STANLEY CLARKE
forever to Return
They say 40 is the new 20. So what does that mean about 60? Rather than being close to retirement (if anyone even does that anymore), it means a jazz musician right in the middle of their prime. This month’s selection of sexagenarians proves just that. Bassist Stanley Clarke (On The Cover), veteran fusioneer and virtuoso funkster, isn’t technically 60 yet (born Jun. 30th, 1951) but he celebrates his diamond birthday a little early with a week at Blue Note. Cornetist Warren Vaché (Interview), keeper of the mainstream flame, passed the milestone this winter (born Feb. 21, 1951) and carries on marvelously with a weekend at The Kitano. And saxist/vocalist/poet Roy Nathanson (Artist Feature) will usher in a new decade on his actual birthday (born May 17, 1951) at Jazz Standard. Flutist Sam Most (Encore) is quite a bit older than 60 but is still excelling on the instrument he is widely credited as bringing to the frontline of jazz. And while saxophonist Clifford Jordan died almost two decades ago in his early 60s - a tragic loss for jazz - his music is remembered with an allstar band at Dizzy’s Club this month.

In chronologically-unrelated coverage, we feature the indie avant garde label Engine Records (Label Spotlight), two young musicians in our Listen Up! column we wish life and success long past 60 and a Megaphone from trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, extolling the rich jazz history of Harlem, just in time for this month’s inaugural Harlem Jazz Shrines Festival, a cooperative effort of the Apollo Theater, Harlem Stage and Jazzmobile, bringing a week of concerts, discussions and exhibitions to various locations uptown (May 9th-15th).

And there’s sure to be lots of sexagenarians, as well as many vicenarians, tricenarians, quadragenarians, quinquagenarians, septuagenarians, octogenarians and maybe even nonagenarians among our usual cavalcade of CD Reviews and packing the clubs in our Event Calendar.

6, 60 or 600...get out and see some jazz. We’ll see you out there.

On the cover: Stanley Clarke (photos by Steven Parke)

In Correction: In last month’s CD reviews, the album/concert review of Nik Bärtsch’s Lyria had a personnel error: disc bass player Björn Meyer was replaced by Thomy Jordi at the concert. In the Claude Diallo review, a song mistakenly co-credited to Charlie Banacos is actually only dedicated to him.

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US Subscription rates: 12 issues, $30 (International: 12 issues, $40)

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Ascend to the bandstand with pianist Martial Solal, relentless as ever at 83 years old, and you’re going to have a challenging time of it. But 49-year-old bassist François Moutin faced the unusually daunting task of playing duo with Solal for a week at the Village Vanguard. At the outset of their Thursday late set (Apr. 14th), Moutin stayed out the way while Solal got into Rodgers-Hart’s “There’s a Small Hotel”, but their swinging chemistry ignited soon enough. For all of Solal’s lightning runs and flourishes, he pinned his ideas to the main melody to a remarkable extent. At full steam, however, Solal will change keys at will in the middle of a section, or quote whimsically at length, then return to the tune he left behind and have it all make sense. “All the Things You Are” and “Tea for Two” found themselves commingled. “I’m Getting Sentimental Over You” somehow became “Stardust” and then ended, abruptly. Ditto “Caravan” and “Prelude to a Kiss”. Moutin’s reaction time through all this was swifter than anyone could rightly expect and his solos were often as captivating as Solal’s. The two have a similar sort of wild proficiency and the duo format gave them a unique space to roam - although Solal’s recent trio discs (both with François Moutin) show the focusing effect a drummer can have.

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Martial Solal @ Village Vanguard

John Gibson - more associated with New York minimalism than Downtown jazz - to perform alongside the two works on display. Gibson mostly improvised, responding to the sculptures, one suggesting a tangerine yurt, the other a forest green tulip waiting to blossom, both rendered in metal, bamboo and fabric. He placed quick lines across a sparse field until finding a note he liked, which might then be sounded a dozen times or more in succession. Gibson played three pieces of roughly 10 minutes each, judiciously facing one then the other of the structures, humbly waving off applause and asking if he should play more before a final ﬂute piece. It was only then that he turned to the scores set up on a stand at the edge of the stage area. This final piece was, perhaps unsurprisingly, more structured, carrying something of the feeling of a native American flute song, with slow meditative lines reaching toward the edge of the stage area. This final piece was, perhaps unsurprisingly, more structured, carrying something of the feeling of a native American flute song, with slow meditative lines reaching toward the edge of the stage area.

Sculptor Alain Kirili and photographer Ariane Lopez-Huici open their Tribeca loft every few months for gallery-styled jazz shows but the concert they presented Apr. 10th broke the mold of their usual audio and visual meetings. The music was presented not against Kirili’s tom-tom-like sculptures but the works of Jene Hightstein, who invited saxophonist Jon Gibson - more associated with New York minimalism than Downtown jazz - to perform alongside the two works on display. Gibson mostly improvised, responding to the sculptures, one suggesting a tangerine yurt, the other a forest green tulip waiting to blossom, both rendered in metal, bamboo and fabric. He placed quick lines across a sparse field until finding a note he liked, which might then be sounded a dozen times or more in succession. Gibson played three pieces of roughly 10 minutes each, judiciously facing one then the other of the structures, humbly waving off applause and asking if he should play more before a final ﬂute piece. It was only then that he turned to the scores set up on a stand at the edge of the stage area. This final piece was, perhaps unsurprisingly, more structured, carrying something of the feeling of a native American flute song, with slow meditative lines reaching toward the edge of the stage area. This final piece was, perhaps unsurprisingly, more structured, carrying something of the feeling of a native American flute song, with slow meditative lines reaching toward the edge of the stage area.

Jon Gibson @ Alain Kirili Loft

Pianist Jon Gibson has absorbed untold wisdom through his many duo engagements with alto great Lee Konitz, but at Cornelia Street Café (Apr. 9th) it was time for the young Tepfer to face another giant, bassist Gary Peacock (Konitz was on hand to hear it). “I’ll Remember April” made for an exploratory warmup, with a strong but loosely felt tempo and streams of harmonic depth and fullness, qualities that spilled into the original material that followed. Inspired by long harmonic depth and fullness, qualities that spilled into the original material that followed. The music was presented not against Kirili’s tom-tom-like sculptures but the works of Jene Hightstein, who invited saxophonist Jon Gibson - more associated with New York minimalism than Downtown jazz - to perform alongside the two works on display. Gibson mostly improvised, responding to the sculptures, one suggesting a tangerine yurt, the other a forest green tulip waiting to blossom, both rendered in metal, bamboo and fabric. He placed quick lines across a sparse field until finding a note he liked, which might then be sounded a dozen times or more in succession. Gibson played three pieces of roughly 10 minutes each, judiciously facing one then the other of the structures, humbly waving off applause and asking if he should play more before a final ﬂute piece. It was only then that he turned to the scores set up on a stand at the edge of the stage area. This final piece was, perhaps unsurprisingly, more structured, carrying something of the feeling of a native American flute song, with slow meditative lines reaching toward the edge of the stage area. This final piece was, perhaps unsurprisingly, more structured, carrying something of the feeling of a native American flute song, with slow meditative lines reaching toward the edge of the stage area.
Perhaps the most interesting part of jazz is the opportunity to watch young artists develop. This progress is often subtle but when it happens to a musician from overseas whose local appearances are infrequent, the transformations can be almost shocking. So it is with Norwegian saxophonist Håkon Kornstad, who played at Korzo (Apr. 5th) with a trio of countryman bassist Eivind Opsvik and avant-linchen drummer Jim Black. In the past couple of years Kornstad has amazed us with his duo project with bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten and his solo saxophone recital. Nothing so conceptual was presented at Korzo but still Kornstad showed that he may be one of the most compelling musicians working today, able to mix virtuosic technique with remarkable control and laudable restraint. He also is a genre-hopper in the best possible sense, not stymied by conventional expectations of scene or role. Opsvik, he of heavy pulse, was interestingly matched against the wide-ranging Black, both contrasting nicely with Kornstad’s blues-inflected tone. The nine tunes were each five minutes long; this was not a coincidence as Kornstad is known for a fierce burning “Flintstones Theme”, Garnett made a rare return to the environs in which he developed his art, performing with his New York working band of pianist Carlton Holmes, bassist Brad Jones and drummer Taru Alexander, as part of the Central Park Jazz Festival at Boys And Girls High School. At the landmark Harlem club (Apr. 8th) he proved that despite a prolonged absence, his music still speaks to the city’s audiences. The second set, which featured Lewis’ trombone and Alex and Ani will support both events and offer limited-edition charms to be available exclusively at the festival. For more information, visit newportfestivalsfoundation.org.

The newly-released Jazz: The Smithsonian Anthology (Folkways) has launched an interactive educational website to complement the 6-CD, 111-track compilation, including features like a History of Jazz Timeline and Interactive Map. For more information, visit folkways.si.edu/jazz.

WHAT’S NEWS

A major controversy has erupted over the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences’ decision to eliminate the Latin Jazz category from future Grammy Awards. Latin music in general has had its own Grammy Awards since 2000, perhaps contributing to this very unpopular move, at least among possible nominees. It should be noted that this part of a larger restructuring of the awards. Other changes include removal of most of the popular instrumental categories and awards for individual songs. For more information, visit grammy.com.

The Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities has placed the former Dix Hills home of John Coltrane on its 2011 list of endangered historic places. Plans to turn the structure, where the saxophonist lived in the ‘60s and wrote “A Love Supreme”, into a museum have come to naught and the house is empty and deteriorating. For more information, visit spila.org.

After reporting last month that Cadence Magazine was ceasing publication at the end of the year, the avant garde quarterly Signal to Noise is planning to go on hiatus for a year, hopefully (yet sadly) to return as a once-a-year journal. For more information, visit signaltonoise.org.

In addition to performances taking place as part of Harlem Jazz Shrines Festival (May 9th-15th), panel discussions are scheduled: “Visual Representations of Jazz” and “Jazz and the Spirit: The Arts of Harlem in the American Religious Imagination”, both taking place at Miller Theatre May 14th. During the festival, the Miller Theatre will also host “Envisioning Jazz”, a photography exhibition by Kwame Brathwaite. For more information, visit harlemjazzshrines.org.

Pianist Herbie Hancock is among four individuals to receive an Honorary Doctorate for The Juilliard School as part of its commencement ceremony May 20th. For more information, visit juilliard.edu.

It has been announced that a dramatization of the later life of pianist Joe Albany, Low Down will begin production at the end of this year, starring Joe Russo.

A sponsor has been found for the Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals. Local jewelry maker Alex and Ani will support both events and offer limited-edition charms to be available exclusively at the festival. For more information, visit newportfestivalsfoundation.org.

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | May 2011 5
Born in Rahway, New Jersey, Feb. 21st, 1951, Warren Vaché Jr. (he dropped the “Jr.” a while ago) came of age and became a full-time musician at the height of the rock and jazz fusion ’70s, yet his earliest high-profile gigs were with the New York Jazz Repertory Company recreating Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong solos, playing with Benny Goodman’s traveling combo and holding down the trumpet chair in the house band at the trad jazz Condon’s on 54th Street in Manhattan. Usually identified as a trad and neo-swing trumpeter, Vaché isn’t so sure himself, as you’ll discover here.

The New York City Jazz Record: You’re often called a trumpet player, but you actually play a member of the trumpet family that was more prevalent in early jazz, the cornet. Why do you prefer and continue to play the cornet?

Warren Vaché: It’s the sound the instrument makes; it’s more of what I hear in my head, it’s become my voice. I’m also lazy. Most trumpet players have to carry a flugelhorn if they want to get another sound, but the cornet is right in between: the trumpet and the flugelhorn so with minor differences, minor adjustments to my breathing, my embouchure, my concept, I can make the cornet sound like a flugelhorn. For me the cornet has a broader range of timbre than a trumpet or a flugelhorn so I tend to stick with it right in the middle. And luckily I don’t have to play in a trumpet section - I’m a soloist - so I don’t have to match my sound to a lead trumpet player’s. And I find as a soloist I get a broader breadth of expression out of a cornet than I do out of any other instrument. I’m told you can recognize me and for good or bad I’m going to live with it.

TNYCJR: That’s the ultimate compliment for jazz musicians, being recognized by their sound.

WV: That’s old school but it’s how I was taught. If you know who it is in a couple of notes, that’s what you were supposed to do. Duke Ellington was the classic example of a guy who put together musicians who were unique. Anybody who played in Ellington’s band, you could listen to a couple of notes and you knew who it was. And he was so bright and so skillful he could write for each of those talents.

TNYCJR: Music from Elvis, The Beach Boys, The Beatles and other rock bands was all around you when you were a teenager and college student. How did you manage to hone in on jazz, especially earlier styles of music from Elvis, The Beach Boys, The Beatles and other rock bands was all around you when you were a teenager and college student. How did you manage to hone in on jazz, especially earlier styles of music?

WV: When I was in the fourth grade I asked my father if he would give me bass lessons, but he said don’t play the bass, play the trumpet, you’ll get more work. And the next day he came home with a cornet and I began taking lessons from a Mr. James Fitzpatrick from Plainfield [NJ]. At that time I was growing up hearing Louis Armstrong around the house all the time and was dopey enough to think I could play that way. That was what I wanted to do, be a trumpet player, so all through high school and college I played club dates with my father. And back then you could do weddings; I did two or three every weekend. Then and after college I played anything I bloody could [as a job] because the thing about being a musician back then was that you could actually make money doing what you wanted to do - not like an actor who had to wait on tables between acting jobs. And ever since I’ve been able to make a living playing the horn.

TNYCJR: How did you get beyond doing club dates?

WV: My brother [Allan Vaché, a clarinetist two years younger than Warren who later spent decades in the Jim Cullum Jazz Band in San Antonio] and I auditioned for an onstage band in a Broadway show, Mr. Jazz, and got the job. The show only lasted about a week but afterward Bucky Pizzarelli recommended me to Benny Goodman and Benny must have liked what he heard because he hired me. Working with Benny [intermittently, when Goodman toured, for a decade] was a unique learning experience; he was extremely helpful. One night he sat me down in his room and gave me breathing lessons, which have stayed with me to this day. And you gotta remember I was only 24-25 and didn’t know a lot of tunes but you had to learn them very quickly when you were in the same company as Zoot Sims, Slam Stewart, Urbie Green, Connie Kay and Hank Jones. But those guys were all so helpful and Hank was an absolute joy. If you showed any interest they encouraged you.

TNYCJR: Besides those early Louis Armstrong records, including a lot of old 78s. He was also a bass player in trad jazz bands and a founding member of the New Jersey Jazz Society [and editor for years of Jersey Jazz, the society’s newsletter]. So I consider myself very fortunate - between my father’s record collection and the people I got to meet and hear [the Society presented the annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp, an early model for trad jazz society events] I got a lot of listening done. I still find holes in what I know and don’t know, but I have a lot of grounding in what came before me, a lot of historical perspective that a lot of kids these days just don’t get.

TNYCJR: If your father was a big influence and a bass player, how did you end up as a trumpet - excuse me - cornetist?

WV: I stole from everybody I possibly could. I took Buck Clayton’s advice to young players: he said steal, you’ll never play it exactly like the other guy did and it becomes part of your vocabulary. So I took from anybody I could. I stole from Pee Wee Erwin, who was also my private teacher when I was in college; Bobby Hackett and Billy Butterfield, both of whom I was lucky to know, and even the studio guys like Bernie Glow. And even though my dad was a staunch traditionalist, somewhere during my school years I discovered bebop, which made me a big disappointment (CONTINUED ON PAGE 46)
Words are paramount in the beatnik existence of Roy Nathanson. Spiritually of the East Village, this eminently poetic saxophonist has come to roost in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn, only five blocks from where he grew up. Poems, stories, songs with narratives and narratives that spring into song: these are the forms whose ratios Nathanson jiggles. Text and soloing are extensions of his individuality. Whether the tales grow out of the music, with The Jazz Passengers, or whether the band acts as a musical conduit for verse, as with Sotto Voce, there is invariably a deep cross-connection between the words and the tunes.

To celebrate his 60 years on the jazz planet, Nathanson will be playing gigs with both bands this month, feting these twin outlets for his craft. The combos adopt different tactics, yet can’t avoid enjoying a complementary status, given their leader’s all-pervading personality. I met up with Nathanson at De Robertis Pasticceria, part of the old-time East Village that he once inhabited. It’s close to where Nathanson now teaches the kids that he sometimes immerses into his more ambitious performances. “I was very much part of that East Village avant garde theatre,” Nathanson recalls. “I had tons of gay friends and so many people died of AIDS. It was a crazy time. I was also in the jazz world and there were very few people who were part of both those scenes.”

The return to Flatbush wasn’t premeditated. “It was kinda by accident, really,” he muses. “I really was by the brink of signing a massive record contract, but in the end that didn’t quite happen. “It looked like the passenger was gonna be a really big deal, we had a whole bunch of incredible press. It didn’t become that big a deal, but it became a deal, y’know. When things didn’t work out perfectly, I didn’t get the kind of fame I was kinda by accident, really,” he muses. “I really was by the brink of signing a massive record contract, but in the end that didn’t quite happen.”

Nathanson had started playing regularly with Marc Ribot and had joined the Big Apple Circus. In the early ‘80s, his profile was raised significantly by entering the longest-running lineup of The Lounge Lizards. This lasted throughout most of that decade and towards the end of his time with John Lurie’s band (1987), Nathanson had already formed The Jazz Passengers with two of his closest musical (and otherwise) friends, Ribot and trombonist Curtis Fowlkes. “I wanted to start a band that was less cool than John’s, that was more about vaudeville comedy, but also more compositional, as a jazz thing. We ended up using a vibes player and that was the sound: vibes, violin and guitar.”

At one stage, it seemed as though the band was on the brink of signing a massive record contract, but in the end that didn’t quite happen. “It looked like the passenger was gonna be a really big deal, we had a whole bunch of incredible press. It didn’t become that big a deal, but it became a deal, y’know. When things didn’t work out perfectly, I didn’t get the kind of fame that looked like was going to happen, but what I did get was a full life and I feel pretty good about that and I’m able to report on that life in the work that I do now. I got more and more into words and I started writing more songs. So much of my poetry is nostalgic, considering things.”

Nathanson also began playing in a duo situation with the keyboardist Anthony Coleman. This was the foundation for combining sampled environmental sounds with the spoken word. The end result of this is that Sotto Voce has become Nathanson’s primary outlet during the last three years, an outfit where every member vocalizes, whether singing, reading, rapping or beatboxing. This is a particularly fruitful time, though, as The Jazz Passengers have also been enjoying a resurgence.

“Sotto Voce has a quality almost like a barbershop quartet. It works better with the poetry, but for my birthday I wanted both sides. I really like improvisation in the context of narrative theatre. We tell our stories. I like things to be connected on some level to words. Talking a kind of singing.” As the hardcore coffee is downed, I ask the inevitable question, the have-you-achieved-all-that-you’d-expected question: “Well, I’m almost dead now, y’know,” Nathanson responds with a casual dryness. “It wasn’t until I met my wife and I had a kid who’s now 13 years old and I moved back to my old nabe, but things are more tranquil now than I ever expected. This is a wonderful time in my life.”

For more information, visit royxnathanson.com. Nathanson’s 60th Birthday Celebration is at Jazz Standard May 17th and he is also at City Winery May 27th with Sotto Voce. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- Lounge Lizards - Voice of Chunk (Strange & Beautiful Music, 1988)
- The Jazz Passengers - Implement Yourself (New World, 1994)
- Roy Nathanson/Anthony Coleman - Lobster and Friend (Knitting Factory, 1992)
- The Jazz Passengers - Live in Spain (32 Jazz, 1997)
- Roy Nathanson - Subway Moon (Yellowbird, 2009)
- The Jazz Passengers - Reunited (Justin Time, 2009-10)
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June 30, 2011 marks the 60th birthday of Stanley Clarke, who is also celebrating another milestone this year: the 40th anniversary of Chick Corea's fusion powerhouse Return to Forever (RTF). For those who remember Clarke as the 20-something electric bass virtuoso who rose to prominence in the jazz world as an RTF member, it might be hard to believe that Clarke is getting ready to turn 60. But time flies when you're having fun and, true to form, Clarke is still having fun by hurling himself into a wide range of musical activities - some fusion, some straightahead acoustic jazz, some not jazz at all. Indeed, Clarke has a lot on his plate in 2011, in addition to recording with his current group, The Stanley Clarke Band, Clarke has a classical album in the works and is planning an extensive tour with a new five-member RTF lineup that will boast Clarke on electric and upright basses, founder Corea on acoustic piano and electric keyboards, Frank Gambale on guitar, Jean-Luc Ponty on violin and Lenny White on drums.

