

MICHAEL LEAGUE & TERRACE MARTIN: MASTER MUSICIAN-PRODUCERS REVEAL THEIR STUDIO SECRETS

# JazzTimes

AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

## CHARLES LLOYD @ 80

The Last Jazz Mystic  
By David Fricke

### DAVID MURRAY

*Listens to His Life*

### EAST VILLAGE VANGUARD

An Oral History  
of the Stone

### SONNY ROLLINS

*Revisits Way Out West*

### ROXY COSS

*Her Jazz Sheroes*

+

*The Legend of Cecil Taylor*  
*Nicole Mitchell*  
*Walter Smith III*  
*Sherman Irby*

JUNE 2018 • \$5.95



0 74820 64503 1



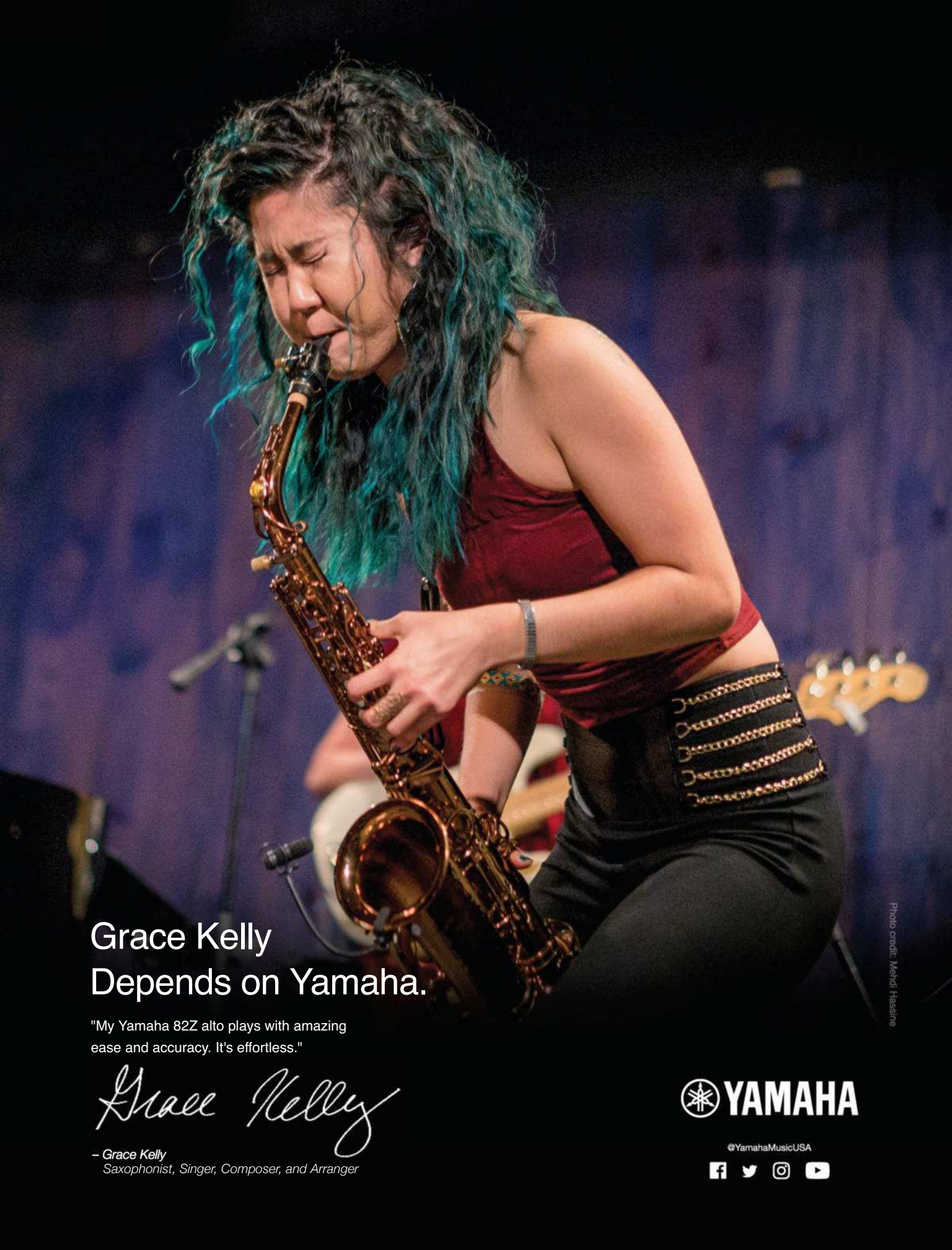


Photo credit: Mehdi Hassine

# Grace Kelly Depends on Yamaha.

"My Yamaha 82Z alto plays with amazing ease and accuracy. It's effortless."

*Grace Kelly*

– Grace Kelly  
Saxophonist, Singer, Composer, and Arranger



@YamahaMusicUSA





# THE **NOW** OF JAZZ.



*Hippest & Coolest*  
THE **JAZZ** EVENT OF THE **SEASON**

**JANUARY 26-FEBRUARY 2, 2019**

FT. LAUDERDALE • NASSAU • COZUMEL • BELIZE • KEY WEST  
m/s CELEBRITY INFINITY

*Hosted by* MARCUS MILLER • ROBERT GLASPER • DON WAS

**JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA** with WYNTON MARSALIS • CÉCILE McCLORIN SALVANT  
KURT ELLING • DAVID SANBORN • TERENCE BLANCHARD • **R+R=NOW** Robert Glasper, Terrace Martin,  
Christian Scott, Derrick Hodge, Taylor McFerrin, Justin Tyson • CHRISTIAN SCOTT • JASON MORAN • JOSÉ JAMES  
CANDY DULFER • KANDACE SPRINGS • ERIC MARIENTHAL Music Director • WYCLIFFE GORDON • BEN WILLIAMS  
BILLY KILSON • NIKI HARIS • AARON PARKS • LOGAN RICHARDSON • GEOFFREY KEEZER • DAMION REID  
VICENTE ARCHER • SULLIVAN FORTNER • FABIAN ALMAZAN • DAVID GINYARD • ALEX HAN • CHARLES ALTURA  
NASHEET WAITS • OSCAR SEATON • TARUS MATEEN • LAWRENCE FIELDS • LUQUES CURTIS  
COREY FONVILLE • MALCOLM GIL • ALONZO BODDEN Comedian • *More to be announced*





AMERICA'S LARGEST CONSUMER AUDIO SHOW

# 15TH ANNUAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN INTERNATIONAL AUDIO FEST

05 - 07 OCTOBER 2018 / DENVER, COLORADO

[www.audiofest.net](http://www.audiofest.net)





# BLUE NOTE®



## 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 to new realms.



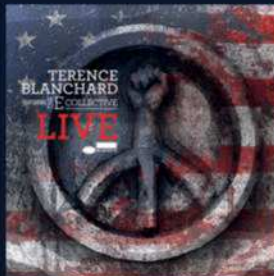
## DAVE MCMURRAY MUSIC IS LIFE

On his Blue Note-debut, the Detroit native delivers a cohesive program of modern jazz that bristles with soul. Joined by **IBRAHIM JONES** (bass), **RON OTIS** and **JEFF CANADY** (drums), *Life* consists of 7 originals along with covers of songs by fellow Detroiters – George Clinton's funk anthem "**Atomic Dog**" and the White Stripes' rock hit "**Seven Nation Army**."



## 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."



## TERENCE BLANCHARD LIVE (FEAT. THE E-COLLECTIVE)

Following his powerful album *Breathless*, **4-time GRAMMY-winning trumpeter** Terence Blanchard documents his band The E-Collective live in Minneapolis, Cleveland, and Dallas – cities that have been scarred by the tension between law enforcement and unarmed African Americans. Live features keyboardist **FABIAN ALMAZAN**, guitarist **CHARLES ALTURA**, bassist **DAVID GINYARD JR.**, and drummer **OSCAR SEATON**



## 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.



# DC JAZZ FEST

presented by **events DC**

JUNE 8 – 17, 2018

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

DCJAZZFEST.ORG



**LESLIE ODOM JR. | R+R=NOW (ROBERT GLASPER SUPERGROUP  
CHRISTIAN SCOTT aTUNDE ADJUAH, TERRACE MARTIN, TAYLOR MCFERRIN, DERRICK HODGE)  
CHUCHO VALDÉS & GONZALO RUBALCABA | IVAN LINS & FRIENDS | MACEO PARKER**

**REGINA CARTER | CHRISTIAN SCOTT aTUNDE ADJUAH | BEN WILLIAMS  
OLIVER LAKE BIG BAND | PATRICIA BARBER | TERENCE BLANCHARD FEATURING THE E-COLLECTIVE**

Delfeayo Marsalis | Terri Lyne Carrington: Celebrating Geri Allen | Frederic Yonnet | Raul Midón  
Edmar Castañeda & Grégoire Maret | Fabrizio Bosso | Jeff Parker | Jaimie Branch | Tia Fuller  
Allan Harris: The Genius of Eddie Jefferson | Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra | AACM Special Ensemble  
Ancestral Memories | Washington Renaissance Orchestra Octet | Kris Funn & Cornerstore | Tribute to Keter Betts  
Melissa Andana | Roy Hargrove | Lisa Fischer | Michael Thomas Quintet | Allyn Johnson feat. Paul Carr  
Samuel Prather & Groove Orchestra | AMP Trio Featuring Tahira Clayton | Rochelle Rice | Mark G. Meadows  
Hess Is More | Todd Marcus | Esther Williams & Davey Yarborough | The Redd Brothers | Christie Dashiell Quartet  
w/C.V. Dashiell, III | Veronneau | Brian and Jessica Settles | Marshall Keys Soulful Path | The Jihye Lee Orchestra  
Baylor Project | Vocal Jam w/the Chris Grasso Quartet | Jo-Go Project | Herb Scott and Aaron Myers | Donvonte' McCoy  
Shacara Rogers | Javier Moreno | Dupont Brass | Tom Teasley | Charmaine Michelle | Ka'Ba Soul Singer  
Liberation Project | Bill Cole's Untempered | Three Fathers: Anthony Nelson Jr., Herman Burney, Nasar Abadey  
Jazz Academy Ensemble | DCJazzPrix Finalists | Robert Mwambe with/Cynda Williams | John Lamkin III Quartet  
Greg Hatza Organization | Leo Maximal Winds | WJAI Ensemble | Benito Gonzalez | Julia Nixon | Elijah Balbed  
Ola Onabule | Origem | Lena Seikaly | Paul Carr | Shannon Gunn | Janelle Gill | Udobi | Kenny Rittenhouse | Coy Fish  
Tyler Leaks | The String Queens | Roosevelt Collier Trio | Herman Burney Trio | Akua Allrich | Reginald Cyntje and more.

**For tickets, artists and a complete schedule, visit [DCJAZZFEST.ORG](http://DCJAZZFEST.ORG)**

PRESENTING SPONSOR



PLATINUM SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSORS



The DC Jazz Festival®, a 501(c)(3) non-profit service organization, and its programs are made possible, in part, with major grants from the Government of the District of Columbia, Muriel Bowser, Mayor; with awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music & Entertainment; and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Planning and Development; and, in part, by major funding from the Anne and Ronald Abramson Family Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Gillon Family Charitable Fund, Wells Fargo Foundation, The NEA Foundation, Venable Foundation, The Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts, The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, The Reva & David Logan Foundation, John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. ©2018 DC Jazz Festival. All rights reserved.





**LATEST 2018 ARTIST ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**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

**LAURIE ANDERSON &  
CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE**

Improvisations, with special guest Rubin Kodheli

**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**

**GRACE KELLY**

**RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA  
INDO-PAK COALITION**

**MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS COMING!**



**60+ ARTISTS  
OVER 3 DAYS!**  
[newportjazz.org](http://newportjazz.org)



Eventbrite





▶ "I just keep moving forward," Charles Lloyd, 80, tells David Fricke. "That's what I'm about."

## 28 CHARLES LLOYD

In his triumphant 80th year, the saxophonist traces the novel-worthy arc of his life in music for **David Fricke**—from his blues and R&B roots in Memphis, through the explosive '60s-era popularity that inspired his self-imposed exile, and into his current Blue Note project, *Vanished Gardens*, featuring the singer-songwriter Lucinda Williams.

## 36 DAVID MURRAY

For this installment of Bright Moments, the strikingly versatile, powerful and prolific saxophonist tells the stories behind his most important albums. By **Shaun Brady**

## 44 MICHAEL LEAGUE & TERRACE MARTIN

In this conversation moderated by **Ashley Kahn**, two of the most successful jazz-trained artists of their generation talk shop as fellow record producers, and walk readers through the creation of a new track.

## 50 CELEBRATING THE STONE

It could be a sweat lodge and the beer list was nonexistent, but for well over a decade the Stone in Manhattan's East Village provided a refuge for the NYC avant-garde. To toast the institution's move to the New School, **Shaun Brady** chats with its most loyal performers and fans.

**JUNE 2018**  
VOLUME 48 | NUMBER 5

9 **JT Notes** Editor Evan Haga on the Jazz Foundation of America

## 10 OPENING CHORUS

10 **Hearsay** NEA Jazz Masters, John Abercrombie tribute, Walter Smith III, Big Ears Festival, artists remember Cecil Taylor, news and farewells

20 **Before & After** Nicole Mitchell  
26 **Overdue Ovation** Sherman Irby

## 58 SOUND ADVICE

58 **AudioFiles** Brent Butterworth on the future, or lack thereof, of the compact disc  
60 **Chops** Sonny Rollins on *Way Out West* and the secrets of the strolling trio  
61 **Gearhead** The latest and greatest musical instruments, accessories and jazz-education resources

## 62 REVIEWS

62 **CD Reviews**  
**Jazz Directory**  
72 **Artist's Choice** Roxy Coss picks tracks by brilliant women in jazz

# outside

AT JAZZTIMES.COM

## MP3s

promotions – jazz MP3s

*JazzTimes Spins & Riffs*, a podcast hosted by JT contributing editor Lee Mergner, plus new music

## EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

Live review: Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya pay homage to the Jazz Epistles in Brooklyn; track premiere: Dave Holland returns to the avant-garde with Evan Parker on "Q&A"; plus video interviews, photo galleries, giveaways, polls, festival and concert announcements, news on new releases and much more

Cover and Table of Contents images by D. Darr.



“Sweetwater always exceeds my expectations in sales, customer service, and knowledge on the gear being sold to me.”

*Hector from Kissimmee, FL*



**Ibanez PM200 Pat Metheny Signature, Tone King Imperial Mk II, JBL EON One Pro, DW Collector's Series Cherry Mahogany Shell Pack, Zildjian K Custom Dark 4-piece Cymbal Pack, Hammond XK-5, Fodera Emperor Standard Classic, Aguilar DB 751, Aguilar DB 410, Line 6 Helix LT**

# Sweetwater®

Music Instruments & Pro Audio

THE SWEETWATER  
DIFFERENCE



55-POINT  
EVALUATION



FREE  
SHIPPING\*\*



FREE TECH  
SUPPORT



FREE 2-YEAR  
WARRANTY

**(800) 222-4700**

**Sweetwater.com**

**0% INTEREST for 24 MONTHS\*** on purchases of select manufacturers' products made with your Sweetwater Card between now and June 30, 2018 – 24 equal monthly payments required.

\*Offer applies only to single-receipt qualifying purchases. No interest will be charged on promo purchase and equal monthly payments are required equal to initial promo purchase amount divided equally by the number of months in promo period until promo is paid in full. The equal monthly payment will be rounded to the next highest whole dollar and may be higher than the minimum payment that would be required if the purchase was a non-promotional purchase. Regular account terms apply to non-promotional purchases. For new accounts: Purchase APR is 29.99%; Minimum Interest Charge is \$2. Existing cardholders should see their credit card agreement for their applicable terms. Subject to credit approval. \*\*Sweetwater.com/about/free-shipping



**EDITORIAL**

**Editor**

Evan Haga | ehaga@jazztimes.com

**Contributing Editor**

Lee Mergner

**Contributing Writers**

David R. Adler, Larry Appelbaum, Shaun Brady, Philip Booth, Nate Chinen, Sharonne Cohen, Thomas Conrad, Brad Farberman, Colin Fleming, David Fricke, Andrew Gilbert, Fernando Gonzalez, Steve Greenlee, Geoffrey Himes, Marc Hopkins, Willard Jenkins, Mike Joyce, Ashley Kahn, David Kastin, Aidan Levy, Christopher Loudon, Bill Meredith, John Murph, Jennifer Odell, Ted Panken, Mac Randall, Britt Robson, Giovanni Russonello, Sam Sessa, Mike Shanley, Jeff Tamarkin, George Varga, Natalie Weiner, Michael J. West, David Whiteis

**Contributing Photographers & Illustrators**

John Abbott, Greg Aiello, Enid Farber, Ken Franckling, Peter Gannushkin, Ben Johnson, Jimmy Katz, R. Andrew Lepley, Alan Nahigian, John Rogers, Nick Ruechel, Jack Vartoogian, Michael Weintrob, Michael Wilderman

**Proofreaders**

Christopher Loudon, Jeff Tamarkin

**ART & PRODUCTION**

**Art Director**

Carolyn V. Marsden

**Senior Digital Designer**

Mike Decker

**Graphic Designer**

Eoin Laramee

**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**

**Vice President, Media Solutions**

Stu Crystal | scrystal@madavor.com

**Media Solutions Manager**

Miene Smith | 617.706.9092 | msmith@madavor.com

**Client Services**

clientservices@madavor.com

**Marketing Director**

Andrew Yeum

**Marketing Associates**

Michael Marzeotti, Summer Whittaker

GET MORE  
*Jazz*

Subscribe to the  
JazzTimes  
eNewsletter for  
weekly reports on  
the latest  
jazz news



**EXECUTIVE**

**Chairman & Chief Executive Officer**

Jeffrey C. Wolk

**Chief Operating Officer**

Susan Fitzgerald

**Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing**

Robin Morse

**AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT**

**VP, Audience Development**

Bob Dortch

**VP, Strategy**

Jason Pomerantz

**CONTENT MARKETING**

**Strategic Content Director**

Peter Madden

**Content Marketing Associates**

Anthony Buzzeo, Tim Doolan

**NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION**

National Publisher Services

**JAZZTIMES EDITORIAL OFFICE**

10801 Margate Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901

**CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS**

Madavor Media, LLC, 25 Braintree Hill Office Park,  
Suite 404, Braintree, MA 02184  
Tel: 617-706-9110 | Fax: 617-536-0102

JazzTimes (ISSN-0272-572-X) is published 10 times per year by Madavor Media, LLC.,

**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.

**OPERATIONS**

**VP, Business Operations**

Courtney Whitaker

**Technical Product Manager**

Michael Ma

**Operations Supervisor**

Nora Frew

**Operations Coordinator**

Kianna Perry

**Human Resources Generalist**

Alicia Roach

**Supervisor, Client Services**

Jessica Krogman

**Client Services**

Cheyenne Corliss, Darren Cormier,  
Tou Zong Her, Andrea Palli

**Accounting Director**

Amanda Joyce

**Accounts Payable Associate**

Tina McDermott

**Accounts Receivable Associate**

Wayne Tuggle

Sign up now at  
[jazztimes.com/newsletter](http://jazztimes.com/newsletter)



# [JT]Notes



► The Heath Brothers accept their Lifetime Achievement Award; Cassandra Wilson; Brittany Howard (from left)

## Of Jazz and Charity

By Evan Haga

Institutional support in jazz is now essential to the music's health, but it can sometimes seem like a satire of charity: a few thousand dollars of grant money to a postgraduate trust-funder, so that he or she might finally finish that chamber-jazz song cycle about whale watching and not get razzed by the family during Christmastime in Connecticut.

The Jazz Foundation of America, which held its annual fundraising gala concert at the Apollo Theater on April 20, deals more in authentic beneficence: healthcare for jazz and roots musicians in dire need of it; home repair for working artists whose communities, such as those in Puerto Rico and Texas and Louisiana, have been devastated by extreme weather. We're not talking about "Music is a healing force, so check out my Kickstarter" stuff; this is inarguable good.

The Apollo show/schmooze is an integral date for the JFA's books, and the event does a consistently fine job of balancing the music culture that the organization serves with the fireworks that keep philanthropists and their dates coming back. Although this year's lineup came off as lower-key—recent editions have featured Keith Richards and John Mayer—it still delivered. Davell Crawford's gospel choir provided a spiritual overture, before pianist Matthew Whitaker dispelled the notion that prodigies lack soul. Saxophonist Jimmy Heath and his drummer brother Tootie received their 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award from Chevy Chase, before performing two tunes: Blue Mitchell's Caribbean hard-bop offering "Fungui

Mama," with high-note trumpet specialist Jon Faddis, pianist Harold Mabern and bassist Rufus Reid; and "Nardis," which swapped out Mabern for Chase. (The comedian gave it the old college try, and his playing demonstrated real enthusiasm and an obvious penchant for the style of the tune's greatest interpreter, his pal Bill Evans. He unhitched from the rhythm section for a spell, and the arrangement seemed ... let's call it casual, but all's well that ends with Tootie Heath.)

Under the musical direction of drummer Steve Jordan, the concert moved with striking efficiency. During the segment to honor Roberta Flack, Alabama Shakes' Brittany Howard made Gene McDaniels' "Compared to What" into a roof-raising moment that felt tailored for the Apollo. (Howard's comfortable fire evoked Les McCann as vividly as it did Flack.) Cassandra Wilson brought her bewitching signatures to "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" and "Killing Me Softly With His Song," and had fun singing with Nona Hendryx, who'd given "Strange Fruit" a sort of rock-musical treatment earlier. Eddie Palmieri performed starkly wistful solo piano in memory of his late wife, before a blues finale honored Otis Rush. At the close, guitarists Jimmie Vaughan, Doyle Bramhall II, Isaiah Sharkey and Ronnie Baker Brooks traded choruses as Houston singer Diunna Greenleaf and actor Bruce Willis, also on harmonica, belted out "Shim Sham Shimmy." It was freewheeling in execution but also savvy programming, pleasing to a roots-music aficionado or a well-heeled *Die Hard* fan. **JT**

ACT

the legacy lives on



esbjörn svensson 1964 - 2008



e.s.t. at the peak of their creativity: the celebrated 2005 live recording available now for the first time

cd / vinyl / digital



www.actmusic.com



# OPENING CHORUS

(( Stay in tune ))



► **The Class of 2018:** Todd Barkan, Joanne Brackeen, Dianne Reeves and Pat Metheny (from left)

## The Next Generations

AT THE KENNEDY CENTER, RISING JAZZ STARS PAY TRIBUTE TO THE 2018 NEA JAZZ MASTERS

The themes of intergenerational support and the power of community rang loud and clear throughout the celebration of the 2018 class of NEA Jazz Masters, held at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., on April 16. The recipients—pianist Joanne Brackeen, 79; guitarist Pat Metheny, 63; vocalist Dianne Reeves, 61; and impresario Todd Barkan, 71—basked in the glow of a series of stirring tribute performances, most of which featured emerging artists rather than the usual roundup of all-stars and fellow jazz masters so common at gala events.

To salute each honoree, the event's producers curated a segment featuring a brief introduction from a person of influence in the performing-arts world; a short video profile; a composition or medley of material associated with the honoree, performed by a select group; and a short acceptance speech. The videos, which can be seen along with the entire show on the NEA website, were all first-person interviews that effectively and engagingly captured the honor-

ees' background and essence. Hearing Barkan explain how he literally stumbled into owning the Bay Area jazz club Keystone Korner, or Brackeen tell how she impulsively sat in with Art Blakey's band at Slugs', allowed the audience to marvel at the fortuitous, almost magical aspects of these lives in jazz.

Naturally, the performances saluting the quartet formed the evening's backbone. Longtime promoter and producer Barkan—recipient of the A.B. Spellman Award for Jazz Advocacy—was saluted by Eddie Palmieri, the only previous NEA Jazz Master on the program. Palmieri was also the only performer to speak at length, though inexplicably he talked not about Barkan but about himself. Then again, his age and stature give him leeway, and his group's energetic performance of his Monk-inspired "Noble Cruise" showed how the piano great has memorably merged the genres of jazz and Afro-Cuban music.

Barkan's beautifully written and delivered acceptance speech focused on the unique ability of the music to inspire and

## Inside

**10** **Hearsay**  
NEA Jazz Masters, John Abercrombie tribute, Walter Smith III, Big Ears Festival, artists remember Cecil Taylor, news and farewells

**20** **Before & After**  
Nicole Mitchell

**26** **Overdue Ovation**  
Sherman Irby

even heal us. "No matter what generation we are blessed to be born into," he said, "we all stand on the shoulders of our teachers, our parents, our heroes and all those elders who have lit the path for us." He thanked many artists, including perhaps his most important mentor and longtime friend, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, as well as Freddie Hubbard, Dexter Gordon and Miles Davis, mentioning specific gifts received from each.

The next honoree, Pat Metheny, was no less eloquent. In the only reference of the night to contemporary social issues, he compared the ageless influence of music on society with the overhyped world of politics. "Politicians come and go," he said. "Great music has a way of lasting and remaining influential for a really, really, really, really long time. Anyone seeking long-term political influence should probably pay attention to that." He predicted that jazz's influence is likely to be much greater than what we're aware of now, and that the largest audience for his music may not even be born yet. Metheny isn't known for speak-





► Clockwise from top right: Cécile McLorin Salvant (with Christian McBride); Eddie Palmieri; Angélique Kidjo dances at the finale; young guitar masters honor Pat Metheny

ing a lot to audiences, but when given the opportunity, he's always thoughtful and articulate.

The performance saluting Metheny was the most creative both in concept and execution, employing five young guitarists—Pasquale Grosso, Nir Felder, Gilad Hekselman, Camila Meza and Dan Wilson—to play a medley of his best-known songs, backed by Metheny's *Day Trip* rhythm section of bassist Christian McBride and drummer Antonio Sanchez. The group rolled through "What Do You Want?," featuring Grosso; a remarkably faithful version of "Bright Size Life," featuring Felder and Hekselman; the irresistible "James," featuring Wilson; and the soaring "Minuano (Six Eight)," featuring Meza doubling the theme on voice and guitar. The set, a demonstration of how the music moves across generations, had Metheny beaming with pride.

Joanne Brackeen added a dash of sardorial insouciance by wearing an NEA baseball cap sideways, hip-hop style, with her otherwise semi-formal attire. The garb reflected her own playful way of creating music, combining a mastery of fundamentals with an open acceptance of spontaneous invention. In her heartfelt speech, she discussed how she has been inspired both by her audiences and by silence. "When I play music, I play from the vibration of the people in the place that I'm playing," she said. "It makes me feel at home on the earth."

The young pianist James Francies performed a medley of two of Brackeen's tunes, "Fi-Fi Goes to Heaven" and "Crystal Palace BPC," backed by McBride and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington. Now recording for Blue Note Records, Francies captured the driving virtuosity and improvisational flights of fancy that are



hallmarks of Brackeen's style.

Before the tribute to Reeves, pianist Jason Moran, the Kennedy Center's Artistic Director for Jazz, improvised music for an "In Memoriam" segment that paid homage to such recently departed NEA Jazz Masters as Jon Hendricks, George Avakian, Muhal Richard Abrams and Cecil Taylor. Moran even evoked Taylor's distinctive percussive approach while the avant-jazz pioneer's image was up on the screen.

The final honoree was fêted, appropriately enough, by one of the music's most impressive young vocalists, Cécile McLorin Salvant. She was accompanied by pianist Sullivan Fortner and a rhythm section of McBride and Carrington, both of whom are likely future NEA Jazz Masters. Carrington in particular has had a long and close relationship with Reeves, not only as a bandmate and musical director but also as a producer. Salvant performed "Obsession," a tune that Reeves recorded for her 2001 album, *The Calling*, a celebration of one of her own vocal heroes, Sarah Vaughan. As Reeves said after the performance, Salvant took the song and did something with it that Reeves would never do or even think to do—and such risk-taking is exactly what makes jazz continue to evolve and grow.

Reeves seemed to be the only honoree who spoke extemporaneously, or at least from minimal notes. With warm and humorous anecdotes, she spoke about the early breaks and deep inspiration given to her by mentors like Sérgio Mendes, Clark Terry and her cousin George Duke. It was through Terry, she said, that she learned "my instrument was one thing, but my voice was my soul." She also thanked her aunt, who nurtured in the singer a love for all kinds of music, including more earthy types, such as a few ribald blues tunes with double-entendre lyrics that a young Reeves didn't understand until much later.

The evening was capped off by a performance of a totally different kind. The dynamic Afropop singer Angélique Kidjo performed a rousing version of the Rolling Stones' "Gimme Shelter," backed by many of the musicians from the night, including Felder, McBride, Carrington and Sanchez, plus Helen Sung on piano and keyboards. The honorees came up onstage for the last part of the song, some dancing, one (Reeves) singing, but all smiling. Kudos to the NEA and the Kennedy Center for so perfectly blending a respect for the past with a look to the future. **LEE MERGNER**

# Dear John

IN BROOKLYN, A TRIBUTE TO GUITAR GREAT JOHN ABERCROMBIE FEATURES THE BEST OF JAZZ'S BABY-BOOM GENERATION

On March 26, at the Brooklyn venue Roulette, a fantastic two-hour-plus tribute show was bookended by the same interview footage from the documentary *Open Land – Meeting John Abercrombie* (which sees DVD release this summer). In it, the guitarist is talking about what constitutes a proper evaluation in art. A musician needs only to look inward, he argues: “My responsibility is to myself.”

That’s effective talk for a reflective film, but it isn’t necessarily the truth that this concert bore out. Abercrombie, who died in August at age 72, was one of his generation’s most natural collaborators, an insider’s guitar hero who architected an arty, emotive version of fusion and wrote tunes balancing his love of melody with sly harmonic and rhythmic complexities. His bands, particularly in his epochal work for ECM in the 1970s, were supergroups on paper but functioned as profoundly empathic working outfits. Even his improvising, especially after he began using his thumb instead of a pick, felt even-handed, egalitarian, as if each note were equally integral to the grand narrative shape of his solos. His responsibility was one of generosity. (And it continues. Proceeds from the concert went to the newly formed John Abercrombie Jazz Scholarship Fund.)

In Brooklyn, a striking lineup of Abercrombie’s peers from jazz’s baby-boom generation gathered to return some of his many favors. With WBGO’s Nate Chinen, a former *JT* columnist, providing sharp intros that functioned as live liner notes, Abercrombie’s music was interpreted and a few of his ensembles were recreated. Sometimes that meant placing in the leader’s stead other brilliant guitarists who learned to play bebop during the rock era.

After establishing a tone of reverent calm with bassist Thomas Morgan on “Epilogue,” guitarist Bill Frisell filled

▶ Jack DeJohnette (left) and Bill Frisell at Roulette in March



## ▶ A tribute to John Abercrombie, by drummer Peter Erskine

Abercrombie’s shoes in the quartet from his 2009 ECM release, *Wait Till You See Her*, alongside Morgan, violinist Mark Feldman and drummer Joey Baron. On the ballad “Sad Song” and chamberlike postbop of “Anniversary Waltz,” Frisell captured Abercrombie’s patient temperament but applied his own trademarks, replacing single-note phrasing with Monk-like chord-melody improvisations. Feldman’s gorgeously textured, melancholy vibrato served as a reminder that this night was indeed a wake of sorts.

Nels Cline lifted up Abercrombie’s solo-guitar masterwork from 1978, *Characters*, with a take of “Memoir,” before the guitarist and pianist Marc Copland gave the infectious melody of “Boat Song” its requisite sparkle, supported by Morgan and drummer Peter Erskine. Throughout, Cline’s winsomely rugged, rock-inflected technique was exciting in the context of Abercrombie’s writing—Advanced Jazz Composition of the school ruled by Pat Metheny, Carla Bley, Steve Swallow and the like. Pianist Eliane Elias filled out Abercrombie’s mid-to-late-’80s trio featuring Erskine and bassist Marc Johnson, and on “John’s Waltz” and especially “Jazz Folk,” she played with an escalating gospel-blues fervor that brought down the house.

