MILES DAVIS

THE MAN WITH THE HORN
Dreaming In Blue: Miles Davis Festival 2012

MAY 25 – JUNE 30 • SMOKE JAZZ & SUPPER CLUB • HARLEM, NEW YORK

May 25 & 26
“Miles 86” - Miles Davis Birthday Celebration
Jeremy Pelt, George Cables, Buster Williams, Louis Hayes

May 31–June 3
Jimmy Cobb Sextet - “Kind of Blue”
Jeremy Pelt, Vincent Herring, Eric Alexander, Mike LeDonne, & John Webber

June 4
“Beyond Blue Light”
A Play by Frank Christopher, inspired by and with the music of Miles Davis' Kind of Blue. Directed by Lea Delaria. Followed by the John Farnsworth Sextet

June 5, 12, 19, & 26
“Milestones” - The Mike Le Donne Quartet

June 7, 14, 21, 28 Late Night Sessions
“Miles Meets Hip Hop”
Nickel and Dime OPS

June 6 & 7
“The Freddie Hendrix Quintet plays Miles”

June 8 & 9
“Remembering Miles Dewey Davis”
Eddie Henderson Quintet
featuring Wayne Escoffery with special guest Bill Stewart with Dave Kikoski & Doug Weiss

June 10, 17 & 24
“Allan Harris celebrates Miles Davis & Billy Eckstine”

June 11, 18 & 25
“The Smoke Big Band plays Miles”
Conducted by Bill Mobley

June 13
“Joe Magnarelli Quintet”

June 14
“Antoine Drye Quintet”

June 15 & 16
“Bitches Brew”
The Lenny White Quintet
featuring Wallace Roney, Victor Bailey, Tom Guarna, & more

June 20 & 21
“Bruce Harris Sextet plays the music of Miles Davis”

June 22 & 23
“Miles Beyond”
The Al Foster Quartet
with special guest Wallace Roney

June 27 & 28
“Phillip Harper Quintet”

June 29 & 30
“Tom Harrell Quintet”
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There are a few icons in jazz history who can be identified solely by a single name: Sonny, Trane, Ornette, Cecil and, perhaps most famous of all, Miles. The trumpeter (1926-99) was both an innovator and a household name (1959’s Kind of Blue is jazz answer to Michael Jackson’s Thriller as album to be found in most record collections). Much has been made of Davis’ many groups (who else has a first and second classic quintet?), his skill as a talent scout, even his gruff public persona and indefatigable style. But lost in these discussions is an analysis of Miles Davis the musician and what he brought to the trumpet lineage in his nearly 50-year career. On The Cover this month we speak with a number of Davis’ colleagues and stylistic heirs for their thoughts on Miles’ musical legacy. Tributes to Miles for what would have been his 86th birthday are at Smoke from late May through June.

In our other features, drummer Charlie Watts (Interview) has spent his own almost-50 years as part of an iconic group (you may have heard of them...the Rolling Stones) but his other love is jazz and he has led big bands and released albums fêting legendary jazz drummers. Watts’ new group, The ABC&D of Boogie Woogie, appears at Lincoln Center’s Midsummer Night Swing and Iridium Jazz Club in its American debut performances. And while alto saxophonist Darius Jones (Artist Feature) has many decades to go before reaching the status of our other features, his leader debut triptych on AUM Fidelity (2012’s Book of Mæ’bul; 2011’s Big Gurl and 2009’s Man’ish Boy) is a very good start. This month, Jones leads a quartet at Vision Festival and co-leads a quintet at The Jazz Gallery.

Filling out our coverage are spotlights on Norwegian guitarist Terje Rypdal (Encore) in a very rare stateside appearance at Le Poisson Rouge, the late vocalist Jackie Paris (Lest We Forget), celebrated at Tribeca Performing Arts Center’s Lost (Encore) in a very rare stateside appearance at Le Poisson Rouge, the late vocalist Jackie Paris (Lest We Forget), celebrated at Tribeca Performing Arts Center’s Lost Shriners, and French record label Potlatch, as well as festival reports from Holland and Norway.