These days, Clarke is widely regarded as a major innovator on the electric bass; ask just about any fusion bassist who their main influences are and Clarke's name comes right up along with the late Jaco Pastorius. Although Clarke wasn't the first person to play jazz on the electric bass (Monk Montgomery, one of Wes Montgomery's brothers, brought the electric bass to bop in the '50s), the way he combined the language of jazz with the influence of Sly & The Family Stone's Larry Graham was certainly groundbreaking in the '70s. But as Clarke points out, being recognized as an innovator was the last thing he had on his mind back then - and he wasn't thinking about how he would be perceived when he was close to 60 either. In those days, Clarke recalls, his goal was simply to play music that excited him.

"The whole concept of innovation is such a retrospective concept," Clarke explains. "Somobody has to copy something you've done or be affected by it before people will say, 'Oh, yeah, he's really innovative.' In the '70s, I wasn't thinking, 'Oh, gosh, by the time I'm 60, I want to have a billion albums done, score a thousand films and play with everybody.' It isn't something I thought about. I just kind of woke up every day and kept trecking along and kept playing with as many people as I could. I was fortunate enough to be in quite a few different bands, including Return to Forever, which was a groundbreaking kind of group and spearheaded the jazz-rock fusion movement or whatever you want to call it. But at the time, I never really thought of Return to Forever that way.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Clarke moved to New York City in 1971 (the year Corea formed RTF) and was employed as a sideman by Joe Farrell, Joe Henderson, Pharaoh Sanders, Gato Barbieri, Herace Silver, Stan Getz and other jazz heavyweights. Clarke played the acoustic bass before he became famous on electric and landed plenty of straightahead jazz gigs after his arrival. But even though Clarke grew up listening to straightahead jazz, he also grew up with rock and R&B. So when the fusion revolution took place, combining jazz with elements of rock and funk made perfect sense to Clarke. He never gave up straightahead jazz and never gave up the acoustic bass (which he plays exclusively on his 2009 release Jazz in the Garden), but fusion and the electric bass became an important part of his diverse contributions to jazz.

And it was RTF, which broke up in 1977 and reunited in 2008, that did the most to make him a major name in jazz - that and his early albums as a leader. But Clarke hasn't been one to play jazz exclusively; Clarke, who now lives in Los Angeles, has appeared on many R&B albums along the way and has done plenty of film scoring. He recently recorded a hip-hop version of rocker Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." in 1985. And Clarke has a very different outlook from the jazz snobs who tend to see music in overly technical terms.

"To be quite frank, there are some musicians who call themselves jazz musicians but don't have a clue about emotion and playing from that point of view," Clarke asserts. "Some of those guys can talk about scales and chords until you're blue in the face, but if you don't have the emotion, you don't have it. It's like someone putting BB King down and saying, 'Every solo he takes, he plays probably no more than six notes.' But it ain't about the notes. That's the problem with the jazz musicians who think that way: they're too focused on the notes and the technique. What hit me with John Coltrane wasn't how many notes he was playing; it was the emotion of what he was doing.

Clarke adds that for many years, his career has been a reflection of someone who loves rock, soul, funk and the blues as much as he loves jazz - and that perspective has been evident with RTF, both in the '70s and the 21st Century.

"The jazz establishment put Return to Forever down in the '70s," Clarke recalls. "But I think that we were just being honest. I listened to Jimi Hendrix with as much passion as I listened to John Coltrane. I was really into John Coltrane, James Brown and Jimi Hendrix and when you're really into those three artists, it's going to come out in your music. Return to Forever had the string that goes through all jazz music, which is improvisation. But it was laced and framed with sounds that people outside of jazz were used to hearing, such as electric bass and loud drums. We used to get a lot of people who were into Yes and Emerson, Lake & Palmer; we used to get a lot of their fans. For some reason, they thought we were like Yes without a vocalist.

Clarke has always had eclectic tastes and he likes to encourage the same quality in his children - including a hiphop-minded son who enjoys telling his friends about Clarke's interpretation of "Born in the U.S.A." "My kids are all into music," Clarke notes. "My son is a hip hop producer, my daughter is a jazz singer and my other son is an avant garde drummer - extremely avant garde. My son who's into hiphop likes Bruce Springsteen's 'Born in the U.S.A.' record out and show it to some of his buddies and tell them, 'My pop was into hiphop back in the early days.' I actually have a really soft heart for hiphop."

If keeping an open mind is the most valuable thing that Clarke has learned along the way, the second most significant concept may be the importance of mentoring. Clarke was guided by Corea and other jazz greats during his youth and bordering on 60, he is doing the same thing with his Stanley Clarke Band (which has included Ukrainian keyboardist/pianist Ruslan Sirota and drummer Ronald Bruner, Jr.; pianist/keyboardist Hiromi has sometimes played with the group as a guest).

"Leadership is really important," Clarke stresses. "You're essentially molding musicians. I had the luck of arriving in New York when that old romantic jazz scene was still there; Miles was still there, I saw Thelonious Monk, Mingus was alive. Everybody was there and they treated me nice. I try to lead like that with my groups."

Clarke adds that when he is playing with Sirota, Bruner or Hiromi, he wants to hear their thoughts and opinions just as Corea wanted to hear his thoughts and opinions back in the '70s. "Chick, who is exactly ten years older than me, is a very gracious musician," Clarke says. "In the early '70s, Chick wanted me to write something for one of Return to Forever's albums and he said, 'Whatever you call the tune, I'll call the album.' What I did was come up with this tune called 'Light As A Feather' and Chick kept his word and called the album that. Chick gave me the spark to become a more serious composer. It's very important what you say to young musicians and I want to give the guys in my band an opportunity to write songs and to participate in the records instead of just coming in and taking orders."

Clarke continues: "There is a tradition in jazz music to pass something down. It's a very African concept: passing knowledge down. It's kind of unspoken, but it's there. Everyone I ever played with in the old days cared about me; I could feel that something was being passed down as knowledge and so, I'm doing it now myself. I tell younger musicians stories the way that people were telling me stories. There's this jazz lore. It's a beautiful thing."

For more information, visit stanleyclarke.com. Clarke's 60th Birthday Celebration is at Blue Note May 24th-29th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Chick Corea and Return to Forever - Light As A Feather (Polydor-Verve, 1972)
• Joe Farrell - Moon Germs (CTI, 1972)
• Stanley Clarke - Stanley Clarke (Nemperor-Atlantic, 1974)
• Wayne Shorter/Michel Petrucciani/ GIL Goldstein/Pete Levin/Stanley Clarke/Lenny White - The Manhattan Project (Blue Note, 1989)
• McCoy Tyner - With Stanley Clarke and Al Foster (Telarc, 1999)
• Chick Corea/Stanley Clarke/Lenny White - Forever (Concord, 2009)
Most's pioneering way of singing through the flute was born out of a necessity to keep the noise level down in his own Bronx apartment. "I couldn't make much noise. So I would hum a little bit and have a little tone on the flute... At the same time I was playing the flute I would be like huddle huddle du duddle duddle deedle deedle and that became my humming technique. I do it occasionally now but not as much. Most of the time I just play the notes but I have a kind of breathy quality because of that."

In the early '60s Most relocated permanently to Los Angeles where he played in orchestras behind Sarah Vaughan, Carmen McRae, Peggy Lee and many others. He appeared on dozens of sessions as a studio musician and for many years only rarely recorded under his own name. While playing at The Sands in Las Vegas with Norvo he laughs as he remembers Sinatra passing him and shouting, "Sam, you're blowing your ass off!" Another time, "Frank invited me and the band to the house. He pulled out this thing, this Rudall Carte flute. 'Sam, I know you would appreciate this. It's yours.' It's wood, handmade in London. I was using it for a while but the metal one projects a little bit more. But I still have it here.

A conversation with Most is sprinkled with such recollections, like of a night in New York when "I worked with Stan Getz, Lee Konitz and I think, Horace Silver and JJ Johnson and Art Blakey on drums. It was just one night. And another time I did a tour with Zoot Sims... I sat in with Lester Young at Birdland. He let me have my way on the flute to keep my chops up." A virtuoso improviser, he is a heartfelt original who remains a musician's musician, one who retains awe in his voice remembering working in Toronto and being introduced by a friend to pianist Oscar Peterson. "Oscar said, 'Oh Sam, I've been a fan of yours for years.' He is the unassuming improviser who bassist Charles Mingus called "the world's greatest jazz flute player."

Still swinging today he enthuses, "I want to put in a plug for my scat singing. I have been doing it a lot lately and I usually get good reviews from the musicians for my singing."
No Place Like Harlem
by Wycliffe Gordon

I am going to tell you right now that I am biased when it comes to talking about Harlem. When I first moved to New York in the late ’80s, I rented a room in Hell’s Kitchen. It was nice, but I needed something larger, something that felt like me. Then I moved to Harlem and found my home away from home. I can walk around the corner to the Lenox Lounge, the Apollo or Somewhere’s Café and feel the spirit of the jazz that was created and performed at these historic locations. It is for this reason that I am proud to have been asked to be the Musical Director of one of the concerts during the inaugural Harlem Jazz Shrines Festival, which takes place all over Harlem May 9th-15th. I am charged with putting a 21st Century stamp on the jazz art and even the spiritual side of jazz. I hope that whatever happens however Black folks got together and thrived. Wherever we were able to perform is where the story would be told. But, thank goodness, Harlem lives.

One of the greatest things for me is to have the opportunity to listen to jazz masters like Frank Wass, Jimmy Heath, Joe Wilder, Jon Hendricks and others tell stories about Harlem and the places they played. The privilege of sitting next to someone like these great musicians, or the late Arvell Shaw or Norris Turney, who actually lived the life is amazing. Hearing them say, “One night Duke did this or Count Basie said that” or recount something that happened on a bus trip in 1953 is like attending advanced classes in jazz. I can still hear Milt Grayson talking about when he first got his hit from Duke Ellington. Years ago, Lincoln Center did an event that brought together all of the living musicians who had performed with Ellington. I was so touched when Harold Land read a letter from Webster congratulating him on “graduating into the University of Duke Ellington.” Just to hear someone in his 70s who still had the same reverence for someone that he had when he was a young man was magical. But that’s what jazz and what jazz in Harlem does to you. And, that’s what the Harlem Jazz Shrines Festival is all about. The Apollo Theater, Harlem Stage and Jazzmobile got together to create a resurgence of jazz opportunities in Harlem and to present jazz in all its diverse forms and formats. The festival will feature 35 events at eight venues over seven days and will include panel discussions, conversations with musicians, educational events, dance parties, jam sessions, cutting sessions, big bands, groove bands, jazz art and even the spiritual side of jazz. I hope that New Yorkers from all five boroughs and visitors to the City will take the A train or whatever they can to come to Harlem to enjoy and experience the Jazz Shrines.

For more information, visit wycliffeegordon.com. Gordon is at Dizzy’s Club May 2nd with the Temple University Big Band and at Apollo Theater May 13th-14th as part of Harlem Jazz Shrines. See Calendar.

Trombonist Wycliffe Gordon has accomplished a great deal since being exposed to the jazz world at large through membership in the Wynton Marsalis Septet and Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. He is a regular award winner for Best Trombonist from the Jazz Journalists Association, has undertaken several commissions and is a committed educator at the Manhattan School of Music and giving master classes nation-wide. Gordon has worked with a wide array of jazz luminaries like Dizzy Gillespie, Lionel Hampton, Tommy Flanagan, Shirley Horn, Joe Henderson, Eric Reed, Randy Sandke and Branford Marsalis and his discography as leader includes over 20 albums since 1996.
Engine Records
by Clifford Allen

Back in the ‘90s (and earlier), records on the Dischord punk label always had the “$7 postage paid” printed on the back. They had an estimable ethos, since this was the era before consistently downloads became de rigueur and there was a desire to keep the music affordable to fans. Now, the average CD is $14-$18. Jazz labels are, for the most part, in a tough boat, finding it difficult to make profits on a genre that consistently sees sales numbers in single-digit percentages. Engine Studios is one small label that is, if not single-handedly able to move the music industry Titan in the right direction, at least trying to instill ethics in the process.

Engine Studios was begun in 2002 by music enthusiast, engineer and former punk musician Steven Walcott to present modern jazz, improvised/creative music and left-field rock that he enjoyed within no-frills, environmentally-conscious setting as both a product and an experience. Walcott studied at Wesleyan in Middletown, CT and got first-hand experience with veteran instrumentalists and composers like saxophonist Bill Barron, trombonist Bill Lowe and drummer Ed Blackwell. Later on, his band shared a saxophonist Bill Barron, trombonist Bill Lowe and drummer Ed Blackwell. Later on, his band shared a no-frills, environmentally-conscious setting as both a product and an experience.

Walcott when he wanted to record the double trio (brass multi-instrumentalist) Taylor Ho Bynum and I had. After that record came out, he asked me if I wanted to do a project. I named a couple of ideas and for various reasons, we settled on the trio project that became Parhiesia (2010). Steven may do things differently, but he’s always been honest and fair with me, and I’ve been able to do the same with him and suggest things I felt should be done, perhaps even differently than he had done them. I see Engine Studios as a collaborative relationship - as a family - and you can tell that because he forms relationships with artists who come back to work with him, that is an important aspect of how he works.” Haynes and Walcott are planning another date, and Smith has also come back to work with him repeatedly.

One of Engine’s standout recordings was a trio led by veteran AACM tenorman Anderson with Bankhead and drummer Tim Daisy, released as Staying in the Game. Walcott relates that “I drove from Brooklyn to Chicago in one day, stayed at a Motel 6 out by the airport and recorded Anderson on a 60 degree day three days before Obama was elected. So I got lucky with the weather and the first African-American heading into the big chair, but Fred was surprised at the lengths I had gone to record him and he responded by blowing the roof off the studio.”

One immediately notices something different about most of the Engine Studios releases - they’re housed in simple, tasteful and recyclable chipboard fold-out cards and letter-pressed (done in-house in Brooklyn), frequently using the understated designs of Seattle architect and visual artist Anjali Grant. Rather than paying for externally-recorded sessions, Walcott records the Engine releases himself, which has led to challenges but a deeper understanding of the process - what it takes to make “all the stars line up” towards a positive vibe that results in good to great music. “Some problems with newer records can be a very accurate but dry picture of musicians playing. Accuracy is great but it can be boring to listen to. My goal is to have separation and togetherness of instruments in the mix, to have driving bass and drums depicted in

(continued on page 46)
June 5th - 11th
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Abrons Art Center
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A Lifetime of Achievement
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John Tchicai • Joe McPhee • Dick Griffin
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Sabir Mateen • William Parker
Jackson Krall • Henry Grimes
Gerald Cleaver • Tyshawn Sorey
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Muhammad Ali • Connie Crothers
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Vission 16
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no need for words
sean jones

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Pianist Jacob Sacks has made quite a mark on New York’s most forward-thinking jazz communities. Acknowledged for his skills early in his career by the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Piano Competition, he has continually sought new directions, always maintaining a look towards the future while effortlessly carrying along with him the weight of having assimilated disparate threads in the development of jazz. Oddly, two gigs that have brought Sacks much attention are in drummer-led bands: those of Dan Weiss and Paul Motian - two innovators in jazz rhythm and color. These two discs are also drummer-led dates and both also revel in Sacks’ nuanced approach.

Sacks shines on Barcelona Holiday, a set of standards with the trio of drummer Vinnie Sperrazza and Barcelona-based bass player Masa Kamaguchi. The second of Sperrazza’s trio discs for Fresh Sound (the first disc also featuring Sacks), the plan this time was to make a standards record, with all tracks done in one take. The resulting sense of freedom, imagination and enthusiasm is at once infectious and thoroughly exemplary of the spirit, fun and seriousness Sperrazza brings to all his projects. Thad Jones’ “Three In One” starts things off, Sacks’ interpretation of the melody gradually fragmenting into loose, floating bits of hard-swinged shapes. “Yardbird Suite” barrels along, something of a jazz equivalent to the Tunisian devil, with Sperrazza’s energy and velocity driving things forward. On “I Loves You Porgy” Kamaguchi gives a colorful solo statement, full of exuberant rushes and pregnant pauses. Ever the generous, supportive agent, Sperrazza’s fluid swing sets up some playful interactions for Sacks and Kamaguchi on “Night and Day”, which also features some great traded fours, as Sperrazza’s orchestration of rhythmic and melodic concepts across the drums beautifully bears the mark of a master who has at his grasp the most nuanced inflections of color and touch on both cymbal and skin.

Sacks’ debt to Monk comes across often in his occasionally quite-jagged rhythmic vocabulary and it is evidenced (no pun intended) on his statement of the melody and his comping for Kamaguchi and Sperrazza on “Sweet and Lovely”. The glacial pacing this is evidenced (no pun intended) on his statement of “O Perto” and “Oaxaca”). Sacks again shines profoundly on “O Perto”, his angular lines bringing new colors to an already colorful composition. Lencastre’s drumming is exquisite throughout and it is his playing that really brings the depth to this record more than the tunes.

For more information, visit freshsoundnederland.com and toapmusic.com. Jacob Sacks is at Puppet’s Jazz Bar May 1st, 55Bar May 3rd with Dave Binney, Littlefield May 4th with Dan Weiss and 17th with Eivind Opsvik, Cornelia Street Café May 12th with Jon Irabagon, Douglass Street Music Collective May 14th with Michael Formanek, The Stone May 18th with Jon Irabagon, Zebulon May 24th with Eivind Opsvik and I-Beam May 29th. See Calendar.

The World Saxophone Quartet (WSQ) has never really gotten over the loss of founding member Julius Hemphill, who died in 1995. Although some estimable players have filled Hemphill’s chair, including Arthur Blythe, Eric Person and John Purcell, the post-Hemphill WSQ has seldom reached the heights that made it, in its ‘80s heyday, the premier jazz group on the planet. However, the band’s newest album, Yes We Can, a live date from Berlin in 2009, is its finest in years, mixing improvisational fire and compositional brilliance in an invigorating and uplifting performance.

Yes We Can
World Saxophone Quartet (Jazzwerkstatt)

The lineup here includes founding members David Murray on tenor sax and bass clarinet and Hamiet Bluiett on baritone sax and clarinet, along with new member James Carter on tenor and soprano and New Orleans legend Kidd Jordan (subbing for Oliver Lake) on alto. The group’s traditional opening (and closing) number, Bluiett’s energetic “Hattie Wall”, has rarely sounded so spirited, with the baritone master laying down an infectious groove over which the rest of the band improvises deliciously. The title cut, penned by Murray, is a buoyant, soulful, already somewhat nostalgic tribute to the then-newly elected Barack Obama, featuring stirring work from Carter on soprano and even a hint of “Hail to the Chief”. Murray also composed the moving ballad “The God of Pain”, which highlights his amazing circular breathing and the powerful “Long March to Freedom”, with Carter again blowing up a storm, this time on tenor. Jordan’s “The River Niger” sounds closest to the WSQ’s avant garde roots, as it devolves into a joyous cacophony of shrieks and screams. “For Now”, Yes We Can serves notice that after more than 30 years, the World Saxophone Quartet remains one of the most daring, creative and exhilarating groups in jazz.

James Carter can also be heard to fine effect playing baritone sax on For Now, his second collaboration with the terrific Dutch band De Nazaten. The eight-piece group (four horns, three drummers and guitar) plays a novel, vibrant and winking blend of jazz and Surinamese music, which itself is a unique cultural mix of African, Caribbean, East Indian and European sources.

The result sometimes sounds like calypso, other times like a forward-thinking New Orleans brass band and others like nothing you’ve heard before. Even if it’s hard to categorize, it’s accessible, danceable and utterly enjoyable music with irresistible beats, tight horn parts and fine solos from Carter and his talented colleagues.