John Scofield, in a trio with Baron and Johnson, swung like mad on his fellow guitarist’s tune “Even Steven,” a fetching set of changes off *Solar*, Abercrombie and Scofield’s overlooked gem from 1982. The bop zest continued into “Within a Song”: Scofield and saxophonist Joe Lovano, his partner in one of current jazz’s most thrilling frontlines, played cat-and-mouse on the theme and burned during their solos, atop bassist Drew Gress and the furious *spang-a-lang* of drummer Adam Nussbaum. (In terms of volume and intensity, the evening worked at two levels: with Nussbaum and without.)

On “Arcade” and “Flipside,” Randy Brecker and Dave Liebman were similarly, delightfully interactive as a frontline tandem—the former blowing with virtuosic elegance on flugelhorn, and the latter, nearly right out of the gate, summoning up Trane on soprano sax at full tilt. Copland, who was also the evening’s musical director, soloed here and elsewhere in comprehensive orchestral statements. On “Flipside,” with its shades of vintage Wayne Shorter, an unbilled appearance by drummer Billy Hart got a terrific but short-lived band back together: Contact, whose 2010 release *Five on One* is another of Abercrombie’s unsung pearls of modern postbop.

SCOTT FRIEDLANDER



The program closed with a proper finale, with music from 1975's *Timeless*, a diverse album highlighted by cosmic organ-trio fusion and featuring keyboardist Jan Hammer and drummer Jack DeJohnette. That is Abercrombie's most popular LP, though not necessarily his best of the era; just as many record collectors might argue in favor of *Gateway*. More important, it's a cultural touchstone of sorts: the kind of jazz LP that smart, curious rock and folk fans absorbed alongside *The Köln Concert* and *In a Silent Way*, and a jewel of his enduring and fruitful devotion to the ECM label. (It's worth noting that the label's founder, Manfred Eicher, was in the house.) At Roulette, DeJohnette, Copland, Gress and Frisell, on a funny-looking short-scale octave guitar, meditated on the title track, an ambient drift of spare but sparkling melody. Then came "Ralph's Piano Waltz," which offered the sold-out room the welcome opportunity to witness DeJohnette swing at midtempo.

Even among the frequent all-star tributes to jazz heroes that occur in New York, this was a special evening. It made you marvel at the sheer volume and magnitude of Abercrombie's circle, and remember those key figures who couldn't be there, like Ralph Towner, who cancelled due to illness, or Dave Holland and Andy LaVerne. Perhaps most impressive, it was a sit-down theater-style show that felt like the best kind of musicians' hang, in which the players were either onstage or engaged with the performances as fans. (Case in point: DeJohnette sat next to me in a press seat until about a minute before he went to work.) It was all for John, but, in his spirit, it was also all for each other. **EVAN HAGA**

---



---



---

## Playing It Straight

SAXOPHONIST **WALTER SMITH III** DELVES INTO OLD-SCHOOL TUNES AND THE TRIO FORMAT

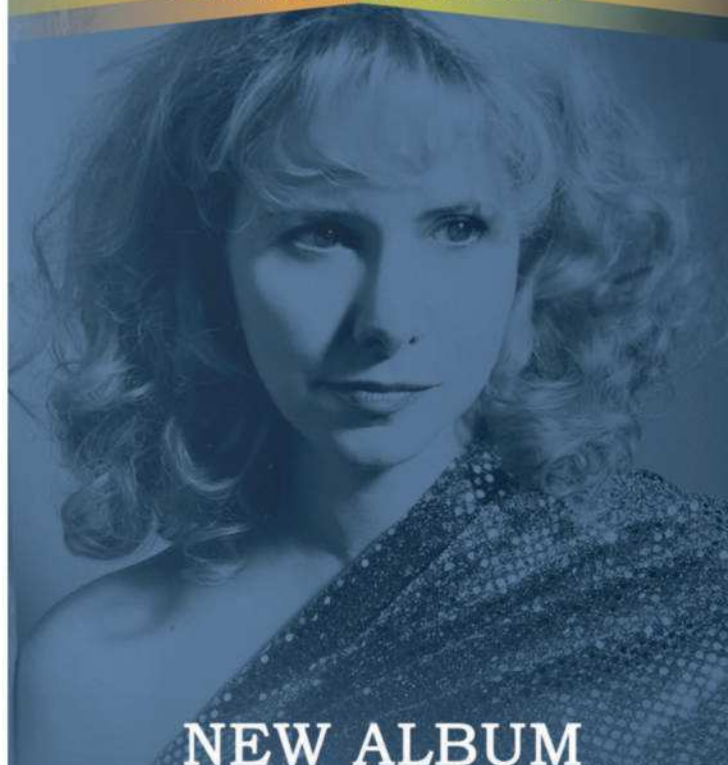
**W**alter Smith III's fifth recording as a leader, *TWIO* (Whirlwind), is a nine-tune date featuring drummer Eric Harland, four tracks apiece with bassists Christian McBride and Harish Raghavan and, on two tunes, saxophonist Joshua Redman. It presents a radically different sound and concept from its four predecessors. The 37-year-old tenor saxophonist's earlier albums, like *III* and *Still Casual*, showcased his *au courant* original music, chockablock with virtuosically executed metric modulations, gnarly lines and advanced harmonic structures. Conversely, on *TWIO*, Smith and partners interpret good-old-good ones of the less-traveled variety, on their own terms, in 4/4 time and eschewing deconstruction.

Asked about this shift, Smith—whose parents are eminent educators in his hometown of Houston—traced it to his burgeoning interest in teaching. That enthusiasm reached an inflection point three years ago, when he accepted a fulltime position at Indiana University. The move augmented an already complex career that has included increasing leader work and abundant employment as a first-call sideman with, among others, Harland, Ambrose Akinmusire, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah and Chris Dave. **TED PANKEN**

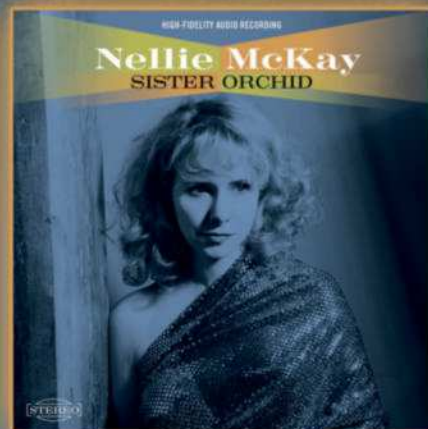
HIGH-FIDELITY AUDIO RECORDING

# Nellie McKay

## SISTER ORCHID



NEW ALBUM



AVAILABLE  
MAY 18, 2018

"Funny and touching, ceaselessly clever and scarily talented." - *The New Yorker*

**Palmetto**  
RECORDS

**JAZZTIMES: WHY, AT THIS POINT, A RECORD OF TUNES, AFTER YOU'VE RECORDED SO MUCH ORIGINAL MUSIC OVER THE YEARS? IT'S A VERY DIFFERENT PRESENTATION.**

**WALTER SMITH III:** In the classroom, I got in the habit of talking about how to deal with functional harmony. I was listening to old records and learning tunes, and it got back on my radar as something to revisit. During high school in Houston I learned Kenny Garrett and Branford Marsalis pieces; [Garrett's] *Triology* and [Marsalis'] *The Dark Keys* were my favorite trio records. But when I got to Berklee, the guys who were playing all the time—Wayne Escoffery, Jaleel Shaw, Bob Reynolds—knew hundreds of tunes. It became clear that if you wanted to play with them, or with the people they were playing with, that was the currency that was being traded in Boston.

**PEOPLE WHO KNEW YOU AT BERKLEE REMEMBER YOU AS HAVING PRODIGIOUS CHOPS AND BEING A VERY ADVANCED PLAYER, BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE DELIBERATELY TAKEN THE SLOW-AND-STEADY APPROACH IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT.**

**WHAT WAS YOUR PROCESS IN PUTTING TOGETHER A RECORDING OF STANDARDS WITHOUT A CHORDAL INSTRUMENT?**

I wanted everyone to be comfortable playing on these tunes without falling into the standard way of playing them. Even though we're making it like a jam session, I didn't want it to feel like we're playing a gig at a hotel, and I felt that someone comping might put me in that mindset. We recorded about 20 tunes, all one or two takes, and boiled it down to things that worked in a program. The program is under 50 minutes, but originally we were aiming for under 40 minutes, like two sides of an LP. Actually, after the first session with Christian and Eric, I thought it would be 25 minutes, with maybe two volumes. But after I did the second session with Harish on bass, the vibe was totally different, which I wanted, and we ended up using half Harish and half Christian.

**HOW MUCH MAPPING OUT DID YOU DO?**

I started out arranging and reharmonizing every one of the songs into stuff I normally would write, but when rehearsals started, I realized that wasn't the point of the album. So I just wrote out lead sheets to all the tunes, so we'd all be on the same page as far as changes and form. I didn't want it to be saxophone solo/bass solo/trade fours, that kind of thing, so for every song I lined up exactly what would happen. Even on the live shows, I'm making sure on each particular tune we go for this or that; if something happens, that's cool, but let's aim for these things.

**BOTH YOUR PARENTS ARE TEACHERS. WAS TEACHING SOMETHING YOU FELT DIRECTED TOWARD FOR A LONG TIME?**

Coming out of high school, my goal was to teach, but I had a lot of opportunities to perform and tour, so it stopped being

my main focus. But I was getting more opportunities to teach as a faculty adjunct or be a guest artist or artist-in-residence, and my wife suggested I look into it more deeply, so I applied for the Indiana position. I'm still based in Los Angeles, so I go back and forth. I've gotten to be so productive on an airplane, it's a joke. I put in all the time before everything starts, which is a habit I've developed for composing and learning people's music. Planning is key for me in everything.

I'm not in a rush to do anything. I've accomplished a lot of things I've wanted to do, but if I hadn't gotten to them yet, I wouldn't be worried about it—there's still time. That's the way I've always looked at it. **JT**



▶ Walter Smith III

Maybe I could play a lot of stuff on saxophone at a young age, but I didn't feel there was any depth or music in it. And when I would listen to people on records, I would just be blown away by how they were using their information. Since I went to Berklee for a music-ed degree, I didn't take improvisation classes or study composition or get to play. So I wanted to learn on the road from people, whether they were peers who knew more about getting gigs and business, or more about composition. Getting to play with Terence Blanchard and asking him a million questions basically informed everything I knew at a certain point, and I built from there in my own study.



# Southern Audacity

AN ECLECTIC ROSTER AND A FERVOR FOR EXPERIMENTATION DEFINE A VISIONARY FESTIVAL IN TENNESSEE

**Y**ou know you're at the Big Ears Festival when Nathan Bowles, banjo and bones player for the old-time string band the Black Twig Pickers, enthusiastically shouts out Milford Graves, the sage of avant-garde jazz percussion. "I got my wig flipped!" Bowles said of Graves' solo set, which took place on the same stage just hours before. Flipping wigs in this fashion is precisely the goal of the annual creative-music confab, which took place March 22-25 in about a dozen venues in downtown Knoxville, Tenn.

Big Ears doesn't just cater to diehards of any one musical form or discipline. It finds commonalities between them, striving to cultivate a discerning public that finds value and sustenance in music of many kinds. And so iconic jazz composers and improvisers appear under the

same banner as bluegrass veterans, classical mavericks, old-time folk primitivists, DJs and electronic sound sculptors. Film, prose and visual art have a role to play as well. There are artist interviews and panels, informal playing sessions and secret pop-up shows. There's a superbly designed mobile app that allows attendees to customize a schedule and receive alerts as things unfold.

Evan Parker, Roscoe Mitchell, Craig Taborn, Jason Moran, Tyshawn Sorey, Nels Cline, Jenny Scheinman, Okkyung Lee, Marc Ribot and others appeared in more than one context. Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn played spirited banjo duos in the Tennessee Theatre (about the size of the Beacon in New York, if not bigger). Singer/fiddler Sam Amidon played a full set in the elegant, comfortable Bijou Theatre, and hosted a

gathering of amateur shape-note singers at the Knoxville Museum of Art. Author and critic Ben Ratliff, at the Scottish pub Boyd's Jig and Reel, led a discussion with experimental electronic artists Laurel Halo and Eli Keszler. Wander a bit and you'd discover something new.

It was striking to see the Jerry Douglas Band and the Tyshawn Sorey Trio play the same room, a cavernous rock venue with high ceilings and no seats called the Mill & Mine. Douglas, the eclectic Dobro master, cranked it up and went toe-to-toe with guitar beast Mike Seal while sporting a "Resist" T-shirt (something he made a point of mentioning). Sorey had fun with the room's sonic potential as well, coaxing wide dynamics from a huge field drum, among other tools in a sprawling drum-and-percussion kit. Pianist Cory Smythe and bassist Chris

# JAZZ UP YOUR SUMMER.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY  
AUGUST 24 & 25  
5:00-11:00 P.M.  
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

36TH ANNUAL Norfolk Waterfront Jazz Festival presented by

- Dave Koz & Friends Summer Horns Tour featuring Gerald Albright, Rick Braun, Richard Elliot, and introducing Aubrey Logan
- Boney James
- Norman Brown
- David Benoit & Marc Antoine
- Marcus Anderson
- Adam Hawley









36TH ANNUAL NORFOLK WATERFRONT JAZZ FESTIVAL

VIRGINIA IS FOR MUSIC LOVERS  
#VAMUSIC

Produced by **Festevents** SM

in association with

THE CITY OF NORFOLK

MAJOR SPONSOR OF FESTIVALS

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

Learn more at [bit.ly/Jazz2018](http://bit.ly/Jazz2018)

Tordini responded in kind, with hushed sensitivity and tremendous power in turn.

St. John's Episcopal Cathedral proved ideal for unaccompanied sets from saxophone legend Evan Parker and trumpet virtuoso Peter Evans. Parker's playing brimmed with cascading figures and circular breathing, but his soprano could also sound disarmingly warm, allowing for space and reflection. (At one point he slipped into an extended quote of John Coltrane's "Miles' Mode.") Evans was more extreme, making bold use of the microphone for loud and breathtakingly resonant effects.

Evans also joined Parker's seven-piece ElectroAcoustic Ensemble in another sacred space, the Church Street United Methodist Church. Craig Taborn began on piano as Ikue Mori manipulated his sparse textures on her laptop, rendering them mysterious and otherworldly. The piece was an hour of continual flux and heightened instability, with arresting contributions from Ned Rothenberg on *shakuhachi* and bass clarinet.

Taborn resurfaced that evening at the Bijou, with Roscoe Mitchell's *Bells for the South Side* ensemble. Mitchell conducted and played three saxophones and piccolo. The music was sprawling in scope but tightly controlled, with Sorey, Mike Reed and Tani Tabbal playing separate episodes on drums before joining the full orchestra in an all-out

► Milford Graves at the Big Ears Festival in Knoxville, Tenn., in March



► More photos from the Big Ears Festival

finale. (Sorey played piano as well.) The set was billed as "Roscoe Mitchell Trios," and that's how it proceeded, mostly in units of three. Ches Smith's mallets, Hugh Ragin's trumpet, James Fei's soprano saxophone and electronics and Jaribu Shahid's bass all shared time in the spotlight.

Earlier at the Bijou, which was filled to capacity, Milford Graves and pianist Jason Moran united for an engaging duo set. Graves often intones vocal syllables and sounds on the mic as he

drums, and this can be infectious; it made perfect sense when Moran grabbed a mic and began to vocalize along with him. The crowd demanded an encore, and at the start there was a prolonged, almost awkward silence. A deep and inscrutable musical gesture, perhaps? Not really: Graves was having a problem with his snare drum stand, and a tech emerged onstage to help fix it. "I apologize," Graves said, and the house clapped appreciatively. Graves added: "No, I was talking to the drum." **DAVID R. ADLER**

## "All at Full Fullness"

ARTISTS REFLECT ON THE GENIUS OF CECIL TAYLOR

**C**ecil Taylor, who died on April 5 at the age of 89, invented a singular school of the jazz avant-garde that never wavered in its audacity, even as the pianist garnered cultural acceptance and institutional accolades over his marathon career. He also gained the respect and admiration of generations of musicians, who saw him as a model of artistic integrity and commitment. Collected here by **Michael J. West** are five of their testimonials.

### STEVE COLEMAN

Cecil hired me for his big band around 1982. The thing that influenced me the most was the rehearsals. The performance is over in an hour or two, but Cecil was doing these six-hour rehearsals to get there.

First of all, there was no music. Everything was done by

ear. At first I thought this was crazy; there was no way he could remember all this. But he could, and he did. It's not like he gave you something and then gave you the exact same musical shape the second time out, but you could tell it was roughly the same musical shape—and yet there was also something very spontaneous about it.

Also, his whole approach to spontaneous composition was a major influence. People talk about Keith Jarrett and them being the first to do that, but for me, Cecil was the cat; I think Keith and them got it from him. He had his own universe, and you had to take it on its own terms.

Cecil made a tremendous contribution, and I don't think it's given its due. If you look at what everybody is doing today, you have a really wide palette—and you can find the imprint of Cecil Taylor everywhere.



## VIJAY IYER

Cecil has been dismissed for a long time as free jazz, as free improvisation. But if you really delve into his language for any length of time, you start to realize there are patterns, tendencies that are very specific and methodical. There's this huge amount of organization in the music, and we've barely scratched the surface of understanding it. It's very rare for anybody outside of his inner circle to have studied his music. Yet the language that he cultivated so carefully over the years, that's his life in a nutshell.

There's also a rigorous research sensibility underlying his vision. People love to talk about him as a character—the neck scarves, the cigarette holders and the Dom Pérignon; that's also who he was. If you ever had any conversation with him, though, you discovered that he knew more than you about anything you think you know. He knew more than you about your own hometown, or about your supposed area of expertise. He'd already studied it extensively.

"Genius" is putting it mildly. He was one of the greatest minds of the 20th century, in any discipline. It's not just about him being a musical innovator, but about him contributing ideas to humankind and synthesizing those ideas out of so, so many sources of information.

That's one thing about Cecil that has continued to inspire me: He showed me that there's no limit to how broad and how deep you can go.

## JASON MORAN

Cecil represented the full human body in the music: From his lips with poetry, from his body in dance, from his mind and fingers on the piano with intense precision. A full human at the instrument, and a full supporter of us young musicians.

I recall the first time I met him—early 2000, in Berlin. He came to see the Bandwagon play. I saw him sitting at the bar, and I rushed over to him with bassist Tarus Mateen and drummer Nasheet Waits. He talked about how he liked the music, and then he said to me, "Jason, why do you have the piano at half stick? Your sound is too big to play at half stick."

And that was a metaphor for everything: full extension, full voice, control and physicality. All at full fullness.

## MATTHEW SHIPP

Cecil was the grandfather of free-jazz piano. But what he did was so idiosyncratic, so specific to his own nervous system, that for anybody else to adopt those textures would never work. The stance, the attitude was more of an influence on me than the actual playing.

There was the fearlessness, the complete belief in his language and the willingness to live or die by that belief. At the same time, he was very open-minded. He was always emphasizing his roots in the jazz idiom of Ellington, Monk

# JOE LOVANO SPEAKS OUT

*"As a passionate endorsing artist for Dakota Saxophones, I love the feeling of the powerful swirling sounds of these wonderful Dakota Straight Tenor & Alto Saxophones...bold & dynamic...guaranteed!!"*

The Dakota Saxophone Company has been recognized for innovative product design, exceptional quality and superior craftsmanship since 2001.

Dakota has become the benchmark for today's professional Saxophonists. There are no boundaries or limits to our visions of tomorrow's bold demands.

We know the expectations of professional Saxophonists and will always strive to deliver those essential needs with every Saxophone we produce.



*"A stunning classic design concept that makes sense... loving it!"*



*"Welcome to my first choice for innovative excellence!"*



*"Redefined sound and resonance... experience it!"*



*"Unlimited versatility...take my word!"*



*"Precision key action in all registers... perfection!"*

FOR A LIVE INTERVIEW WITH JOE LOVANO VISIT [WWW.SAXDAKOTA.COM](http://WWW.SAXDAKOTA.COM)

# DAKOTA

[www.saxdakota.com](http://www.saxdakota.com)

[pjlabiz2@aol.com](mailto:pjlabiz2@aol.com)



▶ **“Genius’ is putting it mildly”:**  
Cecil Taylor in the mid-’60s

## Farewells

### Obituary: Cecil Taylor

**Cecil Taylor**, an iconoclastic pianist who was among the architects of free and avant-garde jazz, died on April 5 at his home in Brooklyn, N.Y. He had turned 89 on March 25. A cause of death was not disclosed.

Even within the idiosyncratic tradition of avant-garde jazz, Taylor’s music was unique and often confounding, comprising relentless percussive onslaughts of atonal clusters and complex, shifting rhythms on the piano. British jazz writer Val Wilmer famously compared his piano attack to “88 tuned drums.” For three decades Taylor was regarded as primarily an underground figure, an eccentric genius known only to cognoscenti of jazz and contemporary art music. He finally cemented his status as an internationally lauded musical giant in the 1980s, and went on to receive great institutional acclaim, including an NEA Jazz Master award, a MacArthur “genius” grant and Japan’s Kyoto Prize. His influence is vast, from pianists and improvisers to composers and arrangers throughout the jazz world and beyond.

**Bob Dorough**, a bebop pianist, composer, arranger and vocalist who was one of the voices of the iconic 1970s educational cartoon *Schoolhouse Rock!*, died April 23 of natural causes in Mt. Bethel, Pa. He was 94.

Best known in the mainstream as the gentle but distinctive Southern lilt behind *Schoolhouse* favorites like “Three Is a Magic Number,” “My Hero, Zero” and “Lucky Seven Sampson,” Dorough was also the writer of the songs and the series’ musical director. By that time, he was already an accomplished musician who was a veteran of both the New York and Los Angeles jazz scenes and had recorded with Miles Davis, who’d recorded Dorough’s “Devil May Care.” He was revered by his fellow singers and musicians for the wit of his songcraft and for his joyfully hip persona.

**Nathan Davis**, a tenor and soprano saxophonist, flutist, clarinetist and pioneering educator who built a reputation as a jazz musician in 1960s Europe before returning to the U.S. to establish the jazz-studies program at the University of Pittsburgh, died on April 8 at a hospital in Palm Beach, Fla. He was 81. According to the university, Davis died of natural causes.

and Horace Silver. But there’s also some Dave Brubeck in there, and he even took a couple of lessons with Lennie Tristano. The classical influences are obviously there, although you could never think of him as Third Stream. (The one person he really hated was Bill Evans. In fact, after I told him how much I liked Bill Evans, he didn’t talk to me for a few years!)

The bottom line is that Cecil ultimately, underneath all the controversy and the complexity, was a romantic poet. That’s what carries the day: There’s poetry there, and it’s authentic and real. That’s why he’ll be listened to throughout history.

### WADADA LEO SMITH

It’s very difficult to conceive how Cecil put his music together. He dictates to you, from the piano, what he wants you to play. If there are five people there, he’ll turn to each one and say, “This is

yours,” then play it and move on to the next person. And he dictates it in a way where it’s virtually impossible for you to get all of it.

The first time I played in his band, there were four or five days of rehearsal. At the break during the first day, I told him there was so much in what he dictated that I didn’t get all of it. So he dictated it again—but this time it was more complex than the first time!

What I discovered from that is this: Cecil Taylor is the score. He’s the score that manifests all the parts individually to the ensemble, and collectively when he’s playing the piano. Unless you’re really, really deeply connected to yourself—and him—it’s a long journey to actually get to the core of his music.

Now, there has been nothing else like that, ever, on Earth. He was courageous and heroic in the way that he made art, and in the way that he lived. **JT**



## News from JazzTimes.com

➤ Singer and pianist Nina Simone was one of six artists inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on April 14 at Cleveland's Public Auditorium. Part of the class of 2018, Simone was inducted along with more conventional rock acts Bon Jovi, the Cars, Dire Straits, the Moody Blues and ur-rocker Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and her induction segment included speeches by Simone's brother, actor and musician Samuel Waymon, and R&B star Mary J Blige. R&B singer Andra Day, backed by the Roots, and R&B/hip-hop artist Lauryn Hill performed songs associated with Simone in tribute.

➤ Acclaimed rapper Q-Tip, of A Tribe Called Quest, will teach a new course on the musical and cultural relationship between jazz and hip-hop at New York University this fall. Sharing instructional duties for the seven-class undergraduate course at NYU's Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music will be author, educator and regular *JazzTimes* contributor Ashley Kahn. The course will begin Sept. 5 and take place on Wednesdays through the fall semester.

➤ More than 30 performances will take place on four stages in downtown Detroit during the 39th annual Detroit Jazz Festival, which is scheduled to run from Friday, Aug. 31, through

Monday, Sept. 3. This year, the festival's artist-in-residence will be Chick Corea, who will perform with his Akoustic Band, his Elektric Band and in a sextet with the Detroit Jazz Festival Symphony Orchestra. The DJF has also announced a new annual addition to its programming: a Resident Ensemble, which will play three sets, each one incorporating an element of technology. The inaugural Resident Ensemble was intended to include pianist Geri Allen, but in the wake of her passing in 2017, drummer Terri Lyne Carrington and bassist Esperanza Spalding have agreed to co-lead a group that will pay tribute to Allen's work.



➤ Esperanza Spalding at last year's Detroit Jazz Festival

## TIA FULLER

DIAMOND CUT



*"He has mastered the art of jazz piano... by maintaining his individual style, enhanced by an innate sense of rhythm that Cuban pianists possess, thus he does not play or sound like anyone."*

— All About Jazz

*"Without question, Cuban pianist López-Nussa is an absolute ace."*

— The Vinyl District

haroldlopeznussa.com

*"...she's one of the most gifted jazz musicians of her generation."*

— Ebony

*"At this point in her career, Fuller finds herself amid a tight circle of the most accomplished female musicians in the business...she continues gracefully on her own path, all while forging new ground for women in jazz."*

— The Washington Post

tiafuller.com

## HAROLD LÓPEZNUSSA

Un Día Cualquiera



## Cyrille Aimée Live



*"When you see Cyrille Aimée perform, you instantly fall in love with her—her voice, eyes, curls and the joyful spirit she invests in each song."*

— JazzTimes

*"Beautiful, talented, precocious, funny, cultured, with the kind of instantly recognizable voice that has no known precedent..."*

— Classicalite

cyrillemusic.com



mackavenue.com

# NICOLE MITCHELL

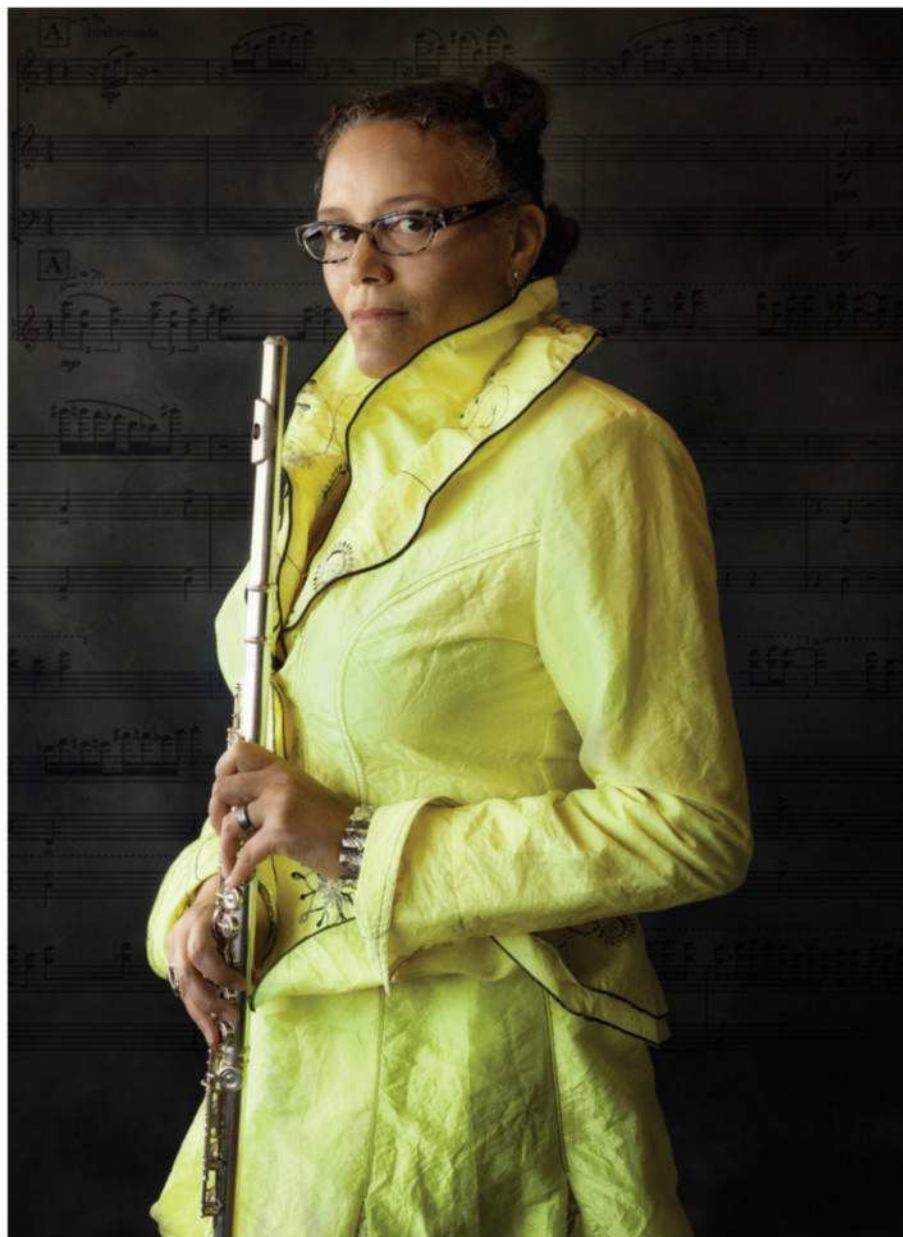
FLUTIST, COMPOSER,  
EDUCATOR, DOODLER

By George Varga

**Feature:** A tribute to pianist Geri Allen, by Nicole Mitchell

Nicole Mitchell isn't kicking back at all after a heady 2017, during which she performed several world premieres at the prestigious Ojai Music Festival and made two of the year's most audacious and acclaimed albums. A singular flutist, composer, bandleader, educator and aural provocateur, she is set to soar even higher than she did on those two dynamic recordings, *Mandorla Awakening II: Emerging Worlds* and *Liberation Narratives*, the latter an inspired collaboration with the poet Haki Madhubuti. At press time, Mitchell's Artifacts trio with drummer Mike Reed and cellist Tomeka Reid is scheduled to perform in May at the Spoleto Festival USA, in South Carolina. In August, the Syracuse-born, Anaheim-raised Mitchell will do a one-week residency at the Stone in New York City and play the Newport Jazz Festival with her Dusty Wings band. She's also set to perform at festivals in Chicago, Berlin and Vienna with her Mandorla ensemble. Now at work on a solo flute album, for which she'll double-track all the parts, Mitchell has yet another new record due out soon from her Maroon Cloud quartet and a fall tour planned with pianist Myra Melford and bassist Joëlle Léandre—the free-improv-fueled Tiger Trio.

A key member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians since 1995—Mitchell, 51, became its first female chair in 2005—she is a professor of music at the University of California's Irvine campus. "Am I a workaholic? Yeah, I got it from both my parents," she says, adding, "and I'm a doodler!" Mitchell proved as much throughout an April listening session in the control room of Exowax Recordings in northern San Diego County. Her "doodles" included artful drawings and written notes that confirmed she is as focused and free-spirited when listening to music as she is when making it.



