal Festival, April 12-14, 2018
Jazz Band Festival, May 5, 2018
MiraCosta College,
Oceanside, CA
oceansidejazzfestival.com

UNC/GREELEY JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 19-21, 2018
Union Colony Civic Center,
Greeley, CO
uncjazzfest.com



Regina Carter at the
2017 Detroit Jazz Festival

CLEARWATER JAZZ HOLIDAY

October 18-21, 2018
Coachman Park,
Clearwater, FL
clearwaterjazz.com

KENTUCK FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

October 20-21, 2018
Kentuck Park, Northport, AL
kentuck.org

SUNCOAST DIXIELAND JAZZ CLASSIC

November 16-18, 2018
Sheraton Sand Key Resort,
Clearwater Beach, FL
suncoastjazzfestival.com/

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 12 & 13, 2018
NMU Campus, Marquette, MI
nmu.edu/music/jazz-festival

WICHITA JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 2-8, 2018
Various venues, Wichita, KS
wichitajazzfestival.com

SCOTT JOPLIN RAGTIME FEST

May 30-June 2, 2018
Historic downtown,
Sedalia, MO
scottjoplin.org



**60+ ARTISTS
OVER 3 DAYS!**
newportjazz.org

**CHARLES LLOYD'S
80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

Charles Lloyd & Friends feat. Lucinda Williams with Jason Moran, Marvin Sewell, Stuart Mathis, Reuben Rogers & Eric Harland

Sangam with Zakir Hussain & Eric Harland

Charles Lloyd New Quartet with Jason Moran, Reuben Rogers & Eric Harland

PAT METHENY

with Antonio Sanchez, Linda May Han Oh & Gwilym Simcock

**GEORGE CLINTON &
PARLIMENT FUNKADELIC**

R+R=NOW

Robert Glasper, Terrace Martin, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Derrick Hodge, Taylor McFerrin & Justin Tyson

JON BATISTE

ANDRA DAY

GREGORY PORTER

STILL DREAMING

with Joshua Redman, Ron Miles, Scott Colley & Brian Blade

BADBADNOTGOOD

LIVING COLOUR

LEAN ON ME:

José James Celebrates Bill Withers

ARTEMIS

featuring Cécile McLorin Salvant, Renee Rosnes, Anat Cohen, Melissa Aldana, Ingrid Jensen, Noriko Ueda & Allison Miller

THE DIVA JAZZ ORCHESTRA

TONY ALLEN

**AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE'S
ORIGAMI HARVEST**

CORY HENRY & THE FUNK APOSTLES

GOGO PENGUIN

MICHEL CAMILO

HAROLD MABERN & ERIC ALEXANDER

GRACE KELLY

**RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA
INDO-PAK COALITION**

MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS COMING!



Eventbrite

2018-2019 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL GUIDE

RENO JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 26-28, 2018
University of Nevada – Reno
Reno, NV
unr.edu/rjf

BAKERSFIELD JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 27-28, 2018
Cal State University
Bakersfield, CA
bakersfieldjazz.com

DENTON ARTS & JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 27-29, 2018
Denton's Quakertown Park and
Facilities,
Denton, TX
dentonjazzfest.com

LAS VEGAS CITY OF LIGHTS JAZZ & R&B FESTIVAL

April 28-29, 2018
Government Amphitheater
Hills Park at Summerlin,
Las Vegas, NV
yourjazz.com

JUNEAU JAZZ & CLASSICS

May 4-19, 2018
Various venues, Juneau, AK
jazzandclassics.org

BALLARD JAZZ FESTIVAL

May 16-19, 2018
Various venues,
Seattle, WA
ballardjazzfestival.com

WEST TEXAS JAZZ PARTY

May 18-19, 2018
MCM Eleganté, Odessa, TX
wtjs.org/jazz-party

BELLEVUE JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

May 30 – June 3, 2018
Various venues,
Downtown Bellevue, WA
bellevuedowntown.com

HYATT REGENCY NEWPORT BEACH JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 1-3, 2018
Hyatt Regency Newport Beach,
Newport Beach, CA
festivals.hyattconcerts.com

HEALDSBURG JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 1-10, 2018
Various venues, Healdsburg, CA
healdsburgjazzfestival.org

BRIAN CULBERTSON'S NAPA VALLEY JAZZ GETAWAY

June 6-10, 2018
Jamieson Ranch Vineyards,
Napa, CA
jazzgetaway.com

SAN FRANCISCO JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 5-17, 2018
SFJAZZ Center,
San Francisco, CA
sfjazz.org

PLAYBOY JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 9-10, 2018
Hollywood Bowl,
Los Angeles, CA
hollywoodbowl.com

JAZZ IN JUNE FESTIVAL

June 14-16, 2018
Brookhaven Village,
Andrews Park, Norman, OK
jazzinjune.org

WALLA WALLA SWEET ONION FESTIVAL

July 21, 2018
Walla Walla County
Fairgrounds, Walla Walla, WA
sweetonions.org

JAZZ ASPEN SNOWMASS JUNE EXPERIENCE

June 22-24, 2018
Benedict Music Tent, Aspen, CO
jazzaspen.org

STANFORD JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
Stanford University,
Stanford, CA
stanfordjazz.org

FILLMORE JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 30 – July 1, 2018
Fillmore Street,
San Francisco, CA
fillmorejazzfestival.com

SAN DIEGO SMOOTH JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 29 – July 1, 2018
Embarcadero Marina Park,
San Diego, CA
rainbowpromotions.com

NEW MEXICO JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 11-29, 2018
Various venues,
Albuquerque, NM
outpostspace.org

CATHEDRAL PARK JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 20-22, 2018
Cathedral City Park,
Portland, OR
cpjazz.com

NAPA VALLEY FESTIVAL DEL SOLE

July 20-29, 2018
Various venues,
Napa Valley, CA
fdsnapa.org

FAIRBANKS SUMMER ARTS FESTIVAL

July 15-29, 2018
University of Alaska
Fairbanks campus,
Fairbanks, AK
fsaf.org

CENTRUM'S JAZZ PORT TOWNSEND

July 22-29, 2018
Ft. Worden State Park &
downtown clubs,
Port Townsend, WA
centrum.org

EVERGREEN JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 27-29, 2018
Various venues, Evergreen, CO
evergreenjazz.org

JAZZ IN THE VALLEY

July 27-29, 2018
Historic downtown,
Ellensburg, WA
jazzinthevalley.com

FESTIVAL AT SANDPOINT

August 2-12, 2018
War Memorial Field,
Sandpoint, ID
festivalatsandpoint.com

HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
Bayou Music Center, Houston, TX
jazzeducation.org

TELLURIDE JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 3-5, 2018
Telluride Town Park and clubs,
Telluride, CO
telluridejazz.org

VINO & NOTES WINE FESTIVAL

August 4, 2018
Memorial Park,
Woodland Park, CO
vinoandnotes.com

SAN JOSE JAZZ SUMMER FEST

August 10-12, 2018
Downtown San Jose,
San Jose, CA
sanjosejazz.org

LONG BEACH JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 10-12, 2018
Rainbow Lagoon Park,
Long Beach, CA
longbeachjazzfestival.com

IDYLLWILD JAZZ IN THE PINES

August 10-12, 2018
Idyllwild Arts Academy,
Idyllwild, CA
jazzinthepines.com

VANCOUVER WINE & JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 24-26, 2018
Esther Short Park,
Vancouver, WA
vancouverwinejazz.com

PRESCOTT JAZZ SUMMIT

2018 Dates TBD
Downtown Prescott, AZ
prescottjazz.com

VAIL JAZZ PARTY

August 30 – September 3, 2018
Various venues,
Vail, CO
vailjazz.org

JAZZ ASPEN SNOWMASS LABOR DAY EXPERIENCE

August 31 – September 2, 2018
Snowmass Village Town Park,
Snowmass Village, CO
jazzaspen.org

MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL

September 21-23, 2018
Monterey Fairgrounds,
Monterey, CA
montereyjazzfestival.org

OREGON COAST JAZZ PARTY

2018 dates are unconfirmed
Newport, OR
jazzatnewport.org

EARSHOT JAZZ FESTIVAL

October 14 – November 4, 2018
Various venues, Seattle, WA
earshot.org

CATALINA ISLAND JAZZTRAX FESTIVAL

October 11-14/18-21, 2018
Avalon Casino Ballroom,
Avalon, CA
jazztrax.com

SUN VALLEY JAZZ JAMBOREE

October 17-21, 2018
Sun Valley Resort,
Sun Valley, ID
sunvalleyjazz.com

JAZZ EDUCATION NETWORK CONFERENCE

January 9-12, 2019
Reno, NV
jazzednet.org

LIONEL HAMPTON INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

2019 Dates TBD
University of Idaho,
Moscow, ID
uidaho.edu/jazzfest

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 OLIVER LAKE BIG BAND / PATRICIA BARBER / TERENCE BLANCHARD feat. the E-Collective**

Delfeayo Marsalis / Terri Lyne Carrington: Celebrating Geri Allen’s Genius, Grace & Fire / Frédéric Yonnet Raul Midón / Edmar Castañeda & Gregoire Maret / Fabrizio Bosso / Jeff Parker / Jaimie Branch’s Fly or Die AACM Special Ensemble / Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra / Yosvany Terry & Baptiste Trotignon’s Ancestral Memories / Washington Renaissance Orchestra Octet / Kris Funn & Cornerstore / Melissa Andana Roy Hargrove / Lisa Fischer / Michael Thomas Quintet / Allyn Johnson & Meet the Artist feat. Paul Carr Sam Prather Groove Orchestra / AMP Trio feat. Tahira Clayton / Rochelle Rice / Mark G. Meadows Todd Marcus Quintet / Esther Williams & Davey Yarborough / The Redd Brothers / Christie Dashiell Quartet Veronneau w/Dave Kline / Brian & Jessica Settles / Marshall Keys Soulful Path / Free Benjamin & Ayanna Gregory / The Jihye Lee Orchestra / Jo-Go Project / Shacara Rogers / Javier Moreno Chris Grasso Quartet / Tom Teasley / Charmaine Michelle Quintet / Ka’Ba Soul Singer / Liberation Project Ajoyo / Aaron Myers / Herb Scott / Donvonte` McCoy / Lena Seikaly / DC JazzPrix Finalists / And many more!