For more information, visit jazzwerkstatt.eu and nazaten.nl. James Carter is at Blue Note May 1st. See Calendar.
Ricardo Gallo’s Tierra de Nadie (Clean Feed)

Colombian pianist and composer Ricardo Gallo here launches his New York-based “Tierra de Nadie,” or No Man’s Land, a terrain in which “genres, or national and/or racial identities keep becoming wider and blurrier.” It’s an apt description of his compositions, which freely draw on Latin and jazz traditions, mixing melodies, rhythms and ostinatos from his South American background with boppish chord changes, counterpoint and loose improvisatory forms from jazz. It might also suggest the special fluidity of the band Gallo has put together, with a frontline made up of American background with boppish chord changes, melodies, rhythms and ostinatos from his South American background with boppish chord changes, counterpoint and loose improvisatory forms from jazz. While Blake plays forceful tenor on a couple of tracks, he’s usually on soprano, improvising with quicksilver runs and providing a high-spirited, piquant and chirping contrast to Anderson’s brilliant bluster. While bassist Mark Helias provides a fluid continuous anchor, there are two drummers here, shifting duties. Satoshi Takeishi is alone for roughly the first half, then switches to assorted percussion for the last, ceding the drum chair to Pheeroan akLaff. The combination of the two creates tremendous rhythmic verve on the Latin-esque “Hermetismo” and “South American Idyll.” The CD is also a feature for Gallo the pianist, who comps with the forceful inventiveness of Andrew Hill and possesses a chameleonic lyricism that can be freely rhapsodic (his introduction to the traditional jazz-flavored “Stomp at No Man’s Land”), move loosely through rhythmic knots (“The Intervention”) or create the glassy, abstract soundscape of “Improbability.” Gallo has assembled a first-rate band and given it plenty with which to work.

For more information, visit cleanfeed-records.com. This group is at Cornelia Street Café May 1st. See Calendar.

Natura Naturans

Architeuthis Walks on Land (Carrier)

Architeuthis is Latin for ‘giant squid’. One thinks not only of the colossal size of this animal but its many tentacles as well, famously seen grazing a sperm whale in a display at the Museum of Natural History. Though the architeuthis is gifted with eyes over one foot in diameter, it finds much of its orientation and balance through sac-like structures called statocysts, which contain bundles of sensory hairs not unlike those found in the human organ of Corti.

On the other hand, Architeuthis Walks on Land is the appellation chosen by Amy Cimini (viola) and Katherine Young (bassoon), a duo formerly based in Chicago but now settled in Brooklyn. While their debut (Set Projects, 2007) sported a silhouette of the aforementioned cephalopod on the cover, Natura Naturans features mountains of tangled pipe-cleaners, some taking the shape of masts and sails. We are indeed prepared for a voyage to the bedrock of the sonic ocean, to a world hidden in darkness yet alive with sound.

While the bassoon–viola combination could easily slip into the preciosity of chamber pop, Young and Cimini play in a raw, improvisatory style that betrays their interest in the historic innovations of Ayler and Ornette as well as the contemporary experiments of an Arrington de Dionysio. Particular emphasis is placed on timbre, on the kind of drawn-out tones that render the architeuthis a kind of ‘parts’ are actually medleys of various tunes from “Taste for Love” demonstrates a depth of tone, talent for arpeggiation and articulation of phrases. The clarity of the sax line reveals its beauty and directness. Fefer is not one to dwell on a lot of complexity. Even though he may slide through series of split tones, he succeeds in the major themes of his melodies with grace and agility.

Full force, bassoon and viola running parallel in a continuous, jittery fashion whose pulsations are produced as much by vibrato as by chord changes; a bleated, angular sound-meld unique to this duo, slips into the preciosity of chamber pop, Young and Cimini playing was at its most adventurous. These two parts are actually medleys of various tunes from Mangelsdorff’s classic quartet/quintet, when he played against the sharp ejaculations of the strings. The duo’s love of contrasts emerges once again on “The Field”, whose dense tapestry begins to merge into a new space of fragile bassoon lines and lovingly pulsed viola - a reminder that this terrifying creature of the sea is not without its own peculiar brand of grace and whimsy.

For more information, visit carrierrecords.com. Katherine Young is at The Stone May 1st and I-Beam May 27th with this duo. See Calendar.

UNEARTHED GEM

Swiss Radio Days: Jazz Live Trio Concert Series Vol. 22

Albert Mangelsdorff/Francois Jeanneau (TCB)

by Andrey Henkin

Listening to jazz is not that much different than being an archeologist. Studio albums are usually only glimpses in the career arcs of musicians, who more regularly ply their trade onstage. There are so many concerts, from almost every era of jazz history, waiting to be released, no one need ever enter a studio again. One label committed to proliferating such important documents, which fill in crucial gaps in the assessment of a player’s development, is the Swiss imprint TCB and its most intriguing series is Swiss Radio Days, 25 CDs of performances by legendary American artists like Art Blakey, Count Basie and Cannonball Adderley. What it has lacked thus far is acknowledgment of the seminal musicians in the label’s own backyard, finally rectified by Vol. 22, a split disc between German trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff and French saxist Francois Jeanneau.

The late Mangelsdorff can be argued as Europe’s most famous jazz export, a title buttressed by a 50-year career and work on both sides of the Atlantic and both sides of the inside-outside divide. For this 1972 Zurich concert, he is featured alongside the Jazz Live Trio (pianist Klaus Koenig, bassist Peter Frei and drummer Peter Schmidli) for a pair of 18-minute tracks simply titled “Part 1” and “Part 2.” This music is notable because it is another entry into the period shortly after the dissolution of Mangelsdorff’s classic quartet/quintet, when he was working with everybody in Europe and his playing was at its most adventurous. These two parts are actually medleys of various tunes from Mangelsdorff’s canon and pushes the straight-ahead rhythm section into rather progressive territory.

Jeanneau came out of the Jef Gilson school of mid-’60s French jazz and, like Mangelsdorff, has avoided strict allegiance to any one jazz camp. The Jazz Live Trio, oddly with Pierre Favre in the drum chair, backs up the tenor/soprano saxophonist for his “Le Lynx” and “Suite Eoliene”, recorded in 1979. This at-field recording, with shadings of the French Romantic take on the avant garde, propelled by Jeanneau’s Steve Lacy-like approach to soprano and Favre forgetting that he is supposed to be merely a compliant sideman.

For more information, visit tcb.ch
Live in Vienna
Emil Viklický Trio (Cube Metier)
What’s Outside
Ondřej Štverák Quartet (Cube Metier)
It’s About Time
Najponk Trio (Animal Music)

GLOBE UNITY: CZECH REPUBLIC

Live in London
Matana Roberts (Central Control)
Coin Coin Chapter One
Matana Roberts (Constellation)

Although domiciled in New York since 2001, Chicago-native saxophonist Matana Roberts has only recently begun to garner due recognition at home. However, as is so often the case, her talent has already been noticed further afield with two new recordings documenting concerts outside the US, both on small independent labels. Roberts persuades as a storyteller, whether through her fluent improvisational skills on full-toned keening alto or her distinctive compositional and narrative settings. In this first chapter (of 12), Roberts uses family stories of a distant relative known as “Coin Coin” to portray aurally a strong black female archetype around which she constructs her own myths and truths. Performed by a 16-piece ensemble, each highpoint: “Multicolored Blue”, a deep groove blues, is高速增长的间歇和声部的循环，以及多声部的旋律，为听众营造出一种深沉而强烈的氛围。而“Golden Earrings”则以浪漫的旋律和和声结构，展示了Roberts的高超技巧和音乐表达能力。

This Side of Strayhorn was born of the Stafford Quintet’s participation in a “Celebrating Billy Strayhorn” week in Dayton, Ohio, the composer’s birthplace. Delving beyond the more obvious Strayhorn catalogue, they came up with nine titles, only two collaborations with Duke Ellington, all arranged by the stellar pianist Bruce Barth, who is joined in the rhythm section by bassist Peter Washington and drummer Dana Hall. Brisk two-bar trades by the horns serve as intro to “Raincheck”, the swing melody delivered in call and responses punctuated by drum breaks. “Smada” is outfitted with a gentle samba beat while “My Little Brown Book” finds Stafford emotively expressing through other than the usual-these-days Harmon mutes. Two rarely heard Strayhorn pieces are highpoints: “Multicolored Blue”, a deep groove blues, showcases Stafford’s alluring plunger-muted style in crowling, caressing phrases of which Cootie Williams would be proud and “Lana Turner”, a curvy ballad where Stafford’s solo begins over stop-times with heraldic statements echoing Louis Armstrong’s heraldic statements echoing Louis Armstrong’s mantra.

Common to these albums is a repertoire approach and trumpet Terell Stafford and saxophonist Tim Warfield. Stafford’s tenure in big bands has made him conversant with early and swing trumpet styles as well as hardbop giants like early influence Clifford Brown. Warfield’s long stint with the late organist Shirley Scott and continuing work with vocalists has widened his early swing, a tribute to a romantic tenor tradition of Lester Young, Ben Webster, Gene Ammons and Stanley Turrentine.

For more information, visit maxjazz.com and crisscrossjazz.com. Stafford is at Dizzy’s Club May 2nd with the Temple University Jazz Band and Village Vanguard Mondays with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. See Calendar and Regular Engagements.
Two recent releases both feature the splendid tenor saxophonist Chris Speed, who at times spins solos with such control and gentleness, favoring higher registers, it is as if he were playing alto. He never forgets the Coltrane school, however, and can intimate a growl or work overflowing with sense and subtlety. *Endangered Blood* and drummer Dejan Terzic’s *Diaspora* give Speed two opportunities to deploy his mastery in divergent settings that ultimately bear his own stamp of firm, mild balance spiked with an edge.

*Endangered Blood* is bold, peppy and precise, a nice mix of free, funk and cool. Balance occurs in two dimensions: the vertical, where Trevor Dunn might be plucking a funky bass line while Speed and alto saxophonist Oscar Noriega harmonize gently or engage in a counterpoint alternatingly jazzy and swinging, formal and baroque. Then there is the balance in the horizontal dimension, where the mix and match of styles and beats and tempos is always satisfying: they never play too fast for too long, or dip into dark emotions without coming up for breath.

Drummer Jim Black often favors a hip-hop beat, as on the first number, “Plunge.” Noriega enters here bright and bouncy but with dark undertones. Double stops on bass bolt out, then bold melody that supports the others effectively, almost dominating the low tones on the sax. Hot harmonies and counterpoints crop up throughout. Another key piece is “Tacos at Oscars”, with its spicy Latin percussion to open, but with Elvin Jones-like heavy complexity. There’s an electronica feel to the woven sax lines that follow, with hints of free discordance. The theme proper is cool baroque, almost something out of Dave Brubeck. A harmolodic solo from Noriega follows, reconstructing and rarefying the theme in freeform context; this is introduced again, verbatim - but now, recontextualized, it has an entirely different feel. Speed then waxes in energy mode, chasing his own tail, with harsh harmonics.

*Diaspora* has a dark, Balkan romantic feel, secured by the tactful and tasteful bass or cello of Henning Sieverts. The music itself seems to disseminate, meander sadly and then resituate in combined, happier dimensions: the vertical, where Trevor Dunn might be playing alto. He never forgets the Coltrane school, however, and can intimate a growl or work overflowing with sense and subtlety. *Diaspora* and drummer Dejan Terzic’s *Diaspora* give Speed two opportunities to deploy his mastery in divergent settings that ultimately bear his own stamp of firm, mild balance spiked with an edge.

For more information, visit skirlrecords.com and enjarecords.com. *Endangered Blood* is at Littlefield May 4th. See Calendar.
The infectious "233 Butler" is a chameleon-like suite about a fictional town. Mantilla.

Rivas, bassist Jorge Roeder and percussionist Tupac music, folk, string bands and bluegrass. His band wide-ranging as a leader), Lage continues on a similar path with the Swing Trio, in addition to leading his own band.

Burton and also with violinist Mark O'Connor's Hot soon regularly appearing as a guest with vibes master at 11 and musicians before he was in his early teens, appearing on mandolinist David Grisman's at 11 and 233 Butler" is a chameleon-like

Saxist Thomas Chapin was a singular figure in the Downtown jazz of the '80s-90s. A strong free player, he also wrote wonderfully intricate lines for the brass and string sections with which he augmented his trio; a child of the '60s with shoulder-length hair held back with a headband, he nevertheless went by the nickname "Rage". And while he lost a battle to leukemia in 1998 at the age of 40, he left a considerable and varied recorded legacy.

But with all the different groupings and contexts he explored during a recording career of less than 16 years, he never issued a recording of duets with drums. That hole in his discography is now filled in the form of a pairing with William Hooker, one of the heaviest drummers in town, then or now.

The three long pieces (totaling over an hour) were culled from two sets played at percussionist Jerome Cooper’s 9th Street Gallery in 1992. The recording is less than pristine; it sounds like an audience recording in a boomy room, which is more than likely what it is. That said, however, it’s well above acceptable. It’s unsurprisingly explosive, but it’s not only that. There’s a lot of responsiveness at play, which allows the pair to move into some more rhythmic explorations and subtler dynamics, along with the firestorm such a duo would be expected to produce. Had this session been released in the '90s, it wouldn’t stand out in either man’s discography. But as a simple opportunity to hear Chapin’s horn again, it’s more than welcome.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com. Hooker is at University of the Streets May 2nd and Rhythm in the Kitchen Festival May 28th. See Calendar.

Vocalist Marlene VerPlanck’s new CD should delight her fans and garner new ones. With an impressive background as a studio and advertising commercials singer and concert and club tours in the US and UK, VerPlanck is one of the most welcome interpreters of the popular songbook. Blessed with precise diction and the love of a good lyric, VerPlanck’s voice is clear, pure, young and remarkably rangy. And once again, she is treating her listeners to a fine collection of not-overdone material as well as some lovely originals by her late husband - composer and arranger Billy VerPlanck. Working in a trio setting, VerPlanck uses various combinations of personnel: pianists Tedd Firth, Tomoko Ohno and Ed Vodicka (also on organ), bassists Steve LaSpina and Jennifer Leitham and drummers Sherrie Maricle and Ron Vincent.

The surprise addition of Hammond B3 organ comes at you on the first track – Kenny Rankin's "Haven't We Met" – and Vodicka’s work on this and a bluesy “I’m Falling For You” is notable. Several items are outstanding on this offering: Billy VerPlanck’s medley arrangement of “Flying Down To Rio” combined with “The Carioca” (from the Fred and Ginger movie), a combination VerPlanck does quite often live, swung here with Firth, LaSpina and Vincent; an original by Billy entitled “Quietly” that has the feel of the '50s; a wistful rendition of Lerner-Loewe’s “The Heather On The Hill” from Brigadoon featuring Firth’s pretty fills and some fine bowing by LaSpina and a finger-snapping “What A Difference A Day Made” that gives Ohno some nice exposure and includes a lively dialogue between Maricle and Leitham.

Most of the collection is material from the '30s, '40s and '50s when there were verses to songs, lyrics that could be understood and storytelling to be done. This is VerPlanck’s bailiwick, an area she knows and loves and continues to call her own. It is a piece of nostalgia that needs to be kept alive and VerPlanck is surely one of the best vocalists to keep it going.

For more information, visit marleneverplanck.com. VerPlanck is at The Kitano May 4th. See Calendar.

Guitarist Julian Lage attracted the attention of veteran musicians before he was in his early teens, appearing on mandolinist David Grisman’s Daug Duo at 11 and soon regularly appearing as a guest with vibes master Gary Burton, with whom he recorded two CDs while still in his teens. Lage has continued to work with Burton and also with violinist Mark O’Connor’s Hot Swing Trio, in addition to leading his own band.

After the success of Sounding Point (his 2009 debut as a leader), Lage continues on a similar path with the wide-ranging Gladwell, which blends many of the guitarist’s stylistic interests, including jazz, chamber music, folk, string bands and bluegrass. His band includes tenor saxophonist Dan Blake, cellist Aristides Rivas, bassist Jorge Roeder and percussionist Tupac Mantilla.

The songs make up a suite about a fictional town. The infectious “233 Butler” is a chameleon-like introduction, blending a Latin rhythm with the flavor of progressive bluegrass (à la Grisman), rock and jazz. "Margaret" begins as a sensuous ballad feature for Blake, before taking a dramatic turn. The sole standard is “Autumn Leaves”, taken solo by Lage, where he shows off his virtuoso chops while avoiding the predictable path through this chestnut. Lage’s solo exploration of the folk tune “Freight Train” is sublime while his “Cathedral”, “Point the Way”, and “Listen Darkly” blend multi-tracked lines on his vintage Martin acoustic guitars in shimmering performance. The guitarist’s “Iowa Taken” features Roeder and Mantilla, another progressive work blurring stylistic lines while showcasing all three musicians to good effect. Lage’s fast-paced “Telegram” is a terrific finale, with the leader and Blake sharing the spotlight as Roeder and Mantilla (mostly on brushes) fuel their fire. Julian Lage is clearly one of the most promising guitarists of his generation.

For more information, visit emarcy.com. Lage is at Jazz Standard May 4th. See Calendar.

Julian Lage (Emarcy-Decca)

Gladwell

by Ken Dryden

58th Street Grill lounge, 7-10pm.

With special guests:

Firth, LaSpina and Vincent; an original by Billy entitled “Quietly” that has the feel of the '50s; a wistful rendition of Lerner-Loewe’s “The Heather On The Hill” from Brigadoon featuring Firth’s pretty fills and some fine bowing by LaSpina and a finger-snapping “What A Difference A Day Made” that gives Ohno some nice exposure and includes a lively dialogue between Maricle and Leitham.

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Crossing Points

William Hooker/Thomas Chapin (NoBusiness)

by Kurt Gottschalk

Saxist Thomas Chapin was a singular figure in the Downtown jazz of the '80s-90s. A strong free player, he also wrote wonderfully intricate lines for the brass and string sections with which he augmented his trio; a child of the '60s with shoulder-length hair held back with a headband, he nevertheless went by the nickname “Rage”. And while he lost a battle to leukemia in 1998 at the age of 40, he left a considerable and varied recorded legacy.

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feeling typically associated with the man he’s honoring. His solos tend to venture sharply from the stated melodies in a manner that’s often explorative and, in some cases, borderline aggressive. Rarely are these traits associated with Hank Jones’ style of playing. However, one cannot and should not fault Enders for deciding to express his affection for the Joneses in such a manner. Just don’t pick this one up expecting to hear your typical Jonesian outing. Things do, though, return to the straightahead realm when Jones sits in with the band for his own lighthearted composition “We Are All Together”. These two releases offer distinct portraits of the late, great Hank Jones: the man himself in his ideal setting, leading a trio in a laid-back showcase of standards; the other a unique tribute to the power of his music. Both are must-listens for Jones aficionados.

For more information, visit storyville-records.com and enjarecords.com. A Hank Jones tribute is at Tribeca Performing Arts Center May 5th as part of Highlights in Jazz. See Calendar.

Trio with Mads Vinding & Al Foster
Hank Jones
(Storyville)

One for Three - The Jones Suite
Jazz Baltica Ensemble
(Enja)

Tenor saxist Adam Kolker believes that the most important information is delivered quietly; that what is most worthwhile must be told in confidence. His tone is breathy and restrained, informed by the classic sound of Ben Webster but not as brawny, closer perhaps to Joe Henderson in terms of its introspectiveness and dark subtext. His tunes are taken at a deliberate pace, emphasizing the care and thought that goes into the choices of each note. His previous release, 2008’s Flag Day, was comprised of allstars: John Hébert (bass), Paul Motian (drums) and John Abercrombie (guitar). The music snuck up on you with an unanticipated seductiveness that encouraged you to lean in just a little bit, so as not to miss anything.

Hébert is again at the center of Reflections, Billy Mintz assumes the drum chair and Abercrombie is back on two cuts, but overall this CD presents a more varied and farther-ranging selection of material. Kolker, who also plays flutes and clarinets, spreads the compositional credits around, with Hébert, Mintz and Russ Lossing (who sits in on piano for a few tunes) each making a contribution, along with one from guest vocalist Judi Silvano (Kay Matsukawa also gives voice to a version of “Nature Boy”). Silvano’s “Boscarob” is the one track that features a relatively hyper tempo, with her scat singing setting a pace for the band to follow and Lossing to pick up for his piano solo. A cover of Monk’s “Let’s Call This” demonstrates the loose, easy-going swinging effortlessness of the sax-bass-drum trio while on “Fez” the trio is economical as they struggle and strive to move their story forward.

Arguably, Kolker’s most sympathetic partner is Abercrombie and it’s their complementary sounds that bracket the CD: first on the opener, “Soon It’s Gonna Rain” and then on the closer, Kolker’s own “Kevin’s Birthday Blues”, an evocative and atmospheric piece that gives Abercrombie the chance to get just a little bit bendy and distorted with his licks. Kolker digs into the blues rhythms methodically, in no hurry at all.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. Kolker is at Cornelia Street Cafe May 6th and Sycamore May 8th, 15th and 22nd. See Calendar.
Los Angeles-based brothers John and Jeff Clayton formed the powerhouse Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra in 1985 - only a year after the birth of John’s son, Gerald – while also maintaining sturdy reputations in the academic scene and both of their careers are still thriving. This quintet album continues the family tradition with all three Claytons contributing well-crafted tunes and tasteful, hard-swinging solos.