## 1. Adam Rudolph's Moving Pictures With Organic Orchestra Strings

"Return of the Magnificent Spirits" (*Both/And*, Meta). Rudolph, percussion; Graham Haynes, cornet; Joseph Bowie, trombone, harmonica, electronics; Ralph M. Jones, flute, bamboo flute; Brahim Fribgane, oud; Kenny Wessel, guitar; Jerome Harris, bass; Matt Kilmer, frame drums. Recorded in 2010.

**BEFORE:** Ha! Actually, I have no idea who this is. But it's cool, mixing the harmonica with what I think is a Thai flute. It's definitely Jon Hassell-influenced. African funk?

**AFTER:** Oh, it's Adam Rudolph. I should have thought of him, but this doesn't sound like the stuff I've listened to by him. It makes sense now.



### Did you like the use of electronics on this?

Oh, yeah, it's really vibrant. And there are some great '70s references in there. I should have known them, because the approach to the flute playing was kind of Yusef Lateef-like, and I know Adam played with Yusef. What I really like about it, and Adam's work in general, is he puts a lot of energy into finding ways to create platforms for diversity in the language of music—different instruments coming from different traditions—and finding a way for them to coexist in a beautiful way. That's something I'm fascinated with in the things I try to do. But Adam's been at it a long time and mastered it, in a way.

## 2. Jeannie & Jimmy Cheatham

"Blues Like Jay McShann" (*Basket Full of Blues*, Concord). Jeannie Cheatham, piano, vocals; Jimmy Cheatham, bass trombone; Frank Wess, flute; Curtis Peagler, alto saxophone; Dinky Morris, baritone saxophone; Snooky Young, Nolan Smith, trumpets; Red Callender, bass; John "Ironman" Harris, drums. Recorded in 1992.

**BEFORE:** Well, that was Amina's [Claudine Myers] voice. I don't listen to a lot of big-band stuff, but it's definitely full of life.

**AFTER:** Oh, I should have known. You want to dig deep, huh? Jimmy Cheatham! He wasn't playing so much when I was at the University of California at San Diego, and I didn't get to

play in the [UCSD] band. I literally had just started. I was in his improvisation class.

### How important was Jimmy as your first jazz teacher?

He was a messenger. He recognized something in me I didn't see in myself and pointed me in the right direction. He brought James Newton down to talk to our class, which I'm pretty sure he did for me, and it turned my head around! My memories of Jimmy are more as a teacher talking about the idea of the "law of permutations." It provides endless possibilities in finding the parameters and working out all the possible combinations. He found me when I was roller-skating on campus while playing Mozart's Concerto in D on my flute. He said, "I think you should try the jazz improv class!" And I did. Then he sent me to the library to listen to Eric Dolphy. Who was the flutist on the song you just played?

### Frank Wess.

It makes sense, because he played with Basie, and so did Jimmy.

## 3. Buddy Collette Quintet feat. James Newton

"Magali" (*Flute Talk*, Soul Note). Collette, clarinet; James

# To All Pianists: ENTER NOW!



Ellis Marsalis  
NEA Jazz Master &  
Artistic Director

### Ellis Marsalis International Jazz Piano Competition

June 22-23, 2018

Over \$200,000 in cash, & prizes  
including feature appearances at  
jazz festivals & clubs!

#### All-Star Judges:

Ellis Marsalis • Branford Marsalis • Arturo O'Farrill • Jon Batiste

♦ First, Second, & Third Place Winners

♦ No Age Limit

Final Entry Submission Date: May 19, 2018

For more info or to enter, visit: [www.jazzpiano.competition.org](http://www.jazzpiano.competition.org),  
email [info@jazzpiano.competition.org](mailto:info@jazzpiano.competition.org),  
or call 212-920-1494 ext. 3

### Huntington International Jazz Festival

June 19-23, 2018

Five days of amazing jazz experiences

#### Featuring:

Ellis Marsalis • Branford Marsalis • Delfeayo Marsalis  
Jason Marsalis • Adam O'Farrill • Zack O'Farrill • Da Yeon Seok  
Jon Batiste • Arturo O'Farrill • Chi Lin Lu and many more!

#### Events Include:

The Marsalis Family Quintet Concert  
Jon Batiste Concert  
Photographs of Herman Leonard Exhibit  
Duke Ellington Sacred Music Concerts  
Marshall University Jazz Ensemble featuring Jason Marsalis  
For more information, visit: [www.huntingtonjazzfest.org](http://www.huntingtonjazzfest.org)

♦♦♦

### Marshall University Jazz-MU-Tazz Summer Camp

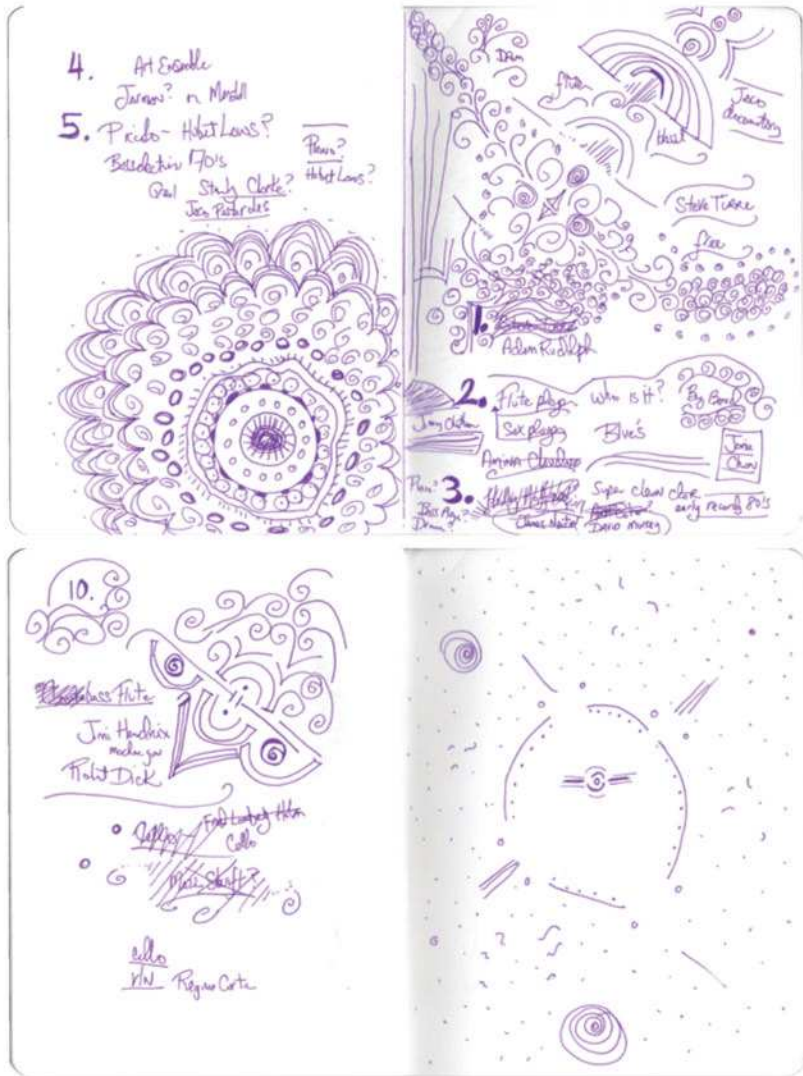
June 17-22, 2018

Attend this camp and receive free admission to all activities  
For more info, visit: [www.marshall.edu/music/jazz/jmt](http://www.marshall.edu/music/jazz/jmt)



All activities take place in Huntington, West Virginia U.S.A.





► Mitchell drew and jotted down notes while listening

I thought about Buddy. I knew he was one of James' heroes. Geri, I wouldn't have guessed. This is from a 1988 concert? Wow, that's awesome.

## 4. Sun Ra & His Intergalactic Arkestra

"The Forest of No Return" (*Second Star to the Right: Salute to Walt Disney*, Leo). Sun Ra, piano, synthesizer, vocals; Marshall Allen, alto saxophone; June Tyson, violin, vocals; Michael Ray, trumpet, vocals; Julian Priester, Tyrone Hill, trombones; Eloe Omoe, alto saxophone, clarinet; Noel Scott, alto saxophone, flute; James Jackson, bassoon, oboe, vocals; Arthur Joonie Booth, electric bass; Earl "Buster" Smith, drums; Nelson Nascimento Santos, percussion. Recorded in 1989.

**BEFORE:** Well, it's good to have fun with music! A lot of times we take it way too seriously. I knew it was a live album, because somebody was hitting that mic. There weren't a lot of instruments playing. So in trying to distinguish some of the voices—and with that sense of humor—I could easily be tricked into thinking it was the Art Ensemble of Chicago. But then some people

Newton, flute; Geri Allen, piano; Jaribu Shahid, bass; Giampiero Prina, drums. Recorded in 1988.

**BEFORE:** Oh, a clarinet, out of nowhere! I'm pretty sure that was James [Newton], but I don't think it was his music. So it makes me wonder if that was David Murray playing clarinet. What I really like about James' playing is he goes off the chart, in terms of the language. He opens up the possibilities for the instrument outside of the saxophone logic, which is a logic a lot of flute players use. James is showing here that he can do that "sax logic" and then naturally go out and beyond that. When I was starting out, I listened to sax players more than flutists—a lot of Ornette, Coltrane, Albert Ayler. I like the expressiveness of bending notes and changing the color of your sound, and the way saxophonists are able to do that is amazing. I listened to a lot of Fred Anderson. I liked Steve Lacy. Roscoe [Mitchell] is super original, and Henry Threadgill and Anthony Braxton's compositional ideas are totally amazing. Who's the clarinetist playing with James Newton?

**Buddy Collette. Geri Allen is on piano.**

might think it was Sun Ra.

### It was. What made you think so?

They were singing "no one is allowed in here," and it was too many people for it to be the Art Ensemble. I was listening for piano, but I could tell they were marching around and leaving the stage. Sun Ra pioneered a lot of performance art in jazz and lots of things people take for granted now, like improvising with electronics, which he was doing in real time. He had an amazing mind.

### Did you ever meet him?

I had two meetings with Sun Ra, and the first was really intense. He was playing in Los Angeles, when I was 19, and someone told me, "You have to go!" When I went to the ticket booth, the lady said, "The rest of the band is backstage. Just go through the door over there." So I went back and got to meet June Tyson, Marshall Allen and the band. The trumpeter from Kool & the Gang was also back there. And I talked to Sun Ra. It was amazing, because



my mom had a lot of Afrofuturistic ideas and she was from Chicago but had never heard Sun Ra, or even knew what the AACM was. But she definitely had a lot of parallel ideas as a self-taught writer. Sun Ra told me, "You should come to Philadelphia when you're ready to join the band." I ended up going to Chicago and joined the AACM. If not, I would have gone to Philadelphia and joined Sun Ra's band!

## 5. Jaco Pastorius

"(Used to Be a) Cha-Cha" (*Jaco Pastorius*, Epic). Pastorius, electric bass; Hubert Laws, piccolo; Herbie Hancock, piano; Lenny White, drums; Don Alias, congas. Recorded in 1976.

**BEFORE:** That was super dope! Hubert Laws, the master, on piccolo. I haven't heard this song in a really long time. I want to go back and revisit that now. I want to know who the bass player is. Don't tell me! Is it Stanley Clarke or Jaco? Yeah, Jaco. And Herbie!

**Did hearing Hubert and James Newton inspire you or intimidate you?**

When I heard James, I thought, "Is there anything else that can be done on the flute?" And then I thought, "OK, let me find what else there is." So that was inspiring. With Hubert it was kind of scary, because I wondered, "Will I ever be able to

**"WHEN I WAS STARTING OUT, I LISTENED TO SAX PLAYERS MORE THAN FLUTISTS—A LOT OF ORNETTE, COLTRANE, ALBERT AYLER. I LIKE THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF CHANGING THE COLOR OF YOUR SOUND."**

play something else, and will I ever be able to play something that amazing?" At the same time, I had a different aesthetic of how I wanted to play. I enjoy hearing him, but I know I'm not being me if I play like him. I hear things differently, but I love his playing. He set the standard, in a lot of ways.

## 6. James Newton Ensemble

"Elliptical" (*Suite for Frida Kahlo*, Audioquest). Newton, flute; George Lewis, trombone. Recorded in 1994.

# SARAH MCKENZIE

- 06/18 NEW YORK, NY - Blue Note
- 07/03 MONTREAL, CAN - Int. Jazz Festival
- 08/08 LOS GATOS, CA - Jazz on the Plazz
- 08/09 SAN FRANCISCO, CA - SF Jazz Center
- 08/10 SANTA CRUZ, CA - Kuumbwa Jazz Center
- 08/11 SAN JOSE, CA - Hammer Theater
- 09/14 WALNUT CREEK, CA - Leshner Center for the Arts
- 09/27 BOSTON, MA - Berklee The Checkout
- 11/13 NEW YORK, NY - Dizzy's Club Coca Cola



New album out now!  
**"PARIS IN THE RAIN"**

(Impulse!)

B.H. HOPPER  
MANAGEMENT

Air,

[www.sarahmckenzie.info](http://www.sarahmckenzie.info)

Photo: Philippe Levy-Stab

**BEFORE:** I'm standing on the shoulders of those two. I recognized them from the first phrase, James and George. James' writing is so undeniable; nobody else writes like that. Obviously, there's plenty of improvisation, but the lifts and shapes he creates with his writing are amazing. Listening to the two of them, they are very expansive thinkers in the way they move and navigate. They have great chemistry, too. Awesome duet!

I met George in Chicago and he's been a great mentor. And James was my first mentor. I knew them separately, then I found out that they worked together. I guess it is a small world. George is an amazing musician; both of them are. And their compositional abilities are just as striking as their instrumental abilities.

**“SUN RA TOLD ME, ‘YOU SHOULD COME TO PHILADELPHIA WHEN YOU’RE READY TO JOIN THE BAND.’ I ENDED UP GOING TO CHICAGO AND JOINED THE AACM.”**

**Jimmy Cheatham talked to you about the “law of permutations.” How well were you able to apply that with the AACM?**

I apply it as an improviser. Because you think about that even if you're not just playing “jazz” and are in a free-improvised context, having that ability to look at different parameters and not making assumptions. ... It gives you a bigger awareness. Jimmy was very literal about dealing with the core. But, conceptually, that idea works in a lot of different situations. With the AACM, you have this idea of total intellectual diversity—a group of people with a whole lot of ideas who support themselves and each other in those differences. And that's a community that doesn't exist in too many places, because everybody wants to be of like mind. If you have different ideas, it's not so easy to get the support. To experiment and explore requires risk. So to have that kind of community is a great, fertile space for developing.

## 7. Various Artists

“Meditations on Integration” (*Hal Willner Presents Weird Nightmare: Meditations on Mingus*, Columbia). Henry Threadgill, flute, arrangement; Marc Ribot, banjo; Bill Frisell, guitar; Art Baron, tuba; Greg Cohen, bass; Don Alias, cymbals and percussion; Francis Thumm, Harmonic Canon; Michael Blair, drums, flapper and Marimba Eroica. Released in 1992.

**BEFORE:** That's pretty cool. You're really playing with me! Well, that was a super original rendition of a Mingus tune. I really liked the minimalist approach, the John Cage-ian approach. But I have no idea who it is. Very cool use of electronics and percussion.

**I think what sounds like electronics is actually some of the 43-tone-scale instruments, created by the late Harry Partch, that are featured here. Your album, *Artifacts*, with Mike Reed and Tomeka Reid, features reinventions of music by Roscoe Mitchell, your erstwhile collaborator, Anthony Braxton and others. What balance between reverence and adding your own stamp did you strive for?**

That's a good question, because most of the time I'm doing my own music. In this case we were all choosing compositions, and the arrangements are more a collective decision-making process between the three of us. We felt we had a lot of freedom. At the same time, we kept a certain level of reverence as to how these tunes were done originally. But we weren't repeating the instrumentation and were obviously approaching things from our aesthetic, in terms of the improvisation and choosing how to work with the material. It was fairly intuitive. Hopefully, we didn't piss any of the composers off—nobody cursed us out or anything!

## 8. Mark Dresser Trio

“FLBP” (*Aquifer*, Cryptogramophone). Dresser, contrabass; Matthias Ziegler, electro-acoustic contrabass flute; Denman Maroney, hyperpiano. Recorded in 2002.

**AFTER:** That was an intriguing journey. That was definitely Mark Dresser on bass. I'm not 100-percent sure of the flutist. You made it hard, because they barely played normally and were just doing the finger clicks. But it sounded like contrabass flute at some point, and not many people play those. At first I thought maybe it was Robert Dick, but I don't know how often they play together. Then I thought about Matthias Ziegler, because I know he and Mark worked together a lot and he does lots of stuff with extended techniques and contrabass flute. I had a hard time trying to figure out who the pianist was. I thought it could be Myra [Melford], because she does do prepared piano, but I'm not sure. Denman Maroney? I've heard of him.

**Are the sounds of acoustic and electronically treated flutes equal for you?**

I haven't used electronics that much; the *Artifacts* album is the only one so far. What I wanted to do, which is why I took so long to even start playing with electronics, is challenge myself. What are all the possibilities of how I can alter the flute? Because there are so many, and it took a while to explore those things. Now I'm definitely doing some more investigation about what was done in the past. It's hard, because I think some people start getting taken over, once they start using electronics, and lose a lot of what they were doing originally. And I don't want to do that, so it takes time.



## 9. Chicago Edge Ensemble

"Bluster Buster" (*Decaying Orbit*, Lizard Breath). Dan Phillips, guitar; Jeb Bishop, trombone; Mars Williams, saxophones; Krzysztof Pabian, bass; Hamid Drake, drums. Released in 2017.

**BEFORE:** Well, you really dug some old gems out, didn't you? I've never heard this, but it sounded fascinating. I definitely want to listen to it again.

**How'd you like the drumming by Hamid Drake, your long-time collaborator?**

I liked it. The first thing to stick out was the trombonist. The electric guitarist was amazing; the first thing I thought is that it's *not* Jeff [Parker]. This is a group from Chicago, right? I might be way off, because I don't know Sonny Sharrock's playing that well, but I think it might be him. As for the drumming, I have been listening to Steve McCall lately and I wonder how much Hamid was influenced by him, because I heard some connections. But this is kind of an old recording, I guess, so it might not be Hamid. I thought it was George [Lewis] on trombone and wondered if it was Malachi [Favors] on bass. I want to take a stab at the sax player, but it's hard. I want to say it was [Anthony] Braxton, but I'm not sure because he changed a lot.

**AFTER:** Oh, this is more recent; I thought this was an old recording. That's so funny. I guess it has to do with the way they

recorded it, in one room, which made it sound a lot older than it is. Well, I got the Chicago part right! I don't know Dan Phillips at all, but he sounds amazing.

## 10. Robert Dick & the Soldier String Quartet

"Machine Gun" (*Jazz Standards on Mars*, Enja). Dick, flute; Dave Soldier, Regina Carter, violins; Judith Insell, viola; Dawn Buckholz, cello; Mark Dresser, acoustic bass; Kermit Driscoll, electric bass; Ben Perowsky, drums. Recorded in 1995-96.

**BEFORE:** So that was some love for Jimi Hendrix. Is that song called "Machine Gun"? I love Jimi and I'm pretty sure that was Robert Dick. He's really brought the flute to a whole other planet. He's certainly an under-sung legend on the flute. I've never had a chance to study with him, but I'm happy I've had a chance to meet him and play a little bit together. He definitely influenced me. I don't know who the string players are, but they are pretty amazing. You want to see something? My doodle looks very much like his album cover.

**Did you ever write anything inspired by a doodle?**

I've definitely written prose and poetry. I don't think I've made music based off a doodle. That might be something to try! **JT**



# Jazz-MU-Tazz Summer Camp

## Make your summer swing!

**AN IMMERSIVE 6 DAY, 5 NIGHT CAMP PACKED WITH BIG BAND & COMBO EXPERIENCES, MASTER CLASSES, JAZZ HISTORY, IMPROVISATION, AND LOTS OF FUN!**

CAMP TUITION: \$375    HOUSING & MEALS: \$340

## June 17-22, 2018

**REGISTER NOW** at  
[marshall.edu/music/jmt](http://marshall.edu/music/jmt)



Jazz-MU-Tazz is part of the  
**Huntington International Jazz Festival**  
featuring performances by:



Ellis Marsalis



Jason Marsalis



Jon Batiste



Arturo O'Farrill



## SHERMAN IRBY

LIVING MEANS LEARNING

By Matthew Kassel

### ► Sherman Irby & Momentum's *Cerulean Canvas*

On a March evening at the Blue Note in Greenwich Village, the alto saxophonist Sherman Irby, wearing a charcoal suit, was unfurling a lithe solo over the rumbling chords of McCoy Tyner. Irby was situated center stage on a waist-high stool, but rather than face the audience, he sat in profile, looking away from the crowd and directly at the John Coltrane Quartet alumnus, now nearly 80. What seemed at first glance like a subtle act of defiance against the conventions of showmanship was really, it soon appeared, a gesture of deference to the eminent pianist before him.

"You can't get closer to Trane than that," Irby tells me at the Blue Note, a couple of hours before going onstage. He's recently been performing with Tyner at the club about one Monday a month.

Irby is a man who respects his elders. He spends most of his time as the lead alto saxophonist in the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, where he's had a seat since 2005. The orchestra's somewhat pedagogical approach to music suits Irby, a traditionalist of sorts whose appreciation for the past is pronounced in his sweet, longing tone, which recalls Cannonball Adderley. (In 2009, Irby even released the tribute album *Work Song: Dear Cannonball*.)

At this point in his career, however, Irby, an avuncular 50-year-old with a salt-and-pepper beard, can be counted as something of an eminence too—if a lesser-known one than Tyner and his legendary cohort. Over the past couple of

decades, Irby has established himself as a sort of ballast in the jazz world, his style and process an embodiment of slow refinement.

Since the mid-to-late '90s, he's released a steady stream of self-assured records, and he's performed with such stalwarts as Roy Hargrove, Marcus Roberts and the late Elvin Jones. "He's like a throwback to the way the older musicians used to play," says the drummer Willie Jones III, who has known Irby for decades. "He has that feeling."

Not that Irby sees it that way. He presents himself as a perpetual student of the jazz tradition and, more broadly, history as a whole. "I want to do something I can learn something from," Irby says with characteristic modesty.

That desire occasionally extends beyond jazz. About six years ago, he interpreted Dante's *Inferno*, in a piece commissioned by Jazz at Lincoln Center. Irby had originally wanted to take on the German-American psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, whose work on life cycles he was reading at the time. But he gravitated toward Dante, in part because his iconoclasm reminded him of Charlie Parker; the poet changed the Italian language forever, but was highly controversial in his time, to the point of exile. "He was like a jazz musician," Irby says.

"I had to go through my own demons. To see his process, he put it all out there, almost like Van Gogh painting himself every day," Irby says of Dante's fastidious approach. "He put the things he was going through all through that piece. And I was able to learn something from that."

Reared in Tuscaloosa, Ala., Irby made his way in the late 1980s to Atlanta, which at the time supported a robust jazz scene, including such musicians as the guitarist Russell Malone, the bassist Tarus Mateen and the pianist Johnny O'Neal. "It was booming," Irby recalls nostalgically. He started gigging at night, and made ends meet by working as a fry cook at a restaurant called Fish in the Pocket. Money was tight, but he was learning a lot, making long-lasting connections and preparing himself for his eventual migration to New York.

Before going north, though, Irby worked the cruise ship circuit, floating mostly around the Caribbean on a Carnival liner called the Fantasy. Playing on a boat for two and a half years wasn't so much an act of wanderlust, Irby says, or even a day job, but a means to refine his craft. After playing show tunes in the house orchestra each evening, Irby would practice for hours in the dark, vacant ballroom, writing music and transcribing tunes. "I actually wrote my own fake book," Irby tells me.

At a certain point, having exhausted his sea legs, Irby was ready to make the jump to the big show. In 1994 he moved to New York with \$1,600 to his name and ended up settling for a time in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Fort Greene—one block away from bassist Bill Lee, father of filmmaker Spike. But he spent nearly all of his waking hours in Manhattan, particularly at Smalls, the basement jazz club that fostered a hugely influential generation of musicians during the '90s (and continues to be a proving ground).

Smalls was where Irby was discovered by a talent scout at Blue Note Records, which put out his first two records—soulful affairs titled *Full Circle*, from 1997, and *Big Mama's Biscuits*, released the following year. It was also where Wynton Marsalis occasionally hung out, looking for fresh blood to enlist in his fledgling big band at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Irby joined the



band in 1995 and stayed for two years before joining Hargrove's quintet for three years—a tenure he remembers as one of the most enlivening experiences of his professional life. “The energy would be so high that sometimes we’d start crying walking off the bandstand,” Irby says. “Seriously.”

But Irby still felt he had much to learn in his development as a musician, so he left his steady gig with Hargrove to pursue a solo career with intention. Working as a kind of musical factotum, he founded his own record label, Black Warrior, through which he has released about half a dozen titles. Working with the saxophonist Don Braden, he helped compose music for *Fatherhood*, an animated series co-created by Bill Cosby. He learned video editing and mastered the art of home recording—a skill he put to use while in Italy, when he taped a show at the now-defunct Otto Jazz Club, in Naples, and put it out on his label. “Reading manuals,” Irby recalls, “was a typical thing for people to see me do.”

Jazz musicians are autodidacts by nature, but Irby's curiosity stands out for its fervor and strikingly wide range. And even since returning to the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in 2005, Irby is still quite industrious. His most recent album, *Cerulean Canvas*, was released last year and features his group Momentum, with the trombonist Vincent Gardner, the pianist Eric Reed, the bassist Gerald Cannon and Willie Jones III. It's a cool-tempered postbop record, satisfyingly funky. Irby takes a number of brisk, finely stated solos, but for the most part he seems more intent on creating a mood using the whole band. The album sounds like something Lee Morgan or Freddie Hubbard or perhaps even Herbie Hancock might have put out in the mid-1960s, as if Irby were—happily—unconcerned with all the mutations jazz has gone through since.

When not engaged in bandleading or his JLCO duties, he continues to gig on the side. “He has an open invitation to play with my band,” says the trombonist Papo Vazquez, who leads the Mighty Pirates Troubadours, an Afro-Latin outfit. “And he's one of the few musicians who has that privilege in my circle.”

But having played with Wynton Marsalis for 13 straight years seems to have given Irby, who now lives with his family in Warren, N.J., a good dose of awe for the past. Benny Goodman, for instance, whom Irby says he never much liked but whose music the orchestra plays, is a current source of inspiration.

Irby says he is working on the second installment of his Dante piece, in which he is interpreting the entirety of the *Divine Comedy*. Though he wouldn't say much about the tribute, his goal is to unveil it in 2021, which will, as it happens, coincide with the 700th anniversary of Dante's death.

Aside from that, Irby is thinking about putting together a nine- or 10-piece band to play his original music. But he hasn't yet worked out what exactly the instrumentation will look like or what kind of music he'd like to play; it's still a few years down the line. He says he recently bought a few new books to help him make sense of the project, including Neil deGrasse Tyson and Donald Goldsmith's *Origins: Fourteen Billion Years of Cosmic Evolution* and Terence Dickinson's *Hubble's Universe*. “I'm still working on the concept,” Irby tells me. “I have to study.” **JT**



**CHARLIE PARKER JAZZ FESTIVAL**  
2 0 1 8

HONORING THE LEGACY OF JAZZ ICON  
**CHARLIE PARKER**  
WITH 3 DAYS OF FREE LIVE JAZZ  
IN NEW YORK CITY PARKS

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 2018**  
Marcus Garvey Park, Harlem

CHARLES TOLLIVER'S 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF 'PAPER MAN'  
FEATURING GARY BARTZ,  
JACK DEJOHNETTE & BUSTER WILLIAMS  
+ SURPRISE GUEST • BRIANNA THOMAS

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 2018**  
Marcus Garvey Park, Harlem

MONTY ALEXANDER AND HARLEM KINGSTON EXPRESS  
• CATHERINE RUSSELL •  
KEYON HARROLD • MATTHEW WHITAKER TRIO

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 2018**  
Tompkins Square Park, East Village

GARY BARTZ QUARTET • THE BAD PLUS  
• AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS •  
UNHEARD: ADAM O'FARRILL, IMMANUEL WILKINS, JOEL ROSS  
COMMISSIONED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE JOYCE AND GEORGE  
WEIN FOUNDATION AND THE JAZZ GALLERY