Enjoy the beginning of summer and we’ll see you out there.
Jazz musicians often develop uncanny systems of nonverbal communication. But tenor saxophonist Jimmy Heath, 85, and drummer Albert “Tootie” Heath, 76, share a closer and longer bond than most and the playful onstage code they’ve evolved seems to guide every performance by the Heath Brothers Quartet. Kicking off a late set at Birdland with Jimmy’s midtempo “Sound for Sore Ears” (May 3rd), they greeted improvised ideas with shouts, dances, double takes or just little shifts of posture that somehow fed into the music itself. During a pause Jimmy referred to his cohorts as “young men” and, indeed, rock-solid bassist David Wong couldn’t help underlining that this was once a three-brother band (Percy, the eldest Heath, died in 2005). In terms of soloing prominence and harmonic game plan, much rested on the shoulders of pianist Jeb Patton, a confident master of the bop-and-beyond milieu handed down by prior pianists with the group such as Wynton Kelly and Stanley Cowell. Even Patton’s more restrained solos delivered a jolt, something to push at the boundaries of the idiom.

Patton’s more restrained solos delivered a jolt, group such as Wynton Kelly and Stanley Cowell. Even Patton’s more restrained solos delivered a jolt, something to push at the boundaries of the idiom. There was the fascination of Brandon Seabrook’s banjo delivery on a standard kit, the luxurious, elongated single-note motif that dramatically punctuated the whirlwind. A panel talk led by George Lewis after the concert stressed that Taylor’s music isn’t unstructured but deeply structured, full of (as Iyer put it) “detail, complexity, specificity and order.” If there was to be something Cecil-esque about the night, it was perhaps in the use of the whole of the keyboard, the flight to far left and far right and maybe in a sense that, at least some of the time, all the notes were equal.

Craig Taborn played a determinedly gradual progression, sticking with an opening quietude for a considerable time before moving toward onslaught with a repeating single-note motif that dramatically punctuated the whirlwind. A panel talk led by George Lewis after the concert stressed that Taylor’s music isn’t unstructured but deeply structured, full of (as Iyer put it) “detail, complexity, specificity and order.” If there was to be something Cecil-esque about the night, it was perhaps in the use of the whole of the keyboard, the flight to far left and far right and maybe in a sense that, at least some of the time, all the notes were equal.

Watching the Undead Music Festival’s night of improvised duets at 92Y Tribeca (May 12th), it was hard to miss the element of ritual. 17 players came and went, speaking only through their instruments, observing a well-defined ‘round robin’ protocol. Drummer Amir ElSaffar played solo until saxophonist John Ellis emerged to stir up the first duet. Then keyboardist Matt Mottel of Talibam! began to engage Ellis as Ziv walked off. And so it went: electric and acoustic sounds mingling; noisy abstraction offset by controlled virtuosic displays; older and younger players from different circles, thrust into unfamiliar situations and moving toward a common goal. There were echoes of the ‘70s loft scene, perhaps most clearly in the alto saxophone/tuba, two instruments of early and proto-jazz aligned in a wildly experimental spirit. Linda Oh and Mark Helias brought out timbres far more varied than one would expect from two upright basses. Bill McHenry and John Hollenbeck took flight in a tenor saxophone/percussion duet of unrelenting energy and tonal brilliance. Cooper-Moore summoned huge sub-bass notes on diddly-bow while playing with Stillman, then switched to homemade quasi-banjo for a bluesy romp with guitarist Miles Okazaki. Solo cornet and strange manipulated feedback from Graham Haynes made for a stark, unresolved, almost defiant conclusion.