Despite its title, opening track “Cha Cha Charleston” is about as far from James P. Johnson as one can get. Soft-focus cymbals offer an ethereal mood before John Clayton kicks in with a driving bassline that underscores the bright horn lines from Jeff Clayton on alto and Terell Stafford on trumpet. Drummer Obed Calvaire closes the tune with a precise yet opposing solo over a herky-jerky horn line. “Battle Circle”, pianist Gerald Clayton’s contribution to the album, is anchored by John’s Morse code-like thump. Stafford takes a measured yet passionate approach over the busy rhythm section while Gerald’s solo, which starts out on the actual strings of the piano, is equally controlled amid the turbulence. “Smarty Pants Dance” is a quick-fire tune whose melody veers seamlessly through starts and stops. Gerald takes off first with each briskly articulated note flying by while Stafford playfully jumps through the changes.

The sole cover of the set, Stevie Wonder’s “They Won’t Go When I Go”, starts with John’s aching bowed melody backed by Stafford and Jeff on flute, turning Wonder’s song into a chamber piece only lightly accented by a pair of brushes; except for a brief bout of swing, the band keeps it cool throughout. The group closes with the second-line-infused “Street Dance”, Gerald’s bouncy block chords and Calvaire’s propulsive drumming anchoring the tune. The band finishes in style, strutting hard with a little cowbell accentuated by a pair of brushes; except for a brief bout of swing, the band keeps it cool throughout. The group closes with the second-line-infused “Street Dance”, Gerald’s bouncy block chords and Calvaire’s propulsive drumming anchoring the tune. The band finishes in style, strutting hard with a little cowbell.

For more information, visit artistsrecordingcollective.info. This group is at Café Orléan May 7th and The Stone May 8th. See Calendar.
accompaniment and free improv that tends toward the music straddles the line between folk melodies with haze with the vocals delivered in a rich, soprano that quite nicely in this format. The music floats in a gauzy

Í stillunni hljómar

Hilmar Jensson may be known to US listeners through

The disc by Mogil is the most unusual. Guitarist but it is finely tuned. And at 38 minutes, the program drop of a hat. The group interplay tends to be spacious filigreed yet can take on a harsh and angular cast at the

are sampled, instrumental timbres are distorted and, one assumes, the musicians on their toes. Phrases Erian. He is the wild card that keeps the music fresh and sonorous and accompanies Badenhorst with a

bass clarinet initially and clarinet for the second version, which is twice as long. Soniano’s bass is deep and transparent, and the reed work is a major part of the group fabric.

Pianist Jesse Stacken, raised in Minneapolis and a New York resident for the better part of a decade, is making a strong name for himself through a diverse range of projects and associations. As a pianist, one can be quite easily associated with certain schools of playing - the avant garde or traditional mainstream two obvious directions. Luckily, improvised song-based piano music has considerably more wherewithal than a couple historical strains could signal and Stacken shows that categories exist to be mincemeat.

Magnolia, a trio with bassist Eivind Opsvik and drummer Jeff Davis, presents seven original compositions. Alternating between textured minimalism, spry postbop and resonantly sculpted poise, Stacken’s playing owes few clear stylistic debts. South African jazz of the Abdullah Ibrahim variety peppers “The Whip”, a bouncy and ringing rush through the townships via Ellington and Hampton Hawes, Stacken continually returning to the folksy melody as Opsvik and Davis maintain a taut, thick groove. The trio rarely moves with such lickety-split energy, rather generating tense and sometimes suspended interplay that coalesces into form, as in the martial “Crow Leaf Frog”, where the pianist gestures with lean arrows through the tune’s choppy rhythm. The opening “Solstice” is like Mal Waldron’s “The Seagulls of Kristiansund” slowed down to a crawl, repeating and elaborating on cells in glacial embellishment towards a sly anthem. Too much cannot be made of Stacken’s partners here, with Davis’ dry punch teetering on the edge of bombast while Opsvik provides stoic, woody muscle and harmonic shade. In a landscape chock full of piano trios, there is definitely room for this threesome’s brilliant interplay.

Another side of Stacken’s playing is heard in duo with the cornetist Kirk Knuffke; they first appeared on record covering Ellington and Monk on Mockingbird (SteepleChase, 2009) and have returned to tackle 11 selections from the Mingus songbook on Orange was the color. There’s a crucial difference between composers like Ellington, Monk and Strayhorn and the work of Charles Mingus. The latter often evoked other musician-composers, and this disc is the result of a fuller understanding of, say, Bird or Duke. Mingus was clearly not always successful and therein lies part of his charm and complexity. Starting off with such a delicate piece as “Duke Ellington’s Sound of Love” is a programmatic volley in the right direction - it follows from the previous disc and it’s written to allow orchestration with a small number of instruments. “East Coasting” also moves along at a buoyant clip, Stacken a bright foil to the fat, gauzy and deft lines of Knuffke’s cornet. But pieces like “Moanin’” and “So Long Eric” don’t really lend themselves to a duo setting, their meaning instead derived from the combative environment of Mingus’ Jazz Workshop. Whereas the pieces of Monk and, to a degree, some of Ellington’s tunes, can survive as gems and puzzles, much of the music on Orange was the color needs the process of failure to breathe.

For more information, visit freshsoundrecords.com and steeplesound.de. Stacken’s Trio is at I-Beam May 29th. The Duo is at Cornelia Street Cafe May 8th. See Calendar.
An unapologetic party band with brains, Underground Horns is a melting-pot aggregation only possible in a big city: its chief composer, reedist Welf Dor, is a Munich transplant who participates in Butch Morris conduction; one of its trumpeters is Japanese-born Satoru Ohashi, who moved to New York from New Orleans while the rest are veterans of local jazz, Latin and reggae bands. The 10 selections pop with relentless rhythms and with four brass players, a saxophonist/clarinetist and three percussionists, tonal inflections from the Big Easy, central Africa, the Maghreb and the Baltic states make their way into the mix. Tubalist Nate Rawls multi-rhythmically pumps out an ostinato underneath nearly every track, although any similarity to marching bands is scotched when the soloists appear. Dor's obviously-titled "Arabian Flavor", for instance, features snake-charmer-like alto saxophone trills mixed with a stentorian brass crescendo, plus interjections from a disco whistle and resonating Berimbau-styled scratches. In contrast, trombonist Kevin Moehringer's usual tailgate slurs are put aside on a tune like Dor's "La Luciernaga" for a solo that's half-Willy Colón salsa and half-Rico Rodriguez ska. Eventually the vamping theme gives way to stop-time breaks involving the drummers. If there are drawbacks to this game plan, it's that the constant beat is omnipresent during every tune's exposition, turn around and finale, no matter how many half-valve trumpet solos or altissimo reed trills break it up. Perhaps the band realizes this. Although brassyier and more percussive than usually played, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and Dor's "Tranquility" are taken midtempo and moderato. The latter is "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and Dorr's "Tranquility" brassier and more percussive than usually played, many half-valve trumpet solos or altissimo reed trills exposition, turn around and finale, no matter how the constant beat is omnipresent during every tune's exposition, turn around and finale, no matter how many half-valve trumpet solos or altissimo reed trills break it up. Perhaps the band realizes this. Although brassyier and more percussive than usually played, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and Dor's "Tranquility" are taken midtempo and moderato. The latter is defined by bass clarinet growls, screams and reed whistles while the former melds tuba burbles, hand-slapped drumming and one trumpeter's descriptive grace notes. Big Beat isn't the sort of CD to be intently listened to in one sitting. But heard a few pieces at a time, or used as a festive soundtrack, it's sure to impress.

For more information, visit hollisticmusicworks.com. Lynch's insights on jazz history make Unsung Heroes a valuable addition to his catalogue.

For more information, visit concordmusicgroup.com. This group is at The Gate House May 15th as part of Harlem Jazz Shrines. See Calendar.

Viva la Tradicion
Spanish Harlem Orchestra (Concord Picante)
by Russ Musto
The latest release from the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, 2011 Grammy Award winner for Best Tropical Latin Album, lives up to its title’s mandate of keeping the AfroCuban musical tradition alive, not by dwelling upon its opulent past, but instead reveling in the vivacious present. The powerful tenet plus vocal trio, led by veteran pianist Oscar Hernandez, presents a program of 12 predominantly new compositions and original arrangements that extend the classic sound of the Tito Puente/Eddie Palmieri continuum into the 21st Century.

Consolidating the lessons learned playing with a host of bandleaders - from percussionists Manny Oquendo and Ray Barretto to singers Celia Cruz and Rubén Blades - Hernandez has produced an outstanding album equally satisfying for its hard-hitting instrumental sound and authoritative vocals, as evidenced in the opening “La Salsa Dura”. The tour de force arrangement by Hernandez, with a dynamic two trumpet-two trombone-tenor sax frontline propelled by the leader’s commanding piano, Gerardo Madera’s bass and the well-oiled rhythm machine of timbalero Luisito Quintero, conguero George Delgado and bongocero Jorge Gonzalez, driving the call-and-response vocals of Ray De La Paz, Marco Bermudez and Willie Torres, is sure to achieve classic status.

The date’s other tracks follow suit. “Mi Herencia Latina” sings the praises of many of the music’s greats in the context of a swinging guaguancó. The rhythms of rumba, son, mambo and cha-cha-cha fill out the program, which also includes the classic bolero “Nuestra Canción” (buoyed by Mitch Frohman’s flute) and a guest appearance by sonero Isaac Delgado on the exciting set closer, “El Negro Tiene Tumbao”, which lets loose the blaring brass section of trumpeters Hector Colón and John Walsh and trombonists Jimmy Bosch and Dan Reagan.

For more information, visit concordmusicgroup.com. This group is at The Gate House May 15th as part of Harlem Jazz Shrines. See Calendar.

Big Beat
Underground Horns (s/t)
by Ken Waxman

Jazz has a rich history not only because of its icons, but also because of all the talented artists who didn’t receive as much exposure. Big-toned trumpeter Brian Lynch is clearly aware of this fact. This postbop effort is a thoughtful tribute to gifted trumpeters who didn’t enjoy as much exposure as Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, Dizzy Gillespie, Lee Morgan or Chet Baker and, for the most part, the musicians Lynch salutes are people one probably hasn’t heard of unless possessing a more-than-casual interest in jazz.

One of the trumpeters Lynch lists on the CD’s back cover, Donald Byrd, is a suspect choice. Given how well known Byrd is in both straightahead jazz and soul/funk, does he really fall into the underexposed trumpet category? The band that Byrd founded, the Blackbyrds, even enjoyed some major R&B hits in the ’70s. But most of the trumpeters Lynch pays tribute to fit the album’s theme perfectly, including Tommy Turrentine (brother of Stanley Turrentine and the musician saluted on “Big Red” and the ballad “I Could Never Forget You”), Joe Gordon (who is acknowledged on the exclamatory “Terra Firma Irma”) and Idees Suleiman (who is remembered on Suleiman’s “Saturday Afternoon at Four”). “RoditiSamba” is a Brazil-flavored piece dedicated to Claudio Roditi while Charles Tolliver is acknowledged on a hard-swinging performance of his own “Household of Saud”.

Lynch leads a cohesive acoustic lineup of alto saxophonist Vincent Herring, tenor saxophonist Alex Hoffman, pianist Rob Schneiderman, bassist David Wong, drummer Pete Van Nostrand and conguero Vicente “Little Johnny” Rivero (who is heard on two tracks). All of them play with much enthusiasm, indicating that they really appreciate what Lynch is going for on this 68-minute CD.

Tributes to Davis, Gillespie or Armstrong aren’t hard to find in the jazz world, but it isn’t every day that a player goes out of his way to pay homage to those less celebrated. Lynch’s insights on jazz history make Unsung Heroes a valuable addition to his catalogue.

For more information, visit hollisticmusicworks.com. Lynch is at Blue Note May 16th with Rikas Ritmi Festival All-Stars. See Calendar.
Eponymous
Bones & Tones (Freedom Art)
Universal Sounds (Odean Pope [Portal]
Parrhesia (Stephen Haynes [Engine])

by Francis Lo Kee

Though it’s a cliché, Warren Smith really is a class in himself. There are only a few percussionists who have equal mastery on drumset as well as vibraphone.

Smith also plays instruments rarely heard in jazz, like timpani, glockenspiel and xylophone. And how many players can say they’ve contributed to the music of Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin, Sam Rivers, Van Morrison and Janis Joplin? These CDs feature Smith at the height of his creativity. Though “only” a sideman, his contributions are unmistakably prominent.

On Bones & Tones, Smith is on vibraphone in tandem with marimba player, and ostensible leader, Lloyd Haber. The sound of this frontline is an attractive one and while Smith provides the jazz chops on vibes, Haber provides focus by composing and arranging for the band.

The ensemble is rounded out by vocalist/percussionist Abdou Mboup and stalwart bassist Jaribu Shahid, making for a conceptually powerful but flexible and sensitive group. This CD grooves from start to finish thanks to Mboup and Shahid, who provide launching pads for the marimba and vibraphone solos. The tunes have a strong African flavor especially when Mboup sings on “Breathing Water” and “In the Valley of Dreams”. Smith’s solos are a stream of notes that fly up and down the keyboard, reminding us that the vibraphone is sometimes referred to as the vibraharp. His solo on his own composition “228” not only demonstrates his knowledge of vibraphone language (Lionel Hampton, Red Norvo, Milt Jackson, Gary Burton, Bobby Hutcherson, etc.) but his own unique voice.

The raw fire of Odean Pope is a wonder. Yet Universal Sounds is also structured by a master composer/arranger. Though there are two other great drummers on this CD (Belcher and Jim Hamilton) astute listeners know it’s Smith when a marimba, timpani or glockenspiel is heard. Those exotic colors are particularly welcome when Mboup sings on “Breathing Water” and “In the Valley of Dreams”.

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Seamus Blake is an established jazz journeyman who has been active on the New York scene for two decades, first making his mark with innovative young lion groups, later with the Mingus Big Band, Victor Lewis, John Scofield and other prominent artists. Meanwhile, his own dates as a leader have sustained a consistently high standard of composition, performance and personality within the neobop tradition.

Blake’s, seventh for Criss Cross, includes frequent collaborators guitarist Lage Lund, pianist David Kikoski, bassist Matt Clohesy and drummer Bill Stewart (who appeared on Blake’s very first release), a cohesive team which features a seamless frontline of guitar and tenor backed by a powerful but grounded percussive pulse. The mostly original set is bookended by Scofield’s “Dance Me Home” and Debussy’s “String Quartet in G minor, Opus 10”, the latter showcasing lyrical soprano sax work and highly effective piano textures. Blake stretches out on “Subterfuge”, “The Song That Lives Inside” and “Minor Celebrity”, producing a cogent tone across the wide ambit of his improvisations, embellishing his phrases with tasteful ornamentation, maintaining a cool composure even as his musical thought intensifies. Lund is similarly cool, favoring a dark, woody tone that matches Blake’s, engaging the tenor in a tandem build to tremendous volume and density.

Blake nevertheless embodies the vibrancy and immediacy of ‘mainstream’ jazz and this album represents him at the peak of his art and craft.

For more information, visit crixcsijazz.com. Blake is at Dizzy’s Club May 17th-22nd. See Calendar.
Polyrhythmic pursuits and the absorption of African sounds are recurrent elements of percussionist Lukas Ligeti’s music. Melodic minimalism and multi-metered layers typify his contemporary classical writing while he exercises overt Afrotop inspirations with his band Burkina Electric. Ligeti synthesizes these strands for his ambitious Pattern Time.

“Without Prior Warning” bursts open with a hyper electric bass ostinato from Michael Manning, a specialty of his. The leader’s drums and cowbell counter it, as Aly Keita’s balafon and Benoit Delbecq’s prepared-piano add percussive and rhythmic intrigue for saxophonist Gianni Gebbia’s puncturing beats. Like many of the pieces, it has a respiratory quality as the various rhythmic phrases converge and diverge. Chatter between prepared piano and balafon begins the episodic “On Patterned Time” until Ligeti’s steady bass drum elicits floating sax slurs and responding articulated notes from Delbecq. Developing from a swirling sax and balafon exchange, Manning and Ligeti build an insistent groove that spurs Gebbia’s improv.

The music is not all esoteric technicality. A winsome melody emerges from the music box-like exactness of “Timelessnesses” and after a dramatic sax and percussion crescendo, it recedes to tinkling keys. “From the Ground Up” boasts a funky vibe between bass and shuffling drums, from which the leader unveils a dynamic solo. Chasing single-note runs are passed between the instruments, creating a revolving swirl with “Dry Tear”, where Itzik impresses with his impassioned tune. The band adds a bop waltz to the mix with “Dry Tear”, where Itzik impresses with his drumming. The CD concludes with a wonderful version of pianist Richie Beirach’s ballad “Leaving” and the quick-tempered, scampering “Budva”.

The diversity of the songs and crispness of their interpretations is impressive. It sounds like these guys have been recording together for years instead of just starting out of the gate. Their collective talent makes this a maiden voyage worthy of celebration.

For more information, visit daywooddrive.com. This group is at Cornelia Street Café May 24th. See Calendar.

A Augmented Reality trio comprised of pianist Roy Assaf, drummer Ronen Itzik and bassist Jorge Roeder, has released a debut defined by sophistication, cohesiveness and a thoroughly engaging musicality. Most of the songs are written by Assaf and Itzik and even though the group is proficient at any tempo it’s clear that they prefer songs at the slower end of the spectrum. Throughout this recording Assaf’s playing is deft, clever and light-fingered; his flowing piano and Jarrett-like vocalizing leading the way on the mellow “Tabacon”. Roeder’s melancholy yet robust pizzicato and Itzik’s multifaceted stick work highlight the moody but effective ballad “Alfonsina Y El Mar”. “Sphere”, Assaf supplements his lovely piano playing with a surprising and splendid turn on the recorder.

Roeder’s plucking is excellent on the aforementioned “Sphere” and at the core of the elegiac “Morning of Sorrow”, “Stone and Sun” is another shimmering ballad driven by Assaf’s symphonic piano styling and composer Itzik’s masterful cymbal play.

Roeder does his best bass singing on Benny Carter’s “Only Trust Your Heart”, which is also the song the trio plays the most straight, so to speak. Roeder’s sensibilities and inventions are right on point and are an absolute pleasure to hear. With Assaf adding more of his great piano to this bright, uptempo tune, as well as Itzik’s solid drumming, this is the disc’s shining moment. Assaf’s “Ohel Israel” is a crisp and impassioned tune. The band adds a bop waltz to the mix with “Dry Tear”, where Itzik impresses with his drumming. The CD concludes with a wonderful version of pianist Richie Beirach’s ballad “Leaving” and the quick-tempered, scampering “Budva”.

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Augmented Reality
Roy Assaf/Ronen Itzik/Jorge Roeder
(Daywood Drive)
by Terrell Holmes

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For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. Anderson is at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola May 24th-29th with Houston Person. See Calendar.

The music of Gato Barbieri is central to the night. His timeless compositions and transcendent trumpet work have influenced countless artists. Together with his trio, consisting of bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Nasheet Waits, Barbieri will perform a set that is sure to move and transport the audience. See Calendar.

I’ve been fortunate to have a band that can so beautifully realize the vision. And this music and Jones himself are letter words to human beings who happen to be lucky. The rhythm section - pianist Orrin Evans, bassist Luques Curtis and drummer Obed Calvaire - punch this concept along with a drive that gets the message.

Jones can also write a beautiful, soulful melody, as is evidenced by “Momma”, a bouquet of loving flowers to his mother. It’s a gentle waltz, with the horns stating the heartfelt theme, which we can tell bears the fruit of a mother’s love. Evans plays a quietly affecting solo that manages to have rhythmic verve and display the harmonic richness of the song.

Perhaps the most celebratory tune is the Latin-ish “Olive Juice”, the title of which is inspired by an episode of Friends. With the percussion of Kahil Kwame Brown and the bright melody, it takes joy in a friend’s newfound love.

And there’s anger, too. “Love’s Fury” features guitarist Matt Stevens providing animal-like howls to complement the primal passion down in the trenches of love. The combination of the horns playing a thematic line and the visceral power of the rhythm section and guitar gives the tune a churning angst that has the density of a storm.

If you’re looking for more from the darker side, album closer “Forgiveness (Release)”, is another view of a parent-child relationship that ultimately reflects the loving nature of its title and provides that much needed letting-go.