For tickets, artists and a complete schedule, visit DCJAZZFEST.ORG



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2018-2019 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL GUIDE

BIAMP PDX JAZZ FESTIVAL

February 15-25, 2019
Various venues,
Portland, OR
pdxjazz.com

SAN JOSE WINTER JAZZ FESTIVAL

2019 Dates TBD
Downtown San Jose,
San Jose, CA
sanjosejazz.org

BRUBECK FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
University of the Pacific,
Stockton, CA
brubeckinstitute.org

NEXT GENERATION JAZZ FESTIVAL

2019 Dates TBD
Various venues, Monterey, CA
montereyjazzfestival.org

International and Cruises

CANADA

FESTIVAL JAZZ & BLUES DE SAGUENAY

April 17-21, 2018
Chicoutimi, Jonquiere, QC
jazzetblues.com

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE MUSIQUE ACTUELLE DE VICTORIAVILLE

May 17-20, 2018
Various venues,
Victoriaville, QC
fimav.qc.ca

BARRIE JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

June 7-18, 2018
Various venues, Barrie, ON
barriejazzbluesfest.com

TD WINNIPEG INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 14-24, 2018
Various venues,
Downtown Winnipeg, MB
jazzwinnipeg.com

GIBSONS LANDING JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 15-17, 2018
Various venues,
Gibsons Landing, BC
coastjazz.com

MEDICINE HAT JAZZFEST

June 17-24, 2018
Various venues,
Medicine Hat, AB
medicinehatjazzfest.com

TD OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 21 – July 1, 2018
Confederation Park and other
downtown locations,
Ottawa, ON
ottawajazzfestival.com

TD TORONTO JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 22 – July 1, 2018
Various venues, Toronto, ON
torontojazz.com

EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 22 – July 1, 2018
Various venues, Edmonton, AB
edmontonjazz.com

TD VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL JAZZFEST

June 22 – July 1, 2018
Various venues,
Victoria, BC
jazzvictoria.ca

TD VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 22 – July 1, 2018
40 indoor and outdoor venues,
Vancouver, BC
coastaljazz.ca

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTREAL

June 28 – July 7, 2018
Downtown Montreal,
Montreal, QC
montrealjazzfest.com

QUEBEC CITY SUMMER FESTIVAL

July 5-15, 2018
Various venues,
Quebec City, QC
infofestival.com

BEACHES INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 6-29, 2018
Woodbine Park,
Queen Street East, Toronto, ON
beachesjazz.com

TD HALIFAX JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 11-15, 2018
Festival Tent & other venues,
Halifax, NS
jazzeast.com

TRENTON BIG BAND FESTIVAL

July 20-22, 2018
Downtown Trenton &
Centennial Park Amphitheatre,
Trenton, ON
trentonbigbandfestival.com

KASLO JAZZ FESTIVAL

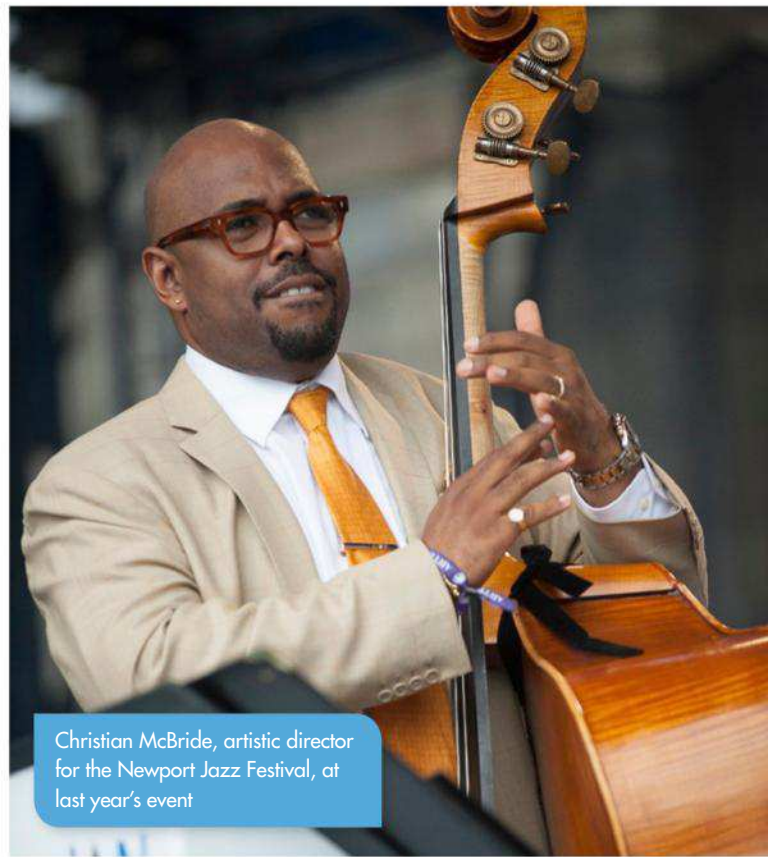
August 3-5, 2018
Kootenay Lake, Kaslo, BC
kaslojazzfest.com

HARVEST JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

September 11-16, 2018
Downtown Fredericton,
Fredericton, NB
harvestjazzandblues.com

GUELPH JAZZ FESTIVAL

September 12-16, 2018
Various venues, Guelph, ON
guelphjazzfestival.com



Christian McBride, artistic director for the Newport Jazz Festival, at last year's event

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 14-19, 2018
Prince Edward County,
Picton, ON
pecjazz.org

FESTI JAZZ INTERNATIONAL RIMOUSKI

August 29 – September 2, 2018
Various venues,
Rimouski, QC
festijazzrimouski.com

AFRICA

CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

March 23-24, 2018
Cape Town International
Convention Centre,
Cape Town, South Africa
capetownjazzfest.com

STANDARD BANK JOY OF JAZZ FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
Sandlon Convention Centre
Johannesburg, South Africa
joyofjazz.co.za

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TD VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

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VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL



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GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



2018-2019 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL GUIDE

ASIA

BORNEO JAZZ
May 11-12, 2018
City of Miri,
Sarawak, Borneo
jazzborneo.com

SEOUL JAZZ FESTIVAL
May 19-20, 2018
Olympic Park,
Seoul Korea
seouljazz.co.kr

TOKYO JAZZ FESTIVAL
2018 dates are unconfirmed
Tokyo International Forum,
Japan
tokyo-jazz.com

JARASUM JAZZ FESTIVAL
October 12-14, 2018
Jarasum Park,
Gapyeong, Korea
jarasumjazz.com

JAZZMANDU
November 1-6, 2018
Various venues in the
Kathmandu Valley,
Kathmandu, Nepal
jazzmandu.com

**JAKARTA INTERNATIONAL
JAVA JAZZ FESTIVAL**
2019 Dates TBD
JIExpo Exhibition Hall,
Kemayoran, Central Jakarta
javajazzfestival.com

AUSTRALIA

**MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL
JAZZ FESTIVAL**
June 1-10, 2018
Various venues,
Melbourne, VIC
melbournejazz.com

CASTLEMAINE JAZZ FESTIVAL
June 8-11, 2018
Various venues,
Castlemaine, VIC
castlemainejazzfestival.com.au

**BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL
JAZZ FESTIVAL**
2018 Dates TBD
Various venues,
Brisbane
bijf.com.au

**BRISBANE VOCAL JAZZ
FESTIVAL**
August 2-5, 2018
Various venues,
Brisbane
brisbanevocaljazzfestival.
com.au

**WANGARATTA FESTIVAL
OF JAZZ**
November 2-4, 2018
Various venues,
Wangaratta, VIC
wangarattajazz.com

**PENANG ISLAND JAZZ
FESTIVAL**
November 29–December 2, 2018
Various venues,
Penang, Malay
penangjazz.com



VICTORIA | BC | CANADA

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VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL
JazzFest
JUNE 22-JULY 1 | 2018

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Produced by:


FESTIVAL INFO: 1-250-388-4423

TOURISM VICTORIA


CARIBBEAN

PUERTO RICO HEINEKEN

JAZZFEST

2018 dates are unconfirmed
Tito Puente Amphitheatre,
San Juan, Puerto Rico
prheinenjazz.com

TOBAGO JAZZ EXPERIENCE

April 2018
Various venues, Tobago

SAINT LUCIA JAZZ FESTIVAL

May 6-13, 2018
Various, Castries, Saint Lucia
stluciazazz.org

ARUBA CARIBBEAN SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL

September 21-22, 2018
Various venues, Aruba
caribbeanseaazz.com

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC JAZZ FESTIVAL

August 24-25, October 28,
November 1-4, 2018
Various, Dominican Republic
drjazzfestival.com

PLAZA JAZZ FESTIVAL

2019 Dates TBD
Various venues, Havana, Cuba

CRUISES AT SEA

DAVE KOZ & FRIENDS AT SEA

May 13-20/20-27, 2018
Aboard: Royal Caribbean's
Serenade of the Seas; Boards
in Copenhagen, Denmark;
Ports of call: Stockholm,
Sweden; Tallinn, Estonia; St.
Petersburg, Russia; Helsinki,
Finland; Copenhagen, Denmark
davekozcruiase.com

JAZZ FEST AT SEA

January 10-20, 2019
Aboard MSC Divina; Boards
in Miami, FL; Ports of call:
St. John's; St. Kitts; Tortola;
Guadeloupe; St. Maarten
jazzfestatsea.com

CAPITAL JAZZ SUPERCRUISE

January 17-25, 2019
Aboard Royal Caribbean's
Independence of the Seas;
Boards in Fort Lauderdale, FL;
Ports of call: Belize City, Belize;
Labadee, Haiti; Roatan Island,
Honduras; Cozumel, Mexico
capitaljazz.com

THE JAZZ CRUISE

January 19-26, 2019
Aboard m/s Celebrity Infinity;
Boards in Ft. Lauderdale, FL;
Ports of call: St. Maarten; St.
Thomas; Grand Bahamas
thejazzcruise.com

BLUE NOTE AT SEA

January 26 – February 2, 2019
Aboard m/s Celebrity Infinity;
Boards in Ft. Lauderdale, FL;
Ports of call: Nassau, Haiti;
Cozumel, Mexico; Belize;
Key West
bluenoteatsea.com

THE SMOOTH JAZZ CRUISE

February 2-9, 2019/
February 23 – March 2, 2019
Aboard m/s Celebrity Infinity;
Boards in Ft. Lauderdale, FL;
Ports of call in Mexico, Belize
and Bahamas
thesmoothjazzcruise.com



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JAZZ
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MAY
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JacksonvilleJazzFest.com



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AARON DIEHL
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JON FADDIS
MELBA JOYCE
KEN PEPLOWSKI
MELISSA ALDANA
HOUSTON PERSON
AND MANY OTHERS!

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92Y Jazz in July is partially endowed by a generous gift from Simona and Jerome A. Chazen. Additional support is generously provided by the Wechsler Foundation and an anonymous donor.

EUROPE

CULLY JAZZ FESTIVAL

April 13-21, 2018
Cully, Switzerland
cullyjazz.ch

TALLINN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL JAZZKAAR

April 20-29, 2018
Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu, Viljandi, Narva, Estonia
jazzkaar.ee

CHELTENHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL

May 2-7, 2018
Montpellier Gardens, Cheltenham, UK
cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz

CITY OF DERRY JAZZ AND BIG BAND FESTIVAL

May 3-7, 2018
City of Derry/Londonderry, Derry, Northern Ireland, Ireland
cityofderryjazzfestival.com

KESWICK JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

May 10-13, 2018
Keswick, UK
keswickjazzandbluesfestival.co.uk

EUROPAFEST

2018 Dates TBD
Auditorium Hall, Bucharest, Romania
europafest.ro

JAZZFEST BONN

April 26-29, 2018/May 3-7, 2018/ May 10-12, 2018
Bonn, Germany
jazzfest-bonn.de

BUCHAREST INTERNATIONAL JAZZ COMPETITION & FESTIVAL

May 12-19, 2018
Concert halls and jazz clubs
Bucharest, Romania
jazzcompetition.ro

THE BATH FESTIVAL

May 11-27, 2018
Bath, UK
bathfestivals.org.uk

NATTJAZZ BERGEN

May 25 - June 2, 2018
USF Verftet, Bergen, Norway
nattjazz.no

MOERS JAZZ FEST

May 18-21, 2018
Moers, Germany
moers-festival.de

NEWPORT ISLE OF WIGHT JAZZ WEEKEND

May 30 - June 3, 2018
Isle of Wight, UK
newportjazzweekend.co.uk

GLASGOW JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 20-24, 2018
Glasgow, UK
jazzfest.co.uk

RIVERBOAT JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 27 - July 1, 2018
Various venues, Silkeborg, Denmark
riverboat.dk

JAZZASCONA

June 21-30, 2018
Various venues, Ascona, Switzerland
jazzascona.ch/en

IMATRA BIG BAND FESTIVAL

2018 Dates TBD
Various venues, Imatra, Finland
ibbf.fi

LEOPOLIS JAZZ FESTIVAL (FORMERLY: ALFA JAZZ FEST)

June 27 - July 1, 2018
Boghdan Khmelnitsky Culture Park, Lviv, Ukraine
leopolisjazz.com