(DA)

Trumpeter Amir ElSaffar’s heritage is never far from his music. The Middle Eastern origins might be more apparent on his most recent CD (Inana, Pi Recordings) than they were at The Jazz Gallery May 4th, if nothing else by virtue of the instrumentation, but even with a traditional jazz quintet (sax, piano, bass, drums), the complex rhythms and long melodic lines didn’t just evoke his Iraqi heritage, they embodied it. With the easy yet outstretched sound of Tony Malaby’s tenor it fell into place. And at center, of course, was ElSaffar’s compositions for the new group were grounded in the musical prayers of the maqam, the ancient microtonal ishtarum mode and centuries-old Sumerian scales. Key to the reframing of tradition was drummer Dan Weiss. With his deft traditional jazz quintet (sax, piano, bass, drums), the complex rhythms and long melodic lines didn’t just evoke his Iraqi heritage, they embodied it. With the easy yet outstretched sound of Tony Malaby’s tenor it fell into place. And at center, of course, was ElSaffar’s compositions for the new group were grounded in the musical prayers of the maqam, the ancient microtonal ishtarum mode and centuries-old Sumerian scales. Key to the reframing of tradition was drummer Dan Weiss. With his deft

(KG)
One of this correspondent’s Top 10 albums of 2011 was The Veil (Cryptogramophone) by the trio of alto saxist Tim Berne, drummer Jim Black and guitarist Nels Cline, dubbed BB&C. One imagines no intended relationship to the British Broadcasting Corporation (they could just have easily referenced the Central Bank of Barbados). Since the 2009 live recording, the group had played only three times until bringing its particular amalgamation of free jazz and rock energy to the new ShapeShifter Lab - one of the finest new rooms to open in recent memory - for two nights last month (May 7th-8th). Unlike many improvising ensembles, BB&C have eclecticism in their corner. Berne is far more nuanced than your average shrieker; Cline has proven definitively he can play anything and Black moves from Gene Krupa to Paul Motian to John Bonham to Bruce Sleesinger with no seams showing. The first piece of the first set on May 7th was merely an amuse-bouche, though in its 10 minutes it amusingly fused ’70s-style arena rock with grungy punk enthusiasm and jazz intricacy, mostly going wherever Black took it. The second piece, 35 mighty minutes, revealed more about the band: the valleys were less deep, the peaks higher and more frequent. Berne often stood to the side while Cline and Black worked John McLaughlin-Billy Cobham style, each driving the trio as the guitarist always remaining musical even when futzing with a dozen effects pedals. When Berne reentered it was like the firing of the second stage of a rocket. – Andrey Henkin

This is the place. The spirits are here,” Barry Harris proclaimed to the SRO crowd at Minton’s Playhouse (May 11th) who came to hear the bebop professor celebrate the music of Thelonious Monk during the historic room’s Legends of the Bandstand series as part of the Harlem Jazz Shriners Festival. Seated at the well-worn piano, in front of the iconic mural purportedly depicting Billie Holiday in a brass bed sleeping one off while a quartet jams, Harris told tales of Monk’s tenure there in the ’40s when he was house pianist making his distinctive contributions to the birthing of bebop. Harris opened the set with an original solo piano introduction to Monk’s “Ruby My Dear” that shone a light on his creative mastery of the bebop language, blending aspects of Monk and Bud Powell’s vocabulary into his own swinging style. Accompanied by bassist Ray Drummond and drummer Leroy Williams, the trio laid down a slow and easy tempo over which tenor saxophonist Charles Davis blew flowing melodic lines. The quartet upped the ante on “Epistrophy”. Harris setting up the song with a solid left-hand vamp that led the trio into a brisk uptempo that had Davis pushing out tough tenor lines over Drummond’s walking bass, as Williams dropped Art Blakey-ish bombs into the mix. The quartet pushed even harder on a wildly swinging “Hackensack”, then mellowed the mood with a moving “Pannonica” before gradually reigning the fire on “Nutty”, “Blue Monk” and a burning hot “Evidence”. – Russ Mastro