CityParks  
**SUMMER STAGE 2018**

PRESENTED BY  
Capital One

f SummerStageNYC  
SummerStage  
SummerStage.org

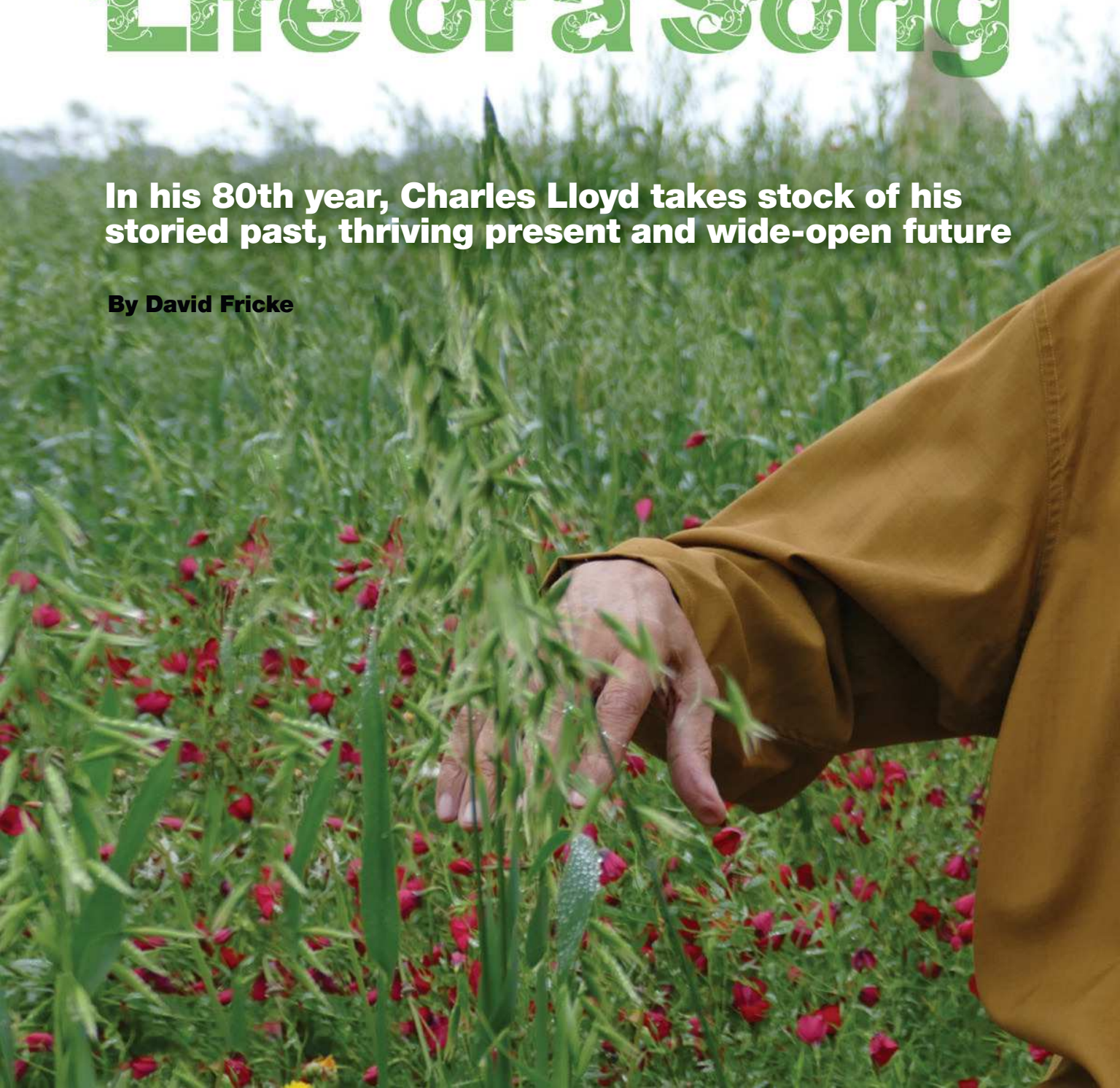


# Charles Lloyd

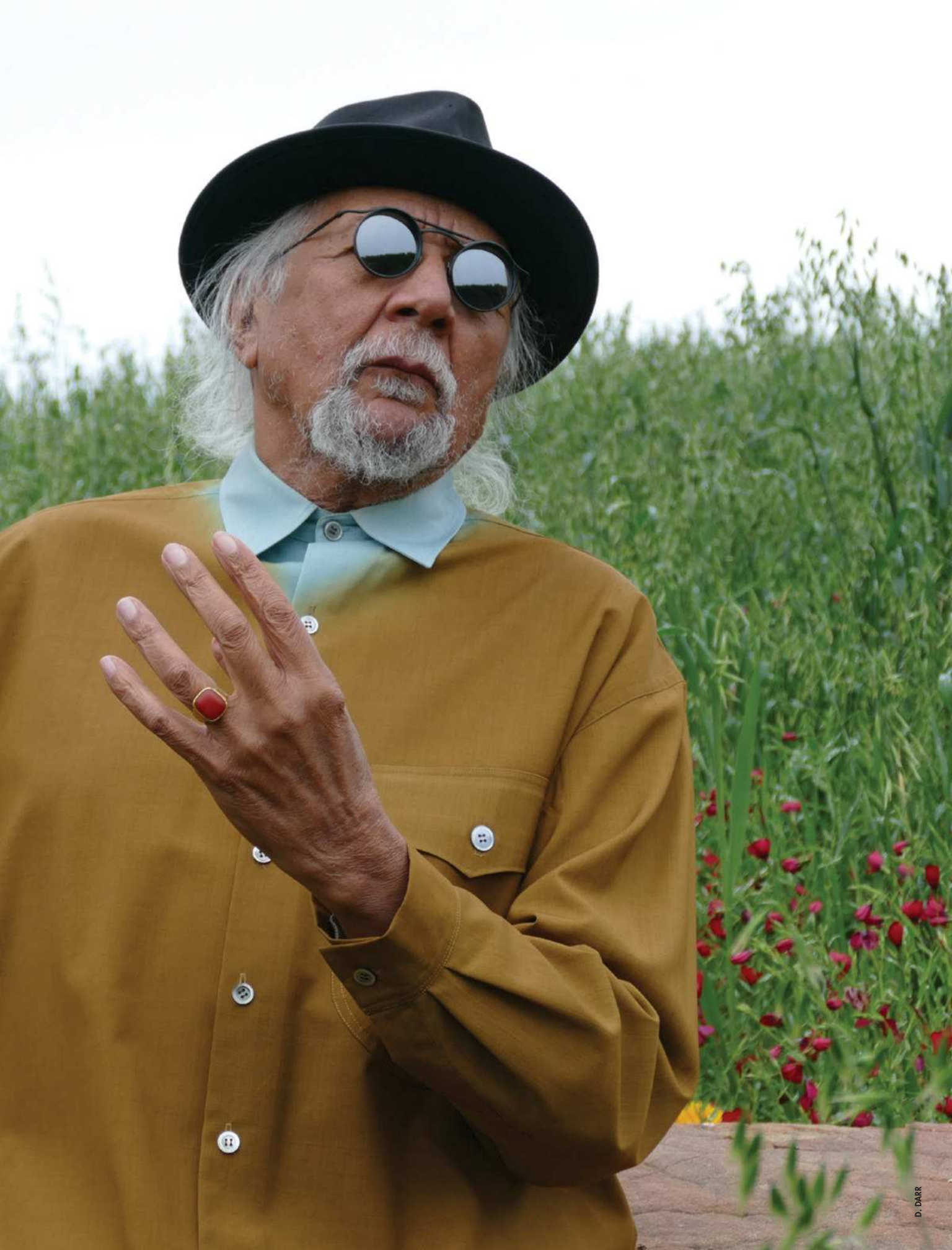
## Life of a Song

**In his 80th year, Charles Lloyd takes stock of his storied past, thriving present and wide-open future**

**By David Fricke**









n March 15, the tenor saxophonist and flutist Charles Lloyd spent his 80th birthday at home—both literally and, given that he’s one of jazz’s most exalted and enduring live performers, figuratively. At a concert in Santa Barbara, Calif., Lloyd led a special ensemble combining bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Eric Harland—the rhythm section in Lloyd’s New Quartet and in his Americana-flavored band the Marvels—with pianist Gerald Clayton, an occasional member of the Quartet; guitarist Julian Lage; and, from Lloyd’s birthplace of Memphis, Tenn., organist Booker T. Jones of Booker T. & the M.G.’s.

“I didn’t know Booker then [in the ’60s]—he’s behind me several years,” Lloyd says on the phone from his house in the picturesque Central California town. “But he acted like I was a big deal to him when he was growing up. I never knew that. You don’t know where your seed falls and the tree grows.”

The same could be said of Lloyd’s new Blue Note album with the Marvels, *Vanished Gardens*, which features the progressive-country singer-songwriter Lucinda Williams. The two met in 2015 through guitarist Bill Frisell and pedal-steel guitarist Greg Leisz of the Marvels. Last year, Lloyd, Williams and the Marvels convened in a Los Angeles studio for a pair of two-day sprints, recording a provocative range of material: Lloyd originals; Williams’ emotionally probing folk-noir; “Monk’s Mood,” as a Lloyd-Frisell duet; the Jimi Hendrix ballad “Angel,” done by a quiet-power trio of Lloyd, Frisell and Williams. “I don’t think there’s any precedent for it,” Lloyd says of the album. “She’s from that side of the box; I’m from over here. We started stirring the soup.”

*Vanished Gardens* is another milestone in a career that was already full of them when Lloyd turned 30 in 1968. Two years earlier, after tenures with Chico Hamilton and Cannonball Adderley, he made an explosive debut at the Monterey Jazz Festival as a leader. His set with pianist Keith Jarrett, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Jack DeJohnette, issued by Atlantic as *Forest Flower*, was a commercial sensation, and he became one of the label’s best-selling jazz artists, drawing rock audiences after game-changing shows at the Fillmore in San Francisco. Today,



► On March 15, Lloyd celebrates his 80th birthday in Santa Barbara with Julian Lage, Don Was, Eric Harland and Booker T (from left)

the further Lloyd digs into his past, the more exuberant and discursive his storytelling becomes. One tale during this interview started with a hang in Woodstock with Bob Dylan, turned into a hair-raising ride to a dentist appointment via mountain roads in a snowstorm, and ended with Lloyd spotting Richard Pryor in a rental-car office.

The saxophonist also speaks frankly of his dark hours with drugs and ill health, and the chosen exile of healing and spirituality that allowed him to emerge as a reborn force in the ’80s. Lloyd currently has three working groups: the Marvels; the world-jazz ensemble Sangam, with Harland and tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain; and the New Quartet. Notably, the Quartet’s 2017 Blue Note gem with pianist Jason Moran, *Passin’ Thru*, includes Lloyd’s Atlantic perennial “Dream Weaver.”

Also notably, Lloyd will headline all three days of the Newport Jazz Festival, in August, with Sangam, the New Quartet and a special “& Friends” ensemble featuring Williams.

“It’s funny,” he says brightly. “Bill heard me when he was a teenager in Denver, playing with Keith and Paul Motian. He saw there was another way to look at this stuff, as I was inspired by those before me. Now here we come, Lu and I. I just keep moving forward. That’s what I’m about.”

**JazzTimes:** *Vanished Gardens* is a decisive evolution for the Marvels. The last album, 2016’s *I Long to See You*, had vocal cameos by Willie Nelson and Norah Jones, but Williams is embedded on this record, singing on half the tracks. And you cut four of her songs.

Years ago, I had a neighbor who turned



me on to her [1998] album *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*. It was some kind of Southern crossroads for me, like when Willie had that *Stardust* record [in 1978]. I used to play that a lot, too. I don't have lines of demarcation. I'm about the music. And it's not my profession; it's my life. I walked away when I was a young man. They wanted me to play in stadiums, but I would have to be a commodity for that. I wasn't up for it.

**"Unsuffer Me" is remarkable in that, over 11 minutes, you don't take a solo. Your**

**playing is in phrases and interjections, as if you're in conversation with Williams.**

Did you hear my ghost vocal? She was talking about "Unsuffer Me." I decided to liberate her. Not since *Moon Man* [Lloyd's 1970 spiritual-pop album] have I been singing. People wanted to crucify me for that record, but I'm an observer of the condition. By that time in the session, it had gotten very mystical. She's a poet, and it got really out there. My longevity is probably because I follow my own bells. And I think you should serve missions rather than lead them.

**Does your playing change as you go from the New Quartet to the Marvels?**

**The rhythm section is the same, but the instrumental textures and exchange are different.**

It's the same guy, but something happens where it's fresh, in-the-moment. This thing with the Marvels—I had that in Memphis playing with Howlin' Wolf and B.B. King. When I came to Los Angeles and played with Chico Hamilton, I brought [guitarist] Gábor Szabó in that band. And I had John Abercrombie in my band for a time. I don't use guitar all the time, but sometimes it comes over me.

Bill and Greg in the Marvels, Jason or Gerald on piano, Reuben and Eric in the rhythm section: What they're feeding me in background, harmony and *simpatico* brings out different versions of the meal. It's gonna be truffles instead of porcini in the risotto. I don't call it anything. They touch me, and I express it. When those instruments move against each other, it makes another sonority. And you respond to that.



**I'm thinking of releasing that 80th-birthday concert with Julian [Lage] and Booker T. When guys play with me, something happens where two things combine and make a third thing. I'm blessed with that.**



**Review:** Charles Lloyd at the Village Vanguard

**FRED HERSCH TRIO** **LIVE IN EUROPE**

"ONE OF THE MAJOR ENSEMBLES OF OUR TIMES."  
—THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

FRED HERSCH TRIO **LIVE IN EUROPE**

**AVAILABLE MAY 11TH**

Music by Hersch, Shorter and Monk

Palmetto RECORDS

# NOW I GET THE BIG BEAR HUG

Lucinda Williams  
on the Spirit  
of Charles Lloyd



The Marvels + 1, from left: Greg Leisz, Williams, Lloyd, Eric Harland, Reuben Rogers and Bill Frisell

"When you meet him, he doesn't shake hands," Lucinda Williams says in her gravelly Louisiana drawl, recalling her first encounter with Charles Lloyd at a concert in Santa Barbara, Calif., in 2015. "He bumps elbows. That's his quirky little thing. But I immediately loved him, especially after I saw him live. You close your eyes and you think you're listening to John Coltrane. It's otherworldly."

Williams, 65, who will make special appearances this summer with Lloyd to recreate their collaboration on *Vanished Gardens*, talked about her fondness for the saxophonist with *JazzTimes*.

DAVID FRICKE

**JazzTimes:** *The saxophone is a very vocal instrument. What's it like to sing with someone who plays it with such force and personality?*

The spirituality comes through. It lifts you up. That connection was enlightening. Charles is always reminding me that he's from Memphis, so we have the Southern thing, too. And he's so funny. You listen to him talk and he sounds like he hung out with those Beat guys back in the day. Then you realize he is that. You're sitting next to a legend.

**In "Unsuffer Me," Lloyd goes back to his roots as a sideman in Memphis; he doesn't really solo. Was there discussion about that approach before the take?**

There was very little discussion about anything. The rhythm section started that whole vibe on "Unsuffer Me." They went off on this thing that was different from anything I'd done with the song [from Williams' 2007 album, *Wes*]. Nothing was really planned out. They would shoot through the songs. On the last night, after we cut the Hendrix song, "Angel," my voice was getting tired. I wasn't sure I got my best take. I said, "I might want to come back and re-sing some of that." Charles gave me this look. He said, "Well, that's a luxury"—like, "Oh, you young people, you don't know how we do it." [Laughs] I didn't get to do it again.

**Can you tell that Greg Leisz and Bill Frisell play differently with Lloyd than they have on your records?**

I don't notice a difference. I don't feel them holding back in any way compared to when they play with me. They're real sensitive. But everyone in that band seems so relaxed. Nobody's walking on eggshells.

**The bigger difference is probably for you.**

When I got involved with playing with Charles, I felt like, "Wow, where have you been all my life? Why did this take so long?"

**What would you like to sing next with him?**

I still want to do "Ballad of the Sad Young Men" [live]. I thought about doing that song before I met Charles. And I grew up listening to Coltrane, Chet Baker and Dinah Washington. I've had that in my wheelhouse for a while. But I've never been in this situation before, where I would be able to do these kinds of standards. It would be fun to stretch out on those songs, in front of a band like that. And we don't do the elbow thing anymore. Now I get the big bear hug.

**What did you learn as a sideman for Howlin' Wolf, B.B. King and Johnny Ace that informed your voice on the saxophone?**

What really shook me up was how Wolf could go into a place and raise the roof off it. His communication with an audience—I got something from that. A lot of guys can play and their stuff doesn't come off the stage. It reaches a few people in front. Those guys reached the back row. I got infected by that. I've been to over 100 countries. I can't speak those languages, but there is something in the music that transcends the world. I was in one of those Eastern European countries in the '60s...

**Estonia, in 1967 [where he recorded Charles Lloyd in the Soviet Union].**

They said, "You're playing our folk songs." I wasn't. But with that audience and my being open to the night, the deities came and said, "Let's dance with Charles."

**But the important part of being a sideman is to not get in the way of the vocal.**

Nobody played the blues as slow as Johnny Ace. On the horns, we were holding these long tones. But I'd heard Charlie Parker and Lester Young. I wanted to soar. Johnny Ace sang so slowly that I could figure out some calculations, some algebra between the beats while I was back there waiting my time. I had a sense of mission and dynamics, but I had to hold it in abeyance until I could sing my song.

**What did it sound like when you first let it loose?**

I came to L.A. to go to college. I played with Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry around town. There was a club in Pasadena called the Dragonwyck; I played there with Bobby Hutcherson. On my own gigs, most of the time I would get fired because people couldn't tolerate it. I played a wedding with Billy Higgins, Scott LaFaro and Don Cherry. The father of the bride ran up to the stage—they had an imitation white picket fence in front—and said, "Please stop. I'll pay you now. Please leave." We wanted to cement that relationship, send them out with the grace of the infinite. The father wouldn't let us.

**What did you learn from the Memphis pianist Phineas Newborn Jr.? He was one of your first teachers.**

I didn't live far from Phineas. I'd ride my bicycle over to his house and sit outside



as he was playing Chopin, Bach and Beethoven. I would tremble from the music coming out of the screen door. But he would look in on me, see what I was playing. He put me in his father's band, with him and his brother Calvin, at the Plantation Inn in West Memphis, Arkansas. We'd play from 9 at night to 4 a.m.—40 minutes on, 15 off.

**So your lessons were on the bandstand.**

Phineas also started turning me on to the records of Bird. "Relaxin' at Camarillo" was one of the first. It was this blues I was hearing in Memphis, transformed into heaven. If you're around genius, osmosis will grab you. If you're sincere and you're fortunate enough to find a teacher along the path, you will be saved. Phineas was my savior.

**In West Memphis, you played with a pedal-steel guitarist, Al Vescovo, who was in the Snearly Ranch Boys, a white country band.**

They would play in the afternoon; we'd do our thing at night. During the overlap,

**Miles would always come around and hear me play. Of course, his press was different; he would dime on me. But he watched that Fillmore thing, and he took it to the bank, at which point I was falling apart.**

Al and I became friends. He could play "Honeysuckle Rose," and he wanted to swing. There was no racism. We had this common love for jazz. It was kind of illegal in those days for us to meet up. My mother confronted me once: "The neighbors are saying you're sitting at the counter with a white boy. You punkin' or something?" They thought some homosexual stuff was goin' on.

One time I was talking to Bill Frisell about Al, how I missed something about

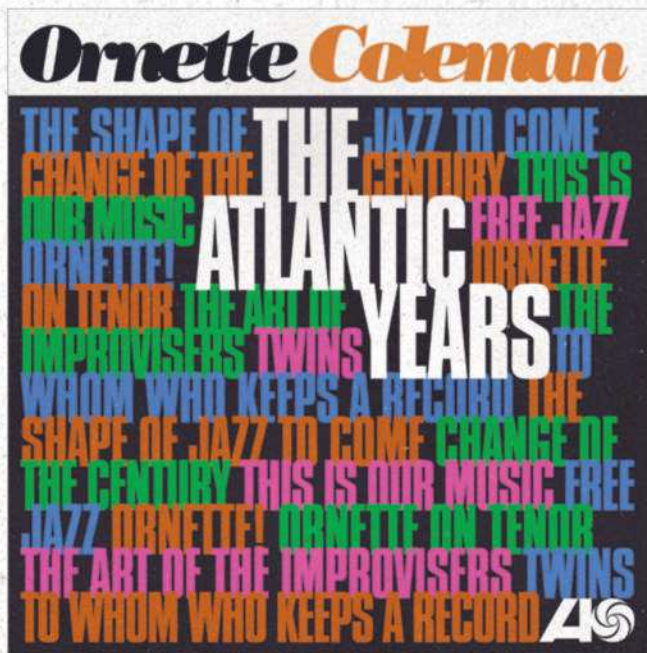
that. He said, "Well, I've got this friend." He invited Greg Leisz to a show at UCLA, to play a few songs with us, and that's how the Marvels were born. I called Bill and said, "Our group will be called the Marvels." Because it was a marvel what was going on.

**How did that Hendrix cover on the new album happen?**

Everybody was going home after the session. Bill and I were packing up. Lucinda



**THE COMPLETE ATLANTIC RECORDINGS BY THE LEGENDARY FREE JAZZ PIONEER**



**DELUXE BOXED SET  
10 ESSENTIAL LPs**

*Includes*

*The Ornette Coleman Legacy featuring 6 tracks available for the first time on vinyl*

*180 Gram LPs*

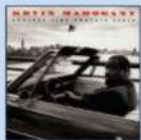
*Deluxe vintage-style jackets  
LP-size booklet with classic photos & new essay by jazz critic, Ben Ratliff*



# HONKY TONK BLUES

## Four more inspired collaborations between elite jazzers and great roots singers

By Lee Mergner



### Kevin Mahogany Featuring Randy Travis

"I Believe She Was Talkin' 'Bout Me"

from *Another Time Another Place* (Warner Bros., 1997)

In the mid-1990s, the late Kevin Mahogany had a high-profile recording contract with Warner Bros. that enabled him to snare the popular country artist. On this Mahogany original, the two singers playfully portray rivals for a woman's affection. Over the years, Mahogany explored all sorts of rootsy American styles, including soul, blues and doo-wop. Travis, on the other hand, has stayed in his neo-traditional country lane, at least so far.



### Charlie Haden Family & Friends

*Rambling Boy* (Decca, 2008)

With this concept album, Haden returned to his very early roots in country music. The bassist began performing country as a 22-month-old singer in his family's group in Shenandoah, Iowa, on the radio and onstage à la the Carter Family. Indeed, a brief cut of "Little Cowboy Charlie" singing on the *Old Haden Family Show* is included in this set, which also features a cross-section of Americana singers (Rosanne Cash, Vince Gill, Ricky Skaggs) and rockers (Elvis Costello, Jack Black, Bruce Hornsby), all doing traditional country tunes backed by Haden's accomplished friends and family.



### Willie Nelson & Wynton Marsalis *Two Men With the Blues* (Blue Note, 2008)

This surprising pairing, taken from a performance at Jazz at Lincoln Center in 2007, is notable for its contrasts in both sartorial and musical styles. Nelson has long been public about his affection for jazz—his 1978 album, *Stardust*, is a landmark union of country and standards—so perhaps it wasn't such a leap for him. But Marsalis' collaboration with the country legend, on songs like "Stardust" and "Night Life," seemed to come out of nowhere. The New Orleans-influenced results are funkier and bluesier than you might expect—and a lot of fun. Marsalis even takes a turn at singing on "My Bucket's Got a Hole in It" and "Ain't Nobody's Business."

Highwaymen:  
Nelson and Marsalis



### Chris Thile & Brad Mehldau

*Chris Thile & Brad Mehldau* (Nonesuch, 2017)

Yet another pairing of artists who not only spring from very different genres but also have decidedly different personas. Thile came to prominence as the virtuosic mandolinist and singer in the bluegrass trio Nickel Creek, which broke up in 2007. Since then he's forged a strong career as a solo artist and leader of the band Punch Brothers, as well as the de facto heir to Garrison Keillor as host of the public-radio show *Live From Here*. An ebullient performer, Thile is the affable yang to the introspective pianist's yin. The two, mutual admirers for some time, came together for a few shows in NYC and then recorded this inspired set.

was like, "I wanna do this song 'Angel'" [does a funny impression of her Louisiana drawl]. I said OK. We sat around a mic. Lucinda started singing, and we played it in one take.

"Ballad of the Sad Young Men"—that was one take. Lucinda wanted to sing it, but she was late. We rehearsed it and liked the vibe we got, so we put one down. But that's OK, because we did a lot of other stuff with her. We were gonna have a double album—one with us and Lucinda, one of the Marvels. But [Blue Note president] Don Was said we should make one album now and mix it up, so we did.

### How about a good Hendrix story?

There's so many. I bought a loft on West 3rd Street [in Greenwich Village], and Jimi was playing down the street at the Cafe Wha? [as Jimmy James]. I'd walk past and hear this guy. I dug that he had something. He'd come out of the blues guys, as I had. He was bringing that stuff, but he wasn't himself yet. Later on, I was in London. There was all this talk about him and me, because of our hair and stuff. Somebody got me high and played me *Are You Experienced*. That blew my socks off.

We would be on the same shows. We would hang out. He was always very sweet. At a party in Hollywood, his girlfriend Devon [Wilson] told me, "Jimi can't wait to record [with you]." By the time I got back to New York, time had run out on us.

### Of the eight Atlantic albums you made in the '60s, only the first, *Dream Weaver*, was a studio LP. How much did the nonstop touring impact your playing and composing?

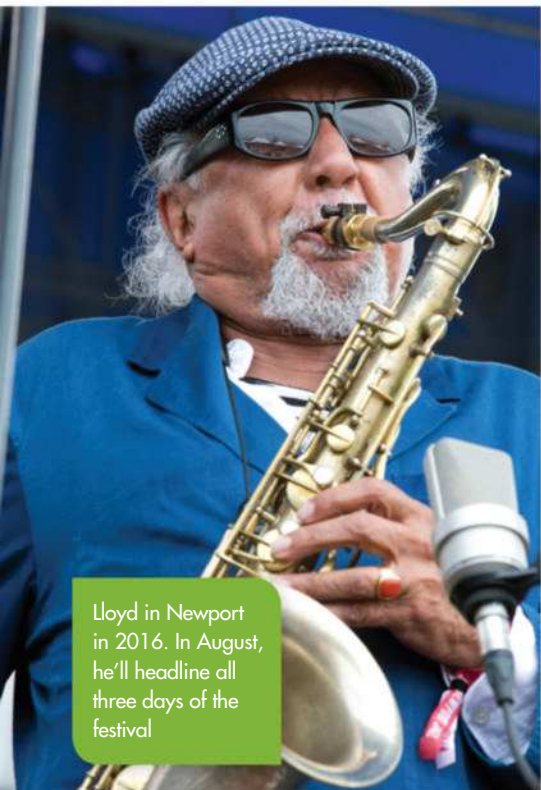
My contract was odious. I made *Dream Weaver* [in 1966], and it sold a lot of records for those times. Then *Forest Flower* went ballistic. I had a meeting with Nesuhi Ertegun, who ran the jazz world [at Atlantic Records]. I said, "I want to get a house in Woodstock, take the band to live there and keep working on the music." He said he would talk to Ahmet about it.

### But it didn't happen.

I refused to go back into the studio. And I started medicating myself more and more. We grew further and further



**Review: Charles Lloyd at the Newport Jazz Festival**



Lloyd in Newport in 2016. In August, he'll headline all three days of the festival

apart. They had those live records, and that's what they held on me. Pretty soon, I made my getaway. People thought I was making a lot of money then. I'd make \$2,000 for a college concert, but in the clubs, I'd play at Slugs' for \$400 and have to pay people out of that. I didn't have anything.

**The saxophonist David S. Ware once told me that your Atlantic albums were an early inspiration for him, proving that progressive jazz could be popular music. *Love-In*, recorded at the Fillmore in 1967, certainly set the stage for what Miles Davis achieved with *Bitches Brew*.**

Miles would always come around and hear me play. Of course, his press was different; he would dime on me. But he watched that Fillmore thing, and he took it to the bank, at which point I was falling apart. I came to Big Sur to heal; my study of Vedanta got deep.

There's an old saying: If you have the goods, even if you live in a cave, the world will beat a path to your door. It wasn't quite like that, but when

[pianist] Michel Petrucciani came knocking [in 1982], I realized the elders had always helped me. So I helped him. I was blessed that I didn't completely self-destruct. That gave me the longevity I have now.

**What do you see for your extended future?**

It reveals itself unto itself. I'm thinking of releasing that 80th-birthday concert with Julian and Booker T. When guys play with me, something happens where two things combine and make a third thing. I'm blessed with that.

But I'm backed up with stuff. I just had a big commission in Poland with a string orchestra and 24-voice choir. I have this wonderful fleet-of-foot thing with Bill and Greg and now this thing with Lucinda. I'm not suffering a challenge.

**You know what you have going on? You have life.**

My thing is overfull. I keep emptying. And the more I empty, the fuller it gets. **JT**



**JUNE 15-17, 2018**  
**PITTSBURGHJAZZFEST.ORG**  
**OUTDOOR STAGES JAZZ BAR CRAWL**  
**ARTIST BAZAAR VINTAGE VINYL RECORD BOUTIQUE**  
**FOOD TRUCKS CRAFT BEER GARDEN JAM SESSIONS**

**PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL**  
**JAZZ 2018**  
 Presented by  
**Citizens Bank®**

**MARCUS MILLER    GREGORY PORTER    EMMET COHEN TRIO WITH SPECIAL GUEST TOOTIE HEATH    KENNY GARRETT    PEDRITO MARTINEZ    TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON**  
**YOKO SUZUKI    MIGUEL ZENÓN    AMBROSE AKINSMUSIRE    POLLY GIBBONS    CORY HENRY & THE FUNK APOSTLES    SHEMEKIA COPELAND    DONNY MCCASLIN**



BRIGHT MOMENTS



DAVID MURRAY



# The powerhouse saxophonist looks back on key entries in his mammoth discography

By Shaun Brady

**D**avid Murray credits his notoriously tireless work ethic to his father, who made his way from Nebraska to Los Angeles at age 15 without even the money to pay for a train ticket. He ended up serving a stint in the Navy and working a variety of jobs to provide for his family, from garbageman to circus acrobat, and instilled the same drive in his son.

“My father was the kind of guy who, if they asked him if he could do brain surgery, he’d say, ‘Yeah, sure!’” Murray joked over lunch at a Philadelphia bar in March, the day after a freewheeling set at South Kitchen & Jazz Parlor. “Never say you can’t do something, because you can learn—and you can learn fast.”

Murray carried that drive from Pomona College to New York City, originally inspired by professor/mentor/early collaborator Stanley Crouch to pursue both music and journalism. He undertook an independent study to interview artists like Cecil Taylor, McCoy Tyner, Ornette Coleman and John Cage, but it was Dewey Redman’s advice to “put down the pencil and pick up your saxophone” that he ultimately heeded. He left college for good—much to his family’s consternation—and dove into the deep end of the then-thriving loft-jazz scene.

Still, the hustle persisted: Murray kept a pair of skates in his backpack to facilitate covering more ground while hanging gig fliers around the city. He coaxed local business owners into transforming

their establishments into unlikely venues, like the time a pillow store ended up hosting a solo tenor recital, with the shop’s wares as makeshift seating. (By the time his Guinness arrived as we talked, Murray had eyed the ideal spot for a temporary stage near our table.)

That same work ethic lies behind the 63-year-old’s famously voluminous discography, which boasts more than 150 titles over his four-decade career. He’s the first to admit that the results vary in quality, but it’s the ones he didn’t record that Murray regrets: “I don’t need to document every minute, but I’d write some music, do six weeks on the road playing the music, come back and do the Vanguard and Sweet Basil, and the next week I’m in the studio. I didn’t want to lose a project. There’s some that got away and I’m pissed off about that.”

It’s a daunting task to whittle that vast catalogue down to a handful of key titles, but we covered as much ground as possible during a two-hour-plus conversation. The following recollections are in Murray’s own words, edited slightly for space and clarity.



**David Murray**  
*Flowers for Albert* (India Navigation, 1976)  
 Murray, tenor saxophone; Olu Dara, trumpet;  
 Fred Hopkins, bass; Phillip Wilson, drums

Technically, *Flowers for Albert* was supposed to have been my first release. I actually recorded it before *Low Class Conspiracy*, but that came out first. I had come to New York when I was 20, and this whole thing was happening with loft jazz. I hit the ground and saw a lot of charlatans around. There were a lot of cats that played hard, but they didn't know that much about music. All of a sudden, I was placed in this avant-garde thing. I guess that's what I was into, but I knew a lot more than these guys around me about music.

I met Olu Dara and a lot of people in trumpeter Ted Daniel's Energy band. The idea of that band was no music, just energy. I met Hamiet Bluiett there, Frank Lowe, all the East Side guys, all the downtown cats and uptown cats, too; some of them were bebop cats, but most of them were what they call in New York the "outcats." I met all the outcats in one day, and I learned something that day: I learned that in New York City, if you're going to be associated with these guys, the first thing I had to learn was to play loud.

Stanley Crouch had come to New York and he was a little ticked off that I didn't put him on that recording. I respected him as a writer, but people didn't like his drumming all that much. His style was out of Sunny Murray's style. I always considered Sunny the father of avant-garde drumming. He was an

uncle to me, almost. When I first came to New York he took me in. He didn't have nothing, but he gave me what he had. I wrote the song "Flowers for Albert" after Sunny told me some stuff about Albert Ayler. I was walking along the East River [where Ayler drowned], and the next thing you know this tune came into my head.



**The World Saxophone Quartet**  
*Steppin' With the World Saxophone Quartet*  
 (Black Saint, 1979)  
 Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet;  
 Julius Hemphill and Oliver Lake, alto  
 and soprano saxophones; Hamiet Bluiett, baritone  
 saxophone, flute

*Steppin'* was recorded in Milan. That's one of my favorite albums by the World Saxophone Quartet, without a doubt. Julius was writing his ass off during that period. That came after [the WSQ's live debut] *Point of No Return*, which I used to call "Star Bores," because everybody was trying to outblow each other. We hadn't learned how to play together yet, and we had one of the finest composers in the world right amongst us. He had to step up his game, and we had to listen.

Julius was very energetic, too; he was one of the Star Bores. He'd play until you took the horn out of his mouth. So you've got all these guys with ego to blow; each one of us could play an hour by ourselves, and it was hard to crunch all those egos



in. It took some years to do that. With *Steppin'*, we started to understand that you've got to make music for people to listen to. Even if it's hardcore and driving, even if they put the avant-garde label on it, let's still make it good. Let's not run the audience away. The World Saxophone Quartet proved that four ridiculously hard-blowing people could work together and build some music. But we've run our course and now it's over.



**James "Blood" Ulmer**  
*Are You Glad to Be in America?*  
(Rough Trade, 1980)  
*Ulmer, guitar; Murray, tenor saxophone;*  
*Oliver Lake, alto saxophone; Olu Dara,*  
*trumpet; Amin Ali, electric bass; G. Calvin Weston, drums;*  
*Ronald Shannon Jackson, drums*

That was a gas. I originally met Blood at the Keystone Korner, where he was playing with Ornette. I used to follow him around and carry his amp, and we'd hang out and talk. When I got to New York, the first cat I went looking for was Blood. From that moment on we've been tight as brothers. Blood was playing at CBGB and places like that, and I was following him. Whatever he was doing with Amin Ali and those cats, I was right there with them. If they wanted to have me, I was their saxophone player.