This is not just another album of love songs. It’s about LOVE and it reflects both the chemistry of players who have worked together and care for each other as well as a pensive approach to what that four-letter word means to human beings who happen to be playing music at this point in time.

For more information, visit mackavenue.com. Jones is at Jazz Standard starting May 31st. See Calendar.

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These are two excellent and dissimilar trio records with drummer Thomas Strønen. Meadow has pianist John Taylor and tenor/soprano saxophonist Tore Brunborg. Food has tenor/soprano saxophonist Iain Ballamy and either trumpeter Nils Petter Molvær or guitarist Christian Fennesz. Blissful Ignorance is on Edition, a small independent British label, but it has more of the ‘ECM sound’ than Quiet Inlet, itself an ECM release. The former was recorded and mixed by Jan Erik Kongshaug, who has engineered hundreds of ECM albums while the latter comes from live recordings at the Blå club in Oslo and the Molde Festival.

There is nowhere to hide on Blissful Ignorance. In the bare spaces of this trio, Taylor’s aslant lyricism and Brunborg’s terse austerity are starkly juxtaposed. Strønen necessarily functions in the front line, spattering commentary all around the other two instruments in a continuous percussive flowing. Moment-to-moment free improvisation never fully disconnects from threads of preconceived song woven throughout. Seven of the nine pieces are by Brunborg, incantatory calls like “Badger” and rapt, solemn contemplations like “Kirstis Tårer”, “Reven” and “Tunn Is”. On “Kirstis Tårer”, Brunborg and then Taylor set out the dark assumptions, but it is Strønen who most deeply explores them, rustling and shimmering across the breadth of the sound stage. On “Tunn Is”, Strønen goes first and last and quietly conjures a specific ominous atmosphere. Brunborg and Taylor offer only spare, cryptic markings. Kongshaug gets every nuance of Brunborg’s expelled breath and Taylor’s touch and Strønen’s brush strokes and surrounds them all with air.

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The development of Jason Kahn’s work says quite a lot about the trajectory of experimental music since the mid ’80s. A member of the SST band Universal Congress Of, his early work signified the move towards freedom that took place in forward-thinking punk circles in the late ’80s. Following Kahn’s move to Germany, his interests went both towards the work of improvisers and composers like Conrad Bauer and Arnold Dreyblatt and also towards the rapidly evolving experimental music scene in Japan, in collaborations with Taku Sugimoto and Toshimaru Nakamura (whose move from playing guitar to no-input mixing board took place during the first years of their collaborations). By the late ’90s Kahn’s own work had moved from that of a drummer to that of a sound artist who works with percussion, samplers and modular synthesizers.

In recent years Kahn has been experimenting with graphic notation and Sin Asunto documents a performance of a graphic score written for Christian Weber (bass), Bo Wiget (cello) and Vincent Milliou (violin). The precisely-timed 60-minute performance brings to the listener an alien sound world of exquisitely placed macroscopic sound objects. Kahn directly calls attention to the precedent of Albert Ayler’s work with strings (the Impulse Live at the Village Vanguard release comes to mind) and this highlights the significance of Kahn’s genesis towards his current methodologies. Drawn initially from punk rock towards the work of improvisers like Ayler, Kahn’s work underscores the relationship between ’60s innovators and the more subtle approach to generating intensity that has become so ubiquitous in recent years.

Appearing at Issue Project Room last month as part of the Unsound Festival, Kahn emphatically forwards a much less subtle image of his sound experiments. In the trio MKM with Günter Müller and Norbert Möslang, sounds swirled and grinded and tumbled around the expansive room, reverberating off the high ceilings. Having previously toured Japan, Europe and the Americas, MKM has a profound synergy to their methods of interaction. What was a nice treat for the night, then, was to hear each member in the more extemporaneous duo with another guest. One could hardly imagine three more diverse sets of electronic improvised music than Muller’s restrained duo with Taylor Deupree, Kahn’s intense but focused duo with Richard Kammerman and Möslang’s caterwauling duo with Gang Gang Dance vocalist Lizzi Bougatsos. Unsound and Issue Project Room ran with the opportunity to present MKM and turned it into an evening-length thesis on the art of collaboration.

For more information, visit creativesourcesrec.com

Brain & Balls BBQ
Buttercup Metal Polish & Jacques Demierre
(Creative Sources)
by Stuart Broomer

Buttercup Metal Polish is the Swiss duo of drummers Nicolas Field and Alexandre Babel. Playing together since 2002, the pair represent an unusual combination of traditional jazz drumming and contemporary percussion music. Part of their appeal consists in the way they create a true collective with the two drummers bouncing off each other in a manner that is both novel and unpredictable timbres line up, drum rolls matched against patterns of clicks, whirs and scrapes. They’re matched here with countryman pianist Jacques Demierre in a series of free improvisations recorded in Japan.

While they’re capable of considerable subtlety - in the sustained pointillism of “He’s likable guts”, for example - this is a far cry from minimalist improvisation. Field and Babel are just as likely to attack with the ancient enthusiasm of Gene Krupa and they often do, hitting everything in the kit. Demierre has a mercurial touch at the keyboard, evident in the brilliantly spiky phrases set against the drummers’ random flurries of percussion on “Lettre du gouverneur”. Often, though, he behaves less like a conventional pianist than another percussionist, darting strings and exploring the whole of his instrument: on the concluding “L’empire du nez” he repeatedly finds new and isolated sounds in the piano’s interior, each one triggering a response from the drums.

The longer pieces here reveal continuous evolution, densities and sound developing rapidly and organically, as in the energized “How to choose plus size dresses that flatter (in a mushroom)”, with its rolling waves of piano sound swirling through a minefield of snares and cymbals. Throughout the CD, Buttercup Metal Polish and Demierre manage the unlikely task of creating music that’s every bit as witty and disconnecting as their titles.

For more information, visit creativesourcesrec.com. Demierre is at Downtown Music Gallery May 1st. See Calendar.
For those who are only familiar with electric bassist Giacomo Merega through his 2007 debut as a leader, The Light and Other Things (Creative Nation), these two releases may come as something of a surprise: one an avant-pop interpretation of the music of Schoenberg, Poulenc and Ives, the other a highly accessible release that lies somewhere between postbop and smooth jazz.

Merega, a native of Genoa who completed his studies at The New England Conservatory before moving to Brooklyn several years ago, is found playing in the group Dollshot with Rosalie Kaplan (vocals), Noah Kaplan (saxophone) and Wes Matthews (piano). The music’s high sense of drama, combined with Kaplan’s sweetly sonorous voice, may recall, in an odd way, the Canterbury sound of groups like Slapp Happy or Art Bears. Phrases like “the trees, the trees are falling” or “the breeze, the breeze, the breeze is choking” is mirrored on the instrumental level by the breathy oscillations of the saxophone. “Der Genügsame Liebhaber” is a relatively orthodox interpretation of one of Schoenberg’s cabaret pieces. Orphic, as that is, until the music is interrupted by mini-passages of free improvisation replete with atonal piano and wailing saxophone. The alternating segments of cabaret and free music give the impression of two parallel conversations, using a popular genre to convey more avant garde intentions. “The Cage, Maple Leaves, Evening” is an Ives medley that follows a similar trajectory, with some especially interesting passages of timbral manipulation by Kaplan’s sax and Merega’s prepared bass, which, however briefly, leaves the land of Joe Morris for the percussive world of Glenn Branca. The aptly named “Rolling Vamp” begets a tumbling lopsided rhythm over which Lake effortlessly glides, with falsetto asides and multiphonic flutters, before a solo full of timbral wit from the drummer. Similarly the driving “Spring-Ing Ulrich’s title track is one of the most straightforward numbers, with a lyrical theme framing three-way improvisation before a gradual return to the opening gambit.

Though adept at conventional swinging rhythms, the Swiss pairing typically tend towards more fragmented structures, as on the knotty opener “Marion Theme” where they leave asymmetric pockets of space for Lake’s bittersweet alto saxophone to veer into melodic invention and bracing atonality, spiced by bursts of juddering overtones. Paradoxically Ulrich’s title track is one of the most straightforward numbers, with a lyrical theme framing three-way improvisation before a gradual return to the opening gambit. Together they forge a coherent group identity in which the drummer and compatriot bassist Christian Weber forcefully makes the case that this band merits future recordings.

For more information, visit intaktrec.ch. Lake is at Jazz Gallery May 14th. See Calendar.
A leading jazz academic, as well as composer-arranger, Andy Jaffe’s eclecticism and breadth as a writer is on display here, from swinging big band charts to a suite reminiscent of the mid-20th Century Third Stream movement. Six of the big band tracks are from the Bill Lowe/Andy Jaffe Repertory Big Band, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and three feature The Slovak Radio Orchestra. Portaculture, the suite, augments the latter with a string section and American guest musicians.

The repertory pieces from the Lowe/Jaffe band abound in complex harmonies, stacked voicings often mixing sections and a modern but palpable sense of big band tradition. Bud Powell’s “Un Poco Loco”, with layered ostinato and backgrounds to the soloists Jaffe orchestrated from Max Roach’s drums and cymbals from the original Blue Note recording, is reinvented at its swinging best. “Old Folks”, with echoes of “A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square”, provides Gil Evans-like sonorous orchestral backgrounds for Rob Faulkner’s flugelhorn. Singer Kitty Kathryn is provided with rollicking big band frames with R&B fringes on Fats Domino’s “I’m Walkin’” and Nat Cole’s “Straighten Up and Fly Right”. Jaffe puts a Coltrane spin on “Woody’n You” with the Slovak orchestra, also heard doing two of his originals.

“My idea was to juxtapose musical and cultural ideas in close and sudden proximity,” says Jaffe of the five-part Portaculture. “It’s an arch form: movements I and V share material, so do II and IV and III combines everything.” Richard Stoltzman, best known as a classical clarinetist, is one of the main soloists, along with reedman Bruce Williamson, another jazz educator-musician. Juxtapositions range from slow and fast to light (shades of Raymond Scott) and heavy, with more than a suggestion of dancing revels in the sprightly mixing of 3/4, 6/8, 5/4 and 4/4 meters. For a putatively serious, ambitious work, it is delightfully adroit, truly fun for the listener.

For more information, visit bigroundrecords.com. Bill Lowe is at Cornelia Street Café May 15th with Taylor Ho Bynum. See Calendar.

Cut-and-paste has become a creation of its own - one that begs the very question of how a genre can be constituted by a process that is characterized precisely by the dissolution of music styles such as we know them. However that may be, the bands that practice it are out there and they come expecting us to recognize their justification and, perhaps, their uniqueness.

Steampunk Serenade is a mash of mellow swing with a taste of precision-strike energy music, jabs of cyber-funk, robo-punk and such stuff that, however raucous it gets, always rolls out the carpet for us at the right times to a place of calm and reflection. One of the trio’s more remarkable traits is the way the musicians never get in each other’s way. Erik Lawrence’s saxes are mellifluous, even when they burn with freedom, such that the bass colorings from Rene Hart enter into the mix, when they come, with touching inflection. Allison Miller has a nice bop base as a drummer but knows just how and when to lose the beat, circling the band like a spider circles her web.

A nice compositional logic is at work here as well, one that extends from the individual songs themselves to the interrelation among them. Thus, what comes across is not simply a trendy postmodernism, but rather something with the niceties of composed concert music. The energy often runs high, but no in-your-face threat grabs. If the fact that “Over the Rainbow” is the midpoint track means anything, this is a trio who do not seek to bowl over an audience even collectively. That song, amid a dozen other fine (mostly) originals, stands as an anti-signature piece. In the long run there is something entirely inviting about this effort, like that of a wedding band a true jazz fan would want to play at his or her wedding. Which is to say it’s not for beginners, but it is genuinely delightful and romantic.

For more information, visit foxhavenrecords.com. This group is at Cornelia Street Café May 5th. See Calendar.
Anders Nilsson and Fay Victor open up their first duo record with Duke Ellington’s “Mood Indigo” and they do it in a way that makes you half feel like you’ve never heard it before and whole feel that you want to hear more. Victor’s voice and Nilsson’s guitar aren’t beholden to Ellington. They’re beholden only to the song - enveloping it, possessing it and freeing it again. Which, time was, what made the blues the blues, back when it was a cry, before it was just a beat.

This is what seems to be The Exposed Blues Duo modus operandi: it’s not the blues that’s exposed on Bare, it’s the duo. Nilsson and Victor are heartfelt and volatile. They pull some other standards from the jazz book - “Blue Monk”, “Rocking Chair” - and pull out some great gospel blues as well: “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho”, “Mother Earth” and “If I Had My Way” (aka “Samson and Delilah”). They both play loose and easy with the material and don’t always play together in the traditional sense, but they are always deeply playing the songs. It’s not so much, in other words, that The Exposed Blues Duo is ‘updating’ or ‘modernizing’ the material; in fact it’s the opposite: they’re resonating with its history.

Victor takes a very similar approach for a very different record with Kaiso Stories, bringing calypso and her own Trinidad and Tobago background into a setting with four stalwarts of New York free jazz. The notion of ‘playing the song’ without necessarily ‘playing together’ in a traditional sense is key to understanding the meeting between Victor and Other Dimensions in Music. The power quartet (Roy Campbell and Daniel Carter on a variety of horns and percussion, William Parker on double bass, gembri, bass duduk and trombonium and Charles Downs on drums and percussion) have always been more musical than some of their freeblowing contemporaries and it serves this session well. They provide an open and easy setting over which Victor lays lyrics from classic calypso cuts of the ’30s and ’50s (the two pinnacles of the calypso movement). While the record is steeped in Victor’s heritage, even the accents and inflections she grew up hearing, it’d be a mistake to call Kaiso Stories a calypso record. It’s free jazz with source material and as such is an unusual and wonderful album.

Veteran drummer/bandleader Ralph Peterson’s Unity Project band was inspired by the late organist Larry Young’s landmark Unity album, featuring a trio of talented, young, up-and-coming musicians: trumpeter Josh Evans, tenor saxophonist Jovian Alexander and organist Pat Bianchi. 4 of the release’s 12 tracks appeared on Unity, starting with Woody Shaw’s “The Moontrane”, an explosive opener fueled by the leader’s driving percussion. Peterson kicks off Shaw’s “Zoltan” by suggesting that he’s leading a parade, with Evans and Alexander playing tight unison lines over Peterson’s surging polyrhythms, supported by Bianchi’s pulsing organ, guitarist David Fiuczynski adding an edgy solo in the midst of the fireworks. The intense workout of Shaw’s “Beyond All Limits” tests the younger players, who pass with flying colors with the guidance of Peterson. Bianchi is center stage for the hip treatment of Thelonious Monk’s “Monk’s Dream”, with Peterson providing his only backing, an energetic performance that also has a bit of sly humor.

“We Three Kings” is typically found on Christmas albums (though Rahsaan Roland Kirk long ago made it fair game any time of year). Alexandre and Evans sit this one out as Bianchi and Peterson share the spotlight, though it is the leader who is heard on trumpet, courtesy of the magic of overdubbing. Fiuczynski returns for the hard-edged, funky “Spectrum”, a sizzling finale to an inspired record date. Peterson’s composer skills are also on display. His breezy “Beyond My Wildest Dream” is a hip melody dedicated to his wife Diane while “On My Side” is a lush ballad with a rich horn unison over mellow organ and effective brushwork.

For more information, visit ralphpetersonmusic.com. Peterson is at Miles’ Café May 20th-21st. See Calendar.
At The Cotton Club
Duke Ellington (Storyville)
Duke! (Three Portraits of Ellington)
Graham Reynolds/Golden Arm Trio (Innova)
From His World To Mine
Dan Block (Miles High)
Alone With Duke
David Morgenroth (Eskie)

by Graham Flanagan

April 29, 2011 marked the 112th anniversary of Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington’s birth. Fans of the legendary jazz pioneer have four new ways to celebrate via a diverse group of newly released recordings.

There’s no better way to appreciate Duke Ellington’s storied legacy than by starting with the man himself. The double-CD At The Cotton Club provides a formidable, 47-song glimpse at a unique era of his career: that which preceded his long association with Billy Strayhorn. These recordings span 1937-38, along with three tracks from a live 1939 broadcast from Stockholm, Sweden. The bulk of the selections come from radio broadcasts transmitted during Ellington’s famous engagement at the Cotton Club, one that lasted, on and off, for the better part of a decade. As expected, this study in pre-Strayhorn Ellingtonia offers a cornucopia of rarities, many of which would soon disappear from the bandleader’s permanent repertoire. Highlights include the boisterous exercise in syncopation “Birmingham Breakdown”, as well as “Alabamy Home”, a possible precursor to “Caravan”, which features Ellington’s standby vocalist from this period: Ivie Anderson. We also get early renditions of career-long standards like “Mood Indigo”, “Solitude” and “In a Sentimental Mood”. A must for serious Ellington collectors, At The Cotton Club holds a special interest to audiophiles; many of the original recordings were made by Joseph Schillinger, hailed by many as a pioneer in the fields of recording and arrangement.

On the ambitious new release Duke! (Three Portraits of Ellington), composer, bandleader and pianist Graham Reynolds, along with his “Golden Arm Trio”, creates a three-part salute to Ellington, beginning with seven unique arrangements of Ellington classics like “Caravan”, “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing)” and “Cotton Tail”. Brimming with aggressively bumptious percussion, this lively set features inspired playing from Reynolds’ ensemble, especially from saxophonists John Mills, Paul Klemperer and Thad Scott. The horn section notably shines on Arabiantinged versions of “Echoes of Harlem” and “Blue Pepper”. The album’s middle section shows off Reynolds’ talent as an arranger unafraid to let his imagination take the music to places most might not otherwise expect. Here he charges a large string-ensemble to interpret the same tunes previously heard in a traditional jazz setting. Reynolds closes the disc with seven fascinating remixes of the songs featured in the first set. Guest mixologists include DJ Spooky, Butcher Bear and Reynolds himself.

For a slightly more straightahead tribute, look no further than From His World To Mine by Dan Block, who here works overtime on tenor sax, alto sax, clarinet and bass clarinet. This release already qualifies as one of the most solid straightahead efforts of the year thus far. This quickly becomes apparent on the album-opening swinger “Kissing Bug”, where Block’s muscular tenor-work clearly recalls Dexter Gordon’s Blue Note era. Along with that gem, Block sprinkles myriad rarely-referenced Ellington nuggets throughout the album, such as the unique mood piece “The Beautiful Indians” as well as a samba-infused take on “Mt. Harrissa”. Block gets strong support from bassist Lee Hudson and drummer Brian Grico, along with five terrific selections featuring Mark Sherman on vibes. While this excellent music stands out as the most accessible of the featured Ellington tributes, its unique song selection will no doubt pique the interest of seasoned Ellingtonians.

Pianist David Morgenroth’s outstanding solo release Alone With Duke celebrates the spirit of the master with 13 interpretations of some of the most beloved Ellington compositions. Morgenroth plays with an overall laid-back, relaxing style that always stays fresh and surprising. He sets the proper mood with a playful, album-opening rendition of “Just Squeeze Me”. He recreates the same joyful feeling on midtempo readings of classics like “Cotton Tail”, “I’m Just a Lucky So-And-So” and “C Jam Blues”. Morgenroth also honors Duke with a series of ballads, exhibiting an especially beautiful feeling on “Come Sunday”, “Melancholia” and the album-closing “Single Petal of a Rose”.

For more information, visit storyville-records.com, innova.mu, mileshighrecords.com and davidmorgenroth.com. An Ellington tribute is at Allen Room May 3rd-4th. The Essentially Ellington Concert is at Avery Fisher Hall May 14th. See Calendar.

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THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | May 2011 31

“...the music is warm with well-conceived autumn colors. The harmonies for the reeds and brass are rich and often breathtaking."

— Bruce Lee Gallanter, Downbeat Music Gallery
If you approach *For YES!* as a Michael Marcus CD, you’re quickly struck by how easily it could have been credited to the trumpeter, who might just happen to be playing Marcus’ songs. Then as you go along, you start to think that maybe it’s the bass player who’s the featured artist, then maybe it’s the guy on Fender Rhodes. Such is the egalitarian ethos of Marcus, one of jazz’ most consistently excellent reedists. Fluent on tenor, alto and soprano saxes, as well as the Rahsaan Roland Kirk-associated stritch and manzello, recently Marcus has focused on the Bb clarinet on CD in small group settings and in Duology, a fruitful pairing with trumpeter Ted Daniel.