Another entry into the Top 10 list was Upcoming Hurricane, the trio of bassist Pascal Niggenkemper, pianist Simon Nabatov and drummer Gerald Cleaver (NN&C). Nabatov was making a rare visit to the city where he lived during the ’80s and Brooklyn’s Korzo hosted what was effectively the release party for the trio of bassist Pascal Niggenkemper, Hurrican

In town for the inaugural International Jazz Day festivities at the United Nations, Hugh Masekela made a rare New York club appearance at Jazz Standard (May 2nd) to celebrate the release of his four-CD set of duets with pianist Larry Willis, the fittingly titled Friends. The two have made music together since the days when the trumpet first came here from South Africa to study at the Manhattan School of Music more than 50 years ago, humorously recounted in stories from their school days with the likes of fellow students Herbie Hancock and Ron Carter. Opening with Randy Weston’s “Hi-Fly” and following with “Monk’s Mood”, the pair set a conversational tone that testified to their half-century friendship, with Willis smiling broadly as his partner, an engaging raconteur, entertained the audience with amusing anecdotes. One of the music’s most successful crossover artists, Masekela’s depth and breadth of the Great American Songbook during a set comprised of selections from the new release, from jazz classics like Duke Ellington’s “Daydream” to the Stylistics soul standard “You Make Me Feel New”, crediting Willis for teaching him all the music. On “Until The Real Thing Comes Along” and “Dear Old Southland” he paid tribute to Louis Armstrong with unabashed replication of the trumpet’s gravelly tone and scatting phraseology. Closing with Hancock’s “Cantaloupe Island” the pair were joined by vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater for an exciting finish. – RM

WHAT'S NEWS

Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) has announced that Robert J. Appel will succeed Lisa Schiff as Chairman of the Board of Directors, a position she has held since 2002. Additionally, Greg Scholl has been named the Executive Director of JALC in conjunction with the organization’s upcoming 25th anniversary during the 2012-2013 season. Both Appel and Scholl will work closely with JALC Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis. For more information, visit jalc.org.

The winners of the 2012 Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition have been named after the three-day event held last month. Winners are: 1st Place - Dillard Center for the Arts (Fort Lauderdale, FL); 2nd Place - Roosevelt High School (Seattle, WA) and 3rd Place - New World School of the Arts (Miami, FL), with an Honorable Mention for Rio Américo High School (Sacramento, CA). For more information, visit jalc.org/essentiallyellington.

In an odd bit of research conducted by Albany Medical College, rodent specimens seemed to prefer classical music to jazz (Beethoven’s “Für Elise” versus Miles Davis’ “Four”) until given doses of cocaine.

With the 2012 edition, the Newport Jazz Festival will enter into a three-year sponsorship agreement with Natixis Global Asset Management (NGAM), bringing the Rhode Island Music Educators Association (RIMEA) Jazz Band to perform at this year’s festival as well as the Berklee College of Music Global Jazz Ambassadors. NGAM is a sponsor of Berklee College of Music’s Summer in the City program and the Berklee Beantown Jazz Festival. For more information, visit newportjazzfest.net.

The 2012 Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Awards Party will be held at Blue Note Jun. 20th at 4 pm. The New York City Jazz Record is among the nominees, in the category of Best Periodical. For more information, visit jazzhouse.org.

Bassist Christian McBride has been named the Artistic Director of the NJPAC/James Moody Jazz Festival, taking place this year in Newark, NJ Oct. 15th-21st. For more information, visit njpac.com.

Pianist Pete Malinverni has been named the new Director of Jazz Studies at Purchase College (SUNY), replacing the departing Todd Coolman. For more information, visit purchase.edu.

A benefit concert for flutist Dave Valentine was held at Le Poisson Rouge last month to raise funds to aid in his recovery from a stroke. Since Mar. 3rd, Valentine has not been able to perform. The concert raised several thousand dollars but donors can still contribute by sending checks to: The Jazz Foundation of America, 322 West 48th Street, New York, NY 10036. All checks or money orders should note Dave Valentine in the memo line.