That was a scene. When Stanley finished up teaching at Pomona he came out and joined me, and we shared the loft that became Studio Infinity. It was right down the street from Studio Rivbea, the Ramones stayed right next door, and CBGB was right over there. We were growing up in this environment. I remember Jean-Michel Basquiat coming around and trying to play the clarinet. He could never fucking play, so he got a rock band [Gray] and just played real hard. I don't remember him as a painter; I remember him as a bad clarinet player.

Blood used to say, "All you saxophone players out here, y'all can say anything you want about David Murray, but David Murray is one of the only cats out here that's free." I dug the fact that he understood that that's what I'm trying to do. A lot of people don't know that's what I'm trying to do. Everybody else is out here trying to adhere to stuff. I'm trying to be free.



**Jack DeJohnette**  
*Special Edition* (ECM, 1980)  
*DeJohnette, drums, piano, melodica; Murray,*  
*tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Arthur Blythe,*  
*alto saxophone; Peter Warren, bass, cello*

That was a very interesting period. Jack is such an exceptional drummer. His mind is so advanced. As far as I'm concerned, as long as he's got sticks, Jack is number one. He's a pretty

good piano player, too, and a lot of times he would want to play the piano as much as he wanted to play the drums. The promoters would always come up and try to get me to ask Jack to mostly play drums. But I couldn't do that; he was my employer and Jack does what Jack wants. Then they'd ask Arthur Blythe, and he'd say the same thing. I would try to intimate it, but I was very young and in no place to dictate to Jack.

Arthur Blythe was one of my gurus. He was the Coltrane of the West Coast. We called him Black Arthur Blythe because he wasn't afraid to talk to the police in a bad way. In the community, when you cursed out the police we gave you a stripe; we called you "Black," which was like "Captain." Arthur wasn't scared of the police. He was way ahead of Black Lives Matter. He was such a great player. He didn't have to go to Africa and Guadeloupe and all these places to find African rhythms. He had his own African rhythm shit in his style of music.

Everybody wanted to be in Jack's band. I was kind of a renegade in the band. I wasn't a good sideman, because I always wanted to do my thing. The gig I really wanted was with Charlie Mingus. I wanted George Adams' gig, but I wasn't old enough to be in that band while Mingus was healthy. Playing with Jack was a wonderful experience, but I couldn't stay long because Jack wanted you to conform to Jack, and after a while I wanted to move on.



**David Murray Octet**  
*Ming* (Black Saint, 1980)  
*Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet;*  
*Henry Threadgill, alto saxophone; Olu Dara,*  
*trumpet; Lawrence "Butch" Morris, cornet;*  
*George Lewis, trombone; Anthony Davis, piano; Wilber*  
*Morris, bass; Steve McCall, drums*

Those guys [Threadgill, Lewis and McCall] always had this AACM moniker, but I think they really just wanted to be New York jazz musicians. We were all loft-jazz guys. Wherever we were from, it really didn't matter. I don't know why they needed that, but I guess it was important to them. All the California cats like me, all we cared about was being virtuosos on our instruments. We weren't gonna call ourselves the California Contingent of African-American Castaways. We didn't need any of those abbreviations. It was Arthur Blythe, it was James Newton, it was David Murray, it was Butch Morris.

The first big band I was allowed to do was at the Public Theater—I remember, because I had Jaki Byard on piano. Then I realized I couldn't keep a band like that together, so the Octet was born the same year. That was a standing group and I could run it from the stage. With *Ming*, I was really honing and developing my writing and arranging skills. An octet is a very easy vehicle for me to express myself. That's something I'd like to get back to, because it's a perfect unit for jazz.



► Murray at New York's Greenwich House, March 1985

**“The World Saxophone Quartet proved that four ridiculously hard-blowing people could work together and build some music. But we’ve run our course and now it’s over.”**



**Amiri Baraka**  
*New Music – New Poetry*  
 (India Navigation, 1982)  
 Baraka, poetry; Murray, tenor saxophone,  
 bass clarinet; Steve McCall, drums



**David Murray Quartet**  
*Morning Song* (Black Saint, 1984)  
 Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet;  
 John Hicks, piano; Reggie Workman, bass;  
 Ed Blackwell, drums

Somebody asked me, “What would Baraka say about Donald Trump?” I told them, “What he always said about every president: You voted the motherfucker in—you deal with it.” And he was right. Lay down, shut up and take the poison. A lot of people didn’t like Baraka. He was vilified for growing and saying what he thought. Baraka is the only cat who changed. He embraced the Back-to-Africa movement and cultural nationalism. A lot of people put him down, but he was going through a period, he dealt with it and then he moved on.

We truncated everything into a trio for *New Music – New Poetry*, because there was no money. We went out on tour with that. Steve and I did it because we wanted to be up there with our hero Baraka. That was me being political without speaking myself. Everything that came out of his mouth, I liked. When I was on the road with him, Baraka used to tell me, and it always stuck in my mind, “David, you’ve got to learn something every day.” Wherever we stopped on tour, he’d go to all the bookstores, looking for something he’d never seen. His mind was in constant motion, and I’ve never seen anybody operate that way. I can truly say that Baraka is one of my heroes. He inspired me. I still feel that way.

That was the beginning of what I call my Power Quartet. Any time you had an opportunity to play with John Hicks was a great opportunity, because John Hicks was one of the only piano players from that era that could take the whole band, put it on his shoulders and you could ride. Man, if you don’t learn something playing with him, you’re stupid.

I wrote “Morning Song” for my mother. She taught me how to play music on her lap. The first memory I have of music is playing on the floor, in between my mom’s legs, as she was trying to learn how to play the Hammond organ. I was 3 or so, trying to hit the foot pedals and throw her off. My father was a garbage man for the city of Berkeley, and he had to go to work at 5:30 in the morning. My mother started practicing after she got him out the door. She started off playing hymnal stuff, real quiet. Half an hour later it started getting louder and started to sound less hymnal, more lively. Then, by 7, she was banging, and that was my wakeup call. That’s why I called it “Morning Song.” From then on, music was part of my life.





◆ The World Saxophone Quartet gigs at the Picnic House in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, June 1985. From left: Murray, Arthur Blythe, Oliver Lake and Hamiet Bluiett



**McCoy Tyner**  
*Blues for Coltrane: A Tribute to John Coltrane*  
 (Impulse!, 1988)  
 Tyner, piano; Murray, Pharoah Sanders, tenor saxophone (on separate tracks); Cecil McBee, bass; Roy Haynes, drums

That was a Bob Thiele production for Impulse!. Bob Thiele was the kind of cat, you did what Bob said. That wasn't your album; that was Bob's album. His concept was just putting people in the same space at a certain moment. There was no concept there other than Coltrane. And we won the Grammy [for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Group] because of the names. Bob gets you some money. That money ain't available no more. When Bob died, that was the end of it. So I love Bob for that. Bob bought me a house.

Everybody else was [emulating Trane]. I didn't know why I had to get in that line. It was like they didn't hear nobody else. What I did was started hearing cats like Paul Gonsalves, and I'd go back to the source. For me, the source was Coleman Hawkins. There might have been people before him, but for me it all came from there, if I were to start with the guy who really put his stamp on that horn. And I think everybody feels that way who plays tenor. I know Sonny Rollins does. I did my study of Coltrane after I let everybody else get it out of their system. I grew up in California, and the best guy who aped Coltrane was Azar Lawrence—wasn't nobody gonna out-Coltrane Azar.



**David Murray Big Band**  
*David Murray Big Band* (DIW/Columbia, 1991)

Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Lawrence "Butch" Morris, conductor; Graham Haynes, Hugh Ragin, Rasul Siddik, James Zollar, trumpets; Craig Harris, Frank Lacy, Al Patterson, trombones; Vincent Chancey, French horn; Bob Stewart, tuba; Don Byron, Khalil Henry, Patience Higgins, John Purcell, James Spaulding, woodwinds; Joel A. Brandon, whistle; Sonelius Smith, piano; Fred Hopkins, bass; Tani Tabbal, drums; Brother G'Ra, poetry; Andy Bey, vocals

"Conduction" was born in the David Murray Big Band. Butch stayed at my house when he came to New York. He was developing this idea about conducting. The first cat he'd seen do it was Charles Moffett, and Ellington was into it, in a way. Butch turned it into something quite different.

As he went on with the conducting, Butch could never get the kind of quality guys that I could have in my big band. The higher the quality of jazz musicians, the less they'd look at him. I used to have to make them watch him. A lot of people were like, "Why you got this guy conducting the band?" And I said, "Well, does it sound different than other people's bands?" The purists didn't like it, and the purist musicians wouldn't watch him. I'd have to remind them: "In this band that's what we do." That album was probably the highest that we could have went during that time with my big band.



**David Murray & the Gwo-Ka Masters  
feat. Pharoah Sanders**  
*Gwotet* (Justin Time, 2004)

*Murray, Sanders, tenor saxophone; Leonardo Alarcon, trombone; Angel Ballester Veliz, alto saxophone, flute; Moises Marquez Leyva, baritone saxophone; Alexander Brown, Elpidio Chappotin Delgado, Carlos Sonduy Dimet, trumpets; Christian Lavisio, guitar, voice; Hervé Sambe, guitar; Jaribu Shahid, bass; Hamid Drake, drums; Klod Kiavue, gwo-ka drums, voice*



**Murray, Allen & Carrington Power Trio**  
*Perfection* (Motéma, 2016)

*Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Geri Allen, piano; Terri Lyne Carrington, drums*

I used to do all these workshops in Paris, with dancers, rappers, hand drummers, people from Guadeloupe and Senegal doing different projects for the community. Some of them got so good that we tried to make a project and go to that country and do a real album. We went to Guadeloupe and found the good musicians there. I still had my record contract with Justin Time, so I used it to do that.

I made a bunch of jazz albums, so I decided to try something different. There's jazz in all those albums, though; you have to hear that. I had some knucklehead write, "David Murray not only left America, he left jazz." You want me to make 30 more albums like the quartet? I could do that. My objective with the Gwo-Ka Masters was to try to take that to the Grammy Awards. I think the album is good enough. Pharoah was just overdubbed. The real work came way before. I worked hard on all those albums.

For the [NYC] Winter Jazzfest in 2015, I wanted to put together three different ensembles to try to do something new. I put together a Clarinet Summit with Hamiet Bluiett, Don Byron and David Krakauer, since I'm the only living member of the Clarinet Summit that I used to do with John Carter, Alvin Batiste and Jimmy Hamilton. I had a quartet with Nasheet Waits, Orrin Evans and Jaribu Shahid, and I added [the slam poet] Saul Williams to that mix. And I figured I'd do something with Terri Lyne and Geri. I first played with Geri for a week at the Village Vanguard back sometime in the early '90s, with the bass player Richard Davis. He put me and Geri together and we hooked up pretty good. I had played with Terri Lyne not too long before that, at one of those Round Robin Duet things they do at the Town Hall [presented by the Red Bull Music Academy].

It was obvious by then that the World Saxophone Quartet wouldn't be getting back together, so I needed another collective band. But it ended up being just a band in thirds. They were very opinionated. I kicked back and just let them run things, because they were very adamant about doing that. I've done a lot of records on my own, but I've



► "She may have been sick, but she played her butt off," Murray said of Geri Allen, seen here at far right with Terri Lyne Carrington





Murray plays NYC Winter Jazzfest with poet Saul Williams, January 2015



**David Murray feat. Saul Williams**  
*Blues for Memo* (Motéma, 2018)

Murray, tenor saxophone; Williams, poetry, spoken word; Craig Harris, trombone; Aytac Dogun, kanun; Mingus Murray, guitar; Orrin Evans, piano; Jason Moran, Fender Rhodes; Jaribu Shahid, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums; Pervis Evans, vocals

**“I don’t remember [Jean-Michel Basquiat] as a painter; I remember him as a bad clarinet player.”**

**Review: Murray, Allen & Carrington Power Trio’s Perfection**

never had so much advice. It was great to play with such fine musicians, but there were a lot of opinions.

In the middle of doing the album, Ornette Coleman passed away, and that was a big thing because everybody loved Ornette. Geri played with him in one of his bands, and he was one of the first guys I interviewed when I came to New York. I had this song, “Perfection,” in my library for a long time. It was a ditty that Ornette was playing that Bobby Bradford copied out. He gave it to me while we were practicing one day and said, “This is something Ornette wrote but never recorded.” So I kept it and used it as a practice piece.

I’m not sure if the group would have stayed together anyways, but the fact that Geri passed was a drag. I really enjoyed playing with her. She may have been sick, but she played her butt off. God bless her. She was a great pianist, a great mother, a great thinker and a great educator.

I did that as a tribute to [the Turkish music impresario] Mehmet Ulug, this friend of mine who died. Memo and his brother, Ahmet, were good people and jazz enthusiasts. They owned the club Babylon, a very famous club in Turkey. They also have a company called Pozitif, and they were the people behind anything that was jazz in Istanbul. Their father was a well-to-do businessman in Istanbul, and he sent his kids to college in the States. While they were in college they became like Sun Ra groupies. They used to follow Sun Ra around the country on spring break. That’s why we did “Enlightenment,” and Craig was in the Arkestra, so that’s why he’s on the album.

I saw Saul at Baraka’s funeral, and he spoke to me from the stage. [He recited a poem in which] he told Baraka, “Get out of the casket!” That’s how I decided I wanted to use him. A lot of people spoke that day, but he was the best. He sent some poems, I wrote some songs, and that’s how that came about. Memo, Mehmet and Butch died not so far apart, so Butch is in the mix, too; we did his song “Obe.” So it’s a tribute to more than one thing, but Memo is at the beginning of it. **JT**

LEFT: © ANTHONY BARBOZA RIGHT: ALAN NAHIGIAN

*Jamey Aebersold's*  
**SUMMER Jazz 2018**  
UNIV. OF LOUISVILLE  
LOUISVILLE, KY

**JOIN THESE JAZZ LEGENDS WHO HAVE BEEN A PART OF OUR WORKSHOPS:**

- Joe Henderson
- Woody Shaw
- Slide Hampton
- James Moody
- Chris Potter
- Randy Brecker
- Jimmy Cobb
- Tom Harrell
- John Scofield
- Eric Alexander

**All Ages!**  
**All Abilities!**  
**All Instruments & Vocalists!**

CHOOSE FROM 2 GREAT WEEKS OF JAZZ!

WEEK A

**July 1<sup>st</sup> - July 6<sup>th</sup>**

WEEK B

**July 8<sup>th</sup> - July 13<sup>th</sup>**

COMBOS • JAM SESSIONS • THEORY • CONCERTS • MASTER CLASSES

40 hours of hands-on rehearsals, classes, and lectures • 25 faculty concerts • Ages from 11 to 85 • Participants from all over the world • All instruments including strings, voice, and vibes ...

... a week with us could change your life!

www.summerjazzworkshops.com • 1-812-944-8141



► "Before I knew who Miles Davis or John Coltrane was, my first heroes were Eazy-E and Dr. Dre and Ice Cube," says Terrace Martin. "My thing was two turntables and a mixer and a drum machine."

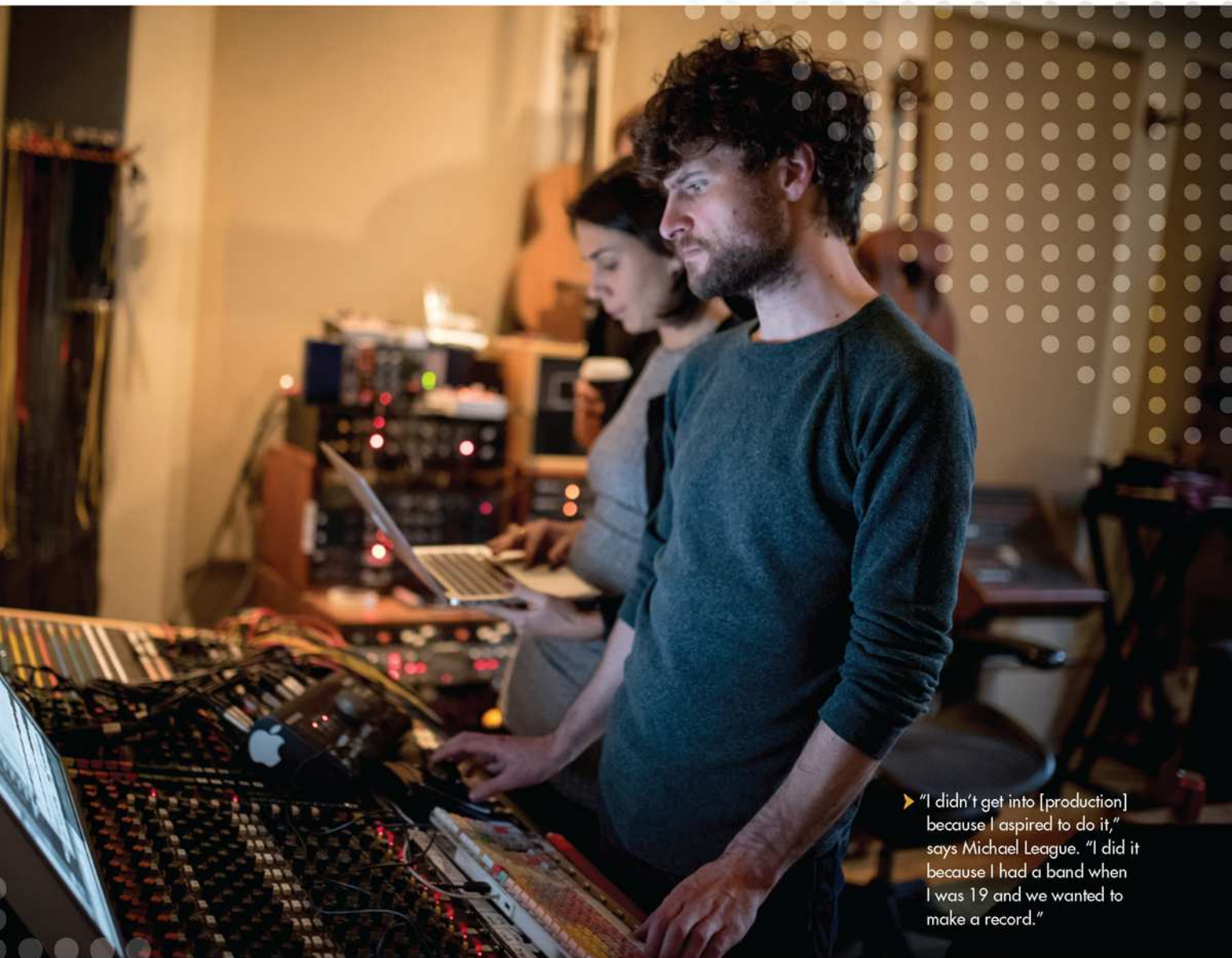
# TRACK MINDS



# MUSICIAN-PRODUCERS MICHAEL LEAGUE AND TERRACE MARTIN ON LIFE BEHIND THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STUDIO GLASS

By Ashley Kahn

 **Chops:** Terrace Martin on vocoder technique



▶ "I didn't get into [production] because I aspired to do it," says Michael League. "I did it because I had a band when I was 19 and we wanted to make a record."

**E**very now and then at Holland's annual North Sea Jazz Festival, the Jazz Café—the small room that hosts the festival's talk events—fills to capacity. People spill out into the hall, even while 12 other venues in the Rotterdam Ahoy complex are pumping out live music. During the fest's most recent edition, in July 2017, at the same time that Chick Corea, Mary J. Blige, Dianne Reeves, Laura Mvula and other popular acts were performing elsewhere, more than 100 people parked themselves among the small tables—and even on the floor—to hear Terrace Martin and Michael League talk.

The popularity that these two musician-producers enjoy is remarkable, and due as much to their studio collaborations as to their own recordings. Alto saxophonist/keyboardist/producer Martin has worked with hip-hop heavyweights like Kendrick Lamar and Snoop Dogg as well as major jazz names like Kamasi Washington and Robert Glasper, and—with pleasant surprise and high expectations—he's been a member of Herbie Hancock's touring ensemble since 2016. League is the bassist and leader of the stylistically expansive Snarky Puppy, and he has produced his band's recordings in addition to those by David Crosby, Becca Stevens and others. He also toured with his new, world-and-blues-inspired group Bokanté last summer, while organizing the second GroundUP Music Festival, an eclectic three-day event that took place in Miami in February.

Many, then, were the reasons for an overflow crowd that skewed young and enthusiastic. As jazz players who not only perform their own music but also specialize in helping others document theirs, both Martin and League represent a current, genre-mixing trend that other musician-cum-producers—Glasper and drummers Karriem Riggins and Chris Dave among them—are similarly spearheading.

During the discussion, titled "Songcrafting in the Studio," Martin and League talked about the overlap of their work as players and producers, and how they approach making new recordings in an age when more and more music is developed on laptops and even cellphones. With thanks to the folks at the North Sea Jazz Festival for hosting the forum, this is an excerpt of that discussion.

**ASHLEY KAHN:** You guys know each other, right?

**MICHAEL LEAGUE:** We played your mom's birthday.

**TERRACE MARTIN:** Snarky Puppy played my mother's birthday party.

**KAHN:** I don't know if it gets closer than that.

**MARTIN:** I've been a fan and admirer ever since.

**LEAGUE:** We play birthdays, weddings, bar mitzvahs. We got it covered. [laughter] [Snarky Puppy drummer] Sput [a.k.a. Robert Searight] was talking about his brother all the time. You guys lived together, right?

**MARTIN:** Yeah, since I was 13.

**LEAGUE:** So they grew up together, and Sput was always talking about Terrace being on both sides of that divide between hip-hop and jazz, and also having his shit together in terms of being

enterprising and ambitious without being network-y. We all definitely have him to thank for that Kendrick Lamar record *To Pimp a Butterfly* [co-produced by Martin], which turned on the whole music world. It felt like, "Oh, wait, it's OK to be musical again in popular music?" That record alone fulfilled all the stuff that Sput had said. Then we played gigs together.

**KAHN:** Both of you became producers very early on. Can you describe that moment when you decided were going to wear that hat as well?

**MARTIN:** For me that was the first hat, because I come from the Crenshaw District—South Central Los Angeles. Before I knew who Miles Davis or John Coltrane was, my first heroes were Eazy-E and Dr. Dre and Ice Cube. The saxophone was later in my life. My thing was two turntables and a mixer and a drum machine: producing records or writing songs, wanting to work with the dopest rappers. That's what we did in my neighborhood. Everybody had a drum machine. ... The cool thing about hip-hop is that it's such a gumbo of everything. Most of the artists and MCs are the producers of the records. So producing is part of our culture. It's not a separation; it's one thing.

**LEAGUE:** It's very opposite to the jazz world, where production is sometimes the last thing musicians think about because they're so focused on the live performance and the live energy. But I think the best jazz records are immaculately produced. Think about the Teo Macero stuff.

I didn't get into [production] because I aspired to do it. I did it because I had a band when I was 19 and we wanted to make a record. I didn't know any producers, and I didn't have any money.

**MARTIN:** Like hip-hop.

**LEAGUE:** Maybe it's the same thing. So I really cut my teeth flying completely blind, failing often and trying not to fail the same way twice. I did three Snarky Puppy records before I produced anything else. I didn't have any knowledge of preamps or Pro Tools or recording techniques or microphone choices or anything. I was just telling people what to play, and if something felt bad I would change it. That's what producing was to me—and it still is, actually. The more I learn about producing, the more it goes back to just being a totally intuitive, no-rules process. If it sounds good and feels good, it's right.

**KAHN:** As producers, do you find yourselves developing your own touch or sound in the studio, the way that players do?

**LEAGUE:** I try to be a servant of the artist. You don't want to just dip your finger in ink and smear it on every record you make



and impose your sound. I love producers who have a catalog that's versatile and the fingerprint is more one of quality and taste rather than a style. If you put a Yoruba percussionist in the studio, you don't want to make him try to sound like a Dr. Dre record—unless that's what they're going for.

This past month I finished mixing a record for Eliades Ochoa, who's the singer and guitarist for the Buena Vista Social Club, and then also a debut record by a half-Swedish/half-Thai artist who sounds like Nine Inch Nails. It was so fun to go down those different paths, and I know with Terrace, he's always on different sides. I don't know if he thinks about it the same way.

**MARTIN:** I do. When it comes to production, a lot of my heroes do have a sound. But what I learned from them—and why I didn't want to stick with just one thing—is that when people get tired of one sound, they move on. I never want to be—and I'm never *going* to be—the flavor of the month. I have to always evolve and change, and so every artist is different. If I was to work with Snarky Puppy, it would be something I've never, ever done before.

Even when I work with Kendrick—he and I have been working together for 14 years, and every time we work the first thing we say is, “We don't want to do nothing we did on the last album, so let's not even use the same keyboards.” To *Pimp a Butterfly* [made heavy use of] musical instruments, but then on this last album we did, [the Pulitzer-winning] *DAMN.*, I was sampling a lot with the drum machine and the turntable, with no keyboards. We wanted to go back to the basics for us, which is the boom box, the turntable, the drum machine and the MC. It was a conscious [decision] to say, “Let's give them *DAMN.*,

so we can get these kids back involved and make sure they can move, dance and hear a message. Let's get back to the hood shit; let's get back to just the [Roland TR-] 808 [drum machine]. We don't care if the 808 is out of tune with that.”

**KAHN:** How do you use the studio? Is that where you create, or do you get creative beforehand and then bring what you've created in to record?

**MARTIN:** It's different every time. I got a little keyboard this big [*holds hands two feet wide*] in my backpack right now, and a laptop. It's never one place that it's going to happen. It's like when you meet a lover—you know what I'm saying? You don't know where you're going to meet the person you're going to be with for the rest of your life, or for just that night. But you're prepared because you got a laptop. So stay ready.

**LEAGUE:** The Voice Memo section [on my smartphone] has like 150 song ideas, and some are a three-minute thing with a verse, pre-chorus and chorus, and some are just me recording the luggage belt at JFK Airport, Baggage Claim D. It's the funkier beat, and it's over and over every day. They haven't fixed the shit in six years!

When I was in Cuba in January, I heard this on the street [*plays track on phone*]. It's a guy selling fruit, but it sounds like a track. I just collect ideas from things that are around: if I have a little stupid idea, even if it's just a one-bar rhythm, or if I'm practicing and I find something that I like, or if I'm onstage and someone plays something cool, I try to record everything so that when I do have time to write, I don't start from scratch. I don't



League talks sound with David Crosby during a session in New Orleans, February 2015



“Imagine working with the ultimate artist that has heard everything. He wants you for something, but what you got famous for is like 40-percent regurgitated him.”

— Terrace Martin, on collaborating with Herbie Hancock

"I make sure that [my demos] are so shitty that I can't fall in love with them."

— Michael League

► Inside Michael League's world-blues project, Bokanté

want to trust the muse to descend upon me in my 45 minutes between sound check and a gig. I want to have a catalog of stuff that I can pull up and see what inspires me, then you click on it and you're like, "All right, I'm going to continue with this."

**KAHN:** So when you're in the studio, you pull this stuff out too?

**LEAGUE:** Sure. I don't like to make demos that sound good. I try to make demos that are super-raw, so that I'm not going into the studio trying to recreate something that worked on my laptop or my media controller. To me, the sound and the part are always connected, like a conga part on a Buena Vista record is in every microphone—the trumpet mic, the guitar mic, the vocal mic—and that's why it sounds so warm and washy the whole time. If you recorded that in a tight [isolation] booth and it didn't bleed into any of the other microphones, the whole sound of that record is gone, even if they're playing the exact same thing.

I like for as much of the creative process as possible to happen in the room where the music will be recorded, because if it works in that room with that microphone on it, it will work in the mix. But if it works in your bathroom, it might not work in some beautiful million-dollar studio.

**MARTIN:** If I have the luxury of [producing] my own stuff, I have all the time in the world. Record companies hate me too, because I take forever on my own stuff. But if I'm working for, let's say, Snoop, it's different. I've been working with him since I was in my junior year of high school, and that was my intro to production with a major artist.

Snoop had a studio at his house at that time. There were about 10 of the most amazing producers in the world down there standing in line to let him hear a beat. But Snoop wouldn't take [prerecorded] beats. He would have the equipment there, and his thing was like, "Yeah, uh, why don't you cook up something for me—*right now?*" And the room is full of people, the football game is going on, basketball game is going on, Snoop's playing video games, loud music going on, everybody's talking and you have all these people looking at you. But he'll put on *Soul Train* and it's like, "Oh, you see that? I want some move like that. Yo, Terrace, why don't you get down right now?"

This is your chance. This is a life-changing chance. You got about 10, 15 minutes with the headphones on to make sure you got your drum sounds up; you got to tune everything out but still use everything as a tool. Because the whole thing about doing hip-hop records in front of everybody is, if everybody keeps talking while you're banging out a beat, your beat ain't shit. But if everybody stops and pays attention, you got something.

So whether I'm alone or in a room with people, if you have a drum machine right there and you say, "Yo, we got about 30 minutes," I am going to get down. Whether you like it I don't



know, but I'm going to have something for you to start off with. Working with Herbie, it's very intimate—just me and him trying to figure out harmony and the bridge for like five days—and that's a different thing.

**KAHN:** I was just about to ask you about Herbie. How is that working and how did it start off?

**MARTIN:** [Electronic musician] Flying Lotus gave the introduction to Herbie. He was working with Herbie and told him, "You need to check out *To Pimp a Butterfly*," and [Herbie] reached out to a few people but couldn't get in touch with me. Then he was at a festival with Robert Glasper and asked him, "Do you know this guy named Terrace Martin?" Robert called me right there from [South] Korea and he's like, "Man, Herbie is looking for you." I was like, "Stop pulling my leg, man. Don't do that to me." And I hung up the phone! Then I got another call from [trumpeter] Keyon Harrold. Me, Robert and Keyon grew up since [we were all] 15. So he said, "I was standing right there [with Glasper] and Herbie is looking for you."

Then a month later Robert is working in the studio, and I brought some smokable salad over to [the] Capitol Records [studio]. I walked in and saw Rob and my friend Ambrose [Akinmusire] and Wayne Shorter, and behind him I kept hearing a guy going, "Heh, heh, heh..." It was Herbie, and we hooked up, and we've been working ever since.

**KAHN:** Can you talk about that process?

**MARTIN:** It's still unraveling. It's tricky for me working for Herbie, because, remember, the biggest dream in my neighborhood was getting a post office job or working for the city. So when I got a chance to work with Herbie Hancock, I felt like I knew him way more than he could ever know me. It took three months for me to stop asking questions about [*Live at the*] *Plugged Nickel* and *'Four' & More* and *Head Hunters* and, "Why didn't you play ii-V there? Why don't you play the root there? What is that there?" It took me three months to get all that out of the way. And then I realized, "Oh, this cat is like me!"

Imagine working with the ultimate artist that has heard everything. He wants you for something, but what you got famous for is like 40-percent regurgitated him. In my world I can bring in something that's new to my generation, but to Herbie it's not new and he doesn't want to do nothing he's heard before. So I have to take myself out of the normal situation and become a vessel for anything that comes in that could not be the norm.

It takes a team to work with a dude like Herbie. For the first few months we were still learning each other, but when I started





Martin and League in conversation with Ashley Kahn at the North Sea Jazz Festival, July 2017

playing in his band I met this cat [bassist] James Genus. He's a legend for us in L.A.—he was part of a 1992 Brecker Brothers video we all know. And I saw at the first rehearsal how he communicated with Herbie, and he was the only one able to speak a certain language to bring all things together. So I learned from him how to communicate. Now we're moving at a smooth pace and every day is different, every song is different, every creative aspect is different. We have like seven terabytes of music.