JAZZ IN THE PARK CLUJ NAPOCA

June 21 - July 1, 2018
Central Park Cui, Napoca Cluj, Romania
jazzinthepark.ro

JAZZ À VIENNE

June 28 - July 13, 2018
Roman Theatre, Vienne, France
jazzavienne.com

JAZZ FEST WIEN-VIENNA

June 15 - July 10, 2018
Various venues, including Vienna State Opera, Vienna, Austria
viennajazz.org

KALOTT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

June 29-30, 2018
Various venues, Tornio, Finland
kalottjazzblues.net

MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 29 - July 14, 2018
Auditorium Stravinski, Miles Davis Hall, Seaside, Montreux, Switzerland
montreuxjazz.com



**ATLANTA
JAZZ
FESTIVAL**

dianne reeves

jon batiste and
the dap-kings

the bad plus

jazzmeia horn

**cory henry & the
funk apostles**

tia fuller quartet

& many more



atlantafestivals.com

may 26 & 27
memorial day weekend

piedmont park



2018-2019 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL GUIDE

KONGSBERG JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 4-7, 2018
Various venues,
Kongsberg, Norway
kongsberg-jazzfestival.no

FESTIVAL DJANGO REINHARDT

June 30/July 5-8, 2018
Various venues,
Samois sur Seine, France
festivaldjangoreinhardt.com

NORTH SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 13-15, 2018
Ahoy, Rotterdam, Netherlands
northseajazz.com

MOSTLY JAZZ, FUNK & SOUL FESTIVAL

July 6-8, 2018
Moseley Park,
Birmingham, UK
mostlyjazz.co.uk

COPENHAGEN JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 6-15, 2018
Various venues,
Copenhagen, Denmark
jazzfestival.dk

UMBRIA JAZZ

July 13-22, 2018
Various venues, Perugia,
Umbria, Italy
umbriajazz.com

JAZZ OPEN STUTTGART

July 12-22, 2018
Various venues,
Stuttgart, Germany
jazzopen.com

PORI JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 14-22, 2018
Pori, Finland
porijazz.fi

BOHEMIA JAZZFEST

July 9-17, 2018
Prague and other cities,
Czech Republic
bohemiajazzfest.com

ISTANBUL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 1-19, 2018
Various venues,
Istanbul, Turkey
iksv.org

FESTIVAL DE JAZZ DE VITORIA-GASTEIZ

July 17-21, 2018
Various venues,
Vitoria, Spain
jazzvitoria.com

FUNCHAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 12-14, 2018
Parque de Santa
Catarina, Funchal,
Madeira, Portugal
funchaljazzfestival.org

JAZZ À JUAN

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▶ Apple AirPods

In a Silent Way

MEET THE HEARABLE—THE WIRELESS IN-EAR HEADPHONE THAT MIXES YOUR MUSIC, CALLS, VOICE COMMANDS AND MORE

By Brent Butterworth

When Apple launched its AirPods in December, it brought the tech world's attention to a new product category: hearables. Hearables are tiny, smartphone-connected in-ear headphones that rest in your ears and have no cables. They also incorporate computers and sensing capabilities. In their first two weeks on sale, the average-sounding, \$159 AirPods grabbed 26 percent of the wireless headphone market, which suggests that hearables may someday become as common as smartphones.

Because hearables can tap the power of smartphones and, through them, the Internet, asking what exactly hearables can do is like asking what a computer can do. They can all function as in-ear

▶ Nuheara IQbuds Blue-

mixed with the outside sound. Thus, you can hold a conversation while listening to Gene Ammons blow on "Willow Weep for Me." This feature alone might make hearables a common sight in offices. After all, what meeting wouldn't be more tolerable with Jug playing in the background?

The \$269 Nuheara IQbuds offer noise-cancelling modes optimized for airplane, office, street, home, driving, workout and restaurant settings. Adjustments in the smartphone app let you control how much outside sound you hear, and you can even adjust the bass and treble of that exterior noise—perfect if you're somewhere with loud, rumbling machinery or screeching babies.

Nuheara's upcoming IQbuds Boost take the sound-tailoring a step further by running you through a quick hearing test, then adjusting the sound to compensate for any hearing loss you might have. This could even bring out subtleties in live jazz performances,

especially in high-frequency instruments (flute, cymbals) that older listeners with some degree of hearing loss haven't heard properly in years.

The noise-cancelling features in Bragi's \$329 Dash Pro are much simpler and less adjustable than those in the IQbuds, with just on/off settings for noise cancelling and wind-noise cancelling. The focus with the Dash Pro is much more on the headphones' smart features, such as activity tracking and real-time language translation.

The Dash Pro has a couple of other advantages for jazz listeners, too. It includes 4 GB of internal memory for storing your tunes, so you can listen during your workout

even if you leave your smartphone in the gym locker. It uses balanced-armature drivers of the same sort found in most of the high-end in-ear headphones many audiophiles prefer, and it's also available in a \$599 version that's custom-molded to fit your ear canals, based on molds that a local audiologist takes of your ears.

Many other manufacturers are producing less complex takes on the hearable. Sony's \$279 Xperia Ear Duo is an acoustically open design that does nothing to impede outside sounds; it merely blends your music and responses from its voice-assistant features with whatever sound is going on around you. Jabra's \$169 Elite 65t focuses more on call quality, with four microphones and wind-noise reduction—enhancements that should make accessing Siri, Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa voice-command features more reliable.

Baby Steps

Because hearables are brand new and are serving as the testing platform for many developing technologies, they do present



tooth
head-
phones, and

most have biometric sensors that can track your fitness. Some include voice-command features, for no-hands operation and access to digital assistants such as Apple Siri and Google Assistant. A few can even translate speech in real time.

Right Off

Perhaps the most compelling feature of hearables is the ability to tailor what your ears hear. Many can cancel outside noise while also amplifying conversation—and they let you tune the way the music is



▶ Bragi Dash Pro

a few ergonomic hurdles. Most current models are rather large for something designed to fit in your ear. And while most of the designs offer various sizes and shapes of tips and flanges that let you adjust the fit to suit your ears, the relative bulkiness of the earpieces, when

compared with a typical set of in-ear Bluetooth headphones, does tend to give you the uncomfortable feeling that the earpieces are about to fall out.

Battery life and charging can also be an issue. Many hearables only last about five hours on a charge. Typically, manufacturers supply a "charging case" that has its own battery and recharges the hearables when you put them in the case. The case itself recharges through a standard USB connection. It's a little complicated, and you may not be able to listen to your hearables through a full workday, but the

Jabra Elite 65t



benefits seem to outweigh this disadvantage.

It will be interesting to see how good hearables can get. Will they someday be so effective that they let an acoustic jazz performance pass to your ears unhindered while blocking the annoying chatter of the people at the table next to you? Fans can only hope... **JT**



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Chops

Perfecting the Score

MARC RIBOT AND ANTONIO SANCHEZ ON THE ART OF IMPROVISING TO FILM

By Shaun Brady

When Antonio Sanchez recorded his score for Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Birdman* or (*The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance*), the uniqueness of the situation led him to assume that this would be a one-time thing—after all, solo drum improvisations are hardly common in film soundtracks. But that very idiosyncrasy, combined with the film's Best Picture Oscar, opened a new career path for Sanchez as a soundtrack composer (his most recent work has been for the Epix TV series *Get Shorty*). Four years after *Birdman*'s release, he continues to tour the world accompanying the movie live. "Iñárritu wanted the score to be impro-

vised and very organic," Sanchez says, "so that's what I do live. I try to maintain the dramatic effect that was achieved originally, but every performance is completely different."

Live film scoring presents a unique context for a jazz musician: While the performance aspect offers the same opportunity for in-the-moment creativity, it's coupled with the unchanging demands of a motion picture. An orchestra playing along to *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings* has to nail the familiar dramatic moments from those well-known soundtracks, but an improviser is tasked with capturing the emotional beats of a film without the guidance of notes on paper. "I'm neither improvising freely nor

am I reacting to the image," says guitarist Marc Ribot, who has performed live scores for Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* and Josef von Sternberg's *The Docks of New York*, among other silent classics and new experimental films.

"It's not about what you feel," Ribot says. "It's you collaborating with the director, even if the director's been dead for 50 years, to enable the audience to feel something. When a score is done perfectly, it disappears and you think you're seeing what you're actually hearing."

That creates a conundrum when playing for an audience that arrives at least in part to "see" the artist in question. But Ribot places himself wholly in service of the film, keeping the lights low and himself to one side of the stage, well out of the viewers' sightlines. "What I hope people experience when I do a live score is that they watch the movie and have an experience with the film," he says. "If



▶ "Every performance is completely different," Antonio Sanchez says of his *Birdman* shows

"IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU FEEL," MARC RIBOT SAYS. "IT'S YOU COLLABORATING WITH THE DIRECTOR, EVEN IF THE DIRECTOR'S BEEN DEAD FOR 50 YEARS, TO ENABLE THE AUDIENCE TO FEEL SOMETHING."

they're listening to me like it's a concert, then I'm fucking up."

Whether composing a score that will live with a film for its entire existence or preparing to create music that will accompany it for only one night, Sanchez stresses the importance of getting the film into one's head in a detailed way. "It's a huge difference when you know something really well," he says. "It's the same thing as playing with a live band: If you *kind of* know the music and are reading it on the bandstand, then your playing is going to be a bit handcuffed by your lack of knowledge. But if you know the subject really well, you can start taking liberties here and there that still serve the music and take it deeper. If you know the work of art intimately, you're going to be able to extract way more juice out of it."

"Just watch the movie a lot," Ribot says. "The way I work with a film is I watch it, *a lot*, and I perform with it. My composed scores start out as live scores in my living room, and my live scores wind up continuing the process of watching the movie and doing what I think it needs. In either case, whether it's on paper or in my brain, what I wind up with is a bunch of sonic ideas for what



sounds I'm going to use, and usually with a bunch of motifs."

Another key decision is the instrumentation that will accompany the film; both Sanchez and Ribot play solo, which the guitarist says allows for both musical flexibility and staying true to the demands of the image. "In pure non-film group improvisation, the music follows its own logic," he explains. "In improvisation with a film, the music has to follow the logic of the film in real time, and sometimes has to anticipate and foreshadow the events of the film. One of the weaknesses of group improvisation is its inability to have sharp corners or sudden unison changes."

Regardless of the ensemble format, the most important consideration is to stay in time with the film, keeping the emotional shifts of the music synced to the scene playing out. Both Sanchez and Ribot position themselves so that they can see the big screen, but they also have a video monitor with timecode close at hand. That's especially important

during *Birdman*, when at two points Sanchez has to exactly mimic the playing of an onscreen drummer (played by Nate Smith).

Though best known for his eclectic experimentalism, Ribot insists that any aspiring film composer or accompanist become intimately familiar with the tradition of Hollywood film music.