Here it’s the hotshot up-and-comer Lenwood “Woody” Turner on trumpet and his easy lines and fluid improvisations threaten to steal the show, particularly across the nine minutes of “Mojo Breakfast”. Anchored by coproducer Rashaan Carter’s bass and accented with sprinkles of electric piano from John Austria, a handful of drummers (Clifford Barbaro, Darrell Green, Emanuel Harrold, Jay Rosen or Russell Carter) round out this quintet that plays straightahead music (all compositions by Marcus), bookending the solos with melodic statements, as on the opener “Bird Comes Home” and the dreamy ballad, “Night Eyes in Spring”. The bouncy tunefulness of “Theme Dream” could be plucked from a Golden Era Blue Note or Atlantic Jazz album while Marcus, Turner and Austria navigate the smooth grooves of “Dragon Concerto” like Billy Dee Williams moving through a crowd of stewardesses.

One of Marcus’ most rewarding partnerships has been with one of the elders of fire music, altoist Sonny Simmons in the Cosmosamatics, where the masterful horns come together and apart in a hypnotic intertwining of sounds. In this band, however, it’s Marcus who takes Turner along on the sinuous journey through “Riff-Be-In”, their dialogue marked by Marcus’ snake-charming and Turner’s untroubled glide, their empathic communication audible in every note.

For more information, visit nottwo.com. Marcus is at Rhythm in the Kitchen Festival May 27th with Jay Rosen and 28th in duo with Charlie Taylor. See Calendar.

Guitarist Sheryl Bailey is a chameleon of sorts who is equally at home interpreting Jimi Hendrix, oozing juice with her hot B3 trio, playing klezmer or fronting a big band. *For All Those Living*, however, showcases a more evolved Bailey who has put together a straightahead quartet of pianist Jim Ridl, bassist Gary Wang and drummer Shingo Okudaira to serve as a vehicle for these eight highly personal original compositions.

There is a definite positive vibe to this session that can swing hard but never loses track of the tunes. Even the title cut, with its subtle hint of the Irving Berlin chestnut “Blue Skies”, a paean to those of us left after losing a loved one, is celebratory in nature. Much of that faith is due to Bailey’s instrumental command, always-elegant tone and comfort level with the material. Yet that has always been the case with Bailey and this is somehow different, more expansive yet more in the pocket.

Whatever the reason, this is a great setting for Bailey to showcase her strengths and they are much in evidence. In the absence of the overpowering B3, her choral mastery, pure tone and leadership all shine, leaving no doubt who is in charge. Even when Ridl takes center stage for a solo, as on CD opener “An Unexpected Turn”, he picks up from Bailey’s lead and sets the stage for her reentry.

Other tunes recognize friends and influences: superbly fluid lines on “A Muse Sings” toast late guitarist Jimmy Wyble; the hard swing of “Masa’s Bag” pays tribute to guitarist Masa Sasaki; an exquisite arrangement, “Wilkinsburg”, doubly defers to both Bailey’s western Pennsylvania roots and the immaculate style of guitarist Jack Wilkins and soulful swing salutes famed saxophonist Hank Mobley on “Moblin’”. *For All Those Living* signals yet another new direction for Sheryl Bailey, one that is borne out of experience with a positive eye toward the future.

For more information, visit sherylbailey.com. Bailey is at Ronald McDonald House May 8th and 55Bar May 20th. See Calendar.
Trumpeter David Weiss, whose work occupies a curious space between reflecting on repertory and pushing forward with devil-may-care aplomb, is a founding member of the New Jazz Composers Octet and former collaborator with Freddie Hubbard and Horace Silver among others. Weiss’ recent projects include the septet The Cookers, a paean to Hubbard’s 1964 Night of the Cookers discs on Blue Note, which was initially a vehicle to explore the late trumpeter’s music and that of musicians associated with his circle.

Warriors brings Weiss together with trumpeter Eddie Henderson, pianist George Cables, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Billy Hart on a program of seven member originals and Hubbard’s “The Core”. The latter, an explosive number from the Jazz Messengers’ Free for All (Blue Note, 1964), starts the disc, reminding one that Blakey’s unit wasn’t just hardbop, but a vehicle for young composers with a hell of a lot of fire. Henderson is the first soloist and, while a player mostly associated with fusion, brings a deftly-applied weight to the music and lays the groundwork for a hard-charging Harper and Weiss’ toothy straight-arrow improvisation. Cables’ “Spookarella” features Weiss’ lush arrangements and a surprising orchestral lilt that encircles Handy’s metallic pierce-and-flutter and the pianist’s spiky filigree. “Priestess” and “Capra Black” represent the catalog of Harper compositions, Cables giving the former a deep, churchy refrain beneath flinty and lush interwoven texture. The latter is Harper’s signature tune, an elastic and knotty theme somewhere out of Duke Pearson-land, predicated by a sanctified bottom and elegantly rolling rhythm.

Cast The First Stone expands The Cookers’ lineup slightly, bringing tenor and soprano firebrand Azar Lawrence into the picture on four of the disc’s seven tracks - originals by Harper, McBee, Cables and Harold Mabern. The title opener is Harper’s tune and merges cascading fluidity with big blocks of sound. For example, at its most lilting, uptempo moments, there remains a gooey sense of time that McBee and Hart toy around with, making a stew of blurry accent. The piece moves from punchy forward motion to languid chorus and fleet dialogue, with Harper cutting through as the preacher’s voice. Weiss is thin and crackling in his bursts, pushing forth atop an alternately restive and churning chordal-rhythmic background and Cables emerges to spin a call and response between spiritual rejoinder and glassy detail true to the composer’s vision of factional emotion. Restless rhythm pervades even the stately warmth of McBee’s “Peacemaker”, giving a rustling energy behind Henderson’s pensive, muted statements. Ambiguity surrounds Handy’s bubbling keen before his florid improvisation is set up against blocky movement.

While music like what’s offered by The Cookers has been around in some form or another for decades, the vitality in how these musician-composers engage the material is a reminder that there are few laurels to be rested on.

For more information, visit jazzlegacyproductions.com and plusloin.net. This group is at Iridium May 14th-15th. See Calendar.
As unruffled as any musical conversation among veteran players, the free improvs of *Triangle 2* evolve with certainty and sophistication. Nonetheless, with each player an old hand at pushing instrumental timbres to their limits, the results are anything but comfy. Multi-reedman Vinny Golia, trombonist George Lewis and bassist Bert Turetzky are so experienced at sonically depicting the seemingly impossible that they can do so at medium tempos and moderate volume. Plus these unorthodox techniques don’t stop them from creating harmonious musical relationships.

With Turetzky’s stentorian bowing or flashing spicato, he sets up the other’s improvisations then provides string-slapping continuum. Lewis’ contributions range from earth-shaking capillary growls and plunger cries to vocalized tremolo tones. Association with Anthony Braxton serves him when dealing contrapuntally or in harmony with Golia, who outlines breathy flute patterns, guttural contrabass clarinet roars and shrill, yet legato clarinet lines.

Although lacking the bassist’s col legno bow work or slide-whistle like squeals from Golia, which enliven a track like “Diversion a Tre”, two other tracks pinpoint the trio’s intuitive cooperation. “A Low Frequency Colloquy” is just that; Golia’s glissandi and Lewis’ brays sink to such a subterranean low that Turetzky’s pedal point soon prods them to alternate guttural tones with higher-pitched shrills. However “Another Heated Conversation”, with its mirrored triple-counterpoint, is heated in execution not anger. By the finale it’s nearly impossible to distinguish one instrument’s texture from another, with the trombonist trumpeting elephant-like, the bassist slapping his lowest tones and the reedman overblowing pressurized licks from two horns simultaneously. As perfectly balanced as a triangle’s three sides, the performances are emotionally fulfilling as well.

For more information, visit kadmacollective.com. Lewis is at The Stone May 20th. See Calendar.

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Peter Evans has established a reputation as a trumpeter of extraordinary technical skills, a mastery of traditional jazz approaches and an ability to innovate both as an improviser and as a trumpeter. Perhaps it’s his ability to exploit conventional chord changes and the mercurial possibilities of free improvisation and more complex structures simultaneously that are most striking. That particular tightrope act has never been more explicit than it is with his new quintet, where he’s joined by pianist Carlos Homs, bassist Tom Blancarte, drummer Jim Black and, most significantly, Sam Pluta on live processing and laptop.

The transformation of traditional materials is apparent immediately here in the opening “...One to Ninety Two”, based on the chords of Mel Torme’s “The Christmas Song”. Evans constructs a fantasia of great complexity, the brassy precision of his trumpet matched against Pluta’s transformation of the instrument. The group manages to create dense rhythmic activity with individual instruments and parts of the harmony moving at different rates. Homs and Evans in his ability to command concentration amidst its own electronic disintegration and there are moments of sound in here that might be directly attributable to Blancarte’s bowed bass or Pluta’s machinations. “323”, named for its rhythmic cells, develops as a feature for the combined rhythmic invention of Black and Pluta.

The program includes both long explorations (eg, Peter Evans’ own “Articulation”) as well brief and trenchant episodes, like a luminous reworking of Hoagy Carmichael’s “Stardust”. While the CD title *Ghosts* might suggest Albert Ayler’s energy-music anthem, Evans appears interested in the transformative power of all the ghosts of the jazz past: a piece called “Ghost” eerily reworks material from Victor Young’s “I Don’t Stand a Ghost of a Chance with You”, a song now almost too obscure to be thought of as a standard. This is exciting and very distinctive music, a fresh look at the integration of acoustic and electronic elements.

For more information, visit moreismorerecords.com. Evans is at Bovary Poetry Club May 29th. See Calendar.

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**Ghosts**

*Peter Evans Quintet (More Is More)*

*by Stuart Broomer*
Can you have over 60 CDs under your belt and still not be a name that readily trips off the lips of most jazz lovers? Well it would seem so in the case of pianist Michael Jefry Stevens. Although best known for his co-leadership of a long-lived group with bassist Joe Fonda and the transatlantic Conference Call with German reedman Gebhard Ullmann, Stevens is active across so many jazz genres in so many countries that it can be hard to keep track. Add to that a move several years ago to the less-than-fashionable jazz center of Memphis and perhaps there is an explanation for the years ago to the less-than-fashionable jazz center of Memph and perhaps there is an explanation for the understated profile. But for those in the know, Stevens’ adventurous but always lyrical pianisms are a surefire marker that close attention is required and those traits show through. Alongside some familiar tunes are five numbers stemming from the pens of each band member. To say they’ve been together over 20 years and it shows in the vitality that surges through this set making it one not to miss.

Two years later and some 500 miles to the south, Stevens appears in another international aggregation, this time in the company of Fonda. In combination with two Hungarian jazz masters they form the Eastern Boundary Quartet, whose Icicles was recorded in concert in Budapest. Over the course of a 50-minute program of six originals from within the band and a cover of guitarist Attila Zoller’s “Hungarian Jazz Rhapsody”, the four attain a seamless merging of jazz with Balkan folk melodies. Buoyed by Fonda’s swinging bounce, both Stevens and saxophonist Mihály Borbély achieve poetic flight, as on the bassist’s sprightly opener “Fish Soup” where Borbély’s pure-toned soprano slides between pitches, abetted by the pianist’s edgy comping. The two Americans sit out “Soft Balkan Wind”, which passes in a whirl of serpentine soprano and rambunctious drumming. But even on an album full of lovely airs like Fonda’s “China” or Borbély’s closing “Transylvania Blues”, Steven’s title track stands out, building on a downbeat bluesy solo piano intro to launch a gorgeous luminescently spacious excursion at the start of the retrained “Color Deep”, only to morph into insistent percussive accents on dampered piano keys to support Solothurnmann’s breathy alto. There is a fizzing vitality that surges through this set making it one not to miss.

Under the In Transit moniker, Stevens hooks up with three Swiss musicians for Shifting Moods, a live date documented from Zurich in 2007, their second offering following 2004’s well-received Moving Stills (Unit Records). As on its predecessor, the foursome generates a roster of spontaneous compositions that manifest an inherent sense of structure but still have enough space to showcase their ample talents. Not everyone plays at once; voices are added and subtracted, but together they forge an exceptionally strong ensemble identity based around deep listening and interaction between four equals. It helps that saxophonist Jürg Solothurnmann shares Stevens’ predilection for melody amongst the atonality, so that there is a tunefulness in even their most fiery moments. Drummer Dieter Ulrich proves adept at laying a timbrally inventive arrhythmic pulse and meshes well with bassist Daniel Studer, whose slash-and-burn arco is one of the strengths of this band.

Their playful take on the tradition convinces, recasting the ballad “It Never Entered My Mind” as a loping groove over which Stevens ruminates on the show tune while “My Baby Don’t Care For Me” begins as a restless rubato with churning drum rolls before hitting an energetic stride. Even some of the originals, like Ferguson’s nagging “Green Room” and Siegel’s blues-drenched homage to Shirley Horn, “Remembering Shirley”, develop the feel of standards. Stevens is in his pomp on the latter but elsewhere demonstrates a light touch on a tripping rendition of “It’s Only A Paper Moon” and a poignant “Tennessee Waltz”. For more information, visit konnex-records.de. Stevens is at Miles’ Café May 25th, I-Beam May 26th and Saint Peter’s May 29th, all with the Generations Trio. See Calendar.
Miles Davis was an avatar of excess, from the cauldron of his mental cravings to the exorbitant appetites of his tongue. A critic is corollatively daunted, feeling it incumbent to exercise a rigor in word choice that Davis did in note choice. Obviously, there is vast territory in the world of Miles beyond the phenomenon of the cosmically perfect solo. He was jazz' greatest talent scout and this segues into another whole area of his importance, involving nurture of that talent indelibly soldered to the evolution of his own gestalt of improvisation, communication and composition. This has left a legacy in which alumni, recording history and song are all interconnected in a mesh that will last forever - as will the desire to pay tribute to the master.

Lew Soloff's remake of Davis and Gil Evans' *Sketches of Spain* is a labor of love - a phenomenal privilege for us in itself, like a print made from the original block. Soloff leads with inflections of Davis, but his tone is more soberly paced and even tauter than Miles (if that is possible). On the original, Davis was as if chomping at the bit, proceeding slowly but ever forward, taking slyly down all the new rows to be seeded, a hearty recipe for a harvest leaving interminable unfinished business that makes the reworking necessary. And, indeed, Soloff slows things down on the arrangement level as well, making everything gentler without inducing any lack of intensity. A sheer pleasure to listen to, the effort does justice to its source and more - something only a handful of musicians in the world are in a position to do and of which even fewer are capable.

Gerry Gibbs and the Electric Thresher Orchestra's *Play The Music of Miles Davis 1967-1975* is a Herculean effort at containing the entirety of Davis' vast fusion output into a two-CD set. What keeps it working is the fleet simplicity of Gibbs' own drumming. Gibbs is more restrained than, say, Tony Williams or Jack DeJohnette and, as a result, hidden new complexities implied by the works are given the chance to breathe. It never gets claustrophobic in here. Silences and caesuras also grace this effort in intense, unexpected and provocative ways. New tone and patina are achieved, particularly by multi-reediest Doug Webb. In fact, everyone shines. Heavy business and play, difficult dark funk and light, finger-popping stuff alternate with all the cultural, sensual, sexual import of the source material and adopt its bedrock principle: sharing good, damn fun.

The ensemble Animation has released the Davis fusion tribute *Asiento*, apparently drawing the term from a historical usage that designates the act of the Spanish opening their slave market to other sovereign sellers. The legacy of slavery is, in so many words, the legacy of jazz and you can see that there is vast work of interpretation to be applied to a major jazz opus like Davis' body of fusion work relating to its context in the evolution of post-colonial culture. The work is a song-by-song replay of *Bitches Brew*, but *Asiento* for some reason withholds acknowledgment of that on the sleeve. Evidently, an aim to position this effort as a primary artistic source is at work. This may be part of a politics of irony - although, in all truth, the approach to the source is sincerely original and inventive. It realizes that to the passing consumer, this looks like a new title by a new group, with no connection to Miles. True to its packaging, though, the music does indeed play with identity politics, disguising songs with almost-disco beats and getting light and footloose, then turning the jive on its back and getting on with the dark business of serious music.

Barron's "And Then Again" have long been staples of each composer's repertoire and they prove to be excellent vehicles for the trio, even if they were new to the other musicians prior to the tour. The unison clapping at the start of "Someday My Prince Will Come" suggests that this was an encore from one of the shows. Though this standard has long been a favorite of jazz groups, the trio puts its own stamp on it, revealing new facets in their exploration of this familiar Waltz.
Trombonist Chris Washburne and his SYOTOS band are one of the hottest contemporary Latin jazz septets performing in NYC. Compared to their prior release, the fiery sociologically aware Land of Nod (2006), Fields of Moons puts the politics on hold and turns down the heat. Here, the band’s lovely three-horn voicings are highlighted in the context of superb ensemble playing divided equally between polished originals and stately interpretations of Latin and jazz standards.

Washburne’s self-penned title cut induces a mood reminiscent of a bygone ballroom era when jazz was meant for dancing and band harmony ruled over stand-up solos. Likewise on the calm “Seas of Slumber” that follows, he artfully plays over a lilting Latin beat courtesy of two new band members, drummer Diego Lopez and percussionist Cristian Rivera. The elegantly constructed “Obesión”, written by Latin big band icon Pedro Flores, is a lovely vehicle for trumpeter John Walsh to lock horns with Washburne.

Saxophonist Ole Mathisen rounds out the frontline and, in addition to contributing two of the more distinctive tracks - the mysteriously exotic “Non Spoken” and sensuously erotic “Evening Rites” - he manages to adapt to the overall laidback vibe without sacrificing a bit of the passion in his emotive horn. His “Long Time Coming” has the pianist making one note swing.” Basie discusses his methods at the right time” while Grey insisted, “He could doubt helped it become a staple of the band’s repertoire for the remainder of the pianist’s career.

For additional information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This group is at Jazz Standard May 24th. See Calendar.

For more information, visit jazzheads.com. Washburne is at The Stone May 13th. See Calendar.

ON DVD

Swingin’ The Blues Count Basie (EuroArts)

Masters of American Music Swingin’ The Blues

by Ken Dryden

This nearly hour-long documentary was first issued in the early ‘90s as a BMG VHS tape. The pianist, who spent around a half-century leading a band, is portrayed as a friendly boss, who worked hard with his musicians to find the perfect arrangement for each song. The documentary incorporates excerpts of performance footage from film, soundies and television alongside a number of Basie alumni discussing their experiences, including Buck Clayton, Harry ‘Sweets’ Edison, Illinois Jacquet, Al Grey, Earl Warren, Joe Williams and Claude ‘Fiddler’ Williams, along with fellow bandleader Jay McShann, though it is surprising that band alumnus Clark Terry was overlooked (or maybe unavailable). Edison has some of the highest praise for Basie, explaining, “He put the right note in the right place at the right time” while Grey insisted, “He could make one note swing.” Basie discusses his methods in interviews from various points in his career.

While he is generally reserved at the piano with his big band, Basie proved that he still had plenty of stride piano chops, demonstrating them by playing some Fats Waller on Ralph Gleason’s Jazz Casual in the early ‘60s. The Old Testament band is discussed in detail, including the featuring of two tenor saxophone soloists, Lester Young and Herschel Evans, while the contributions of Edison, Clayton, Freddie Green, Walter Page and Jo Jones are praised as well.

When the big band era came to an end following World War II, Basie broke up his orchestra in 1950, only quickly to form a sextet. This evolved into the New Testament band, with the contributions of saxophonists Frank Foster and Wes, along with saxophonist/arranger Ernie Wilkins. Although the work of composer/arranger Neal Hefti is briefly discussed, no mention is made of “Lil’ Darlin” (which became a signature tune for Basie) or the famous story about how Basie slowed down the tempo of Hefti’s initial arrangement, which no doubt helped it become a staple of the band’s repertoire for the remainder of the pianist’s career.

For more information, visit www2.euarts.com. Basie tribute are at Dizzy’s Club in NYC, Monday May 10th and Nectar Wine Bar May 14th as part of Harlem Jazz Shriners. See Calendar.
Donny McCaslin represents a generation of tenor saxophonists for whom no style of jazz seems to be out of bounds. Whether it’s playing straightahead on standards and ballads, walking the bar on honking R&B or blowing free, McCaslin is fluent, proficient and comfortable in any style. Those three aesthetics are touched upon on Perpetual Motion, but in a departure from the trio workouts on Recommended Tools and the brassy compositions on Declaration, it’s mostly fusion - of the Weather Report, electric Miles, Brecker Brothers sort - that carries the day.