**KAHN:** Before we got here today, I asked Terrace and Michael if they could each bring some music to show us how they take the beginning of an idea and develop it into a final track. Michael, would you like to step up first?

**LEAGUE:** I just want to keep hearing about Herbie! [laughs] I was teaching at a bass camp in Canada two years ago, and this bass maker was showing me an instrument. It was detuned—like they put the strings on and they had gone out of tune and were whole steps apart from what they should have been. I started playing something I had played before, but it sounded really crazy and I liked it so I recorded it. It's [an electric bass] unplugged and it's a big blues stomp. It sounded like this [plays raw track from laptop].

When I decided to put [Bokanté] together, I made a demo off this track that's still really bare and I sent it to the singer, Malika [Tirolien]. We talked about lyrical ideas, and she wrote the melody, put vocals on it and sent it back to me, and it sounded like this [plays early version of "Jou Ké Ouvè"]. That's the riff, now on a baritone guitar instead of a bass. When we tracked it, it developed a solo section and it sounded like this [plays final version of "Jou Ké Ouvè," from Bokanté's 2017 album *Strange Circles*]. Even as everything developed compositionally, it still has the same groove.

The thing that I learned from situations like this is to never throw away or discount or hate on an idea, because you never know how that seed will grow. Sometimes you come up with an idea and you're like, "This is dumb. It's so simple, it's *too* basic." It's actually a blessing, because it gives you room to develop something, whereas if you start out with a really complex idea, you're having to constantly condense it and rein it in. I'm sure you've had this experience, Terrace, where you finish tracking an album and you're like, "I know this song is going to be *the* one." But then you mix it and it's actually the worst song on the record.

**MARTIN:** That happens every time.

**LEAGUE:** Then you find another track you thought was going to be a total drag and once the mix comes, you're like, "Man, this is actually the thing." It just goes to show that preconceptions are

your adversary in the studio. It's great to have a concept ahead of time, but to be married to that and not allow new ideas to enter can be a real mistake—and a very easy one to make, because we fall in love with our demos sometimes. I make sure that mine are so shitty that I can't fall in love with them.

**MARTIN:** The song I'm going to play is called "Intentions," and the music started off from a conversation me, my friend [and cousin] Jason [Martin, a.k.a. rapper-producer Problem] and two female friends [were having]. They were talking about how most men have bad intentions, and I was telling them, "Well, I know a group of women that got bad intentions, too." So we're having this deep conversation, and I always have *Soul Train* from the '70s and '80s on repeat, and Shalamar came on, and then the video of "When Doves Cry"—and I'm a Prince fanatic—so I just kept looking at the video while we're talking, and I had an idea right there. They're talking loud and I'm listening and just banging out the beat, and 15 minutes into the conversation, when I finally hit something, I took the headphones off and pressed play and the whole room stopped [plays beat track from laptop, adds in synthesizer melody line].

**LEAGUE:** Unh! That's Prince already...

**MARTIN:** They was all mad at first, and then they heard the jam and they said, "Oh, we like that." And then we kept listening to it for like an hour, over and over again, because that's what we do. I kept hearing the words "intentions, man's intentions" [starts singing along with beat and synthesizer]. So me and my friend Jason wrote the song, then I added more sounds on top and tracked to 2-inch tape. I had to put it on Pro Tools [in the mixing stage] just to make it real loud, but I love tape; I love the analog sound.

I'm also a fan of gear—most of my studio is drum machines. [On "Intentions"] I used the first Linn drum machine, the LM-1. It's the drum machine Prince used on "Head," "I Wanna Be Your Lover" and "When Doves Cry." I [also] used a Minimoog, a [Sequential Circuits] Prophet-5 and an [Oberheim/Dave Smith] OB-6. I replayed the bassline, so it ended up being this [plays final version of "Intentions"]. By the way, that's my new group called the Pollyseeds, on [the 2017 album] *Sounds of Crenshaw, Vol. 1*.

I love nostalgia but I don't ever want to make my music sound retro to where even the mix is retro. I want to let the youngsters know who Prince was but also give them the right frequencies and ear candy. That's what Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre are the masters at; they know how to take something familiar and make it sound so new. To me, that's the definition of a hit record. All my success has been from elements of the past, but then making them new again. **JT**



► Saxophonist John Zorn, pianist Sylvie Courvoisier and cellist Ha-Yang Kim collaborate on one of Zorn's Improv Nights, February 2008

# The Family Stone

By Shaun Brady  
Images by Peter Gannushkin



As the Stone begins to thrive in its cleaner and more temperate confines at the New School, the venue's regulars raise their bottled waters to the joyfully gritty East Village clubhouse they once called home



## The John Zorn Interview, by Bill Milkowski

The downtown scene in New York City has witnessed its fair share of great venues come and go over the years. The latest loss, or change, occurred in March, with the shuttering of the original Stone, an East Village venue launched in 2005 by saxophonist-composer John Zorn. A new Stone has risen at the New School's attractive Glass Box Theater, at 55 West 13th Street, and it has thus far retained the first venue's eclectic, experimental and artist-centric focus.

From its beginnings, the Stone was built on a curation model that gave the musicians who performed there free rein. At first a single artist curated a full month; later that shifted to weekly residencies, but musicians were always encouraged to play in a variety of different, often wholly novel contexts. To say that the space was all about the music is an understatement. Not only was there no bar to distract from the music, there were barely any concessions made to comfort or promotion. It was quite simply a black box where boundary-pushing music was made—a space that was easy to walk by without noticing, but one that promised something new and bold to those drawn to the unusual.

We asked several Stone regulars, both musicians and supporters, to share their memories of this one-of-a-kind space. Ever forward-looking, Zorn declined to participate in a story focused on the “good old days.”

### THE COMMUNITY

**TYSHAWN SOREY** (drummer, multi-instrumentalist): Zorn is legendary for his openness and for giving people the chance to do what they do best. [The Stone] was a logical extension of the way that he makes music happen and makes collaborations happen.

**BRUCE GALLANTER** (founder, Downtown Music Gallery): The Knitting Factory opened up [in 1987] and for 15 years that was the place to be. Zorn and his buddies played there. After the Knitting Factory changed and went more toward rock and jam-band stuff, Tonic opened up and that became the place to be for about 10 years. Right before Tonic closed in 2006, that's when Zorn started the Stone.

**THEO BLECKMANN** (vocalist): You'd go to the old Knitting Factory any day of the week and there would be musicians lined up at the bar in the back and crazy music in the front. And that's why you'd go there—because you have a community, you have a crowd, you have a sense of belonging. That was definitely what the Stone gave us misfits.

**DAVE DOUGLAS** (trumpeter): I always admired John as someone who sees a need in the community and immediately stands up to address it.

**SOREY:** Very early on, I think it was one of the first months that [the Stone] was open. Misha Mengelberg was curating and invited me to participate in a concert. I showed up to this place with no name on the door, with nothing around.

Hardly anyone knew of this place. I remember there being only three to five people in the audience, but that was the beginning of my coming of age. It was a remarkable experience, being a part of something that's not yet off the ground, and it reshaped how I approached performance in general. As the years went by I felt like the Stone was my home away from home.

**CHES SMITH** (percussionist): It opened a little while after I started coming out to New York from California. I'd already started hearing about it on the West Coast, so when someone I knew had a whole month there I'd end up there a lot, whether I was listening or playing a show. At the time I was crashing with people like Mary Halvorson and Shahzad Ismaily, but when I think back it almost feels like I was crashing at the Stone.

### THE VIBE

**MARY HALVORSON** (guitarist): The environment at the Stone was so conducive to listening. Nobody was there to drink; everybody was there to sit and listen, so it was a place where you really felt like the audience was with you—which lends itself to experimentation and trying new stuff.

**ERIK FRIEDLANDER** (cellist): It was all about the musicians. There was no bar, no margarita machine slushing around. I'm well aware that it's no picnic to run a jazz club, but there was something [special] about the Stone, where the artists get every penny of the door. If you packed the house you could actually make money.

**SMITH:** It was a space for people to be creative. It was totally open in terms of style or genre. You could play anything there—even volume-wise; I've played really loud shows and super-quiet shows. You never had to worry about a club owner not asking you back because of the music you played.

**BLECKMANN:** There was a special energy in that room at certain times. It was a listening room and people were in it for that hour, no matter what. You can stand on your head or do whatever you want because there isn't anybody worried about turnout. I've been to many concerts at the Stone where there were very few people, and that didn't make it less exciting or less good. Sometimes it felt like the fewer people there, the more special the offering. I know that sounds a little twisted, but if you go to any other place you'd be like, “Oh, bummer, there's only three people here. She or he probably won't be booked again because they didn't bring in enough people and they're not selling enough drinks.” That was never the case at the Stone.

### THE NAMESAKES

**DOUGLAS:** The Stone was a significant name. Irving Stone and his wife came to every interesting show on the Lower East Side since before I arrived there. Seeing them in the house was a real honor.

**FRIEDLANDER:** You can't talk about the Stone without talking about Irving and Stephanie Stone. They were fixtures at Tonic and other places way before the Stone. They were always at gigs, giving rock-solid support. I got to know them and they really were great supporters of John and the whole scene down there.

**GALLANTER:** In the early days there was a place called Studio Henry in the West Village. There was a couple that was there every week who were older than me. I thought they were my parents' age but it turned out they were older than that, and they were digging the gigs. So I went up to them and said, “Do you really like this music?” And they said, “Yes. We saw Eugene Chadbourne and John Zorn open for David Murray, and we thought what they did was more interesting than



▶ Tyshawn Sorey,  
November 2016

what David Murray was doing.” I was stunned. That couple turned out to be Irving and Stephanie Stone. We became friends and they would show up for all the gigs and they were close with all the musicians and would help them out. Zorn remained very close with them for many, many years.

**JEN SHYU** (vocalist, musician): I was lucky to know the late Stephanie Stone. Irving Stone had passed [in 2003] before I moved to New York City, but I spent some time with Stephanie—a beautiful and sweet woman, so dedicated to music and musicians. I went to her home way out in Brooklyn, and she played and sang for me old songs that she thought I should learn. It is this extreme dedication, this complete abandon to art, that the Stone symbolizes to me.

### THE... AMBIANCE?

**BLECKMANN:** I had some of my Upper East Side friends come to one of my concerts. They loved the music, but they also loved the idea of finding this little hole in the wall that’s not designed up to an inch of its life. It felt authentic and real; it had the grit and the dirt that a lot of New York doesn’t have anymore. Whether we feel romantic or nostalgic about sitting in a space that’s too cold or too hot and smells funny and has bright lights, it’s not that; it’s that feeling of discovery and being part of a community.

**FRIEDLANDER:** Because of the proximity to the audience, when you packed it in there you really felt like everybody was there to have an experience. Tourists would come and their minds were blown. Some people couldn’t find it. They’d walk right by because it was under shutters and they’d end up wandering around the East Village.

**SOREY:** It didn’t feel like some kind of “jazz club.” It was really about the music and nothing else.

**BLECKMANN:** The [artists’] basement always smelled really weird. I remember the smells—the griminess and the smells. The funny thing about the Stone is that it never changed. There were no surprises. I remember they got better air conditioning at some point and that made a big difference—a little wonky machine over the door that you threw on during the breaks. But other than that it was the same bathroom, the same lighting, the same chairs that you slid down on during the show.

**GALLANTER:** The A/C did not work well up until about three years ago. During the summer it was hell, and during the winter the radiator would go on during the middle of the gig and hiss. It would be too hot in one section and too cold in another. Some people would say, “I’m not going to suffer through a gig in 90-degree heat,” but if you were devoted to going you would go.

**HALVORSON:** There were quirks. I remember seeing Secret Chiefs 3 and it was totally sold-out, packed, and it was a sauna. I think I drank three bottles of water during one set alone. But there was something about that that was a really magical experience, too, being in this totally extreme environment hearing this really intense music.

**SMITH:** That was one of my first shows there, with Secret Chiefs 3. I think it was Eyvind Kang’s month. All the sets were completely oversold, and with all those people right up in your face, it was really intense. I was completely soaked after the first song, and then it got completely delirious. Shahzad was with us and he actually can’t sweat; it’s just how he was born. That’s why his skin looks amazing. But you have to watch it. It got to the point where Shahzad started literally

overheating, so we had to take a break or play the last tune without him. You’d be talking to him and he’d start not making sense, saying irrational things. That’s when it was time to call it.

**FRIEDLANDER:** We did a Masada String Trio gig there before the air conditioning. It was unbelievable. They had lights onstage that would just be baking you. It was totally packed, people were on the floors, on pillows, and everybody just hung in there. We were drenched in sweat but it was an incredible night of music. It was like an Olympic event.

**BRET SJERVEN** (marketing/publicity manager, Sunnyside Records): The BBC gig that Tim Berne, Jim Black and Nels Cline did was a fucking sauna, but it was incredible. It was just one of those shows where everything came together, and then on top of that you’re about to pass out from heat exhaustion.

### THE OPPORTUNITIES

**DOUGLAS:** Great music developed at the Stone. I personally got to experiment with all sorts of things. Among memories that stand out are performances of Don Cherry’s music with JD Allen, Henry Grimes and Andrew Cyrille. That was a trip! Also, Blue Buddha, Louie Belogenis’ quartet with me, Bill Laswell and either Tyshawn Sorey or Susie Ibarra. Wonderful nights.

**HALVORSON:** One of the things I really liked was that you’d get these weeklong or month-long [residencies], which gave you a wide-open space to do whatever you want. You were encouraged to do something different every night, and that really makes for an environment where people are inclined to experiment or reach out to musicians they don’t normally work with. It’s a place where I had a lot of first meetings with musicians. The first time I ever played with Marc Ribot was at the Stone, during my residency in 2007. I played duo with drummer Randy Peterson, and with Ben Monder and Liberty Ellman, guitarists I’ve admired for a long time and never got a chance to play with.

**SOREY:** In 2014 I curated a week there, and I really wanted to put myself in situations where I was collaborating with people who were generations older



than I was. I had hung out with Milford Graves, and one of the key things he said to me was that we need to be in situations where younger folks are hanging out with older folks, talking shop. There's none of that happening anymore; there's no Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, nothing where younger musicians can come in and perform with these legends and established elders. So I performed in a trio with Dave Burrell and Henry Grimes, and in the same week with Marilyn Crispell and Mark Helias.

**GALLANTER:** I lucked out in 2006 because my partner at the time, Manny Maris, asked Zorn if he could have a birthday party at the Stone. Zorn said, "There's no parties at the Stone because it's a serious music place, but I'll give you something better than that: I'll allow you and Bruce to curate for a month." The two of us were the only non-musicians who ever curated at the Stone. I picked 25 of my favorite musicians from around the world to play. [It was] a pretty heavy month, including three members of Henry Cow who had not played together in 15 years. I also asked Keith Tippett, my favorite piano player, to play with his quartet. But he wanted too much money so I hired the other three guys: Paul Dunmall on sax, Paul Rogers on bass and Tony Levin, the British drummer.

**BLECKMANN:** The weeklong residency allowed me to workshop the material that became the *Elegy* record [on ECM]. It's such a low-key situation, where everybody expects musicians to experiment with all kinds of parameters. It's more like a living room, where everybody's sitting around and watching you very closely, than a concert hall. People sat behind you and around you. It's that idea that we're right there, part of the process, with these [artists] that travel all around the world playing festivals being right next to you and quite vulnerable—not presenting a big thing that they've done for many years but working on the next thing. This is where it starts. As musicians we need a place like that, a space between the rehearsal space and the full monty.

**DOUGLAS:** For me, the most quintessential events in [my] memory are the Improv Nights. Playing with dozens of musicians over the years, often for the very first time,

was always a thrill. A big part of the experience was the camaraderie in the basement/backstage, with John's sometimes rapier wit—simultaneously loving and welcoming us musicians while also making sure the whole thing wasn't being taken too damn seriously. I love it. I miss it.

## THE MEMORIES

**FRIEDLANDER:** I did a gig at the Stone celebrating the release of my *Claws & Wings* record, which was dedicated to my [late] wife. It was packed, and it was a great experience for me to play that music in celebration of my wife's life and share it with Sylvie Courvoisier and Ikue Mori.

**SHYU:** One of my most memorable gigs was with my dear friend Tyshawn Sorey, in 2014. I was grieving the loss of a young friend and the Stone always allowed for that vulnerability and honesty.

**SOREY:** Each duo encounter that Jen Shyu and I have had keeps growing on this very spiritual, meditative level, to the point where the Stone becomes this shrine or temple. It becomes something other than what people know the Stone to be. It's no longer about music at that point; it's more about the inner experience of music rather than outer.

**HALVORSON:** As an audience member, it was a really great listening space. Sometimes you would get these combinations of musicians that are a little unlikely, people you wouldn't necessarily think to put together. I remember once hearing the trio of Scott Robinson, Henry Grimes

and Jeff "Tain" Watts. I had gotten back from Europe that day and was exhausted, but I had to see it. And it was incredible, such a cool combination of musicians.

**BLECKMANN:** I saw a Zeena Parkins solo harp concert there that I loved. She had a residency, and the fact that she could leave her harps and toys set up over the week [made it feel] like she was at home and we were visiting her in her living room. There were so many things set up that you couldn't set up if you have a one-off gig. It would have been impossible in any other space.

**HALVORSON:** Because of the intimacy of the space, it's also a really great place for solo shows. Bill Frisell did a bunch of solo shows last summer that were phenomenal, and I remember seeing Jessica Pavone do a solo viola thing there which was amazing. The space was so quiet and so focused.

**FRIEDLANDER:** One night Julian Lage and Gyan Riley played a gorgeous interpretation of the Zorn Bagatelles—so transparent and beautiful. Another night I saw Mark Dresser lead 10 bassists in a few pieces—what a sound! Tremendous! Wayne Horvitz once brought a big band in from Seattle. That was a special night with lots of great colors and terrific compositions.

**SJERVEN:** Craig Taborn curated a month and had a night where they did Junk Magic Light and Dark. It was incredible. I saw Taborn a bunch there, and that's where I really got into his music. I saw a solo gig of his where there must not have been more than 10 people in the room and I sat practically next to him on the

► Mary Halvorson,  
September 2017





▶ Lou Reed, Laurie Anderson and John Zorn, January 2008

bench. Considering where he is now, 10 years later, that was interesting.

**SOREY:** Seeing Milford Graves perform there at any time was like an out-of-body experience. I saw him perform there with Bill Laswell and it took me back to the moments I'd spent at Tonic watching John Zorn and Milford Graves performing together. I walked out of there feeling like I didn't know where I was. Seeing Milford, for me, was a healing ceremony at any venue, but especially at the Stone where everything is so intimate and in-your-face.

**SMITH:** My mom came to town and I took her to the Stone. Whatever you want to call the kind of music I play, she only knows it from coming to my shows. That's the extent of her interest. But I took her to see Evan Parker and Milford Graves play duo and she actually liked it a lot.

**GALLANTER:** Eugene Chadbourne did a duo gig with [electronic musician] Blevin Blectum. I was there with my fiancée, and in the middle of the gig this gigantic cockroach walked across the floor in between Chadbourne's legs. It was three or four inches long and the women in the room freaked out and screamed and jumped onto chairs. It was pretty hilarious. Eugene, of course, just made a joke about it, and then I ended up stepping on it. It wouldn't die, no matter how hard I stepped on it. A CD came out on the Victo label, and you can actually hear the screams in the middle of the CD. But only people who were actually there have any clue what that's about.

**SJERVEN:** The last time I saw Grachan Moncur was there, and it was a terrible show. I remember him stepping out of the gig halfway through to have a

cigarette outside, then he came back and basically hung on my shoulder for a good 20 minutes before finishing up on a Miles Davis modal tune. It was kind of sad. But you'd have these run-ins with a lot of different types of people there.

### THE ENCOUNTERS

**SOREY:** In my last concert there as a leader, during my birthday week in 2017, I played a solo concert. I met André Benjamin [a.k.a. André 3000] of OutKast and learned later that he was interested in doing something much more experimental than the work he's been doing, finding new sounds and new approaches to music. We talked about working together but schedules haven't allowed that to happen yet.

**GALLANTER:** I remember seeing Lou Reed, who played there once and was very close with Zorn. He came to a Laurie Anderson/Fred Frith gig. It was [late August] but it was a super-hot day, and he died two months later. He didn't look very good, so I offered him my seat, which he didn't want, and a drink of water, which he took.

**SJERVEN:** One night at a Peter Blegvad show, I remember turning around and seeing Lou Reed and Laurie Anderson and thinking, "Oh, I must be at the right gig this evening." At the BBC gig I met Mike Watt from Minutemen. He was a really sweet guy. Generally it's one of those places where you can see the same people every time you go. That's kind of a nice thing.

**SOREY:** I've met many great older musicians and artists and poets. Cooper-Moore often used to come to my concerts back when I barely had people show up. He would go to the back section, take out a row of chairs and lie down on the floor,

just absorbing all the music that was happening.

### THE STONE 2.0

**SOREY:** I felt sad when I learned that the old Stone was closing. I've birthed several projects there and musically grew up there, and now it no longer exists. It's like leaving your home, leaving the place where you grew up.

**HALVORSON:** The Stone has always been a really special place to me, where I've heard and played and discovered so much music. It's really too bad that it's gone. I'm glad it's found a new home, but a space is a space. The Stone and Tonic to me are two places that I'll always miss and I have so many great memories of.

**BLECKMANN:** It's sad, of course, to lose one of our own. This is so New York. People gripe about something when it's there—it's too cold; it's too hot—but as soon as it's gone, everybody's like, "It was the best thing."

**SOREY:** It's a completely different experience from what I'm used to at the old Stone. It's something that I'll have to get used to in the years to come. It feels very—I don't want to say stuffy, but it doesn't feel like the old Stone in any way. You don't have that DIY energy there anymore. It doesn't feel as in-your-face as it once did.

**SHYU:** John is a force in the community, and it is not just the space, but the whole concept. So now that it has moved to the beautiful space at the New School, it proves the strength of the concept. The old space was, of course, very raw—the freeing vibe and that rawness drove us to do the real thing that we wanted to do, and to listen with heightened ears and more courage.

**BLECKMANN:** The good thing about John is he's not nostalgic. He reminds me of John Baldessari, the visual artist, who at some point burned all his artwork. [The idea is that] we can't attach ourselves to this thing for too long. It's over, and I think there's something really cool about that. He's pointing us in a new direction, and maybe it is time for this music to be elevated to a level where it can be appreciated differently than before. **JT**





# newjazz now

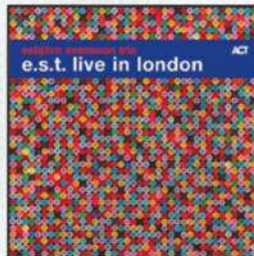
Music from independent artists

## MICHAEL WOLLNY TRIO



**Oslo**  
ACT Music  
[actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)

## ESBJÖRN SVENSSON TRIO



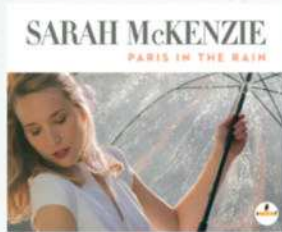
**Live in London**  
ACT Music  
[actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)

## PJ MORGAN



**The Transparency Project**  
1DMV Music Group - June 2018  
[itunes.apple.com](http://itunes.apple.com)

## SARAH MCKENZIE



**PARIS IN THE RAIN**  
Impulse!  
[itunes.apple.com](http://itunes.apple.com)

## KANDACE SPRINGS



**Black Orchid EP**  
Blue Note  
[BlueNote.com](http://BlueNote.com)

## TERENCE BLANCHARD



**Live (feat. The E-Collective)**  
Blue Note  
[BlueNote.com](http://BlueNote.com)

## THE NELS CLINE 4



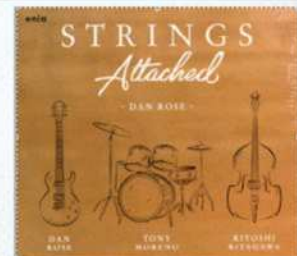
**Currents, Constellations**  
Blue Note  
[BlueNote.com](http://BlueNote.com)

## DR. LONNIE SMITH



**All In My Mind**  
Blue Note  
[BlueNote.com](http://BlueNote.com)

## DAN ROSE, KIYOSHI KITAGAWA, TONY MORENO



**STRINGS ATTACHED**  
Enja Records  
[itunes.apple.com](http://itunes.apple.com)







**newjazz now**

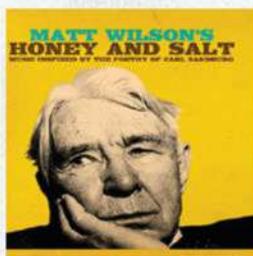
Music from independent artists

**FRED HERSCH**



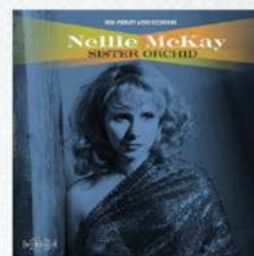
**Open Book**  
Palmetto  
[Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**MATT WILSON**



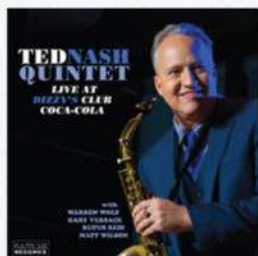
**Honey and Salt**  
Palmetto  
[Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**NELLIE MCKAY**



**Sister Orchid**  
Palmetto  
[Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**TED NASH**



**Ted Nash Quintet Live at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola**  
Plastic Sax Records  
[tednash.com](http://tednash.com)

**ORNETTE COLEMAN**



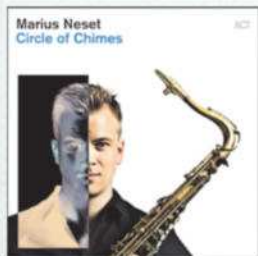
**Ornette Coleman: The Atlantic Years**  
Rhino  
[Rhino.lnk.to/OCTAY10LP](http://Rhino.lnk.to/OCTAY10LP)

**ROYAL STOCKHOLM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**



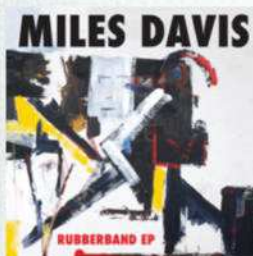
**E.S.T. SYMPHONY**  
ACT Music  
[actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)

**MARIUS NESET**



**Circle of Chimes**  
ACT Music  
[actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)

**MILES DAVIS**



**Rubberband EP**  
Rhino  
[recordstoreday.com/upc/603497862474](http://recordstoreday.com/upc/603497862474)

**HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA**



**Un Día Cualquiera**  
Mack Avenue Records  
[bit.ly/2veYh2K](http://bit.ly/2veYh2K)

For the most recent list of new music go to [jazztimes.com](http://jazztimes.com)





**TIA FULLER**



**Diamond Cut**  
Mack Avenue Records  
[bit.ly/2HAke7U](http://bit.ly/2HAke7U)

**CHARLIE PEACOCK**



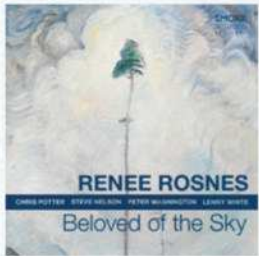
**WHEN LIGHT FLASHES HELP IS ON THE WAY**  
Twenty Ten Music  
[Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**EDDIE HENDERSON**



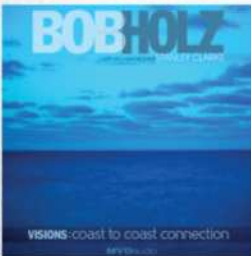
**Be Cool**  
Smoke Sessions Records  
[Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**RENEE ROSNES**



**Beloved of the Sky**  
Smoke Sessions Records  
[Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

**BOB HOLZ**



**Visions: Coast to Coast Connection**  
MVD Audio  
[bobholzband.com](http://bobholzband.com)

**LESLIE PINTCHIK**



**You Eat My Food, You Drink My Wine, You Steal My Girl!**  
Pinch Hard Records  
[lesliepintchik.com](http://lesliepintchik.com)

# JOIN THE COMMUNITY

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to join the conversation and get the latest jazz news!



## JazzTimes



@JazzTimesMag



@JazzTimes

## Can the CD Survive?

IS THE CD DYING FAST, HOLDING STRONG OR DUE FOR A COMEBACK?  
INDUSTRY INSIDERS WEIGH IN

By Brent Butterworth

**T**he rise of the Internet has inspired premature proclamations of the death of newspapers, TV, radio ... and, of course, the CD. Recently, streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube have reduced the CD to near-insignificance in mainstream music. “In 2000, CD’s best year, 943 million units were shipped. By 2016, that dropped to 99 million,” said Ted Green, a tech industry consultant and the editor of the tech marketing website Strata-gee.com.

But in jazz, where the audience is more accustomed to physical media, the story is different. According to Denny Stilwell, president of Mack Avenue Records, “CD is still a big part of our revenue. In 2017, our CD sales increased by a double-digit percentage, and CD also rose in percentage of market share.”

Jana Herzen, president of Motéma Music, shares a similarly hopeful report. “The CD is still a very important part of our sales picture,” she said. “In Europe, CDs typically outsell digital downloads by 90 percent for us. In the U.S., downloads are still significant for us, but they are rapidly declining, and I expect they will be gone soon.”

Can jazz and other niche markets keep the CD alive? To every one of the experts we asked, the answer is far from clear.

### The Hard Numbers

Despite CD’s decline, the jazz industry reps we spoke with still consider the format vital to jazz artists, for a few reasons. CD remains the most practical way for artists and labels to earn money from recordings. Even with the surprising revival of the vinyl record, “vinyl is not eclipsing CDs,” Stilwell said. “We make CDs for every release, but we don’t make vinyl for every release. We have to be smart about what we put on vinyl, because it can cost 10 times as much to make a vinyl album.” And with retail outlets such as Best Buy ceasing sales of CDs, sales of physical media at gigs are increasingly important. “Sales at venues after shows are brisk for many of our artists, and an important part of income for the artist and our label,” Herzen said.

Audiophiles in pursuit of the highest-quality sound may find CD their best option. Of today’s prominent streaming services, only Tidal offers the same uncompressed digital data that CD provides. CD-quality and high-resolution digital downloads are available, but as Herzen pointed out, downloads’ popularity is plummeting. According to the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), revenues gained

through digital downloads fell by 25 percent from 2016 to 2017. “There’s no question that CD sounds better than a lot of the streaming services,” Stilwell said. “If you want something that’s more like what the artist heard when they recorded the music, you’ll want CD.”

CD also remains essential for getting the music out to opinion makers. “From a promotional standpoint, there’s still a place for CD,” said Maureen McFadden, senior account publicist and director of operations at the popular jazz PR firm DL Media Music. “Radio always needs them, and journalists may want them.”

### The Hardware Issue

One problem looming for CD is that the players are getting harder to find. “We have a lot of young people coming up after the shows and saying they really have no way to play a CD—and some of them don’t even know what it is,” Herzen said.

The number of audio companies that still manufacture CD players has rapidly decreased over the past decade, and the units tend to be pricey. Most laptop computers no longer come with a CD/DVD drive, and CD-equipped stereos are disappearing from new cars. Blu-ray and DVD players can play CDs, but Internet streaming is displacing those formats as well. “When electronics manufacturers stop offering the hardware, it’s going to force the decline of the format,” Stilwell said.

Unlike record players, which are relatively simple, making transport mechanisms that properly spin CDs demands a great deal of sophistication. “Audio manufacturers have a couple of choices,” reported Buzz Goddard, brand director for Pro-Ject USA, which sells turntables and small high-end audio components. “You can use the transports from DVD and Blu-ray players, but those are usually cheap and tend not to last. Transports designed for automotive use are better, but those are going away. To make sure we have a supply of transports going forward, we invested in a company that produces a high-quality CD drive.”