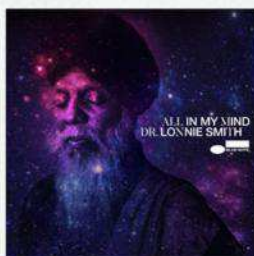
"Most of the world grew up with Hollywood film," he says, "so the language of film scoring is our common culture. Someone that has in their record collection nothing but John Coltrane and free jazz, and someone who has in their record collection nothing but country-and-western, and somebody that has in their record collection nothing but hardcore punk can all sit down in a movie theater and understand exactly what it means when the horns ascend in fifths, and they all cry when the violins come in. So I've found the literacy in the language of classic film scores to be helpful, and the language of them is remarkably consistent and effective." **JT**



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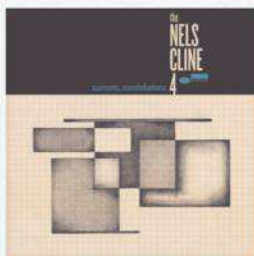


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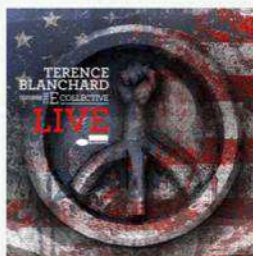


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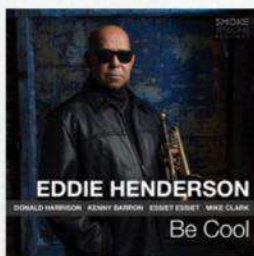


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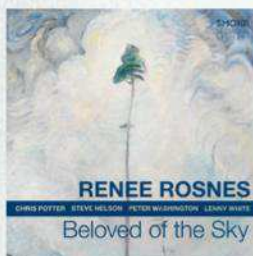


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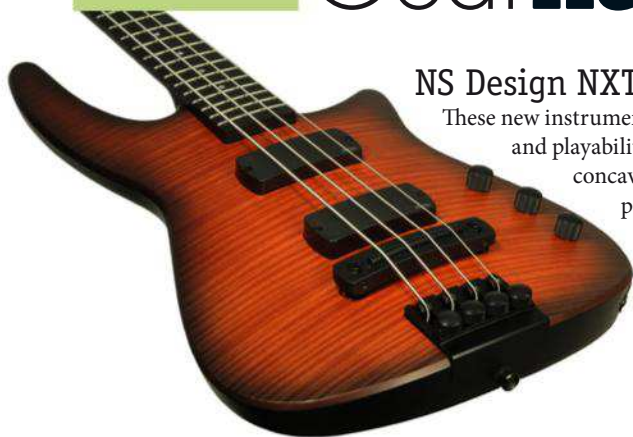
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These new instruments from game-changer Ned Steinberger's NS Design are all about comfort and playability, and feature a wildly ergonomic "Diradial" body with a radiused front and concave back, plus Steinberger's signature headstock-less design that puts the ax in perfect balance (not to mention the tuning stability). The Dual Mode Output Electronics include pickups designed by NS in collaboration with EMG, with a push-pull tone knob that allows the instrument to go between passive and battery-free active modes (through an included AC adapter, 60 seconds of charge equals 16 hours of play). Two models are available: the four-string NXT4a (\$1,749 online) and the five-string NXT5a (\$1,849). thinkns.com

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Dave Samuels, Brian Lynch, Dafnis Prieto, Arturo O'Farrill, even Roy Haynes—all have called on Roberto Quintero to give their recordings the necessary percussive fire. Quintero is now the very deserving recipient of signature congas (and bongos) from Gon Bops. The big drums, available in Conga, Tumba and Super Tumba sizes, feature fiberglass shells, custom REMO Skyndeeep heads and Gon Bops' California Series Contour Hardware. \$634.99-\$699.99 online. gonbops.com



Yamaha Venova

Yamaha's new "Casual Wind Instrument" sits in the median between the recorder and the saxophone—think the former's portability and easy-to-master fingerings with tone and projection that evokes the latter. Weighing less than half a pound and constructed using strong, water-washable ABS resin, the Venova should fulfill many functions: a quirky single-reed, two-octave ax for avant-gardists; an education tool for potential sax students; and a picnic-ready woodwind analogy to the ukulele or travel guitar. \$99.99 online. usa.yamaha.com



Reviews

▶ **Chops:** The jazz-poetry connection



▶“The world was his chapbook”: poet Philip Levine, with saxophonist, composer and arranger Benjamin Boone

BENJAMIN BOONE/ PHILIP LEVINE

THE POETRY OF JAZZ (Origin)



It has been a banner time for high-profile jazz-poetry collaborations. Last year saw the release of Matt Wilson’s long-planned tribute to Carl Sandburg, Nicole Mitchell’s teaming with Haki Madhubuti and Jane Ira Bloom’s musical refractions of Emily Dickinson’s terse verse, among other projects. But now there is *The Poetry of Jazz*, providing us with the revelatory phenomenon of the word-smith being the heppiest musical cat on the scene.

Philip Levine was appointed U.S. Poet Laureate to the Library of Congress in 2011, at the age of 83. By then his poems had already garnered him a National Book Award and a Pulitzer Prize. What remained was four sessions with his jazz-musician friends in Fresno (where he had retired from teaching) and special guests, which took place between the summers of 2012 and 2014, ending seven months before his death in February 2015. Saxophonist Benjamin Boone, a former colleague of Levine’s on the faculty at Cal State Fresno, composed and

arranged the vast majority of the music and organized all the sessions.

For those who knew his work, Levine’s love of jazz was no secret. Some of his poems pay explicit homage to the horn players of bop, and four of these 14 collaborative pieces enlist a kindred luminary to represent the cited artist—Chris Potter for Sonny Rollins, Tom Harrell for Clifford Brown, Branford Marsalis for John Coltrane and Greg Osby for Charlie Parker. They are the lengthiest and most ambitiously arranged songs, and each guest star delivers the goods. But the best material here puts the focus on Levine.

You don’t expect such brilliant phrasing from an octogenarian poet. Levine isn’t ostentatious—there’s no hint of Lord Buckley or Allen Ginsberg here—preferring the acute rhythmic accents of a brush-drummer or contrabassist in the subtle pace and weighting of his syllables. Many of the poems are blue-collar narratives from Levine’s youth in Michigan, ranging from “Gin,” a dense, sprightly ode to copping booze as a teen, to the sojourn of his Uncle Yakov from the woods of Siberia to the factory of Detroit. We learn that the mere dream of a Coltrane solo

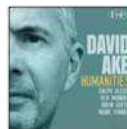
made his elderly mother cry; we take in the accurate observation of Rollins that “his woodshed was the world”; and we understand the feeling of walking toward the door of a tavern where Clifford Brown was blowing.

The climax may be “A Dozen Dawn Songs, Plus One,” 13 vivid vignettes cum “tone poems” further etched by the music of Levine’s jazz-soaked oral sensibility. Or the apex may be how *The Poetry of Jazz* ends, with a line of men waiting in the rain to be hired for work outside a Ford plant, on “What Work Is.” Levine brings precisely the right honorable melancholy to the setting. The world was his chapbook, and it was brimming with music.

BRITT ROBSON

DAVID AKE

HUMANITIES (Posi-Tone)



Humanities is a striking, distinctive record, but in one respect it is representative of a recent trend in American art generally, and in jazz specifically. In press notes, pianist David Ake identifies the “context” for the album: “the tragedy and travesty of this nation’s current political situation.”

The role of politics in art is a large and complicated controversy. From one perspective, all jazz is social protest music. But there has arguably never been a time when so many jazz albums made political statements. In the Trump era, jazz musicians feel compelled to acknowledge our “current tragedy” in their music, not only in anger or despair, but often as an offering of hope for renewal.

Humanities is not narrowly a concept album, but undercurrents of both tragedy and hope run through it. Ake’s quintet contains A-list players who like to live on the edge: trumpeter Ralph Alessi, guitarist Ben Monder, bassist Drew Gress and drummer Mark Ferber. There is turbulence in this music. On “The North” Alessi solos in outcries, over Ake’s dark, obsessive piano vamp. But Ake rarely “comps” for other

players. On “Stream” and the title track, he and Alessi solo intermittently. The rest of the time they overlay, in arcane counterpoint. As for Monder, he is the designated badass. His guitar notes, embedded in the clamor of pieces like “Groundwork,” have nasty jagged edges. *Humanities* is dense, crowded and fierce with energy. “You May Have Already Won” becomes frantic when everyone solos at once. Solidarity does not imply serenity.

There are 11 Ake originals and one cover. “Ripple,” by the Grateful Dead, is an improbable, inspired, fitting choice. Who remembered what a sad, yearning song it is? Perhaps Ake was remembering the last lines of Robert Hunter’s lyrics, as a kind of closure for this album: “If you should stand, then who’s to guide you?/If I knew the way, I would take you home.” **THOMAS CONRAD**

ARILD ANDERSEN IN-HOUSE SCIENCE (ECM)



It is hard to think of a jazz ensemble that wastes fewer notes than bassist Arild Andersen’s trio with tenor saxophonist Tommy Smith and drummer Paolo Vinaccia. They make concentrated music. *In-House Science* is their third recording on ECM in the last decade. Like the first one, *Live at Belleville*, it was recorded in concert.

The opening piece, wistful as a lullaby, is “Mira.” It was the title track of their second (studio) CD. “North of the Northwind” is more of the mysterious lyricism that Andersen owns. No bassist alive plays solos with a stronger sense of yearning. They tug at the heart. Andersen also uses electronics with aesthetic purpose and restraint. He augments his arco bass with a sampler and creates a carpet of mysterious sonorities, then switches to pizzicato and continues soloing over his electronic orchestra. He can make bass notes hang in the air like omens.

But this subtle, refined trio is also capable of burning the house down, especially when the house contains a loud reactive audience. Andersen opens “Science” at a furious tempo and Smith hurtles after him, in spattering fragmented runs. The ensemble operates impulsively but cohesively in the moment. All three together, they suddenly slow “Science” to a lope, Smith reverting to the melody. Then Andersen breaks into another mad dash and Vinaccia and Smith chase after him. “Blussy” is also relentless, with Smith in catharsis, soaring and shrieking.

Speaking of Smith, this riveting player is one of the great unsung tenor saxophonists in jazz. Perhaps he is overlooked because in Andersen’s trio he stays within his role. Even at its most passionate, this music reveals structure, focus and clarity. Even the wildest notes are never wasted because they serve the greater design. Andersen, who began making excellent albums for ECM almost 50 years ago, is still at it.

THOMAS CONRAD

EMMET COHEN MASTERS LEGACY SERIES, VOL. 2 FEATURING RON CARTER (Cellar Live)



Emmet Cohen knows he still has a lot to learn and, accordingly, the pianist—a former prodigy still under 30—surrounds

himself with those who can teach him. This new trio recording features bass totem Ron Carter, 81, and follows a similar session that spotlighted



THE NELS CLINE 4

CURRENTS, CONSTELLATIONS (Blue Note)



Guitarist Nels Cline has always been a sucker for music that’s a bit mystifying—not easily described, transcribed or summarized. So no one should be shocked if he’s particularly pleased with *Currents, Constellations*, an audaciously charted collaboration with guitarist Julian Lage, bassist Scott Colley and drummer Tom Rainey.

Perhaps “charted” is too strong a word, since an air of spontaneity often prevails here, especially when Cline and Lage are intuitively engaged in curious counterpoint, or when the album’s noir-ish themes and funk riffs are artfully and playfully tweaked. No doubt fellow guitarists will marvel at the level of interplay demonstrated here. What’s more, Cline never seems at a loss for ideas when it comes time to introduce contrasting tones, textures and dynamics, or deploy whimsical effects. Some tracks are quick to make strong, even jarring impressions, including the dissonant “Furtive” (inspired by Duke Ellington’s large-ensemble work) and “Swing Ghost ’59,” distinguished by its fitful rhythms. For all the bracing energy generated by Rainey and Colley on “Imperfect 10,” however, other performances reveal a more nuanced view of Cline’s interests and the band’s versatility. Carla Bley’s “Temporarily” and the Ralph Towner-inspired ballad “As Close as That” radiate a similarly quiet soulfulness. The album closes on a touching, elegiac note with “For Each, a Flower,” inspired by the recent deaths of musicians John Abercrombie, Geri Allen, Bill Horvitz and John Shifflett, and luthier Bill Collings. **MIKE JOYCE**



▶ “An audaciously charted collaboration”: Tom Rainey, Scott Colley, Julian Lage and Nels Cline (from left)

drummer Jimmy Cobb, another octogenarian. Cohen, who's already got a shelf's worth of awards for his mature and insightful playing, has also spent time in the company of such relatively elder statesmen as Christian McBride, Herlin Riley, Brian Lynch and Ali Jackson, in addition to leading his own trio and serving as an educator.