McCaslin and his band, however, are utterly contemporary in their approach. The title track features McCaslin’s titanic soloing in creative tension with the relative calm of Adam Benjamin’s Fender Rhodes and producer David Binney’s wash of electronics. On “Five Hands” Antonio Sanchez whips up a firestorm on drums and Benjamin’s Fender twinkle before McCaslin unleashes a torrent of musical information. “Claire” starts with McCaslin and Sanchez crashing off one another in a way that makes you look forward to a McCaslin-drummer duet recording. When the band comes in the tune turns melodic, with McCaslin and Benjamin soloing joyfully. McCaslin is forceful but disciplined, never repetitious and always in control.

The funk gets explicit when electric bassist Tim Caine on electric piano who establishes the poised theme. Eisenstadt and bassist Eivind Opsvik distortions and wah-wah tones until culminating in a squeaky whistle and a breathy downward sigh.

In between, the brassman demonstrates that he has an ear for a well-turned melody. One of the pleasures of this disc is how the seemingly traditional forms get deconstructed and then finally pieced together again. “Hands Together” provides a case in point, starting with a bluesy refrain and loping rhythm that dissipates into a static hiss before the lurching screech of Josh Sinton’s keening bass clarinet resurrects the poised theme. Eisenstadt and bassist Eivind Opsvik mesh elegantly, adroitly switching in and out of tempo and purveying unsettling rhythmic contrasts, as on the insistently “Ethyl”. But lest everything is viewed from a postmodern perspective, the mournful elegiac “Hazel” is rendered simply and affecting, another delightful surprise among many on this fine album.

Trumpeter Nate Wooley has won critical acclaim for his timbral adventurousness but none of that prepares the listener for the debut of his new band, which is a much more accessible and jazzzy affair. To be fair, Wooley has regularly shown this side of himself in sideman dates with the likes of drummer Harris Eisenstadt but now he shows he can do it in his own style. One point of reference might be Eisenstadt’s Canada Day ensemble, which shares a rhythm section with the trumpeter’s quintet, in addition to Chris Dingman’s vibes as the chordal support for two horns.

Wooley’s ten compositions, while conventional in shape, tend to be diverse in content, fully informed by his interest in strange timbres. Wooley bookends the set with two solo renditions of “Shanda Lea”, with a third duo version mid-program. The first is played fairly straight, setting out the Americana-tinged air plainly and with feeling, repeated like a mantra, but gradually becomes fractured and dissipated until only the occasional hints of the tune surface among the entropy. In the final reading, Wooley barely plays the tune at all, instead collating a series of susurrations, distortions and wah-wah tones until culminating in a squeaky whistle and a breathy downward sigh.

But Kozlov is no one trick pony. He creates a fresh improvised introduction to Scott LaFaro’s “Gloria’s Step”, strumming his bass like a guitar at the end of each phrase before revealing its famous theme; his intricate improvisation is simply breathtaking. Likewise, his inspired journey through “Isfahan” keeps one’s interest. Kozlov’s originals, though not familiar to most listeners, also prove compelling. The title “Kowloon Bass Check” makes one think it was composed in Hong Kong, though the piece blends a sophisticated blue line with just a touch of funk. The most unusual track combines his haunting “RGB” with Thielemans, among others.

Kozlov’s choice of playing unaccompanied bass for an entire CD is a bit unusual, as it is challenging to maintain a listener’s interest for over 50 minutes without the presence of other instruments or focus one’s attention exclusively on the lower range. He is at his best in tackling well-known jazz standards at brisk tempos, like Joe Henderson’s “Inner Urge”, which comes alive in his brilliant interpretation, showcasing a formidable technique.

While some may find an entire CD of unaccompanied bass to be too much of a good thing, Kozlov’s masterful project is best appreciated in a quiet setting with a good stereo and no distractions.

For more information, visit borisbass.com. Kozlov is at Jazz Standard May 2nd with Mingus Big Band, 9th with Mingus Dynasty and 16th with Mingus Orchestra, Smalls May 5th with Alex Sipiagin, June 8th with Tessa Souter and North Square Lounge May 22nd with Linda Ciafalio. See Calendar.
Duke Ellington’s popularity and earning power was never greater than in the decade from 1932 through 1941, although reductionist critical views often skip over much of the ’30s to concentrate on the early “jungle sounds” of the 1927-1931 Cotton Club band and the 1939-41 “Webster-Blanton” band. That tendency has been reinforced by the fact that the only comprehensive boxed set of the CD era released in this country is the 24-disc *The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition (1927-1973)* on RCA Victor, which lightly covers 1933-34 and then skips to 1940, because during the missing years the Ellington orchestra recorded exclusively for the Columbia-associated labels represented on this Mosaic set. Together with another Mosaic box, the seven-CD *Duke Ellington: The Complete 1936-1940 Variety, Vocalion and Okeh Small Group Sessions* released five years ago, we get a comprehensive look at what was Ellington’s most prolific and active studio-recording decade.

Billy Strayhorn, Ellington’s collaborator and musical alter ego, whose arranging work begins to show up on the last CD of this collection, once summed up the Duke this way: “Ellington plays the piano, but his real instrument is the band. Each member of the band is to him a distinctive tone color and set of emotions, which he mixes with others equally distinctive to produce a third thing, which I like to call the Ellington Effect.” That Ellington Effect can be heard growing and developing, taking on more tonal colors and emotions as the Famous Orchestra, as it was billed, acquired new, additional musicians and Ellington learned to exploit the burgeoning possibilities of the recording studio as well as of his own genius for composing and arranging. For if one thing is clear from the 252 tracks - including many alternate takes - in this collection, it is that Ellington made sure his orchestra was recorded to maximum sonic effect. And thanks to the brilliant digital mastering/editing of Steven Lasker, often taken from original metal masters, ’30s recordings have never sounded so good.

No better example of the sonic care Ellington took in the studio, as well as his remarkable prescience about the direction of the music, can be found than his use of the string bass in the decade. Wellman Braud, the bassist from 1927-35, was an originator of the walking bass line and is profoundly clear on the early tracks on this set. And although Jimmy Blanton is, rightly, credited as the first modern bass player who soloed, Braud can be heard taking a brief solo on “Blue Harlem” in 1932. And from 1935-38 Ellington often employed and recorded with two bassists: Billy Taylor and Hayes Alvis.

But Ellington was also a purveyor of popular music fare and included here are many of the Tin Pan Alley songs delivered by his featured singer, Ivie Anderson, who sounds more impressive the more she is heard. And Duke’s involvement in Broadway and Hollywood yield two of the great one-offs in this set: Bing Crosby singing “St. Louis Blues” and Ethel Waters doing “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love”, with a second chorus impersonating Louis Armstrong.

For more information, visit mosaicrecords.com. An Ellington tribute is at Allen Room May 3rd-4th. The Essentially Ellington Concert is at Avery Fisher Hall May 14th. See Calendar.
Sunday, May 1

- Pee Wee Ellis, Larry Willis, Christian McBride, Lewis Nash
- Charles Hunter/Shawn Pelton
- All-Flight Quartet with Ravi Coltrane
- The James Carter Trio with guests Michael Parker, James "Blood" Ulver

Monday, May 2

- Napoleon 90th Birthday Celebration with Bryan Strong, Marcus Printup, David Bennett, Aaron Diehl, Yasushi Nakamura, Marion Felder
- Mathieu Fournier/Winick Quartet with guests Michael Parker, James "Blood" Ulver
- Roberta Flack
- Benny Golson Quartet with guest Tim Hagans

Tuesday, May 3

- Julian Priester Quintet: Ron Carter, Rodney Jones, Frank Kimbrough, Carl Allen, Ron Robinson
- Julliet All Star Sextet
- Guillermo Klein Y Los Guachos with Diego Urcola, Taylor Hawkins, Sandro Tomassini, Chris Chen, Bill McHenry, Miguel Zenon, Ben Moneda, Fernando Huerga, Jeff Ballard, Robert Hurst
- Julia Deans/Chicago with guests Billy Hart, Jeanette Harris, Victor Lewis
- Omar Sosa/Anti-Lectric Quintet with Marcus Gilmore, Chico Thomas, Peter Apfeldbaum, Jon Irabagon and guest Lionel Loueke
- Liz Callaway and Hampton Callaway

Wednesday, May 4

- Endangered Blood: Chris Speed, Oscar Noriega, Trevor Dunn, Jim Black
- Julliet All Star Sextet
- Julliet All Star Sextet
- Tommy Bencito Trio
- Julliet All Star Sextet
- Richard Nant

Friday, May 6

- Songs of the Jazz Age: Bill Charlap, Jeremy Pelt, Harry Allen, Steve Wilson, Ken Peck, Randy Waldman, Robert Washington, Karen Clinger
- Chet Blake Trio with Billy Hart, Billy Cameron, Ras Moshe
- Joo Kraus and guest Lionel Loueke
- Gilad Hirsch and guest Lionel Loueke
- Marcus Gilmore; Ken Fowser/Behn Gillece Jam

Saturday, May 7

- Richard Nant
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marque Gilmore, Childo Tomas, Peter Apfeldbaum, Jon Irabagon and guest Lionel Loueke
- Liz Callaway and Hampton Callaway

CALENDAR

Thursday, May 5

- Highlights in Jazz: Remembering Willie Mays, Frank Foster, J. J. Johnson, Junior Mance, Junior Marvin, Steve Swallow, George Mraz, Wardell Gray and guest Frank Wess
- Grady Tate with Ravi Gershonman, Paul Beaudry, Chuck McPherson
- Tom Rainey Trio with Greg Osby, Jack DeJohnette
- Aiza Lawrence Quintet with Jeremy Pelt, Ben依次, Essiet Essiet, Billy Hart
- Lisa Hines

Friday, May 6

- Rob Douglass/Songwritings with Noah Pruginin, Justin Kaufman, Satoe Suzuki
- Geoff "Woof" Quade with David Berkman, Adam O’Donnell, Owen Howard, Saul Rubin Quintet, Stacy Dillard
- Joseph Kenyon Trio with Matt Jaffe, Adam O’Donnell, Bob Maccaro
- Substance McNair, Jay Rodriquez, Roy King
- Marcus Gilmore and guests Vincent Herring, Stan Getz, Bill McHenry, Michael S. Hilscher
- Dave Smith Quintet with Adam O’Donnell, Bob Maccaro,12:30 am $20

Saturday, May 7

- Rich Boffo’s "HQ Music Hall" with beauty
- Joo Kraus and guest Lionel Loueke
- Lenny Pickett NYU Block Party Band
- Avram Fefer Trio with Michael Bisio, Chad Taylor
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marc Mommaas, Ron Horton, Andrew inman, Dean Johnson

Sunday, May 8

- Richard Nant
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marque Gilmore, Childo Tomas, Peter Apfeldbaum, Jon Irabagon and guest Lionel Loueke
- Liz Callaway and Hampton Callaway

- Herbie Hancock: Music Maker 6:30 pm

- Miles Davis "Birth of the Cool" with beauty
- Jack DeJohnette Trio with beauty
- Carla Bley Trio with beauty
- Hiromi Utada

Monday, May 9

- Joe Lovano/Sweet & Low with beauty
- Joo Kraus and guest Lionel Loueke
- Lenny Pickett NYU Block Party Band
- Avram Fefer Trio with Michael Bisio, Chad Taylor
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marc Mommaas, Ron Horton, Andrew inman, Dean Johnson

Tuesday, May 10

- Richard Nant
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marque Gilmore, Childo Tomas, Peter Apfeldbaum, Jon Irabagon and guest Lionel Loueke
- Liz Callaway and Hampton Callaway

Wednesday, May 11

- Richard Nant
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marque Gilmore, Childo Tomas, Peter Apfeldbaum, Jon Irabagon and guest Lionel Loueke
- Liz Callaway and Hampton Callaway

Thursday, May 12

- Richard Nant
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marque Gilmore, Childo Tomas, Peter Apfeldbaum, Jon Irabagon and guest Lionel Loueke
- Liz Callaway and Hampton Callaway

Friday, May 13

- Richard Nant
- Tony Moreno Quintet with Marque Gilmore, Childo Tomas, Peter Apfeldbaum, Jon Irabagon and guest Lionel Loueke
- Liz Callaway and Hampton Callaway

- Herbie Hancock: Music Maker 6:30 pm

- Miles Davis "Birth of the Cool" with beauty
- Jack DeJohnette Trio with beauty
- Carla Bley Trio with beauty
- Hiromi Utada
Saturday, May 7

- Various Jazz Fest: Frank Carlberg Quintet with Christine Cornea, John Gallagher, Johannes Weidenmüller, Mark Ferber, Tony Malaby solo
- Alex Blake Quartet
- Rob Garcia Quartet with Dave lemon, Dan Tepfer, Drew Gress

- Kaisa Saulnier/Joanne Good
- Jon Irabagon Trio with Yashaswi Vanganuru, Yashaswi Venkata
- Sanaa Wajeed with Shoko Nagai, Shoko Tanaka, Satouda Takeda
- Gregorio Uribe Big Band; Pedro Ochoa, Tony Fabian, Te Reiner Jab
- Yotam Silberstein; Tamar Zivan, Gilad Atzmon, Ross Pederson

- Teo Battle Quartet: Anthony Davis, Michael forman, Ron Carter, Ken Filiano
- John Dikeman, Michael Forman, Ron Carter, Ken Filiano, David Naimo, Matt Wilson

- Sanctuary @ Temple Beth Emeth  7 pm $10
- Reptet: Samantha Boshnack, Chris Credit, Izaak Mills, Nelson Bell, Tim Carey, Mark Helias, David Harris, Dave DeLmine, Ben Markovitz, Dan Wilkins

- Monday, May 9
- Johnathan Blake;医药 particle
- Ira Silk, Malcolm Page, Ross Markman, Craig Taborn, Henry Threadgill

- Monday, May 10
- Pharoah Sanders Quartet
- Mark Helias, Dave DeLmine, Dan Wilkins, Dan Kantrowitz

- Tuesday, May 11
- Joel Harrison Large Ensemble with Marty Elming, Dori K Österreich, Kris Davis, Ben Wittman, Dave DeLmine, Ross Markman, Craig Taborn

- MNL Coalition
- The Garage; 6:10 pm $10

- The New York City Jazz Record | May 2011

- Maria Guida
- Williamsburg Music Center  8 pm $10

- Café Orwell  8, 9 pm

- The Stone  8, 10 pm $10

- Shrine  6 pm

- Cleopatra's Needle  8 pm

- Zinc Bar  7, 9, 10:30 pm 12 am

- The Garage  11:30 am 7, 11:30 pm
### Friday, May 13

- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Hotel Sessions with Kermit Davis, Kassa Overall, Quincy Davis, Louis Groberg, John Brown
  -** Harlen Jazz Shriners**
  - Gang Show with Jason Moran and Alphonso Horne
  -** Medgar Evers Jazz Shriners**
  - All-Star Show with John Lockett, David Murray, Thaddeus Thomas
- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Jazz at the Studio with Jenifer Lewis, Carvin Jones, Donyale Luna
- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Floyd Johnson’s 50th Birthday Celebration with Jon Faddis, Kevin Young, Greg Osby
- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Photo Exhibit with John Carter, Kassa Overall, Gloverila, Alphonso Horne

### Saturday, May 14

- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Steve Berrios’s 50th Birthday Celebration with Jon Faddis, Kevin Young, Greg Osby
- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Celebrating the Life of Alphonso Horne with John Carter, Kassa Overall, Gloverila
- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Maria Grazia’s 50th Birthday Celebration with Jon Faddis, Kevin Young, Greg Osby

### Sunday, May 15

- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Alphonso Horne’s 50th Birthday Celebration with John Carter, Kassa Overall, Gloverila
- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Celebrating the Life of Kermit Davis with John Carter, Kassa Overall, Gloverila
- **Harlem Jazz Shriners**
  - Maria Grazia’s 50th Birthday Celebration with John Carter, Kassa Overall, Gloverila

### Monday, May 16

- **Blue Note**
  - 8:30, 10:30 pm $35
- **Dizzy’s Club**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- **Jazz Standard**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $25
- **Park Avenue Chamber Symphony’s Jazzy Classics with guest Ted Rosenthal**
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **The Kitano**
  - 8, 10 pm $25
- **The Alhambra Ballroom**
  - 7 pm $10
- **Showman’s**
  - 8:30, 10, 11:30 pm
- **Iridium**
  - 9, 10:30 pm $30
- **University of the Streets**
  - 8, 10 pm $10
- **Smalls**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm 12:30 am $20
- **Clemente Soto Velez**
  - 7 pm $10
- **The Garage**
  - 6:15, 10:45 pm
- **North Square Lounge**
  - 12:30, 2 pm
- **Dizzy’s Club**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- **Flute Bar**
  - 8 pm
- **The Bitter End**
  - 8 pm
- **Barbès**
  - 8 pm $10
- **Puppet’s Jazz Bar**
  - 7 pm $5
- **ABC No Rio**
  - 7 pm $5
- **Sycamore**
  - 8 pm $10
- **The Garage**
  - 12, 10:45 pm
- **Joe’s Pub**
  - 7:30 pm $17
- **Cornelia Street Café**
  - 8:30, 10 pm $10
- **Doma**
  - 8 pm
- **The Garage**
  - 6:15, 10:45 pm
- **North Square Lounge**
  - 12:30, 2 pm
- **Blue Note**
  - 8, 10:30 pm $35
- **Village Vanguard**
  - 9, 11 pm $30
- **Dizzy’s Club**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- **Iridium**
  - 8, 10 pm $35
- **Apollo Theater**
  - 7 pm $55-1500
- **Cornelia Street Café**
  - 8:30, 10 pm $10
- **Doma**
  - 8 pm

### Tuesday, May 17

- **Jazz Standard**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $25
- **Blue Note**
  - 8, 10:30 pm $35
- **Jazz Standard**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $25
- **Park Avenue Chamber Symphony’s Jazzy Classics with guest Ted Rosenthal**
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **The Kitano**
  - 8, 10 pm $25
- **The Alhambra Ballroom**
  - 7 pm $10
- **Showman’s**
  - 8:30, 10, 11:30 pm
- **Iridium**
  - 9, 10:30 pm $30
- **University of the Streets**
  - 8, 10 pm $10
- **Smalls**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm 12:30 am $20
- **Clemente Soto Velez**
  - 7 pm $10
- **The Garage**
  - 6:15, 10:45 pm
- **North Square Lounge**
  - 12:30, 2 pm
- **Blue Note**
  - 8, 10:30 pm $35
- **Park Avenue Chamber Symphony’s Jazzy Classics with guest Ted Rosenthal**
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **The Kitano**
  - 8, 10 pm $25
- **The Alhambra Ballroom**
  - 7 pm $10
- **Showman’s**
  - 8:30, 10, 11:30 pm
- **Iridium**
  - 9, 10:30 pm $30
- **University of the Streets**
  - 8, 10 pm $10
- **Smalls**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm 12:30 am $20
- **Clemente Soto Velez**
  - 7 pm $10
- **The Garage**
  - 6:15, 10:45 pm
- **North Square Lounge**
  - 12:30, 2 pm
- **Blue Note**
  - 8, 10:30 pm $35
- **Village Vanguard**
  - 9, 11 pm $30
- **Dizzy’s Club**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- **Iridium**
  - 8, 10 pm $35
- **Apollo Theater**
  - 7 pm $55-1500
- **Cornelia Street Café**
  - 8:30, 10 pm $10
- **Doma**
  - 8 pm
- **The Garage**
  - 6:15, 10:45 pm
- **North Square Lounge**
  - 12:30, 2 pm
- **Blue Note**
  - 8, 10:30 pm $35
- **Village Vanguard**
  - 9, 11 pm $30
- **Dizzy’s Club**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- **Iridium**
  - 8, 10 pm $35
- **Apollo Theater**
  - 7 pm $55-1500
- **Cornelia Street Café**
  - 8:30, 10 pm $10
- **Doma**
  - 8 pm