### A CD Renaissance?

Considering the popularity of vinyl and the recent revival of the audio cassette, might CDs experience a similar comeback? “CD’s rate of decline is slowing,” Green said. “The electronics industry is pushing high-resolution audio right now, but that hasn’t gotten a lot of traction. If the industry moves away



from hi-res, it's possible CD could have an afterlife like we're seeing in vinyl."

Goddard points out that CD has become a cheap way to expand a music collection. "Last time I was in Berkeley [Calif.], I went to Rasputin and Amoeba [record stores], and they have bins starting at 50 cents per CD," he said. "It's like being a record collector in 1990. I spent \$8.40 for 12 albums. Will there be a future of CD crate-diggers? I think so."

Will the sheer practicality of CD keep it alive? Will the bargain-basement fun of the format keep listeners hooked the way it did with vinyl? Your guess seems to be as good as anyone's—even the industry reps interviewed here. **JT**



**“WE HAVE A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE COMING UP AFTER THE SHOWS AND SAYING THEY REALLY HAVE NO WAY TO PLAY A CD—AND SOME OF THEM DON’T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS,” SAID JANA HERZEN, PRESIDENT OF MOTÉMA MUSIC.**

# Chops

## The Way of *Way Out West*

SONNY ROLLINS LOOKS BACK ON A GROUNDBREAKING LP AND THE ENSEMBLE FORMAT HE MADE FAMOUS

**Profile: Sonny Rollins**

**W**hen Sonny Rollins' *Way Out West* was released by Contemporary Records in 1957, it got plenty of attention, and not just for its sharply funny cover photo featuring the saxophonist as a mock-cowboy. The album was a departure for Rollins in two major ways: He was teaming with players (bassist Ray Brown and drummer Shelly Manne) he'd never worked with before, and, for the first time on record, he wasn't using a pianist. The more harmonically open sound of a "strolling" trio—in other words, a sax/piano/bass/drums quartet with the piano player taking a permanent stroll—would in subsequent years become a favorite option for Rollins and for many of his disciples as well. In a recent conversation sparked by Craft Recordings' special 60th-anniversary reissue of *Way Out West*, the *Saxophone Colossus*, 87, spoke with Lee Mergner about why he likes this bare-bones format and what's important to keep in mind when you play in it.

I don't know the origin of that [trio] format—I think Don Byas made a [duo] record with Slam Stewart ["Indiana"/"I Got Rhythm," recorded in 1945]. But when Miles Davis first hired me in 1948, I was playing as the intermission band for Miles and some other big jazz stars, and I was playing with a trio at that time. So I had been doing that a long time. Then we'd do it with Miles, playing as a quartet or quintet but with the piano laying out or, as we called it, strolling.

[The choice of a trio] wasn't for economic reasons. I just liked the sound, because I liked the freedom. I love playing solo. That comes from when my mother gave me my first saxophone, an alto saxophone, when I was 7 years old. I got the saxophone and I went into the bedroom and I started playing—that was it. I was in seventh heaven. My mother had to call me: "It's time to eat dinner and come out." I could have been there forever. I love playing by myself. I'm practicing but I'm also communicating with my musical muse.

I played with some great pianists during my career, but a pianist by definition leads the horn players, because of the chords and volume and everything—the presence of a piano. I like more freedom, so that if I wanted to go from this chord

to that chord, I didn't have somebody dictate to me, "You have to go from a B to an E here, and I'm going to make it so loud and prominent that you'll have to do it." To me that was a little constricting. I always loved the idea that if I could get a rhythm section—a drummer for the rhythm and the bass player for the basic harmony—then I had the freedom to do what I wanted to do. Which was perfect for me.

Having Ray Brown and Shelly Manne—what better rhythm section could you get? I got attached to Shelly when I heard him on one of my [favorite] jazz records, Coleman Hawkins' "The Man I Love" [recorded in 1943]. Ray and Shelly both realized that [*Way Out West*] was somewhat different than what was being done. They loved it. They accepted the challenge.

When you're playing with a trio, you have to really know the material. You can't have a bass player who will, as many do, depend on the piano to provide the chords and lead them in a way. There's nothing wrong with that; it's what guys do. But when you're playing in a trio, you have to know what a piano player would be doing and compensate for that and make up for it yourself. The bass has to know what he's doing; same



▶ Sonny Rollins, c. 1960

with the drummer. They have to realize it's the same, but the piano isn't there, so they have to fill in for the piano in accompanying the soloist. All the rhythm instruments are very important, and if one isn't doing his job, then it messes everything up. The drummer is more obvious when he's not doing his job.

Ornette used the trio. Most of his stuff was without piano. When I first heard him, I thought it was just a continuation of what was happening. I didn't think of it as being unusual. Of course, I'm a musician and I hear a lot of music. To me it was just great music. It wasn't "Where did this come from?" I think that Ornette and I have a lot in common in our approach and playing.

I've also heard JD Allen play with a trio. I know that a lot of guys have [used that format], like Joe Lovano and Joshua Redman. Lew Tabackin did it for a while. It's taken hold as something you should do for your résumé.

Basically, if I had my druthers, I prefer the sax, drums and bass format. I think that really gives the artist the most leverage and the most freedom to create. **JT**

For more from this interview, and to read a review of Craft's 60th-anniversary edition of *Way Out West*, visit [JazzTimes.com](http://JazzTimes.com)





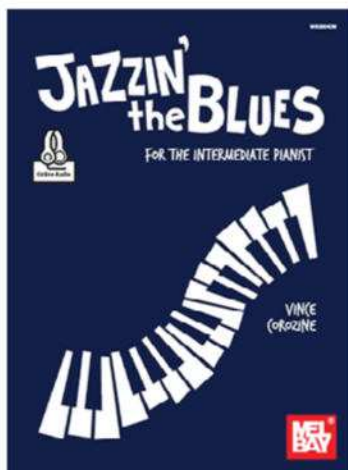


## Carl Allen Signature Drumsticks by Vater

Allen's diamond-sharp sense of swing has elevated sessions by Freddie Hubbard, Jackie McLean, Benny Green, Art Farmer, Christian McBride and so many other elite jazzers. Vater understands this and has honored the still-unsung drummer with a new Player's Design stick, made of American Hickory and measuring 16 inches in length and a bit over 7A, with a pointed, long tip. \$18.25 list. [vater.com](http://vater.com)

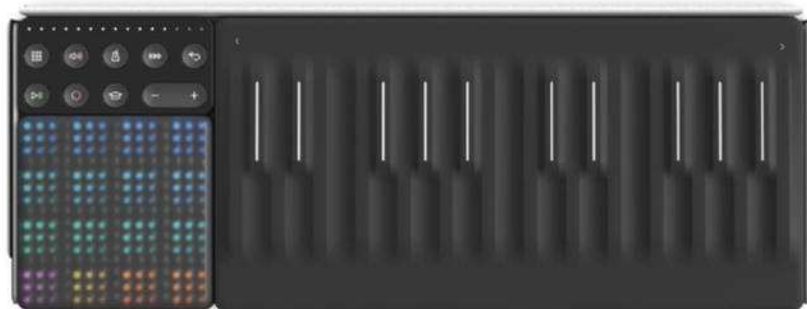
## Jazzin' the Blues Book

Pick up a copy of this Mel Bay book for your favorite promising young piano student who is just getting into jazz and blues. Written by Vince Corozine, with input from Charlie Freeman, *Jazzin'* features instruction on 15 original blues tunes—a versatile array of grooves and vibes, from barrelhouse stride to jazz-blues. Recordings of 40 examples are included via download, and come with and without the lead-piano part for play-along practice. \$19.99. [melbay.com](http://melbay.com)



## Theo Wanne "Fire" Alto Mouthpiece

This powerful, projective alto mouthpiece, crafted for jazz settings as well as R&B, rock and smooth-jazz, introduces Theo Wanne's Elements Series—still made in the U.S. but available at a much lower price point than the master craftsman's other gems. The design boasts flat side walls, a long step-baffle, a small chamber and reticulated 24K-gold plating, and the product ships with Theo's special two-rail, single-screw ligature. \$275 online. [thewanne.com](http://thewanne.com)

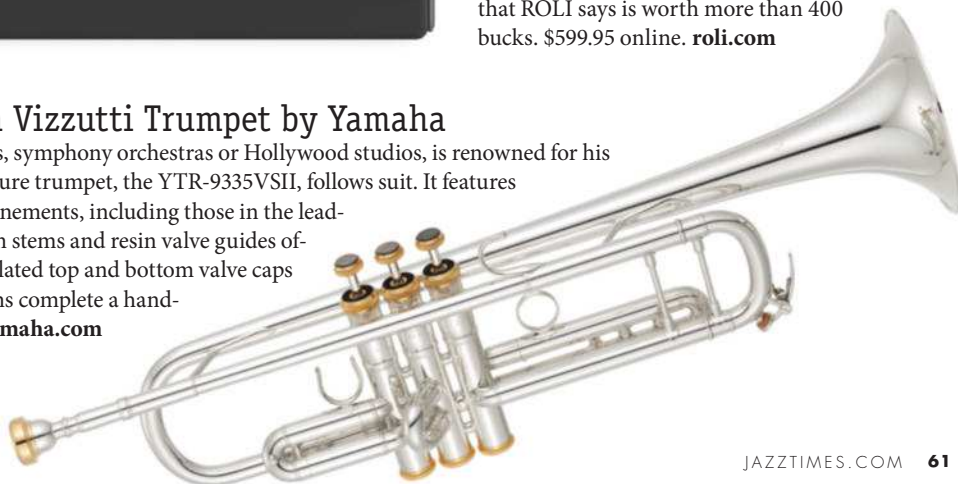


## ROLI Songmaker Kit

If you read the conversation on production earlier in the issue, you know that today's young track-makers need to be able to work wherever and whenever inspiration strikes. Meet ROLI's new Songmaker Kit, a small, savvy package combining the brand's Sea-board Block and Lightpad Block M controllers, its Loop Block and a software bundle that ROLI says is worth more than 400 bucks. \$599.95 online. [roli.com](http://roli.com)

## Second-Generation Allen Vizzutti Trumpet by Yamaha

Vizzutti, no stranger to great jazz bands, symphony orchestras or Hollywood studios, is renowned for his versatility, and his latest Yamaha signature trumpet, the YTR-9335VSII, follows suit. It features several welcome advancements and refinements, including those in the lead-pipe and bell design, and its brass piston stems and resin valve guides offer fluid, high-speed playability. Gold-plated top and bottom valve caps and black mother-of-pearl finger buttons complete a handsome instrument. MSRP \$6,315. [usa.yamaha.com](http://usa.yamaha.com)



# Reviews



►“Supreme confidence in her vision”: Sharel Cassity

## SHAREL CASSITY & ELEKTRA

**EVOLVE** (Relsha)



With its R&B and funk grooves and rock and hip-hop energy, *Evolve* seems to wear its title as an imperative. Certainly it's a long stride from alto saxophonist Sharel Cassity's prior three records of straight-ahead swing. Yet it works; in fact, it triumphs.

Credit goes to Cassity's supreme confidence in her vision. The opening title track immediately evidences her progression, perfectly at home in its sumptuous rhythmic swagger, bold electronic timbres (both Miki Hayama's synths and Cassity's own processed solo) and unusual harmonies. The same is true on “The Here, the Now” and “Outlier.” She also proves an able lyricist: “Wishing Star” is no poetic masterpiece, but it amplifies the sweetness and hope of the pretty tune behind it, Christie Dashiell's light-tough vocal delivery running parallel to the warmth and delicacy of Cassity's alto solo.

More than her overall vision has evolved, however; Cassity's playing has also grown. It's clear from the choice morsels she serves up in her duel

with trumpeter Marcus Printup on Alicia Keys' “New Day,” and perhaps even more so in her long but careful improvisational architecture on “The Here, the Now.” “All Is Full of Love,” meanwhile, finds her deftly balancing subtlety and unrelenting groove. Equally important is her presence as a bandleader. Cassity coaxes from Printup perhaps the best recorded solos of his career on “Be the Change,” as well as a jewel from guitarist Mark Whitfield and one of her own. (Elektra's other trumpeter, Ingrid Jensen, is typically brilliant on “Evolve” and “The Here, the Now.”) Meanwhile, on the ballad “Echoes of Home,” she knows to simply stay out of the way of Hayama and bassist Linda May Han Oh. With any luck, *Evolve* will establish her as a household name among jazz audiences.

**MICHAEL J. WEST**

## JAMIE BAUM SEPTET+

**BRIDGES** (Sunnyside)



For many, religion is the most divisive of matters. For flutist-composer Jamie Baum, however, it turns out to be the ultimate unifier. On this fourth album

from her expandable septet, Baum explores the musical common denominators beneath different ancient belief systems. Offering touches of modernization while remaining steadfast in honoring core values, Baum creates a world where sonic and spiritual resonance rest on an even plane.

Opener “From the Well” serves as the prime example of the merger between forms within faiths. Baum's band works with a scale endemic to Jewish, Maqam and South Asian music, a lingua franca that instantly eradicates boundaries. All becomes one as jostling grooves support alluring explorations. A midtrack melee ensues, giving trumpeter Amir ElSaffar his day, but the music coalesces as it builds back toward its conclusion. Even in its most unsettled state, there's a pronounced sense of purpose lighting the way.

As the program continues, Baum links the personal and the universal. First there's the comforting coupling of “Song Without Words (for S. James Baum),” an introspective work dedicated to her late father, and “There Are No Words,” a general reflection on loss. Then comes *Honoring Nepal: The Shiva Suite*, a three-part work inspired by a painting of the titular pan-Hindu deity; “Joyful Lament,” a riveting showcase for guitarist Brad Shepik that nods toward the late Qawwali icon Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan; and “Mantra,” an open-air meditation on revitalization focusing on Navin Chettri's vocals.

The end of this road—the hypnotic-turned-grooving “UCross Me”—is a fitting summation that points toward an all-embracing spirit. There's clearly no chasm too wide for Jamie Baum to cross. **DAN BILAWSKY**

## LAKECIA BENJAMIN

**RISE UP** (Ropeadope)



Alto saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin's chops are not in doubt, and her playing, composing and arranging have all been finely honed. Yet *Rise Up*, her second album as



a leader, suggests that her imagination could still use some cultivation. Hearing the opening track, “March On,” puts one in mind of mid-’90s Prince: the funky drum loops and processed riffs, the horn punctuation, even the cadences of the rap and vocal fills. A cunning pastiche, it seems. Then comes the guitar-and-synth-driven “On the One,” so faithful an approximation of circa-1982 Prince that it’s genuinely startling when Solomon Dorsey takes the vocal. Three tracks later, “Juicy” presents his post-*Purple Rain* sound and lyric-writing, with Jaime Woods’ vocal a credible stand-in for Sheena Easton. Even her cover of “Change the World” has echoes of his style. This isn’t homage; it’s mimicry.

Not all of *Rise Up* comprises Prince imitations. There are some stock smooth-jazz grooves with little to distinguish them (“Flashback,” “Lonely”). “Stay,” an instrumental for Benjamin and trumpeter Maurice Brown, and “Survivor” sound like film cues warmed over with some R&B touches (and still have a whiff of Prince to them). And there is little improvisation throughout. When Benjamin solos for a chorus and a half on “Change the World,” the full-chorus part is the written theme. The other half-chorus, however, offers more hope, and is solid work—raw funk staccato of the Maceo Parker variety that stands with Benjamin’s best recorded improvisations. There are even seeds of original compositional vision underneath the *Gold Experience*-era Prince arrangement of the groover “Takeback.” *Rise Up* isn’t strong, but Benjamin’s promise still is. **MICHAEL J. WEST**

## ELIANE ELIAS

**MUSIC FROM MAN OF LA MANCHA** (Concord)



Among stage musicals of the 1960s, only *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Hello, Dolly!* achieved longer runs. In the decades since, it has had four successful Broadway revivals and remains a staple of stock and amateur troupes worldwide. Yet *Man of La Mancha*, dually based on the sagas of 16th-century Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes and his tilting-at-windmills hero Don Quixote, produced only one instantly recognizable hit, “The Impossible Dream.” Which perhaps explains why its music, though rich and compelling, is so rarely reinterpreted.

Due to long-ago contractual tangles, the release of this stellar appreciation by Eliane Elias has been delayed nearly a

quarter-century. The original Broadway orchestrations eschewed violins, violas and cellos in favor of flamenco guitars. When Elias arranged and recorded these instrumental tracks in 1995—nine in total, representing about one-third of *La Mancha*’s score—she opted for no guitar. Featuring herself at the piano, she alternates between two dynamic bass/drums pairings, Eddie Gomez with Jack DeJohnette and Marc Johnson with Satoshi Takeishi, augmented by guest percussionist Manolo Badrena.

Across both configurations, it is an immensely lush album, a vibrant fusion of Elias’ Brazilian verve and the music’s Latin-meets-Broadway zest—from a shimmering “Dulcinea,” gently roiling “It’s All the Same” and stirringly contemplative “The Barber’s Song,” to a fiery, passionate “To Each His Dulcinea” and the Carnival-esque rumpus of “A Little Gossip.” And, yes, “Dream” is here: freed of the bombast pop vocalists have typically lent it, masterfully reimagined as a spirited samba.

**CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**



## HOWARD ALDEN/MARTY KRYPSTALL/ BUELL NEIDLINGER

**THE HAPPENINGS: MUSIC OF HERBIE NICHOLS** (K2B2)



When this chamber-jazz trio album was recorded in 2013, it was intended as a tribute to one man: pianist Herbie Nichols, who died (in 1963, age 44, of leukemia) decades before his idiosyncratic writing style was appreciated by a wide audience. Just before its belated release, the album was dedicated to a second, newly departed musician: trombonist Roswell Rudd, who played a crucial role in bringing Nichols’ many unrecorded compositions to light in the early 21st century. Sadly, cellist/bassist Buell Neidlinger’s death in March of 2018 now makes *The Happenings* a memorial to three late jazz greats.

A fine memorial it is, too—and it should be emphasized that little in the music itself could be called sad. Indeed, a joyful vivacity characterizes all nine tracks, even in the most sensitive moments. The two takes of the delicate waltz “Another Friend” that open and close the album are a case in point. Both are duets between Howard Alden, on seven-string archtop guitar, and Neidlinger, on cello. While Alden revels in the contours of Nichols’ chord progression, Neidlinger takes clear delight in how those chords call forth the sophisticated swoop of the melody. Although their respective approaches to the tune’s features change subtly from one version to the next, an air of blissful romanticism pervades both.

Besides “Another Friend,” the most immediately likable selections here are the slinky title track, reminiscent of (but predating) Henry Mancini’s famous theme to *The Pink Panther*, and “Old 52nd Street Rag,” in which Neidlinger’s arco backing chug prompts a buoyant bass clarinet solo from Marty Krystall. The second half of the album, for much of which Krystall switches to flute, gets thornier harmonically but never loses its warm good humor. Nichols and Rudd would be pleased, I’d wager, along with just about anyone else. **MAC RANDALL**



▶ “A fine memorial it is”: Buell Neidlinger

**PETER ERSKINE & THE DR. UM BAND**

**ON CALL** (Fuzzy)



In June of 2017, drummer Peter Erskine's fusion-friendly Dr. Um Band laid down new tracks in front of an audience of engineers at

Sweetwater Studios in Fort Wayne, Ind. It was literally a master class on the art of recording. Eight weeks later, while working his way through Italy with the same outfit, Erskine was presented with pristine audio from a concert the group gave in Occhiobello. Rather than choose between those complementary studio and stage documents, he opted to release both as a double album.

The first of the two discs presents the music in a controlled environment. Erskine's adroit stick work, Benjamin Shepherd's bubbling electric basslines,

John Beasley's shiny keyboard lacquer and Bob Sheppard's slyly sauntering horns are all captured in their truest states across a program that simmers. The music is airtight, but that precision comes with a downside: The band occasionally seems stifled or fenced in by its own design(s). Beasley's "If So Then," a gem marked by fiery grace, is the standout of the bunch and the clearest move away from the emphasis on texture that defines the date.

The second portion of this package finds everybody infinitely looser and lighter in spirit. This crew clearly has a good time working its way through five numbers culled from the two previous Dr. Um Band albums—the bluesy "Hypnototherapy," a calypso-tinged "Hawaii Bathing Suit" and the groove workout "Eleven Eleven" ranking highest among them. The music is neither too mannered nor overly manic, landing on various sweet spots

between those poles. Sequestered in the studio, this group tends to focus on tone and color; in concert, it lets camaraderie and interplay reign supreme.

**DAN BILAWSKY**

**MELODY GARDOT**

**LIVE IN EUROPE** (Decca)



The cover shows a woman, center stage, spotlight, back to the camera, nude save a guitar. The inference is obvious: This, her first live

album, is Gardot laid bare. But Gardot has ranked among the most nakedly honest and emotionally vulnerable of singers, ever since her stellar debut with *Worrisome Heart* in 2008. *Live in Europe's* two discs—17 cuts culled from more than 300 concerts between 2012 and 2016—simply confirm that she exhibits the same breathtaking naturalism in front of thousands-strong audiences.

Rather than seek out the most perfect performances, Gardot assembled her choices based on the sage belief that "live there is only one element that counts: heart," as she puts it in her liner notes. Several tracks focus on her deeply *simpatico* rapport with cellist Stephan Braun, including exquisite duets on "Deep Within the Corners of My Mind" and "Over the Rainbow," as well as a "My One and Only Thrill" with Gardot at the piano and Chuck Staab on drums. There's a rousing, crowd-thrilling "Lisboa" from, of course, Lisbon. "Baby I'm a Fool" is the only song presented twice, first from Vienna, mirroring the tremulous beauty of the original studio session, and second from London, intriguingly sprier and sunnier. But the standout tracks are an 11-minute "The Rain," a resounding showcase for Gardot, Braun, Staab, bassist Aidan Carroll and saxophonist Irwin Hall; and a colossal "March for Mingus" highlighting Hall and bassist Sam Minaie.

**CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**

**LARRY GOLDINGS/PETER BERNSTEIN/BILL STEWART**

**TOY TUNES** (Pirouet)



Twenty-seven years is an extraordinarily long time for any jazz outfit to stay together, and for organist Larry Goldings, guitarist

**ALLAN HARRIS**

**THE GENIUS OF EDDIE JEFFERSON** (Resilience)



In an accompanying press release, Allan Harris compares his deep dive into Eddie Jefferson's groundbreaking oeuvre to "taking a master class at MIT." No question that navigating the tricky, rapid-fire, street-smart wordplay of vocalese—an art form Jefferson is widely credited with creating and of which he remains the undisputed champ, even 39 years after his untimely death—is a daunting endeavor. But although he's best known for his buttery tributes to Nat "King" Cole and Billy Eckstine, Harris ranks among the most dexterous singers around, and he proves fully up to the challenge. Indeed, it's intriguing to hear these 10 gems—mostly vocalese, plus such covers as "Memphis" and Duke Pearson's "Jeannine"—rechanneled from Jefferson's vocal grit to Harris' rich baritone.

Befitting so notable a project, Harris has enlisted top-drawer support: tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore, pianist Eric Reed, bassist George DeLancey, drummer Willie Jones III and, most significant, alto saxophonist Richie Cole, who worked closely with Jefferson in his later years, including on the night he was shot and killed after a Detroit gig in 1979.

The beauty of so many Jefferson creations is that they're not only based on jazz standards but also reworked to lyrically celebrate jazz masters and jazz lore. "So What" recalls Miles and Coltrane's famous mid-performance co-exit, while "Body and Soul" venerates Coleman Hawkins. Prez, Bird, Dex and Horace Silver are all genuflected to. Aptly, Harris closes with Cole's "Waltz for a Rainy Bebop Evening," a whirling salute to the jazz life and its giants.

**CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**



► "Among the most dexterous singers around": Allan Harris





Peter Bernstein and drummer Bill Stewart it's been time well spent. *Toy Tunes*, the trio's 12th album, presents a band that has managed to hone its personal organ-trio language without stepping too far away from the template drawn by the likes of Jimmy Smith, Brother Jack McDuff and Jimmy McGriff.

"And Now the Queen," a Carla Bley composition, is a prime example of the first point: The unearthly, seemingly random sounds tossed out by Goldings as the tune opens crash into Bernstein's chopped-up, quasi-distorted chords; they kick around a few ideas for another minute or so while Stewart lays back, occasionally rattling a snare or tapping a cymbal. A conventional groove never finds its way into the picture; instead, the three slip unobtrusively into an exotic dance, its route unforeseen, its demeanor armor-tough. Goldings' "Fagen," which opens *Toy Tunes*, is a nod to Steely Dan's surviving cofounder, Donald Fagen, and while its melody only flirts with the type that he might write, it's not hard at all to see why Goldings makes the choices he does.

When they're so inclined, though, the trio certainly knows how to play it straight—or close enough. The shuffling title track, the album's longest at seven minutes, features well blocked-out solos from both the keyboardist and the guitarist, with Stewart serving as a solid anchor—albeit one who can't help but lash out every so often and egg the others on. **JEFF TAMARKIN**

## TIGRAN HAMASYAN FOR GYUMRI (Nonesuch)



Gyumri, Armenia, is the city where Tigran Hamasyan was born nearly 31 years ago and where he first placed his hands on the keys of a piano at age 9. In his teens his family moved to L.A., but Hamasyan always retained a soft spot for his homeland. He's since returned to Armenia, and he honors his hometown with this five-track, 30-minute EP. Hamasyan considers *For Gyumri* a companion piece to last year's *An Ancient Observer*. As on the previous release, Hamasyan alternates unadulterated solo-piano meditations with more ambitious outings that incorporate simple but effective

ornamentation. Put another way, while most of *For Gyumri* is just the man and his piano, the artist inserts the occasional treated voices and instrumentation to spice things up.

If Hamasyan's inspiration is the thread that ties these pieces together, he's taken great care to ensure that each makes its own statement. "Aragatz" leads things off, and at first owes as much to the solemnity of a classical recital as to jazz. He doesn't stay there long, though, and by midway Hamasyan is navigating the keyboard in full, striking down hard and plucking out heavy rhythms in the lower register. Then he's off again, swapping idiosyncratic chords worthy of Monk and flawlessly executed right-hand runs.

"Rays of Light" is the EP's most introspective deliberation. Hamasyan finds a tone he likes and allows it to sit there a while and resonate in the room, then repeats the exercise, eventually introducing swells of mild orchestration. For the interchangeably dynamic and serene finale, the 12-minute "Revolving – Prayer," Hamasyan, no effects in sight, takes off here and there, wherever his whims lead. He's home there too.

**JEFF TAMARKIN**

## FRED HERSCH TRIO LIVE IN EUROPE (Palmetto)



Fred Hersch had me at the Monk bookends. The pianist draws from one of his favorite composers—a staple of his repertoire—to start and close *Live in Europe*, recorded with his working trio last fall at an acoustically pristine hall in Brussels.

His version of Monk's infrequently performed "We See" feels like smartly choreographed leapfrogging: Hersch and bassist John Hébert offer brief strands of the melody, which are answered by drummer Eric McPherson's creative snaps, clicks, pops and rimshots; then a madcap dash through the bridge ensues, as well as a set of improvisations marked by much stretching, tension and release, and inspired interplay. A kind of playful intensity, too, informs Hersch's closing unaccompanied version of "Blue Monk," which alternates between laidback strolling and sudden sprays of colorful chord clusters. And Wayne Shorter's music is

## PJ MORGAN

Debut Jazz Album

THE  
**TRANSPARENCY**  
PROJECT



Now Available!

iTunes amazon

Google Play Spotify



WWW.PJMORGANMUSIC.COM

## TED NASH QUINTET

LIVE AT  
DIZZY'S CLUB  
COCA-COLA

with  
WARREN WOLF  
GARY VERSACE  
RUFUS REID  
MATT WILSON

PLATINUM  
RECORDS

Two-time GRAMMY®-winning composer and saxophonist Ted Nash releases his first live recording in over 25 years. Known for his acclaimed works (*Presidential Suite, Chakra, Portrait in Seven Shades*) this much-anticipated release provides an opportunity for Nash to share his improvisational side. His inspired solos are impassioned and interactive. On this album he finds new areas of expression that will **Excite and Move you.**

Available in CD and Limited  
Edition 180 Gram Vinyl

www.tednash.com

given fresh readings, with the laidback-to-intense “Miyako” and hard-driving “Black Nile.”

The leader’s own compositions are the focus of the rest of the disc, with three pieces intended as tributes. “Newklypso” is a rollicking calypso named for Sonny Rollins, and the bluesy, slow-churning “The Big Easy” is meant to honor New Orleans novelist and music journalist Tom Piazza. Lush ballad “Bristol Fog,” nodding to late British pianist and composer John

Taylor, is one of several tracks offering considerable solo space to Hébert’s earthy runs. There’s much inventive trio synchronicity throughout, including on the skittering “Scuttlers,” which segues sensibly into “Skipping,” the latter from *Whirl*, the trio’s 2009 debut. And “Snape Maltings,” its title taken from an oddly named British town, feels like a bent parade march, the kind, like nearly everything else here, that makes a listener want to join. **PHILIP BOOTH**

## BRAD MEHLDAU

AFTER BACH (Nonesuch)



To play the music of Johann Sebastian Bach well, a knack for sonic alchemy is required. One must be able to make swirling waves of chordal density—the original sheets of sound—feel both propulsive and calm, a deep grounding that’s simultaneously an invitation to travel the world.

On this disc, Brad Mehldau gives himself further challenges: to transpose works meant for harpsichord to the piano, whose blockier notes contrast with the former’s radiant numinosity, and to respond to those works with pieces of his own. Mehldau’s light touch, which feels like the quiet revival of a sleeping musical power, is evident on Prelude No. 3 in C# Major, from Book I of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Bach was not a pastoralist, but Mehldau imbues something of the empyrean. We can also detect little hints of boogie-woogie-type chording; Bach, after all, loved a good rolling bass figure as the anchor for airier harmonics.

Fugue No. 16 in G Minor, from Book II of the *WTC*, is tantamount to a duet for one instrument, with that two-in-one approach splintering off in various dialogic patterings—like when you’re sitting in Starbucks and the hum of humanity seems to turn into a confluence of melody before reverting to a series of separate conversations. Mehldau is an excellent “talker” as a pianist, and that serves him well. He’s also skilled in “covering” Bach’s compositional hallmarks through his singular gift for writing. “Before Bach: Benediction” is the crystalline morning that opens the record, the sensation that a new world is about to unfold; the closing “Prayer for Healing” melds Bach and Mehldau with the conic sound-shapes of something like Trane’s “Alabama.” Bach was speaking to you, and so is Mehldau, twining melodic lines around each other as if one of them even belonged to you. That twining, of course, was Bach’s central purpose as a composer, and it’s what his jazzy descendant underscores in his pianistic way. **COLIN FLEMING**



►“Bach was speaking to you, and so is Mehldau”: Brad Mehldau



## WILLIE JONES III

MY POINT IS... (WJ3)



Following up his acclaimed 2016 release, *Groundwork*, drummer Willie Jones III offers a hard-swinging set shot through with

celebratory, life-affirming brilliance. His intro on the opener, “Manhattan Melodies,” sets the tone: playful, expansive, forward-thrusting. Eric Reed’s piano solo likewise sprints gleefully, goaded and harried by bassist Buster Williams’ relentless drive. Saxophonist Ralph Moore’s lines sometimes betray a paucity of rhythmic imagination, but within these confines they swoop, dip and soar. The title tune has a modal feel and surging impetus—a reference point might be Charles Tolliver’s “On the Nile.” Here, the linearity of Eddie Henderson’s phrasing and the rich, rounded tone he summons when using his mute hark back to prepop trumpeters.