Musicians of that caliber wouldn't readily commit to working with some-

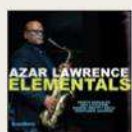
one who had nothing to offer in return, and Cohen's skill on his instrument is matched by his inventiveness. His mastery of mainstream-jazz language and his wide-ranging technical facility are pronounced on this set that mixes standards from Cole Porter and Artie Shaw with Carter originals and a traditional Jewish prayer, "Hatzi Kaddish," arranged for the session by Cohen and drummer Evan Sherman. The latter-

most is introduced solo by Cohen, who conveys the requisite solemnity, then turns suddenly joyful, even festive. The trio runs with the melody, Cohen and Carter offer the floor to Sherman, and the band brings it home on a high note.

If there's a single standout though, that would be the four-part tribute to Cedar Walton: the late pianist's "Hindsight," "Holy Land" and "Dear Ruth," capped by the bassist's "It's About Time," a tune Carter performed with Walton. Shifting moods seamlessly, Cohen evokes the spirit of the medley's inspiration without getting stuck in quotes from the source. With Carter and Sherman pushing the music this way and that, Cohen masters the difficult task of stating his reverence while maintaining a wholly original approach. **JEFF TAMARKIN**

AZAR LAWRENCE

ELEMENTALS (HighNote)



Azar Lawrence is rightfully regarded as a John Coltrane disciple. After all, he's a versatile postbop traditionalist who can play with a rugged or rich or incandescent tone on both soprano and tenor saxophones, and he's piqued by the spiritual nature of African and Indian music.

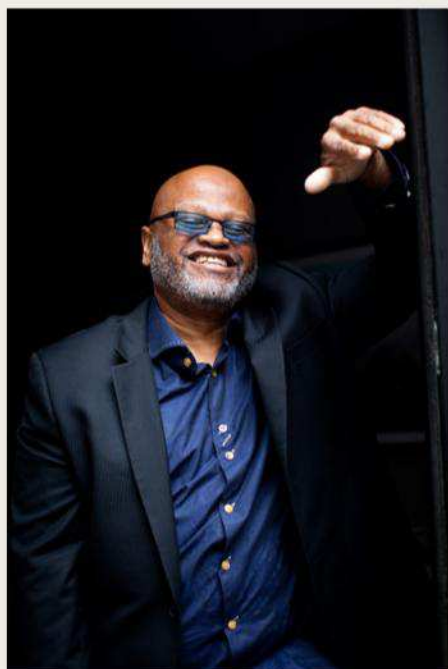
He was also a member of ensembles led by the most prominent Coltrane alumni, McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones (not to mention his work in the *Dark Magus* edition of Miles Davis' band).

But *Elementals* demonstrates that, at 65, Lawrence has sculpted that Coltrane-oriented goodness into the mosaic of his own mature artistry. On the title track, for example, his brawny, metallic tenor solos harken toward Dexter Gordon more than Trane, but they remain inimitably Azar Lawrence in the way he carouses through phrases like a nimble freight train. His torrid soprano modulations on "Sing to the World" (by his band's pianist, Benito Gonzalez) delightfully push the contours of the tune's rock-solid melody. There is also a bossa nova ("La Bossa"), a samba ("Koko") and a polyrhythmic "African Chant," all taken at an accelerated pace that is Lawrence's preferred meter. The wah-wah, in-the-pocket funk of "Solar Winds" is a nod to both his stint with Miles and his R&B roots (most prominently Earth Wind & Fire and Deniece Williams).

The brief closer, the Eastern-drenched "Karma Sutra," with Joe Blocker on tambura, ironically resurrects memories of Trane more than any other song.

From the moment he was Tyner's saxophonist of choice in the early '70s, Lawrence has been a horn player of musical and conceptual substance. His return to a steady jazz output in the past decade has been a blessing, doubled here by his recruitment of drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith away from Smith's comfortable perch on talk-show bandstands. With Lawrence and Smith stoking the fire stride-by-stride as Gonzalez issues chords like a real McCoy, nobody should mind that the lone ballad in the 10-song outing is also the lone standard—a cover of Rodgers & Hart's "It's Easy to Remember."

BRITT ROBSON



▶ "A rugged or rich or incandescent tone": Azar Lawrence



CAROLINE DAVIS

HEART TONIC (Sunnyside)



Heart Tonic opens like a Jefferson Airplane or Soft Machine record—with long, eerie, psychedelic organ tones. It ends like

West African funk, with a slippery bass leading interlocked 9/4 rhythms. Between these brackets is knotty, complex postbop that doesn't sit still long enough to be described less broadly. Fortunately for alto saxophonist Caroline Davis, her music is even better than it is audacious.

The aforementioned organ freakout (courtesy of Julian Shore) at the beginning of "Footloose and Fancy Free" lasts 11 seconds before the eight-minute tune completely changes the subject, shunting into an anxiety- and Rhodes-driven convolution that Davis and trumpeter Marquis Hill navigate steadily. Tension further mounts on "Constructs," a long piece that changes tempo, key and character often and suddenly; Davis and Hill's shared combination of warmth and daredevilry is its through line. Davis in particular has such a warm, rich alto tone that it often sounds like a tenor being played in its upper register, as on the album's lovely highlight "Fortune." The track also features a long, sublime upright solo from Tamir Shmerling and excellent organ work by Benjamin Hoffman, who adds subtle color behind Shore's supple piano. Drummer Jay Saw-

yer gets a thunderous turn on "...TuneFor," a coda to "Fortune" based on one of its motifs.

Sawyer keeps busy on this record of many rhythms, a project often based on the human heart and/or Davis' father's arrhythmia (though you may have to be a cardiologist—or Steve Coleman—to make sense of these concepts). Shore, too, significantly shapes the music, working two synthesizers (best heard in the weird ostinati of "Dionysian") as well as his piano and Rhodes. But *Heart Tonic* remains Davis' triumph, a gauntlet of complex, often fraught music that remains approachable. It's the finest album yet by an artist who has many fine records ahead of her. **MICHAEL J. WEST**

SINNE EEG

DREAMS (ArtistShare)



Sinne Eeg is likely the finest contemporary jazz singer you've yet to discover. While the 40-year-old Dane, regularly ranked foremost throughout Scandinavia, has recorded seven previous albums as a leader, *Dreams* is only her second Stateside release. Still, it's an ideal point of entry, a stunning showcase of not only her intoxicating style, which suggests the cashmere embrace of Nancy Wilson paired with the sharp interpretive skills of Shirley Horn, but also her songwriting acumen.

Of *Dreams'* 10 tracks, four are covers, including a gently inquisitive "What Is This Thing Called Love?" and a downy "I'll Remember April." Eeg's lilting "Falling in Love With Love" proves a sterling showcase for her estimable bandmates: Americans Larry Koonse (guitar), Scott Colley (bass) and Joey Baron (drums) plus her fellow countryman Jacob Christoffersen (piano). And a jagged, scat-kissed "Anything Goes" is refitted for the 21st century with references to fake news and Russian influence in matters presidential.

Eeg shines even brighter across the originals. Love is the predominant idea: The "relationships-are-work" theme of the opener, "The Bitter End," is counterpointed by the tenderness of "Love Song," a valentine to her husband, and the playful romantic confusion of "Head Over High Heels." But the standouts are Eeg's wordless, free-floating title track and "Aleppo," a quietly powerful, deeply stirring ode to Syrian children so devastated by war-torn strife that they can no longer cry. **CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**

ROMÁN FILIÚ

QUARTERIA (Sunnyside)



Román Filiú is an alto saxophonist and composer from Santiago de Cuba who has lived in New York since 2011. His father was

a music-theory teacher and exposed him to a wide range of Cuban, Western classical, jazz and popular genres.

Quarteria is nervous and intense. It has jarring stops and starts, glaring bright colors and many moving parts, and is hard to classify. Afro-Cuban rhythmic forms are recurrent but not dominant. The band is a septet with more North Americans (trumpeter Ralph Alessi, tenor saxophonist Dayna Stephens, bassist Matt Brewer, drummer Craig Weinrib) than Cubans (Filiú, pianist David Virelles, percussionist Yusnier Sanchez).

Filiú's diverse influences include Henry Threadgill, and he played in Threadgill's recent band Ensemble Double Up (as did Virelles and Weinrib). *Quarteria* reminds you of a Threadgill project, not only in its technical elements (arcane organizational principles, jagged counterpoint) but in its culture (the suspenseful sense that anything is possible). Filiú's compositions, like Threadgill's, provoke intellectual curiosity and challenge; unlike Threadgill's, they often lack aesthetic realization. The strident harmonies of "Grass" will make you sit straight up in your chair. Intricate contrapuntal pieces like "Fulcanelli" and "Harina Con Arena" are all harsh voicings and blaring announcements. "Kaijufrem" is a contrivance that assigns a note to each letter of the title. Filiú's tunes feel like exercises. Even so, they are clever, energetic and sometimes exciting.

What saves *Quarteria* are the exceptional players. They expertly execute Filiú's difficult forms and maximize each tune's musicality. In an album that is about ensemble form and not solos, the concise solos, when they come, are strong, including those of Filiú, who improvises in sharp ideas. Alessi and Stephens fill their moments vividly. Virelles shows once again that he is one of the special pianists to enter jazz in the new millennium. Every time he takes the lead on *Quarteria*, he lights it up. **THOMAS CONRAD**

STEVE GADD BAND

STEVE GADD BAND (BFM)



Drumming icon Steve Gadd has always sounded happiest when laying down golden tracks in the studio and serving as a sideman to

the stars, only choosing to assume the mantle of leadership on rare occasions with session-men assemblages like the Gadd Gang or, more recently, the Gaddabouts (fronted by vocalist Edie Brickell). But in forming this group with his musical brethren from James Taylor's touring outfit, Gadd has finally settled comfortably into the driver's seat.

This eponymous album is the fourth release from this band in six years. There's one notable change in the personnel department with this latest offering—pianist Kevin Hays fills the role formerly occupied by Larry Goldings—but that substitution does little to alter the tactics and tone of the group, which also includes guitarist Michael Landau, trumpeter/flugelhornist Walt Fowler and bassist Jimmy Johnson. As with its previous efforts, the Steve Gadd Band emphasizes feel, texture, grooves and holistic presentation over athletic feats.

Save for a take on the late Allan Holdsworth's "Temporary Fault," Gadd and company focus on originals throughout. These men operate with a fairly prudent posture—tempo are slow to modest, and solos are somewhat reserved in nature—but there's enough stylistic variety to maintain interest. In shifting moods and vibes, this crew demonstrates the virtues of holding together and showing restraint—from a chipper "I Know, But Tell Me Again" to the noirish nightscape of "Auckland by Numbers," from a bluesy "Skulk" to the tender "Norma's Girl," and from a soulful "Spring Song" (with vocals by Hays) to the simmering "Timpanogos." If you're looking for Gadd to cut loose and set off fireworks, look somewhere else. But if you want a reminder to never underestimate the power of the pocket in its various states, here it is. **DAN BILAWSKY**

ROBERT HURST

BLACK CURRENT JAM (Dot Time)



Nearly two decades after slipping out of the golden handcuffs of the *Tonight Show* band, Detroit-born Robert Hurst has released

what feels like one of his most ambitious recordings. *Black Current Jam* is an eclectic set of 10 original compositions built around Afrocentric themes and encompassing an eclectic range of jazz-rooted rhythms and textures, bolstered by a fresh arranging style and driven by the leader's distinctive approach to the bass guitar and double bass.

His upright, adorned and unaccompanied, cues the disc's start, laying down a slippery groove that sparks the urban-acoustic vibe of "Detroit Day." That track references Hurst's hometown and incorporates a melody doubled on vocals and Rafael Statin's saxophone; it's the first of several tracks deploying that device, with the help of, variously, singers Brendan Asante and Jillian Hurst, the bassist's daughter. The leader shifts the perspective to a kind of pan-African view, with the percussion-and-vocals unity groove of "Two Beats and a Breath." There, Faith C. Hall's urgent spoken-word incantations connect the musical dots among disparate cultures and traditions.