### Wednesday, May 18

- **Roy Haynes Fountain Of Youth Band with Jaleel Shaw, Martin Bejerano, David Wong, Jerry W. Jones**
  - 8 pm $30
- **Andrew Serrano Group with Todd Reynolds, Christopher Hoffman, Tim Hoffman**
  - 9:30 pm $30
- **Joan Baptista’s Trombone Quintet with Jonathan Graham, Kevin Comolli, Tim Hinton**
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **Luis Legui, Arrolla D’Yonan’s Dromatik Dísa**
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **Jo Allen Glass & August Roden, Peter Schmuck**
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **Todd Scholten’s Tiny Tinkers’ Trio with John Hibbert, Chase Smith**
  - 9:30 pm $30
- **Kris Davis Group with Ingrid Laubrock, Mark Turner, Troy DNA, **
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **Misha Mengelberg, Anna Majewska, Benjamin Koppel,**
  - 7:30 pm $30
- **ABC No Rio**
  - 7, 9 pm $10
- **The Garage**
  - 6:15, 10:45 pm
- **North Square Lounge**
  - 12:30, 2 pm
- **Blue Note**
  - 8, 10:30 pm $35
- **Village Vanguard**
  - 9, 11 pm $30
- **Dizzy’s Club**
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- **Iridium**
  - 8, 10 pm $35
- **Apollo Theater**
  - 7 pm $55-1500
- **Cornelia Street Café**
  - 8:30, 10 pm $10
- **Doma**
  - 8 pm

### Thursday, May 19

- **15th Annual Great A Night in Harlem for the Jazz Foundation of America**
  - 8 pm $30
- **Micha Davis From Off The Cost To Bitters Creek**
  - 8 pm $30
- **Anishan and Mc saila**
  - 8 pm $30
- **Iris Ornig Quartet with Alex Nguyen, Dave Mooney, Chris Benham**
  - 8 pm $30
- **Thomas Morgan**
  - 8 pm $30
- **Roy Haynes Fountain Of Youth Band with Jaleel Shaw, Martin Bejerano, David Wong, Jerry W. Jones**
  - 8 pm $30
May 2011

Friday, May 20

- **Bill Mays/Warren Vache**
  The Iguana  9 pm $25

- **Jazz Stixx Monologue**
  Professor's Bar  9 pm $10

- **Lost Jazz Shins - Multimunk**
  Matt Wilson, Scott Robinson, Frank Kimbrough
  The Stone  8, 10 pm $20

- **The Good Life Set**
  John Farnsworth, Freddye Hendra, Steve Davie, Dwayne Burns, Joe Benden
  The Stone  9 pm $10

- **George Lewis/Barbara Rosefondt:**
  Glenn Whitehead/Michael Theodore

- **Colin Vanton**
  Rubin Museum  7 pm $20

- **Adam O’Farrill Quartet with Arturo O’Farrill**
  Puffin Jazz  9 pm $15

- **Lapine Lust - Shawn Clark, Don Godfrey, Mike Doolin,**
  John Merritt, Neal Maset, Brian Flory
  Birdland  9 pm $30

- **Kirk Knuffke/Billie Pride Duo; Ronnie Vannucci, Jessie Stacker**
  The Village Vanguard  7:30, 9:30 pm $30

- **Mercer Costa, JSP Schaefer**
  Douglas Street Music Cafe  9 pm $10

- **Trevor Sullivan Quartet with Mike Eden, Robert Sheppard, Brian Faucher**
  Brooklyn Bowl  9 pm $20

- **Ken Ford's Revolutionary Sound**
  Joe Stanford, Lisa Mezzacappa, Bill Smith, Brian Faucher
  Village Vanguard  9 pm $30

- **Joe Levy, Kenny Wollesen, Alex Mitsche, Jeff Davis, Steve Berrios,**
  Alora McIntyre, Paul Motian
  The Stone  8, 10 pm $20

- **Who Knows?**
  Richie Nagan, Perry Robinson, Meal Whitecage
  The Stone  9, 11 pm $20

- **Scott Colley**

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**Saturday, May 21**

- **Seamus Blake, Dezron Douglas**
  Lisa Mezzacappa's Bait & Switch with Chris Welcome, Mike Pride
  The Village Vanguard  12:30, 10:15 pm $30

- **Frank Greene, Jason Jackson, Steve Davis, Michael Dease, Douglas Purviance,**
  Thomas Morgan
  The Stone  9 pm $20

- **Ray Drummond**

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**Sunday, May 22**

- **Frankford Quartet with Sunny Marans, Tony Stone,**
  Eugene Chadbourne, Ed Harkness
  Brooklyn Bowl  9 pm $20

- **Jim Black**

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**Monday, May 23**

- **Mingus Big Band; Scott Robinson, Steve Berrios, Frank Morgan, Frank Loudin,**
  Karl Mahern, Kenneth Gigliotti, JOY Quartet
  The Village Vanguard  9 pm $30

- **Florida State University Jazz Combo**
  Howie's Club  7:30, 9:30 pm $20

- **Peter Bernstein solo**
  Howard's House  10 pm $15

- **Catherine Stokoe Quartet with Davide Esposito, Douglas Moncur**
  The Stone  10 pm $20

- **Erica von Meldahl Group**
  St. Peter's  9 pm

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**Tuesday, May 24**

- **Phil Hall**

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**Wednesday, May 25**

- **Sun Ra Arkestra**
  Celebrates Marshall Allen's 87th Birthday

- **Jay Clayton with George Cables, Jay Anderson**

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**Thursday, May 26**

- **Bill Warfield Stevie Wonder and Weather Report Tribute**

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**Friday, May 27**

- **Enrico Silla Jr.**
  Enrico Silla Jr. Duo
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Saturday, May 28**

- **Jeff Voorhies**
  The Village Vanguard  9:30, 11 pm $30

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**Sunday, May 29**

- **Linda Lavin**
  Green Mill  8 pm $15

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**Monday, May 30**

- **Eric Pinto**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Tuesday, May 31**

- **Mike Shortt**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Wednesday, June 1**

- **Eugene Pommer**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Thursday, June 2**

- **David Sancious**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Friday, June 3**

- **John Ahearn**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Saturday, June 4**

- **Eric Millegan**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Sunday, June 5**

- **Julie Landsman**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Monday, June 6**

- **Bob Mullen**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Tuesday, June 7**

- **David Shifrin/Frank Morgan**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Wednesday, June 8**

- **Bob Mullen**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Thursday, June 9**

- **Bob Mullen**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Friday, June 10**

- **Bob Mullen**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Saturday, June 11**

- **Bob Mullen**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Sunday, June 12**

- **Bob Mullen**
  Birdland  8:30, 11 pm $30

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**Friday, May 27**

**Sotto Voice:** Napoleon Napoleon, Curtis Fowkes, Roy Nathanson, Tim Kim, Sam Sarandon and guests
**Miles Davis Birthday Celebration** with John Cobb, Averbach, and Eddie Harris
**Joe Locke Quartet with Robert Gwinn**

**Saturday, May 28**

**Rhythm in the Kitchen Festival**
**Welf Dorr’s Underground Horns**
**Alex Blake Quartet**

**Sunday, May 29**

**DownBeat Music Hall 30th Anniversary Celebration**

**Monday, May 30**

**Monday, May 31**

**Tuesday, May 31**

**RHYTHM IN THE KITCHEN FESTIVAL**

**The New York City Jazz Record** Saturday, May 28

- **Birdland** 8:30, 11 pm $30
- **Nublu** 9 pm
- **Church for All Nations** 7 pm $15
- **Dizzy’s Club** 7:30, 9:30 pm $35
- **Tribeca Performing Arts Center** 8:30 pm $25
- **Iridium** 8, 10 pm $35
- **The Stone** 8, 10 pm $10
- **The Garage** 11:30 pm 7, 11:30 pm
- **Smalls** 7:30, 9:30 pm 12:30 am $20
- **Village Vanguard** 9, 11 pm $30
- **Blue Note** 8, 10:30 pm $35
- **Tutuma Social Club** 8:30 pm
- **TGIFriday’s** 6 pm
- **The Ear Inn** 8 pm
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- **The Ear Inn** 8 pm
- **Crescent and Vine** 6:30 pm
- **Henry’s** 12 pm
- **Smoke** 12:30 am
- **Notaro** 8 pm

**REGULAR ENGAGEMENTS**

- **Tom Abbott Big Band** Big Band show, 7:30 pm
- **Ron Art Trio**
- **Steve Jordan’s Organs**
- **Sode Chimukoko and The Brassiers** Cleo Lee 7:30 pm
- **Peter Davis/Ed Schuller Jam Session** Cocktail Lounge 9 pm
- **Eddy Davis New Orleans Jazz Band** The Carlyle 8:45 pm $75-100
- **George C. Young’s Organ Group**
- **Viacci Giordano’s Nightwings** Softly 8 (ALL-TUE)
- **Peter Davis/Ed Schuller Jam Session** Cocktail Lounge 9 pm
- **Pattie Higgins Rose Hill Sugar Quartet** Lenox Lounge 9:30 pm $10
- **Piers Lawrence**
- **The Groove Jazz All-Stars**
- **Rory Leem/Trent Quartet**
- **Ivan's Jam Session**
- **Midi Lemonweld Quartet**
- **Jeff's Night Out**
- **Yusef Lateef**
- **Rob Rucker Trio Jam**
- **The Village Vanguard**
- **The Village Vanguard**

**TUESDAYS**

- **Elise Wood Hicks Trio**
- **Tony Hewitt**
- **Richard Devine**
- **Sam Bardfeld**
- **Guests Yusef Kumanyaka, Bob Holman, Lee Renaldo, Judy Sheehan**
- **Louis Hayes, David Bryant**
- **Ian Hendrickson-Smith Group**
- **Ralph Lalama Trio**
- **David Wong, Clifford Barbaro**
- **Dezron Douglas Power Trio**
- **Jerome Jennings**
- **Rick Parker, Barry Cooper, Robert Statel, Nick Consol, Doug Drewes, Ryan Cavan**
- **Robert Osborne, Bob Gluck**
- **Alexander Berne**
- **Paul Gill, Brian Floody**
- **Daryl Johnson**
- **Jerome Jennings**

**Wednesday, May 29**

- **Gloria Garnett Quintet**
- **Ralph Pugno**
- **David Williams**
- **Christian Cole**
- **Hendrickson-Smith Group**
- **Ralph Lalama Trio**
- **David Wong, Clifford Barbaro**
- **Dezron Douglas Power Trio**
- **Jerome Jennings**
- **Rick Parker, Barry Cooper, Robert Statel, Nick Consol, Doug Drewes, Ryan Cavan**
- **Robert Osborne, Bob Gluck**
- **Alexander Berne**
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- **Daryl Johnson**
- **Jerome Jennings**
around the old homestead but has given me an awful lot of things to think about. Anybody who tells you he didn’t steal from Miles, Blue Mitchell, Chet Baker, Clifford Brown, Kenny Dorham or others from that era is being dishonest. The only difference with me is I go back a little farther. I know there were people aside from Satchmo, as wonderful as he was - for instance there’s a lot to learn from Muggsy Spanier.

TNYCJR: You’ve often played smaller rooms - and even recorded - with just guitar and bass, no drummer. Was that your choice or just economics?

WV: No, I like it. First of all a guitar has open voicings so you get space between each of the chordal notes and that frees me up a little - a pianist can play close voiced chords and I find the open voicing of the guitar easier for me to free up and hear the harmonies. And don’t get me wrong, I like working with drummers, but without a drummer, first you don’t have the din of the cymbals and you can get space for the harmonics, so there’s that feeling of openness I like. And you’re forced to play time yourself - everybody has to work a little harder and listen to each other more because everybody has more responsibility, in terms of time, without a drummer. And that listening part is what tends to be forgotten nowadays.

TNYCJR: You’ve done lots of recordings, including many as a leader. What is your favorite?

WV: I was very lucky, a couple of years ago Matt Domber [of Arbors Records] paid for a session I did with a string ensemble in Scotland [Don’t Look Back]. I got [late arranger] Bill Finegan to write three of the last charts he ever did. [Guitarist-arranger] James Chirillo did a great job too and we found a Johnny Carisi arrangement of his “Spring” that was written for the Bird with strings album but never recorded. I’ve got to put that album on the top of my list.

For more information, visit warrenvache.com. Vaché plays duo with Bill Mays at The Kitano May 20th-21st. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- John Bunch - John’s Other Bunch (Famous Door-Progressive, 1977)
- Warren Vaché Trio - Live at the Vineyard (Challenge, 1984)
- Newport Jazz Festival Allstars - European Tour (Concord, 1987)
- Warren Vaché - Horn of Plenty (Muse, 1993)

(LABEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

detail, to have details and dynamics and to have a great balance across all frequencies.”

Of course, Walcott is not only trying to keep his costs low, but also passing some of this on to the record-buying public - initially, the discs were selling at $6.49, though that has more recently gone up. “I’ve thought for a while that music business should migrate to a model where a streaming store is tied to discount CDs. I have a collection in the thousands and I don’t purchase any records where I haven’t heard the entire work beforehand. I find out about records via reviews, but it’s not a genre where I would buy based on a reviewer’s opinion. How are listeners supposed to get involved over an extended period of time with great players at $15 a pop? And how do you get new voices to listeners when most people want to listen to players who have been in the game 30 years, not to mention the historical jazz that a listener will want to have as a foundation?” It’s far from easy in the seemingly continual economic and cultural downturn/paradigmatic shift we’re encountering at the outset of the new century.

But in spite of all that, Engine Studios trucks along just under the surface. As Warren Smith puts it, “I have done several projects with Engine, including a couple of my own. I like working with him because he seems to be able to get out of the way and let the artist get their point across. A lot of labels have a preconceived notion of what they want you to do. As a result Engine has a wider range of musical perspectives to present. Steve Walcott is wide open to innovation. I feel free to express myself without having to prove a point to another personality.” That directness is something that fits both great art and respected imprints.

For more information, visit engine-studios.com. Artists performing this month include William Hooker at University of the Streets May 2nd and Rhythm in the Kitchen Festival May 28th; Warren Smith at University of the Streets May 4th with Sabir Mateen and 21st as a leader, NYC Baha’i Center May 17th and Rhythm in the Kitchen Festival May 28th; Warren Smith at University of the Streets May 2nd and Rhythm in the Kitchen Festival May 28th in duo with Dick Griffin; Taylor Ho Bynum at Cornelia Street Café May 15th and The Stone May 29th with Jason Kao Hwang and Tom Abbs and Andrew Lamb at University of the Streets May 21st with Warren Smith. See Calendar.
BILLY BANG - The violonist may be best remembered, apart from an almost 40-year career playing in the local and international avant garde jazz scene and founding the original 'chamber jazz' ensemble String Trio of New York in the late '70s, for his '80s two-part musical remembrance of serving during the Vietnam War: *The Aftermath and Reflections* (both on Justin Time), some of the most cathartic jazz in recent memory.

FRANS ELSSEN - Considered Holland's first bebop pianist, Elsen worked with every visiting American musician starting in 1952, just as he was entering Royal College of Music in The Hague. A longtime arranger for Dutch National Radio, Elsen also published several musical instruction books. Elsen died Feb. 23rd at 76.

NIEL PARKER - Though trumpeter Isadore Nathaniel (Niel) Parker was better known for his contributions to radio orchestras and Hollywood studios, he got his start in the early '20s working for bands led by Bix Beiderbecke, The Dorsey Brothers, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman and Paul Whiteman. Two of his pieces were recorded for Edison Records, overseen by Thomas Alva himself. Parker died Feb. 4th at 103 years old.

CURTIS MITCHELL - Mitchell got his start as a pianist in the rhythm and blues scene of the '50s before switching to bass. An official New Orleans Jazz All-Star, Mitchell was a constant presence in many bands in his native NOLA as well as during the annual Jazz and Heritage Festival. Mitchell died Jan. 6th at 84.

ALAN QUINN - Coming from a family of jazz musicians, the trombonist was a large part of the burgeoning trad scene in '60s Edinburgh. After that style fell out of favor at the end of the decade, Quinn played bass for dance bands before returning to the once-again popular trad-jazz scene in the '80s. Quinn died Feb. 4th at 67.

BILL SCARLETT - Seeing Benny Goodman at the 1939 World’s Fair made Scarlett take up the clarinet. Later he added the tenor sax to his arsenal, working early on with Art Pepper. In the late '50s he moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, where he spent the remainder of his life teaching music and playing in local groups, particularly as a mainstay in the Knoxville Jazz Orchestra. Scarlett died Mar. 28th at 82.

ROGER VANHAVERBEKE - The Belgian bassist accompanied many of his famous countrymen like Fats Sadi and Toots Thielemans as well as backing visiting Americans like Art Farmer, Johnny Griffin and Pepper Adams with his New Look trio, a group he maintained since 1965 with varying personnel. Vanhaeverbeke died Mar. 5th at 80.

**BIRTHDAYS**

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<tr>
<th>May 1</th>
<th>Ira Sullivan b.1932</th>
<th><em>Fine Reeds, 1940-2005</em></th>
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<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Carlos Ward b.1940</td>
<td><em>James Newton</em> b.1963</td>
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<td>Kevin Hays b.1968</td>
<td>Ambrose Akinmusire b.1982</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>Fledgley Stauffer 1902-41</td>
<td>Pablo Aslan b.1962</td>
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<td>May 5</td>
<td>Pat Munsell b.1953</td>
<td>Stanley Cowell b.1941</td>
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<td>Donald Byrd b.1933</td>
<td>Kidd Jordan b.1935</td>
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<td>Johnny Griffin b.1936</td>
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<td>Arnold Griner b.1934</td>
<td>Marty Ehrlich b.1955</td>
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<td>Joe Newman b.1935</td>
<td>†Betty Carter 1930-98</td>
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<td>Dick Grobe b.1935</td>
<td>†David Izenzon 1932-79</td>
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<td>†Kai Winding 1922-83</td>
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<td>Horace Parlan b.1928</td>
<td>†Joe Turley 1911-85</td>
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<td>†David Holland 1952-2009</td>
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<td>†Johnny Guarnaccia 1925-2002</td>
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<td>†Don DeMichael 1928-82</td>
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**IN MEMORIAM**

By Andrey Henkin

Paul Chambers, who died far too early (before his 35th birthday), may have been the preeminent bassist from 1955-65 and one of the few to record with label as regular source. For instance, his third album, which he released as a leader and in 1967's *Saxophone Colossus* trio, was the first to record with the *First* and *Second* Chambers's group. He had found himself at the end of the 60s, especially the *Calypso* and *Work of Art* albums, which were released in 1968 and 1969 respectively, and later even on a solo album, *The Composer*. His last work was a collaboration with Blue Note Records, which he had been a participant in since the 60s. Chambers had a unique ability to express himself through his playing, which made him a true innovator in the jazz genre. His influence continues to be felt today through his playing with various groups and projects in the *New Thing* era.

**ON THIS DAY**

by Andrey Henkin

Paul Chambers (b.1935) May 19th, 1957

After playing on landmark albums by Sonny Rollins, Jackie McLean, and Miles Davis, Chambers formed his own group in 1960 and recorded his first album as a leader, *Paul Chambers Vol. 1 & 2* (1965). His playing on this album was praised by jazz critics and helped establish his reputation as a major force in the hard bop and free jazz scenes.

**ARCHIE SHEPP**

May 24th, 1937 - The tenor saxophonist was involved in many of the important groups creating the *New Thing* in the '60s, including that of pianist Cecil Taylor and the *Contemporary Free Five*. He was a participant on John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, which was released in 1965. As one of the most influential saxophonists of his time, Archie Shepp's influence can still be heard in modern jazz and other genres. He passed away on May 24th, 1937.

**ART CHERRY**

May 25th, 1928 - Art Cherry was a famous American jazz musician who was known for his work on the alto saxophone. He was a member of several important groups including the *Art Tatum Quintet* and *Dexter Gordon* Quartet. Art Cherry passed away on May 25th, 1928. His legacy continues to inspire jazz musicians to this day.

**DICK CLARKE**

May 26th, 1921 - Dick Clarke was another important figure in the world of jazz. He was a famous drum set player and worked with many notable musicians throughout his career. Clarke passed away on May 26th, 1921.

**ALFREDO VASSALLA**

May 27th, 1927 - Alfredo Vassalla was a prominent Italian jazz pianist and composer. He was a member of the *Tuscan* trio and contributed to the *Etruscan* label. Vassalla passed away on May 27th, 1927.
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL MUSIQUE ACTUELLE
VICTORIAVILLE
27TH EDITION - FROM 19 TO 22 MAY 2011

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KID KOALA « 12 Bit Blues Show »
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PETER BRÖTZMANN @ 70 Solo + Trio
PAUL PLIMLEY SOLO
LA PART MAUDITE
ERIKM / FM EINHEIT
ZEENA PARKINS and THE ADORABLES
MIA ZABELKA SOLO
ANTHONY PATERAS / MAX KOHANE
« Pivixki »
7K OAKS
JAAP BLONK SOLO
ANTHONY BRAXTON
« Echo Echo Mirror House »
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NELS CLINE / NORTON WISDOM
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