Pianist Myra Melford is the 2012 winner of the Alpert Award in the Arts, presented annually by The Herb Alpert Foundation and California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Melford will receive $75,000. The award recognizes “past performance and future promise” of artists working in five disciplines: dance, film/video, music, theatre and visual arts. For more information, visit alpertawards.org.

Submit news to info@nycjazzrecord.com

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | June 2012
Charlie Watts is one of the most famous rock and roll drummers of all time but his first love was jazz. In the early ‘60s Watts returned to his first passion with an allstar big band and, when the Rolling Stones schedule permits, organizes a new project a little more swinging than his day job. This month he appears at Lincoln Center with his newest project, The ABC&DE of Boogie Woogie, which has him swinging behind a modern day Meade Lux Lewis/Albert Ammons duo consisting of pianists Axel Zwingenberger and Ben Waters.

The New York City Jazz Record: The British jazz scene was thriving when you were musically growing up in the late ‘50s and as an early 20-year old in the early ‘60s. Which British jazz musicians influenced you?

Charlie Watts: Phil Seaman, Jimmy Deuchar…there’s a whole crowd of people. Half of them were in an orchestra I had, a big band I brought over to New York [in the mid ‘80s]. But there were many of them. The guy [Dave Green] who is playing bass with me was my childhood neighbor and we used to listen to jazz. He used to play with a lot of those people.

TNYCJR: How close were you trying to make a career out of being a jazz musician yourself?

CW: Not very. I used to play the drums and the only drumming I knew was jazz drumming. Eventually I was asked to play with various R&B bands but it’s not an easy adventure trying to be a jazz musician. You live on the end of a telephone. I was pleased to be in a band. I’m not really a virtuoso. I prefer to be a band member.

TNYCJR: Does your approach to the drums change when you are in front of 200 people rather than 20,000?

CW: Only volume, really. It’s about the only difference for me. I play exactly the same either way. You just fit in with what’s going on. You hope.

TNYCJR: You’ve expressed a distaste for touring but does your interest change when you are leading your band? Or is a hotel room a hotel room?

CW: I never had time to do anything outside of the Stones things. Touring was constant and it got on your nerves really. I never had time to do anything at home. I’m so used to it. It seems easier now than it used to be. Our tours used to go on so long. They would become an epic on its own but it’s turned to naught now.

TNYCJR: What jazz drummers influenced you and, as you were growing up, what American jazz drummers do you recall hearing live? And who lost the biggest impression?

CW: The first guy I ever heard play was Chico Hamilton. I’ve always loved what he does. From records, you know. Davey Tough, Big Sid Catlett. The man I used to see in Paris was Kenny Clarke who I really loved but the ambassador of jazz drumming throughout his life is Roy Haynes. I think Roy Haynes is the most amazing man to be playing like he does at his age with his skill and everything. He’s never played in a bad band. Every artist that has asked him to play has been for one of their great bands, from Lester Young to Charlie Parker, Stan Getz. The band he played in with Stan Getz was one of the greats. Haynes is someone everyone should admire.

There were a lot of guys when I was a kid that I was lucky to meet. They’ve been very friendly to me like Jake Hanna. Jake was fabulous and Stan Levey. Stan Levey was one of those real admirable guys. He was something else really.

Shelly Manne was a great influence as well. One of the guys I used to see in London was Joe Morello. Elvin Jones and Chico Hamilton came to see me play a jazz gig once. They’re just having a good time and you have to play.

TNYCJR: In 1964 you released a children’s book about Charlie Parker, Ode to a Highflying Bird. Did you have any idea that copies would eventually sell for $3,000?