The simmering "Bela Bunda" opens up for Hurst's technically adroit solo on bass guitar, and the group handily slips into bossa rhythms on the mellow, aptly titled "Keepin' It Rio." Naturally, drummer Nate Winn and percussionist Pepe Espinosa are showcased at the start of the funk-edged "This Is Your Brain on Drums," and Statin and Hurst play a unison head on "Morse Code and the Time." Hurst employs some colorful bass-guitar chording figures at the start of closer "Happy Nappy," its snaking, circling melody lines and interlocking rhythms leading into bracing workouts by Statin and pianist Ian Finckelstein. Throughout, Hurst's bass playing shines, but it's his compositional mettle that makes *Black Current Jam* stand out from the pack. **PHILIP BOOTH**

WYNTON MARSALIS SEPTET
UNITED WE SWING: BEST OF THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER GALAS (Blue Engine)



People pay big bucks to see Wynton Marsalis and his combos perform with the likes of Jimmy Buffett, Lenny Kravitz and John Mayer. The concept is as gimmicky as it sounds, the lure for Jazz at Lincoln Center's annual fundraising galas for its educational programs. *United We Swing* offers a highlight reel from the 2003-2007

galas (not all, contra the album's billing, featuring septets). Hence the newest tracks are over a decade old. Do they hold up without the novelty? Sometimes.

The pluses and minuses are fairly predictable. It's unsurprising, for example, that Audra McDonald's flawless operatic pipes would succeed brilliantly in the wordless vocal of Duke Ellington's "Creole Love Call," and that soulster John Legend has a deft, subtle touch that Marsalis' septet need only accompany on his own "Please Baby Don't." Nor will it stop any hearts that Mayer sounds as phony and soulless singing "I'm Gonna Find Another You" with a jazz nonet as he does everywhere else, or that Buffett's effort at "Fool's Paradise" with a 10-piece band contains little to recommend it either to Parrot-heads or jazzheads.

There are a few surprises, though, in both the yea and nay columns. James Taylor's "Mean Old Man" makes a lovely set piece, thanks to a dulcet arrangement (and gorgeous trumpet solo) by Marsalis. A New Orleans gutbucket treatment (also by Marsalis) of Kravitz's "Are You Gonna Go My Way" promises silliness; instead, it's dark and stirringly effective. Elsewhere, yet another Marsalis arrangement accomplishes the unlikely feat of draining the wit and zest from Bob Dylan's "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry" (Dylan's disinterested vocal doesn't help), and a Carrie Smith feature on "Empty Bed Blues" is stunningly bland. Fortunately, the revenue at these galas was more consistent than the gimmick. **MICHAEL J. WEST**

NELLIE MCKAY
SISTER ORCHID (Palmetto)



If Theo Bleckmann has an equal among fearless vocal adventurers, it is surely Nellie McKay. Like Bleckmann, an inveterate genre- and era-blurring genius, the British-American McKay has shaped a marvellously checkered career: She's as infatuated with disco, rap and rock as she is with pop and jazz; she's equally at home alongside David Byrne, Laurie Anderson or Fatboy Slim; and she's equally skilled at celebrating Frank Zappa, Doris Day or transgender pianist and bandleader Billy Tipton.

The irrepressible McKay enters this all-standards playlist astride a calliope-driven carousel, her whirling "My Romance"

evincing Peggy Lee. Inspired, as she suggests in the liner notes, by the heady variegation of an overnight drive down the California coast, she then travels from a noirish "Angel Eyes" and fogbound "Where or When" to tender readings of "The Nearness of You," "In a Sentimental Mood" and "Georgia on My Mind," plus a breezy, ukulele-propelled "Lazybones."

Still, there's plenty of room for McKay's offbeat imagination. What begins as a straight-ahead treatment of "Willow Weep for Me" jumps, at the two-minute mark, to a fevered pitch, the stride-driven passage peppered with tribal-esque wails, before settling back into wistful introspection. An impish desire for impropriety underscores her treatment of Bob Dorough's "Small Day Tomorrow," while a sepiatoned "Everything Happens to Me," seemingly set inside a crowded piano bar, perhaps best captures her essence: a cunning blend of Blossom Dearie's slyness, Julie London's smokiness and Lee Wiley's sophistication. **CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**

EVAN PARKER/BARRY GUY/PAUL LYTTON

MUSIC FOR DAVID MOSSMAN: LIVE AT VORTEX LONDON (Intakt)



Who is David Mossman? He is the founder of the Vortex, a jazz club that has been at the center of London's free improvised music scene for

30 years. Tenor saxophonist Evan Parker, bassist Barry Guy and drummer Paul Lytton have been playing as a trio since 1980, often at the Vortex, where they made this live recording. Their ensemble identity is firmly established. They trust their collective creative process for raising hell.

There are four tracks, "Music for David Mossman I-IV," ranging in length from 12 to 24 minutes. Guy and Lytton are the furthest thing from a rhythm section. They seethe and clatter, obeying mysterious impulses. Their energy sweeps, soars, falls away and erupts again. Parker sometimes circles quietly, glancing off possible songs, awaiting the moment. The moment always arrives and the floodgates open and Parker unleashes ideas, torrentially. All the wild action is internal. As an entity, this ensemble moves through musical space slowly, like a storm.

The excitement comes from the spikes

and crescendos, but even more from the overwhelming extravagance of detail. You can drown in the seas of this trio. And Parker's obsessive outpourings sometimes find patterns of arcane melody beyond the reach of conventional improvisational procedures.

The excitement intermittently diminishes because so much happens at the same (intense) level, and dynamic contrast is limited. When Parker uses circular breathing and creates layers of fluttering harmonics (as on the end of "I" and the start of "II"), the effect is dizzying, yet it risks stasis when it persists. But this music can create breakthroughs of perception, like a Jackson Pollock painting. The revelation of Pollock is the liberation from representation and the celebration of the act of painting itself. Parker, Guy and Lytton celebrate the act of making music itself. They celebrate sound itself. Noise and melody are not as different as we thought. **THOMAS CONRAD**

LESLIE PINTCHIK

YOU EAT MY FOOD, YOU DRINK MY WINE, YOU STEAL MY GIRL! (Pintch Hard)



Between the album title (there's a story behind it, of course) and original tunes named "Happy Dog," "A Simpler Time" and especially "Your Call Will Be Answered by Our Next Available Representative, in the Order in Which It Was Received. Please Stay on the Line; Your Call Is Important to Us," you might expect the latest by pianist Leslie Pintchik to be a lightweight trifle. It's not, but neither is *You Eat My Food...* heavy-handed or indulgent. It mostly rides comfortably astride the middle, treating the Kern-Harbach warhorse "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" as a springy samba and injecting even Pintchik's self-penned ballads—"Mortal" and "Hopperesque" stand out—with enough lift to offset any melancholy overtones at the root of the compositions.

Pintchik has her longtime crew on hand to assist. Scott Hardy's acoustic and electric bass and Michael Sarin's drumming are sturdy and imaginative throughout, and various tunes feature trumpeter/flugelhornist Ron Horton and alto saxophonist Steve Wilson fleshing out Pintchik's arrangements.

Accordionist Shoko Nagai adds unexpected colorings and Satoshi Takeishi's understated percussion also provides definition. The title track opens the show, and it's a funky affair, full of streetwise strut. The mood changes rather drastically for the next track, Jimmy Dorsey and Paul Madeira's "I'm Glad There Is You" (the album's only other cover); it's reflective and warm, Pintchik treading lightly during her

solo and opening a door for Hardy to resume and restate the theme.

One small complaint: If you're going to title a track after that excruciating hold message we've all been subjected to, it would seem to benefit from more rage and frustration than Pintchik brings to the tune. That aside, *You Eat My Food...* is a finely crafted set of songs by a talented pianist, featuring a band that does them justice. **JEFF TAMARKIN**



ADAM NUSSBAUM

THE LEAD BELLY PROJECT (Sunnyside)



Aptly enough, this tribute to folk-music legend Lead Belly comes with 12 strings attached, albeit in a thoroughly modern jazz context. Eager to salute one of his earliest and most enduring influences, drummer Adam Nussbaum recently joined tenor saxophonist Ohad Talmor and two electric guitarists—Steve Cardenas and Nate Radley—for a one-day recording session that quickly achieved its aim.

Needless to say, given the sleek instrumentation here, Nussbaum isn't preoccupied with the sound of Lead Belly's 12-string boombox. Nor is the band hemmed in by fundamental chord progressions and folksy triads. Instead, the mood is often free-spirited, the performances delightfully interactive. Uptempo tracks inspired by Huddie Ledbetter's hefty songbook take advantage of Nussbaum's swift propulsion and the well-matched guitarists, allowing for shimmering weaves, quick-witted exchanges and not a little twang. Signature cadences and several bulletproof melodies ("Goodnight Irene," the inevitable coda) add to the album's charms, and certainly the same can be said for Talmor. His lyrical, soulful and rhythmically nimble assurance is evident throughout, starting with the brush-stroked, mood-setting opener, "Old Riley." Two Nussbaum pieces, including "Insight, Enlight," a spiritual interlude, nicely round out the tribute. Even those unfamiliar with the drummer's close association with guitarist John Scofield will likely sense a stylistic connection right off, and no doubt fans of Bill Frisell's roots excursions will find much to enjoy here too. Ultimately, though, comparisons are beside the point. Nussbaum's distinctive take on Lead Belly's remarkably durable legacy proves as personal as it heartfelt and engaging. **MIKE JOYCE**



▶ "Free-spirited ... delightfully interactive": Adam Nussbaum

BOBBY PREVITE**RHAPSODY** (RareNoise)

You can always count on Bobby Previte to give you something innovative, something that sews new seams between musical genres. *Rhapsody* was commissioned by

the 2015 Greenfield Prize for Music, enabling the composer-drummer to complete the second part of his trilogy, which began with *Terminals* in 2014 and is meant to explore the experience of travel.

Anyone who heard *Terminals* probably had unreasonably high expectations for

ALFREDO RODRÍGUEZ**THE LITTLE DREAM** (Mack Avenue)

A dozen years after his breakthrough performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival, and seven since his Mack Avenue debut, the Cuban-born pianist Alfredo Rodríguez continues to dazzle with technique and vision. Quincy Jones, who began mentoring Rodríguez after that Montreux gig and the pianist's move to the U.S., returns here as co-producer, bringing a luminosity and brashness to the 12 tracks, most of them written by the leader.

The Little Dream is Rodríguez's first release to use an unadorned trio throughout, yet the tracks are no less robust than those on his previous recordings that featured more augmentation. Munir Hossn, who provides both guitar and bass, and drummer/percussionist Michael Olivera, are full partners here, giving shape to Rodríguez's wanderings.

And wander he does—in a good way. Rodríguez is not so much restless as perpetually inquisitive, eager to investigate as many ideas as a given composition will afford. On “Dawn,” the set's opener, choppy solo chording gives way after only 10 seconds to an explosion of stacked voices and, just as quickly, a rhythm section ready and willing to go wherever the leader suggests. We're not even half a minute in when Hossn moves over to acoustic guitar, with Rodríguez joining in on the African-esque melody while Olivera's percussion serves as the glue.

It's like that from there on out. “World of Colors” manages to be pastoral and ambitious without anyone needing to pad its open spaces, and “Bloom,” with Hossn's bass co-forging the melodic route with the pianist and Olivera barely brushing, is most satisfying; Rodríguez glides through it with an ease that's undoubtedly deceptive. Of the three covers, “Bésame Mucho” pays the most direct homage to the leader's Cuban roots while simultaneously reiterating just how far he's come. **JEFF TAMARKIN**



▶ “And wander he does”: Alfredo Rodríguez



Rhapsody. The former is a set of five concertos written for the Brooklyn ensemble So Percussion, each featuring a soloist—Previte, John Medeski, Nels Cline, Zeena Parkins, Greg Osby—and creating an array of different tones and moods within the percussion tradition. *Rhapsody* brings back many of the soloists—the Austrian Fabian Rucker replaces Osby on alto, and vocalist Jen Shyu is added—to comprise a formidable sextet.