“The Wind of an Immortal Soul” starts with a meditative solo from Reed, then powers up into a jubilant swing. (Perhaps echoing Art Blakey, Jones likes to swing ballads as well as burners.) Reed’s attack is forceful yet nuanced; each note defines itself in space, punctuating the rhythmic themes stated by Jones and Williams. “Blues for Dat Taz,” with its shades of Coltrane’s “Blues Minor,” finds Reed firing off densely wound flurries, precisely conceived yet almost tumultuous in feel. Henderson, unmuted and with that effulgent tone to the fore, manifests a Clifford Brown-like mix of precision and dexterity. Moore, a bit darker in timbre and mood, negotiates lower regions, prodding and burrowing to unearth his gems. In his solo, as always, Jones both invokes and celebrates the creative tension between fury and logic. **DAVID WHITEIS**

## DAVE LIEBMAN/ JOHN STOWELL

PETITE FLEUR: THE MUSIC OF  
SIDNEY BECHET (Origin)



Jazz innovator, early soprano saxophone pioneer, gifted improviser with a tone so distinctive it can be recognized within

microseconds—this is what musically knowledgeable folks tend to think of when Sidney Bechet’s name comes up. Composer? Not so much. But the New Orleans



legend's catalog of originals was sizable, and fellow soprano master Dave Liebman has done us all a service by researching and interpreting a few highlights, with the expert aid of guitarist John Stowell.

Once you've heard some of Bechet's most memorable tunes, like the elegant "Daniel" and the playfully bluesy "When the Sun Sets Down South," you may find yourself wondering why they aren't standards. Liebman handles them with a vigor that feels carefree, then uses them as platforms for searching solos. Stowell's inventive comping and lead work swings with nary a respite and frequently explores challenging harmonic territory; his occasional tasteful overdubbing of a baritone guitar adds further density. The pair also deserve praise for their clever choice of a tango rhythm on "Premier Bal," and for the bossa-nova accents on "Nous Deux."

The one track that doesn't quite fit the program, even though it was a hit for Bechet in the '30s, is Gershwin's "Summertime," the melody of which Liebman plays on wood flute before moving back to soprano. A striking sound, but what it has to do with Bechet the composer is unclear. Still, that lapse is made up for with three very different yet equally alluring versions of Bechet's best-known composition, which gives the album its title. One features Stowell in solo-acoustic mode, another features Liebman on solo piano (!), and one is a duo rendition. During the lattermost, Liebman plays with more vibrato than usual, a fond tip of the chapeau to his storied predecessor, who made shakiness a virtue. **MAC RANDALL**

## MIKE MCGINNIS

**SINGULAR AWAKENING** (Sunnyside)



So much of *Singular Awakening* is so splendid that complaining about its sequencing seems

petty. It is necessary, though. The album doesn't begin as advertised: Multireedist Mike McGinnis' liners suggest that it's all improvised, but it features a composition by each of his triomates, bassist Steve Swallow and pianist Art Lande, at either end. The

improvisations begin with the third track, which is the weakest by far.

This opening triptych is a compound misdirection. For one thing, while McGinnis tells us that they started the session "with nothing," the recording starts with his clarinet and Lande's piano playing a convoluted Ornette-ish melody, Swallow's "Here Comes Everybody," in unison—a "something," obviously. (To add to the confusion, the sleeve credits McGinnis with only soprano saxophone, but he's clearly playing clarinet on four of the 12 tracks.) It's a lively, smart performance, and its successor, Lande's

"Shining Lights," is dramatic and gorgeous. These, however, just throw "Insist on Something Sometimes" into greater relief: It begins with Swallow gradually finding his way into a groove, which McGinnis and Lande gamely delve into but find no purchase. Even without the composed contrasts, this improvisation is a shambles, and listeners expecting something else could be forgiven for abandoning ship then and there.

That would be a shame, though, because the other seven improvisations are wonders. Lande and Swallow lock in immediately on "A First Memory," McGinnis following

**More Options. More Features. More Innovation.**

**Rovner™ Helps You Play YOUR Way.**

Van Gogh    Platinum    Platinum GOLD    Legacy    Versa-X

**ROVNER™**  
P·R·O·D·U·C·T·S  
MADE IN THE USA

Sizes To Fit Your Mouthpieces    Patents. See Website.    Solid Solutions & Sound Support

[www.rovnerproducts.com](http://www.rovnerproducts.com)

**SWINGER!**

A Jazz Girl's Adventures from Hollywood to Harlem

"Judy's personality leaps from the page. This is a generous, entertaining read by a wonderful jazz pianist and courageous human being. I couldn't put it down."  
—ALAN BROADBENT, *Multi-talented Grammy-winning jazz pianist*

Judy Carmichael

"Judy knows how to beguile onstage and in the pages of this book, which you'll lap up."  
— Blythe Danner Golden Globe, Tony and Emmy-winning Actress

"She is a masterful storyteller with a stinging wit that will make you LOL."  
— Felix Contreras, Host/Jazz Producer, NPR

Order your autographed copy at [JudyCarmichael.com](http://JudyCarmichael.com)

with a pretty, searching clarinet melody. “PolterGinnis” and “Shockinawe” both begin with amorphous abstractions that slowly coalesce into percussive forms; “Slow Dance in a Whisper,” on which McGinnis lays out, sounds like a demented

take on Vivaldi’s lute concerto. Then come two more composed pieces—artful, but misplaced. *Singular Awakening* is a worthy but seriously flawed work, and proof positive that sequencing matters.

**MICHAEL J. WEST**

**SALIM WASHINGTON**

**DOGON REVISITED** (Passin’ Thru)



Saxophonist and flutist Salim Washington’s music is characterized by a deep-running tranquility. Emotions are never forced; rather, they’re cultivated inside the listener. “Self Love/Revolutionary Ontology,” for instance, includes several free tenor passages, stoked with fury yet surpassingly gentle—no shock-screams or honks. The song eventually settles into a Spanish-tinged movement with an undercurrent of funk, followed by an extended multiphonic saxophone squeal as bassist Hill Greene maintains the melodic and chordal foundations. Here, as elsewhere, drummer Tyshawn Sorey transcends the timekeeper role, adding seasoning and texture to Greene’s straight-forward impetus, prodding and goading, responding with angular, juxtaposed offshoots. Time seems to shift, dissolve, re-manifest and change direction, yet it never ceases to move forward.

“New Invasion of Africa,” on which Melanie Dyer recites Amiri Baraka’s scathing takedown of Barack Obama’s Libya policy (“Imperialism can look like anything/Can be quiet and intelligent and even have/A pretty wife”), is brightened by Washington’s bell-like *mbira* accompaniment. “Uh Oh!” is a mostly straight-ahead, swinging outing on which sax and drums trade boppish figures and accents. The Julius Hemphill-penned “Dogon A.D.” is tightly structured but challenging, its non-Western-sounding themes and pulsating funk mood characteristic of the Diasporan scope that informs virtually all of Washington’s music. On both of those tracks, Dyer’s solo viola unleashes an ecstatic, throaty shout, impeccably controlled yet freedom-bound.

Washington’s Africanist stance is unyielding, even militant, but it’s also guided by the spirit of the aphorism usually credited to Che Guevara: “At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love.”

**DAVID WHITEIS**



▶ “Characterized by a deep-running tranquility”: Salim Washington



**ROSCOE MITCHELL & MONTREAL-TORONTO ART ORCHESTRA**

**RIDE THE WIND** (Nessa)



The backstory: In 2013 Roscoe Mitchell recorded *Conversations*, a trio album in two volumes, with pianist Craig Taborn

and drummer Kikanju Baku. Next, Mitchell and his former students Christopher Luna-Mega and Daniel Steffey transcribed and orchestrated that album’s free improvisations for a 19-piece ensemble. The band contained players from Montreal and Toronto, chosen for their ability to read and improvise. They rehearsed Mitchell’s difficult music for a week, gave a concert in Montreal and one in Toronto, then went into a Toronto studio and made this album.

Transcribing and orchestrating jazz solos for big bands is not a revolutionary idea—unless the transcriber is working with content that lacks guideposts of tonality, harmony and meter. In his useful liner notes, Stuart Broomer says this project is “unlike anything you might have heard before.” He’s right. Incongruous chords lurch across sections of the orchestra. When you think the music is looming into motion, it falls silent. The dense ensemble heaves, expands and contracts. Limitless factors are in play: strident blends; eruptions of dark drums; bright flashes of piano; sudden full orchestra crescendos that don’t last. The music is a series of seemingly autonomous sonic events. Form is perceptible only after the fact. The frequency range is enormous, from bass saxophone to piccolo. Evolving sonorities sometimes find startling beauty.

The unstable ensemble is an exciting, challenging setting for improvising soloists. On “They Rode for Them, Part One,” Yves Charuest’s alto saxophone, floating free over the shifting sands of the orchestra, is suspenseful and mesmerizing. Mitchell’s only appearance comes on “Part Two” of that piece. His soprano solo is the kind of wild, shrieking outpouring that used to sound outrageous. In the context of this groundbreaking album, it feels reassuring: the devil we know, as opposed to the devil we don’t called *Ride the Wind*. **THOMAS CONRAD**

HOLLIS KING



## JEREMY PELT

**NOIR EN ROUGE: LIVE IN PARIS** (HighNote)  
**JIM SNIDERO & JEREMY PELT**  
**JUBILATION! CELEBRATING CANNONBALL**  
**ADDERLEY** (Savant)



If you build it, the muse will come.

That was the operating

principle behind trumpeter Jeremy Pelt's latest album as a leader: He brought his working quintet, the same acoustic postbop band heard on 2017's *Make Noise!*, to Paris last fall, intent on recording a two-night stand at the intimate Sunset/Sunside club.

Three of the album's eight cuts are drawn from *Make Noise!* On the opening title track, pianist Victor Gould's rangy, two-fisted improvisation rides atop the roiling rhythmic tension provided by drummer Jonathan Barber, bassist Vicente Archer and percussionist Jacqueline Acevedo, before making way for Pelt's own urgent, artfully constructed solo. Barber's dynamic derring-do sets up the sprawling "Evolution," much of which lets the trumpeter engage in creative back-and-forth with bass and drums. And closer "Château d'Eau" offers an elegant melody attached to lush chord changes.

Pelt wrote two new tunes for the occasion. The laidback "Black Love Stories" opens with just trumpet and piano, leading into gently inquisitive solos from Gould and Pelt. "Melody for V," written for Archer, has the bassist doubling the pianist on the twisting "call" part of the theme, then opening up for a beefy solo. For good measure, there's a tune by a French composer—a lovely, slow-floating version of the Michel Legrand ballad "I Will Wait for You." The let's-make-a-Paris-record gambit paid off; *Noir en Rouge* is an impressive document of a band hitting its stride.

Pelt and alto saxophonist Jim Snidero follow the latter's longtime muse on *Jubilation! Celebrating Cannonball Adderley*, released a few months ahead of what would have been the soul-jazz legend's 90th birthday. The two, leading a group with pianist David Hazeltine, bassist Nat Reeves and drummer Billy Drummond, inject new life into tunes largely associated with the quintet Cannonball co-led with his cornetist brother, Nat.

Snidero handily gets at his inspira-

tion's warm, buoyant sound and ability to burrow deeply into the harmonic structure of nearly any place his horn lands. That's demonstrated during an extended improvisation at the end of Sam Jones' "Del Sasser," during which Snidero is accompanied solely by bass and drums. The familiar material sparks plenty of other highlights, including Pelt's muted solo on Cannonball's "Wabash," the mellow unison horn lines and gentle bossa rhythms of Walter Booker's "Saudade," Snidero's lush ministrations on "Stars Fell on Alabama" and Nat's bluesy, frequently recorded "Work Song."

The group's coleaders also turn in original compositions in the same vein, opening the album with Pelt's jaunty, start-and-stop "Party Time" and including Snidero's "Ball's 90th." Like the music of its honoree, the latter cut blends seemingly disparate parts into a cohesive whole and provides plenty of fertile ground for improvisation.

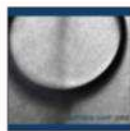
**PHILIP BOOTH**

## MATTHEW SHIPP

**ZERO** (ESP-Disk')

**MATTHEW SHIPP QUARTET**

**SONIC FICTION** (ESP-Disk')



ESP-Disk' epitomized the under-

ground culture of the 1960s by introducing the world to the free jazz of Albert Ayler and Sonny Simmons, to name only two, and by providing a platform for experimental rockers the Fugs and a plethora of other artists who may or may not have been ready for prime-time. The imprint continues to thrive more than half a century later, even after the passing of founder Bernard Stollman. And it appears to be the new home of the prolific pianist Matthew Shipp, who recently released a quartet date and an introspective solo recital through the label.

On *Sonic Fiction*, Shipp guides the session and receives all the songwriting credits but still gives the musicians a great deal of creative space. Polish native Mat Walerian, who has collaborated with Shipp on three previous albums, uses a reed arsenal similar to Eric Dolphy's: alto saxophone, bass clarinet and

soprano clarinet. After a piano introduction on "Blues Addition," Shipp leaves bassist Michael Bisio and Walerian (on clarinet) alone. They begin with a raunchy double-stop slide and the excitement snowballs from there. On "The Station," Walerian, solo on bass clarinet, squeezes low-register melodies until they pop or, in this case, squeak. During "3 by 4," his wails on alto motivate Shipp, who responds with some heavy-handed crashes, while the title track finds the pianist comping with Monk-like restraint. With drummer Whit Dickey completing the group, it's a strong batch of work.

When he plays solo, Shipp puts his artistic voice on full display. He might sometimes refer to great pianists that have preceded him, such as Andrew Hill, but he has solidified a signature approach that lives in the moment. The 11 tracks on *Zero* stand as ideas distinct from one another, rather than simply variations on a single thought. Here, Shipp reveals a classical sense ("Abyss Before Zero"), plays ballads with just a splash of dissonance ("Cosmic Sea") and offers some quick,

**RAMPONE & CAZZANI**  
HANDMADE ITALIAN SAXOPHONES...  
*A New Voice Awaits You!*  
New Dealers:  
Boston • NY  
DC • Seattle  
Baltimore  
Showroom:  
410.833.9631  
www.ramponecazzani-usa.com

**WE BUY OLD RECORDS!**  
WE MAKE HOUSE CALLS ANYWHERE IN THE USA  
CALL US TOLL FREE  
**888-993-4673**  
LP's, 45s, 78 & 12"  
No Collection is too Large!

darting lines (“Zero Skip and a Jump”). The first edition of *Zero* adds a second disc, “Zero: A Lecture on Nothingness,” recorded last year at the Stone in New York. Speaking for an hour, Shipp poses many rhetorical questions, with perhaps a few too many disclaimers about his lack of ability to explain his music succinctly. In the final minutes, though, he reads a couple of poems that provide insight into his approach, making the whole package

an interesting look into the mind of a creative pianist. **MIKE SHANLEY**

## EDWARD SIMON WITH AFINIDAD & IMANI WINDS

**SORROWS & TRIUMPHS** (Sunnyside)



Pianist Edward Simon was born in Venezuela but has worked in the United States for 30 years. His origins are intermit-

tently audible in his music—North American jazz with a subtle undercurrent of South American rhythmic allure. His colors tend toward the pastel. His lyricism does not impose itself upon you; it draws you in.

Simon’s preferred format is the trio, and his taste in bassists and drummers has long been exemplary—currently, he’s working with bassist Scott Colley and drummer Brian Blade. When he adds alto saxophonist David Binney, he calls the quartet Afinidad. *Sorrows & Triumphs* uses this group and several guests (guitarist Adam Rogers, vocalist Gretchen Parlato, percussionists Rogerio Boccato and Luisito Quintero) to perform two suites: the three-movement title work and the four-movement *House of Numbers*, on which Afinidad is augmented by a classical woodwind ensemble, Imani Winds.

This ambitious project is meticulously executed. Simon, Binney and Rogers take some nice solos. But on the tracks with Imani Winds, Simon’s writing is uncharacteristically overwrought. Flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet and French horn, as they trace their quick, intricate filigrees, sound frenetic and sometimes shrill. On “Triangle” and “Uninvited Thoughts,” the wind-ensemble sections feel tacked on, which might still work if they were more melodically attractive. The sense of heterogeneity is compounded by Simon’s odd decision to intermingle pieces from the two separate suites. Even “Venezuela Unida,” dedicated to his homeland, sounds fussy rather than deeply felt. It misses the emotion its subject should evoke, given the scale of human tragedy prevailing in that failed state.

The pieces without the wind ensemble are more compelling, but not by much. *Sorrows & Triumphs*, from an artist who has had many more hits than misses, is a miss. **THOMAS CONRAD**

## DAN WEISS

**STAREBABY** (Pi)



What can you expect from drummer Dan Weiss’ heavy-metal-inspired quintet Starebaby? An eviscerating, exploratory edge, yes; utter mayhem, no. Weiss brings the same exacting standards to Starebaby that were previously evident in his Indo-jazz hybridizations and *sui generis* large-ensemble projects.

The eight doom-laden tracks presented here are incredibly powerful, but they rarely come off as demonstrations of pure force for the sake of it. Weiss is too precise an architect and thinker to let might simply have its way. That’s obvious from the start, as Ben Monder’s quietly absorbing guitar ushers in “A Puncher’s Chance,” a mixture of the weighty and curious that plays to the pugilist’s mindset with its off-kilter attacks. “Depredation” likewise deserves its name, with queries and comebacks aplenty serving as prelude to a main event of Morse code-like ministrations and unfettered shredding.

Weiss, Monder and company—bassist Trevor Dunn and pianists Matt Mitchell and Craig Taborn—work their way through the rest of the music with the same caustically creative spirit, but it manifests in different manners. “Annica” walks a clang-to-clangor path, with angular piano lines serving up uncertainty; “Badalamenti” proves both corrosive and surreal; “Cry Box” is guts, groove, fire and faith rolled into one; and “Veiled” shows the virtues of collusion between electronic music and experimental design.

The album’s two longest tracks—“The Memory of My Memory,” more than 10 minutes long, and “Episode 8,” clocking in at more than 14—require serious patience, as the former flirts with tedium in its development and the latter delivers severe sensory overload and disorientation. But that patience pays dividends, revealing the wonders of art on the brink. **DAN BILAWSKY**



▶ “An eviscerating exploratory edge”: Dan Weiss



## STEVE TYRELL

**A SONG FOR YOU** (EastWest)



Rare is the musician who starts out in a label’s front office as Steve Tyrell did, working in A&R, PR and production with the likes of

Burt Bacharach, Hal David, Dionne Warwick, Ray Charles and B.J. Thomas, amid the Brill Building’s creative whirlwind. Which helps explain why the gravel-voiced singer has such a deep,



genre-spanning knowledge of songs, and why he's so skilled at taking any tune's emotional pulse. Ever since his big break as a performer, when his lilting rendition of "The Way You Look Tonight" featured prominently in the 1991 hit film *Father of the Bride*, Tyrell has remained a spellbinder, unwaveringly consistent in his straight-ahead, embellishment-free readings.

So *A Song for You* comes as a welcome addition to the Tyrell discography, while offering little in the way of surprise. Guitarist Bob Mann shaped most of the arrangements, all elegantly tailored. A revolving array of strong players—including Mann; pianists Andy Ezrin, Alan Pasqua and Bill Cantos; and bassists David Finck, Trey Henry and Chuck Berghoffer—elevate the bespoke ambience. The playlist offsets charmingly affective treatments of Great American Songbook cornerstones ("Come Rain or Come Shine," "Try a Little Tenderness," "When I Fall in Love," "Them There Eyes") with solid pop hits, ranging from Leon Russell's somber title track to Sacha Distel's breezy "The Good Life." Most intriguing: Tyrell's moving take on Jackie Wilson's "To Be Loved," arranged by Alan Broadbent, and his tender rendering of the Roy Clark-associated "Come Live With Me."

**CHRISTOPHER LOUDON**

## MARTIN WIND

**LIGHT BLUE** (Loika)



Bassist Martin Wind's 11th album as a leader is more than the sum of its disparate parts, not because of any clever

concepts, but because its 10 originals are so supple. This is most obviously due to Scott Robinson's bevy of reeds and the versatility of Gary Versace, who plays piano and organ on the album's front half. "Rose," for example, slides from a pensive piano-trio ballad (with Versace and Wind joined by drummer Matt Wilson) into an Ellington-like horn schmear, made distinctive by Robinson's taragota alongside Ingrid Jensen's trumpet; then Versace flips to organ and recasts the mood on the slow, simmering final section. "While I'm Still Here" is spry gumbo-bop, working a variation of "Sweet Georgia Brown" with Versace on organ and Robinson on tenor. "Power Chords" is a house-quaking rumble, as

Wind matches Robinson's plummeting bass saxophone with deep arco flourishes, Wilson channels his inner rock star with thunderous fills and Jensen plays a scorching, guttural solo.

Save for Wind and Robinson, a totally different ensemble handles the back half of *Light Blue*, showcasing a Brazilian bent that's tailor-made for the composer's melodic amiability. In terms of tone and texture, clarinetist Anat Cohen may be the reigning soufflé chef of jazz. Drummer Duduka da Fonseca is Matt Wilson's tropical doppelgänger, blending rigorous rhythms with a playful spirit; Da Fonseca's wife, vocalist Maucha Adnet, was a muse for Antonio Carlos Jobim. The surprises are subtler with this crew, which also includes pianist Bill Cunliffe. Cohen and Robinson twine clarinet lines like caffeinated butterflies on "A Genius and a Saint," and the band puts its own spin on samba with "Seven Steps to Rio," featuring Wind on acoustic bass guitar. But it's the adornments that tug the heartstrings so persistently here; listen to how Cunliffe, Cohen, Wind and Da Fonseca seem to take turns verifying Adnet's sweet lamentation on "A Sad Story." **BRITT ROBSON**

## PABLO ZIEGLER TRIO

**JAZZ TANGO** (Zoho)



Titles don't get more to the point than this one: *Jazz Tango* is where the Argentinian pianist and composer Pablo Ziegler

has, in a sense, always resided, but perhaps he's never stated his case quite so succinctly before. This release won the Grammy (Ziegler's second) for Best Latin Jazz Album earlier this year.

*Jazz Tango* features Ziegler's trio, *bandoneon* player Hector Del Curto and guitarist Claudio Ragazzi, performing seven songs by the leader and three by Astor Piazzolla, the late tango master in whose employ Ziegler remained for more than a decade. Both Ziegler and his predecessor are customarily associated with the term Nuevo Tango, and by melding the traditions of classic tango with the improvisational openness of jazz, Ziegler certainly moves the former style forward.

This trio doesn't need electric

instrumentation or other contemporary tools to get there. "Blues Porteno," one of the Ziegler originals, unfolds purposefully, radiating an air of mystery—it's going to find its way into a neo-noir film soundtrack one of these days. With Ziegler maintaining the trademark rhythm, Del Curto grabs the first solo, Ragazzi the next and Ziegler the last, each taking the core melody someplace different. If that sounds like a fairly loose definition of jazz, then the more complex numbers, like "Elegante Canyenguito," more than compensate. Here Ziegler moves far out of the tango box and ventures toward free-jazz territory, the guitarist hitting high velocity on his tail and all three eventually settling into an easier though never conventional groove.

Of the Piazzolla tunes, the first, "Michelangelo 70," is the most dynamic; Del Curto demonstrates what Django might've done had he been born in Argentina rather than Belgium. Throughout *Jazz Tango*, the hybrid is familiar but never less than stirring and satisfying.

**JEFF TAMARKIN**



**DAN ROSE,  
KIYOSHI KITAGAWA,  
TONY MORENO**

*Original compositions  
by Dan Rose*

**"I think the guitar gods  
are pleased with Strings  
Attached" (Bob Bain)**

**Available At  
ENJA RECORDS,  
CD BABY,  
AMAZON, I-TUNES**

**www.danrose.us.com**

# JAZZ SHEROES

BY ROXY COSS

In creating my new album, *The Future Is Female*, I've thought a lot about women and the role they play in the lineage and trajectory, the past and future, of society and of jazz. It's made me realize how little I still know about the women in the music. If I'm a part of this musical lineage, I need to know who paved the way for me. Some of these artists changed jazz—not just for women, but changed it, full stop—and some took fearless political stands that have allowed me to even exist in this music.

**Profile: Roxy Coss**

## Nina Simone

"I WISH I KNEW HOW IT WOULD FEEL TO BE FREE"  
*Silk & Soul* (RCA Victor, 1967)

Last year, when I was working on my album, I learned Nina's version of this for a project at Jazz at Lincoln Center called Let Freedom Swing, where we teach kids about jazz and American history. The lyrics are still very relevant and timely; those issues continue to be issues for people who aren't of the straight-rich-white-hetero-male norm. The song speaks to me deeply, and this performance is flawless.

## Mary Lou Williams

"NIGHT LIFE"

*The Chronological Mary Lou Williams (1927-1940)* (Classics, 1992)  
You can hear the whole trajectory of the music in this one track recorded in 1930. She's playing stride, boogie-woogie, swing. I can hear compositions that wouldn't be written until years later, like "Sing, Sing, Sing" and "Be-bop"; I also hear modal chords, bebop chords and, far into the future, the beginnings of hip-hop.

## Charlie Haden Liberation Music Orchestra Carla Bley, composer/arranger/conductor

"BLUE ANTHEM"

*Not in Our Name* (Verve, 2005)

Carla really was the co-leader of this orchestra, even though her name isn't above the title; the woman is the invisible figure. She composed this track, and she also arranged and conducted this album—which I listened to a lot in formulating *The Future Is Female*. This track in particular has a beautiful tenor solo by Chris Cheek that combines vocalization with sensitivity and deliberation. As the composer, Carla provided the foundation for that story to be told.

## Darcy James Argue's Secret Society Ingrid Jensen, trumpet solo

"TRANSIT"

*Infernal Machines* (New Amsterdam, 2009)

Ingrid is a mentor of mine. I remember hearing her perform this solo live at the CD-release show in Brooklyn and it blew my mind. When I got the album, I kept this track on repeat. Darcy created this platform for Ingrid's voice, and she takes that and runs with it. She does stuff on the trumpet that no one else does, and she demonstrates that on this tune.



▶ Mary Lou Williams at New York's Café Society, June 1947

## Esperanza Spalding

"I KNOW YOU KNOW"

*Esperanza* (Heads Up, 2008)

I was graduating [from William Paterson University], figuring out what direction I wanted to push myself in musically, and I was inspired by this young, cool woman who clearly had her own unique voice in jazz. It comes through on this track, which feels very free to me. There are all these different flavors—bebop, Latin, R&B—and yet it's still very clearly Esperanza's voice.

## Geri Allen

"DARK PRINCE"

*The Gathering* (Verve, 1998)

Geri was one of the greatest pianists, composers and mentors that I know of. This is a track that I just randomly clicked on one time and was caught off guard by how good it was. The energy is palpable: swinging and funky, mysterious and free. Again, it embodies many different elements of the music, yet it is still very much identifiable as her voice.

## Ella Fitzgerald

"HOW HIGH THE MOON"

*Mack the Knife: Ella in Berlin* (Verve, 1960)

I had a chance last year to do concerts with the great vocalist Thana Alexa, and we did the music of Ella for her centennial. Thana performed her whole solo on "How High the Moon," and hearing it live gave me goosebumps. It was crazy that she sang a solo like that at that time—at any time. It demonstrates how she shaped this music; she's like the mother of the music. **JT**

[As told to Michael J. West]



Roxy Coss is an award-winning saxophonist, composer, bandleader and educator based in New York City. Her new album is *The Future Is Female*, available now from Posi-Tone Records. Visit her online at roxycoss.com.



# It goes with your sax solo

JazzTimes.  
It goes with you.

**JazzTimes**<sup>®</sup>

TEN  
ISSUES  
for only  
**\$18**

**SUBSCRIBE NOW!**  
[bit.ly/jtmsubscribe](http://bit.ly/jtmsubscribe)



# "The Sound" as requested by you.

**You asked for the playability and  
sound of the early Otto Links.**

## **We listened.**

With structural changes both  
inside and out, "the sound"  
of yesteryear has been  
recaptured.



**Otto Link Vintage  
for tenor sax.**



[www.jjbabbitt.com](http://www.jjbabbitt.com)

MOUTHPIECES FOR CLARINETS AND SAXOPHONES





BONUS

# EXCLUSIVE

JazzTimes®

# PHOTOS

FOR OUR  
DIGITAL  
READERS

## Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya in Brooklyn

South African piano  
eminence takes on his Jazz  
Epistles legacy, on his own  
meditative terms

By Mac Randall  
Images by Mike Benigno



# ABDULLAH IBRAHIM & EKAYA IN BROOKLYN

---





**Ekaya, from left:** Cleave Guyton Jr., Noah Jackson, Lance Bryant, Kenyatta Beasley, Andrae Murchison, Will Terrill and Marshall McDonald





# ABDULLAH IBRAHIM & EKAYA IN BROOKLYN

---





Ibrahim and trumpeter Kenyatta Beasley



## ABDULLAH IBRAHIM & EKAYA IN BROOKLYN

---

Three times during a two-hour concert at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on April 18, Abdullah Ibrahim sat alone at the piano, gently coaxing melodies from the keys that were by turns rhapsodic and elegiac. Each time, the South African bandleader's wanderings incorporated strains of the same simple, hymn-like tune, familiar yet maddeningly difficult to identify (at least for this writer, although it shared traits with both "Edelweiss" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem"). Each time, the other seven musicians in his band, Ekaya, gradually appeared from the wings, adding their voices to his reverie. And each time, Ibrahim's direct contributions would then lessen, until entire pieces would go by in which he played

barely a note. But as he bobbed his head back and forth, breathing heavily or mouthing wordless syllables or both—it was hard to tell which sometimes—in tandem with the beat, his continuing engagement with the music was clear. Then the musicians left the stage, and the cycle began again.

It was almost as if Ibrahim were repeatedly dreaming his bandmates into existence. Or, if you will, using the Force, much like Luke Skywalker in *The Last Jedi*, to project images onstage to do what he could not.

Could not, or simply preferred not to? Again, hard to tell. Ibrahim's 83-year-old hands shake a bit, and it was impossible to ignore that whenever tempos rose,

he stopped playing. He never took a conventional solo or comped underneath others; instead, his piano lines became the connecting tissue between solos, commenting on the end of one and the beginning of another, before falling silent. There could be physical reasons for this, but it could also be a stylistic choice, following the lead of Ibrahim's early sponsor Duke Ellington, whose playing often served as occasional punctuation rather than an improvisational focus point.

In any case, it would have been hard for Ibrahim to dream up a better supporting cast than the other members of Ekaya: Cleave Guyton Jr. on flute and alto saxophone, Lance Bryant on tenor, Marshall





McDonald on baritone, Andrae Murchison on trombone, Noah Jackson on cello and bass and Will Terrill on drums, plus guest trumpeter Kenyatta Beasley, appearing in place of Freddie Hendrix. (Ravi Coltrane was also scheduled to join the band the following night.) Though all were superb in rendering Ibrahim's mystical-sounding, harmonically open compositions, Guyton and Murchison stood out. When Guyton played flute, as on the absorbing "Water From an Ancient Well," he added an almost tangible softness to the arrangements. Murchison, meanwhile, served as the frontline's essential thickening agent on selections like "Blue Bolero" and "Mississippi."

The original purpose of this show was

to honor Ibrahim's late-'50s band, the Jazz Epistles, and to reunite him with the other star of that group, trumpeter Hugh Masekela. Due to Ibrahim's and Masekela's subsequent fame, and the fact that they only made one album together before being effectively disbanded by their country's government—the playing of jazz was banned in South Africa in the wake of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre—the Jazz Epistles have acquired a legendary status over the years. Sadly, Masekela's death in January made the reunion an impossibility. Had he been present, one suspects this would have been a very different concert.

As it was, a few Jazz Epistles numbers did make it into the set, but for all the enjoyability of "Scullery Department" or "Carol's Drive,"

they distinguished themselves mainly for the ways in which they differed from the material that formed the bulk of the show: more obvious in their boppishness, with more concise solos, clever for sure but not as deep or exploratory as Ibrahim's later work. And in the end, Masekela's absence only added to the poignancy of Ibrahim's solo ruminations. Here, it seemed, was Cape Town's last Jedi, summoning the spirit of a fallen comrade with every note he played and every note he didn't.