But the work puts its worst foot forward with the opener, “Casting Off,” anchored by a monotonous riff not compelling enough to recall Steve Reich or Terry Riley, but distracting enough to detract from Shyu's vocals and Rucker's horn. Maybe it's supposed to depict the ennui portion of travel. That's followed by “All the World,” which has many sectional shifts that, even with repeated listening, don't cohere.

The rest of *Rhapsody* is a pleasantly acquired taste, however. “The Lost” exploits the earlier fragmentation, with a haunted funhouse of bold, abstract snippets that tunefully strew the sounds of Cline's guitars, Medeski's keyboards, Parkins' harp and Previte's percussion. “When I Land” comes home to song form, and Shyu's voice is backed by the crystalline texture of harp, piano and guitar. Medeski's sturdy circular piano riff ushers in the pressing martial rhythms of “The Timekeeper,” a triumphant anthem limned with anxiety. But the highlight is “All Hands,” a string-driven affair plus saxophone that gradually intensifies into a tour de force for Nels Cline.

Although not as enjoyable as *Terminals*, *Rhapsody* lands enough of Previte's inimitable concoctions to make you look forward to the journey's final leg.

BRITT ROBSON**JAMIE SAFT****SOLO A GENOVA** (RareNoise)

It's taken pianist Jamie Saft 25 years to put out his first solo-piano disc. Based on the many other kinds of recordings he's made—the collaborations with John Zorn, the album of Bob Dylan covers, the three cuts featuring Iggy Pop on last year's *Loneliness Road*—you'd expect his unaccompanied debut to display a wide range of influences, and this 11-track

collection, recorded live in Italy, certainly doesn't lack eclecticism. With the exception of three originals and a couple of postbop ringers ("Naima" and "Blue in Green"), all the material comes from beyond jazz's traditional stylistic boundary lines.

A rapturous version of Curtis Mayfield's "The Makings of You" opens the set. The relish with which Saft navigates its harmony suggests that he's been waiting a while to sink into such a rich chordal bed. Thornier but no less passionate is his take on Charles Ives' "The Housatonic at Stockbridge," which brings out the piece's bedrock hymnal quality amidst all the polytonality. Speaking of hymns, Dylan's "Restless Farewell" (one of two songs by the Bard of Hibbing) sounds like a gospel standard in Saft's hands. But the most arrestingly reimagined composition here has to be ZZ Top's "Sharp Dressed Man," which begins with ominous rooting around inside the piano, then transitions into a kind of tragic aria, its central riff a cathedral bell tolling humanity's doom.

Moments like these are occasionally undercut by an inability to resist showing off. Although Saft's rippling multi-octave runs can be exhilarating—as on a crafty medley of his own "The New Standard" and "Pinkus"—he leans on the speed too often, triggering mental images of Art Tatum continually barging in uninvited to the same party. Still, in all other respects, *Solo a Genova* proves to have been well worth waiting for. **MAC RANDALL**

SARA SERPA

CLOSE UP (Clean Feed)



Every song, it can be argued, is a shifting landscape, the hues, light and details delineated by an artist, then further reimagined by the listener. Taking that conceit a bold, dynamic step further, as is invariably her way, Lisbon-born vocalist Sara Serpa unites with saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and cellist Erik Friedlander to shape a 42-minute session that, as she observes in the liner notes, "can be explained, interpreted and heard through multiple angles of its creative process and performance."

Serpa, a Berklee and NEC grad whose education was further honed at the legendary Hot Clube de Portugal, wrote all

nine selections. Her lyrics are crafted in Portuguese and English, alongside her trademark wordless forays, and draw upon her own life experiences and such inspirations as Virginia Woolf, Belgian-French feminist intellectual Luce Irigaray, Portuguese poet Ruy Belo and Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami. The filmmaker's *Close-Up*, from 1990, mirrors Serpa's multi-perspective goal. In Kiarostami's documentary-style gem, she notes, "subjects become objects, the viewers become the actors, and the actor(s) become(s) the director(s), as they re-enact and reconstruct present and past events."

In the studio, each track unfolded organically, no edits or retakes, all three artists traveling wherever inspiration led while remaining aware, and respectful, of the others' paths. The trio-defined results—alternately dark, bright, bleak, vibrant, joyous, sorrowful, searching, soaring, turbulent, earthy and otherworldly—are laid before the listener, leaving it to each of us to add our own unique layers of elucidation. **CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**

GARY SMULYAN

ALTERNATIVE CONTRAFACTS (SteepleChase)



When Bird and Diz took the chords of popular songs like "I Got Rhythm" and "Cherokee" and wrote new

melodies over them, people called it bebop. Baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan opts for the concept's jazz-education name of "contrafacts." This trio album brings together eight lesser-known examples of the practice from the late '40s through the early '60s—including such "alternatives" to the bop classics as Mal Waldron's "Vodka," Ted Curson's "Ahma See Ya" and Coleman Hawkins' "Hanid"—along with one of Smulyan's own contrafacts, "I've Changed."

The erudition displayed in Smulyan's deep-cut choices is just as clear in his playing. His best solo comes on Gil Fuller and Dave Burns' "Moda-morphosis," a sustained feast of brilliantly interconnected ideas. The rhythm section adds special luster to Paul Chambers' "Tale of the Fingers," with bassist David Wong giving his bow a workout and drummer Rodney Green trading scintillating eights and fours with Smulyan. Tempos and rhythmic feels don't vary much from medium swing, but the musicians find new twists where they can. On Jimmy Giuffre's "Deep People," for instance, they all leave lots of holes in their parts; each player's role in relation to the beat—who's keeping it, who's playing off it—changes from second to second.

If you're not familiar with these tunes but still want to try identifying

the sources from which they sprang, your harmonic detective work will be complicated by the fact that there's no chordal instrument present. This makes it harder to tell what changes the musicians are hearing in their heads, and

easier for them to veer away from those changes whenever they like. You may as well set your analytical mind on other tasks and just enjoy the buoyant vibes, of which there are plenty.

MAC RANDALL

RENEE ROSNES

BELOVED OF THE SKY (Smoke Sessions)



Finding a more simpatico crew for this quintet date would have been hard. Besides the leader on piano, the lineup consists of saxophonist/flutist Chris Potter, vibraphonist Steve Nelson, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Lenny White—good listeners all, and listening is at the core of these nine tracks. For as exquisitely melodic as the frontline can be here, their best bits aren't always found in individual solos.

The point, in short, is counterpoint. It's built into the stately melody of "Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky," as Rosnes and Washington split off from Potter's soprano halfway through the statement of the head to construct a tasty supporting line. It's present when Potter and Rosnes solo together, Dixieland-style, before they return to the darting theme of "Elephant Dust." And it's there pretty much every time Rosnes and Nelson play together. The two weave their most intricate tapestries within a pair of tunes that honor Bobby Hutcherson, "Mirror Image" (which Rosnes originally wrote for Hutcherson to perform) and the late vibraphonist's own "Rosie." On the former, during Potter's solo, they fill the background with a multi-textured cloud of notes; on the latter, Rosnes comps underneath Nelson's solo with such perfect anticipation of what he plays that it's as if they were one four-armed beast.

White, meanwhile, takes rhythmic hints from the others, extrapolates them until he's reached his limit and then moves on. Just about the only time he isn't constantly in motion is the midpoint of "Black Holes," when he briefly stops. Then, in partnership with Washington, he re-scrambles the groove, laying down a funk foundation that Rosnes' syncopated chords keep tugging against. Fittingly, the closing 12-bar "Let the Wild Rumpus Start" tucks a unison tenor/bassline behind the first chorus of Rosnes' solo, yet another clever contrapuntal touch. **MAC RANDALL**



▶ "The point ... is counterpoint": Renee Rosnes



OMAR SOSA & NDR BIGBAND

ES:SENSUAL (Orfi)



Es:sensual is not the Cuban-born pianist-composer Omar Sosa's first meetup with Germany's NDR Bigband or the

Brazilian multi-tasker Jaques Morelenbaum. In 2010, the same three forces came together for *Ceremony*, which *JazzTimes* called in its review "an inventive and rewarding project [that] extends the tradition of Afro-Cuban big bands as established by such pioneers as Machito, Dizzy, Chico O'Farrill and Mario Bauzá."

Es:sensual extends that extension; it's not so much a follow-up as a reboot. Sosa revels in the largeness of the ensemble at his disposal, and with Morelenbaum, the celebrated arranger, conductor, musician and composer, he's found a simpatico partner, one whose own work with the likes of Jobim, Gilberto Gil and other Brazilian stars has given him many an opportunity to work within the big-band format.

The material is drawn primarily from previous Sosa releases, reaching back some two decades to his *Free Roots* recording as well as more recent sources. Both Morelenbaum and Sosa enjoy drama in their arrangements, and there's plenty of that on hand, particularly as the program progresses. "Glu-Glu," heard previously on Sosa's 2009 *Across the Divide: A Tale of Rhythm and Ancestry*, is utterly transformed from a tight slab of funk-ed-up Afro-Latin fusion into a bacchanal of stacked horns, frenetic percussion and, of course, Sosa's piano pushing it along feverishly. "Angustiado," 13 minutes of free-flowing blowing, traverses entire worlds, alternating between thick, structured horn charts, steamy sax breakouts and manic piano percussion, a glorious jumble of polyrhythmic goodness.

The first half of the program, for whatever reason, is more restrained, albeit still quite pleasing. Tunes like "Reposo" and "My Three Notes" emphasize a more tempered side of the collaboration, revisited in the album's finale, "Sad Meeting," something this celebratory affair most definitely is not.

JEFF TAMARKIN

BOBO STENSON TRIO

CONTRA LA INDECISIÓN (ECM)



Contra la Indecisión is scintillating, soothing ... and soporific. It is not to be attempted without a cup of coffee. Its sleep

charm overcome, however, pianist Bobo Stenson and his longtime trio (bassist Anders Jormin, drummer Jon Fält) offer soundscapes of atmospheric beauty and stunning interplay in its melodies and texture.

Even the tunes on the record with rhythmic stridency prioritize softness. Fält plays brushes on Silvio Rodríguez's "Cancion Contra la Indecisión," Satie's "Élégie" and Jormin's "Oktoberhavet," and focuses almost entirely on hi-hat and ride cymbal on the collectively improvised "Kalimba Impressions" (when not picking out muffled notes on the titular instrument). He and Jormin intensify their attacks on the bassist's swingers "Doubt Thou the Stars" and "Stilla," but Stenson tempers them with restrained theme statements and thoughtful solos. Jormin clarifies his quiet intentions on "Doubt Thou the Stars," first with a weeping arco line in the introduction, then with an exquisite *sotto voce* solo.

The rest is gentleness. It's not gentleness that elides detail, though; Stenson embroiders Bartók's "Wedding Song From Poniky" with intricate turns of phrase, and Jormin subtly adds a near counter melody in his bassline. Fält's stickwork on Jormin's "Three Shades of a House" and Frederic Mompou's "Canción y Danza VI" become part of the main melodies, sidestepping momentum entirely to add spontaneous coloring to the pianist's explorations. (Jormin joins Fält in this mission on Stenson's eerie "Alice.") It doesn't happen often, but on *Contra la Indecisión*, torpor is a virtue.

MICHAEL J. WEST

JOHN SURMAN

INVISIBLE THREADS (ECM)



Invisible Threads is something of an international affair. Baritone/soprano saxophonist and bass clarinetist John

Surman, with five decades of recording credits as a leader and sideman behind him, hails from England but resides in

Norway. So does Rob Waring, the mallets player, although he is originally from New York. And Nelson Ayres, the pianist, is Brazilian. That there is a global undercurrent to the music they produce together is not all that surprising, but those flavors are subtler than you might imagine. "Pitanga Pitomba," one of the 11 tunes composed for the album by Surman (the 12th, "Summer Song," is Ayres'), flirts with tango but never truly succumbs to its conventions. Instead, the trio dances around the edges of the familiar rhythm, ultimately putting it aside in favor of something more elusive. "Byndweed" owes as much to European classical traditions as the Brazilian sway suggested by Ayres.

Surman initially envisioned the project as a duet set with Ayres, but the decision to include Waring's vibraphone and marimba was a wise one—his bright tones act as a balance to Surman's deeper ones, as in "The Admiral," where, soon enough, they find a common place in which to reside.

Manfred Eicher's production is, of course, unfussy and crystalline, allowing for each member of the trio to avail himself of opportunities to shine. But stepping out for solo time is hardly the point here. *Invisible Threads* is an ensemble effort first and foremost, the players sharing an innate understanding that the act of group improvisation outweighs individual statement. There's a unity to these pieces, and a bond that comes naturally to the players. **JEFF TAMARKIN**

REGGIE WASHINGTON

RAINBOW SHADOW VOL. 2 (Jammin' Colors)



Like its 2015 predecessor, bassist-vocalist Reggie Washington's latest is a genre-bending set dedicated to the memory

of guitarist Jef Lee Johnson, who died in 2013. Fifteen of the disc's 17 songs are Johnson compositions.

"Silence [No Secret]," despite squiggles and bleeps from turntablist DJ Grazzhopa, is rootsy at its core: Marvin Sewell's modal guitar voicings evoke Northern Mississippi trance blues, and Monique Harcum's guest vocals likewise sound both atavistic

and charged with forward-thrusting energy. A similar bluesy feel permeates the dark-hued remake of Bob Dylan's "Blind Willie McTell" (updated with an electronically tweaked audio clip of a Donald Trump rant) and "Emmett Till," Johnson's paean to the Chicago-born civil-rights martyr. "Hype" (Pts. 1 and 2) re-grafts JB-flavored funk onto its New Orleans street-parade roots; "Other Thoughts of Fanny's Toy" gives Washington the opportunity to strut his considerable solo chops.

"RSJ," a tribute to Ronald Shannon Jackson, is an appropriately sly meld of prowling funk and irony-toughened wit; conversely, the electronica-infused "Children of the Sonic Soul/Gutter Punk With a Geschlossen" is as surrealistic (yet pointed) as its title. The lyrics of "Cake," a kind of postmodernist updating of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" theme, may ruffle feathers in the #MeToo era, but guest guitarist Hervé Samb's molten solo and drummer Patrick Dorcéan's lurching, off-center cadences, combined with Washington's own knuckle-popping bassline, summon a galvanizing mix of aggression and playfulness. (Other lyrics—"Sizzlean," "Hard to Keep the Faith," "Testimony/Open Up," the aforementioned "Silence [No Secret]"—summon up more aggressively the struggles of modern-day freedom fighters.) Throughout, Washington and his bandmates create an aural landscape swirling with colors, resplendent with unexpected delights and textures, and shot through with tough-minded optimism. **DAVID WHITEIS**

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POLITICS & PROTEST IN JAZZ

BY NELLIE MCKAY

Jazz used to be alienating, rather than comforting and bourgeois. It used to provoke discussion and dissent. Teddy Wilson was known as the Marxist Mozart!

Hoagy Carmichael

"LAZYBONES" Co-written with Johnny Mercer
Stardust & Much More (Bluebird; rec. 1933, rel. 1989)

This might be one of the greatest protest songs ever written, because it's about radical non-participation. There's a line in *Cat's Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut where the woman who's working as a relative underling wishes everyone would just stop thinking. That makes me think of this song. I have a friend who says, "If everyone would just do 10 percent less."

Edith Wilson

"(WHAT DID I DO TO BE SO) BLACK AND BLUE"
Music by Fats Waller with lyrics by Harry Brooks and Andy Razaf (Columbia, 1929)

I was able to perform this for a member of the original cast of *Black and Blue*. [The song was originally written for the 1929 Broadway show *Hot Chocolates*.] I was a little embarrassed because I knew I wasn't playing it like Fats Waller. The song is more nuanced than one might think. Most people just know the chorus. I always thought it was about being black, and then I thought about how you can see it as a woman who's being beaten. When you hear Edith Wilson's version you realize that it's about being left for a lighter-skinned black woman. It's about color but also about the vagaries and whims of love beyond only race.

Charles Mingus

"FABLES OF FAUBUS"
Mingus Ah Um (Columbia, 1959)

I used this in my show about [the trailblazing conservationist] Rachel Carson [*Silent Spring: It's Not Nice to Fool Mother Nature*], and we changed some of the shout-outs to be about chemical pesticides. It's a protest song that can be used for so many movements. It has a wonderful feel; it's the delight of protest. I felt it when I campaigned for Bernie Sanders in particular, but also at other moments in my life—that joy of revolt and of the genuine resistance, not the corporate, co-opted kind. The thrill of fighting back shouldn't be underestimated. [Anarchist writer] Emma Goldman said something to the effect of, "I don't want a revolution where there won't be dancing," and this is a catchy tune as well as a statement.

Les McCann & Eddie Harris

"COMPARED TO WHAT" By Gene McDaniels
Swiss Movement (Atlantic, 1969)

The men wore suits back then and the women were all put together, and they wrote these songs of such emotion and so much range. Maybe the secret is to go to church and drink a lot on weekends. I love "Compared to What" because you find out where the truth lies. The ground is always shifting beneath you. There's a term called "fake news" nowadays, but that can ap-

▶ **Artist's Choice:** Singer René Marie on protest music



▶ Billie Holiday and "Mister," 1947

ply to so much, to the majority of the media we consume, which is corporate. We need mass movements of civil disobedience.

Billie Holiday & Her Orchestra

"STRANGE FRUIT" By Abel Meeropol (Commodore, 1939)
Billie used to close her sets with this and not come back, even if people didn't like it. There's a wonderful documentary about the creation of this song [*Strange Fruit*, from 2002]. The song has so much resonance for me. It also applies to war. Civil rights used to be emphatically antiwar; it's lost that international movement of solidarity. If you want to have progress at home as well as abroad, you really need that solidarity, for people and animals.

Dave Frishberg

"MY COUNTRY USED TO BE"
Quality Time (Sterling, 1994)

I saw him at Birdland and he got booed for this song. But that was under [George W.] Bush. The song is beautiful and gets to what is still possible. I've spent some time with David over the years and he's the truest artist I've ever met. There's not a phony bone in his body. He also has "Listen Here," which we also used in my Rachel Carson show. It's about that inner voice that we all neglect. He can be so terribly witty but there's a real earnest Midwesterner in him. **JT**

[As told to Jeff Tamarkin]



Nellie McKay's seventh album, *Sister Orchid*, will be out May 18 on Palmetto Records. She has never won a Grammy. She is a recipient of PETA's Humanitarian Award and the Humane Society's Doris Day Music Award, recognizing her dedication to animal rights. She would like to be friends with Russia, the country with the most nuclear weapons in the world. We must all be very kind to one another.

It goes with your jam sesh

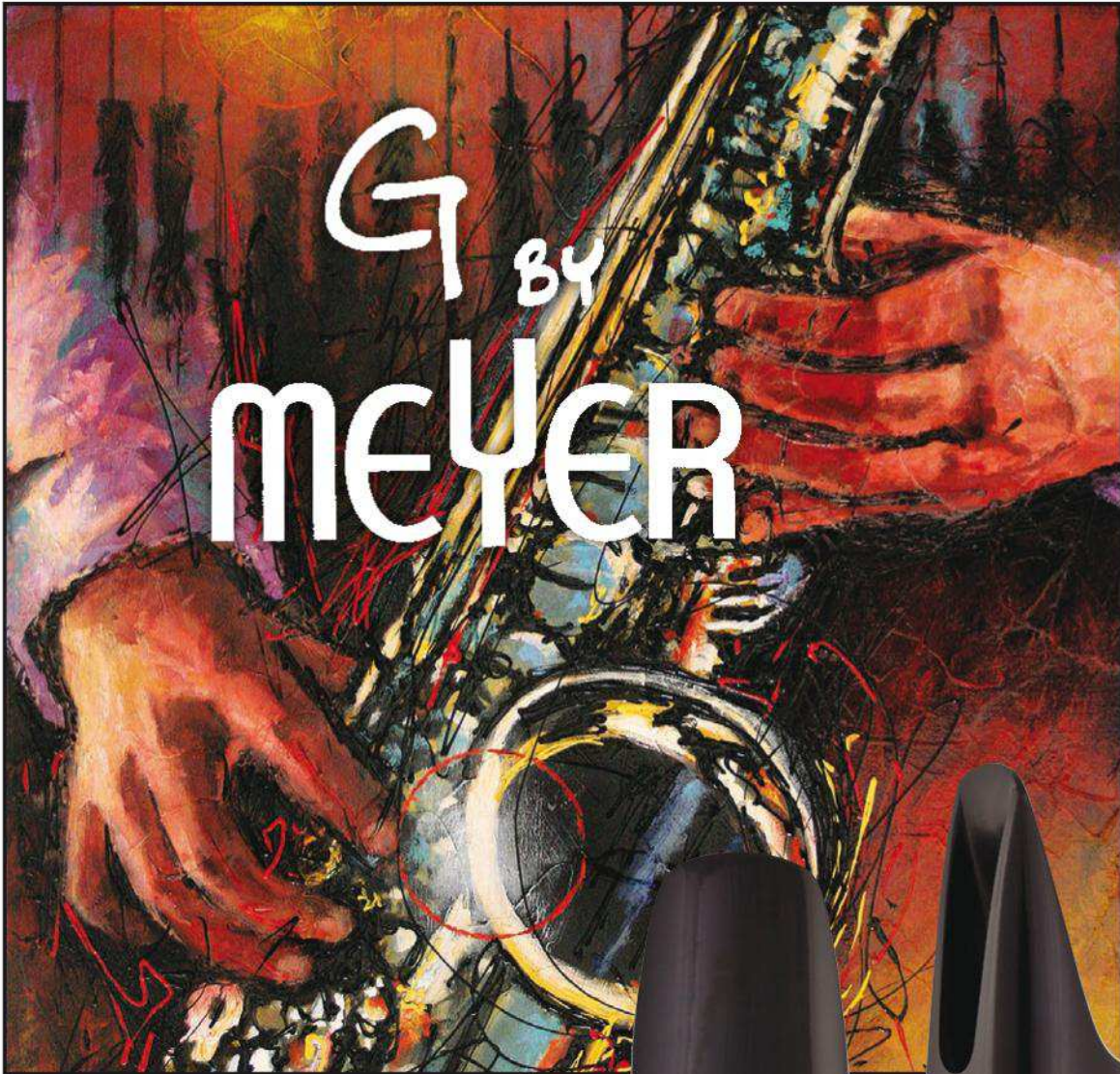


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Kurt Elling



New York Voices



Monty Alexander

THE JAZZ CRUISE



Above: Terell Stafford, Jeff Clayton, Danny Grissett and John Clayton are the Clayton Brothers; drummer Obed Calvaire is obscured
Below: Marcus Miller, Lenny White and Cecil McBee (from left)



Drummer Herlin Riley and
trumpeter Nicholas Payton



Preservation Hall Jazz
Band's Charlie Gabriel and
Ben Jaffe (from left)



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Houston Person



Wycliffe Gordon





Comedian Alonzo Bodden



Nicki Parrott