CW: During the early ‘60s I used to work in a studio. To get a job you had to have a CV - a folder with all your work. That was just me making an excuse to draw and write a thing so that I could show it to people. That’s what I do. About two years after the Rolling Stones started going John Lennon brought A Spaniard in the Works out. They asked if I wanted to put it out [Ode] and I told them, “If you do it exactly like I did it then yes.” And it sold. And then about 20 years after that a guy called Mark Hayward wanted to put it out and he said put some music with it. And I said “no, no, no, I’m not going to do that” but we got a quintet together anyway. Quite a good replica actually.

I’ve got the original original and the reprint that Mark Hayward did and it’s copied exactly. Difficult to tell the difference. I hope the one that sold was an original one.

It’s for children. It’s to help children learn about Charlie Parker. I didn’t realize about all those sorts of things but given time. I have programs signed by Coleman Hawkins - they’re worth a 1,000 pounds today but for you to say to Coleman Hawkins in 1942 that this would be worth that he would have laughed.

It’s a bit like painting. The artist sells it for 10 quid and then ten years later they sell for 4,000 dollars. The painter doesn’t get the other 3,990. It’s all collectors really and I’m one of them. I collect jazz records and I pay a fortune for some of them.

I collect drums too. I have lots of guys’ drums. I have one of Joe Morello’s drum kits. Sonny Greer. I have some things of Stan Levey. I got Jake’s snare drum. Big Sid Catlett’s cymbals are recently obtained.

They’re just lovely things to have.
In a laidback pose on a restaurant chair, he frankly says, “My thing is to be me. So me, unapologetically.” Whether he’s recording the latest release on AUM Fidelity, playing with his spectrum of bands or caught in his signature closed-eye trance on stage, this alto sax innovator is Darius Jones. Behind the name lies a pioneer of a new kind of soul who, for seven years and counting, has crafted some of the most jarring, eccentric and downright earth-defying pieces in contemporary jazz. But Jones’ uncanny artistry plants its roots in a history south of the New York City clubs, back in his native Virginia.

“My grandparents had a farm, so I grew up around chickens, dogs and cows,” he says. It was on this farm and through his family’s diverse love of music that Jones stepped onto the creative path. Fueled by his uncle’s saxophone playing, his father’s love of reggae and even his grandparents’ religious spirituals, Jones first channeled his baritone into vocal studies, performing and working as a choir director at a local church. Throughout high school, he explored the brassier realm, playing the saxophone when not crooning gospel melodies. “I was very connected spiritually to what [the sax] was about,” Jones explains.

“But it wasn’t encouraged to play outside of church.”

As his teenage years whittled to a close, Jones took a step back to reflect on his personal identity: “I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. At first I was thinking, ‘I want to be a marketing executive.’...I was afraid to [be a musician]. Playing the saxophone wasn’t the multi-million dollar thing, unless you wanted to be cheesy.” One decisive moment changed everything. “I remember going to the altar [at church] and asking God, ‘What should I do?’” he recalls. “And he gave me an answer. That’s what I picked and have been trying to follow since. It’s really why I do it.”

Five releases and hundreds of concerts later, that scene resonates through every vein of Jones’ brazen craft. From his albums as a leader to his inventive creations with Matthew Shipp or Little Women, he channels passion through every whine, slur and stream of sax. Jones composes all of his pieces from the bottom up, wiping away his prior experiences and preconceptions before putting his lips on the mouthpiece. “I believe in having rules,” he elaborates. “But if you can’t extend your rules for new ideas, how can you find something beautiful? The overarching [concept] is about being soulful and organic.” Equipped only with his “sonic foundations” from music school, Jones proceeds in a different direction every time he sets flight, soaring alongside collaborators like Shipp, Jason Nazary, Rakalam Bob Moses, Cooper-Moore, Adam Lane, Travis LaPlante and many more.

The method behind Jones’ potent energy rests its foundations in the realm he calls “freedom within structure.” Within that creative hotspot, he manipulating traditional styles like AABA and the 12-bar blues, transcending the bounds of musical structure to reach aural catharsis. Along the way, Jones also seeks honesty and purity: “It’s about being able to tap in and bring [written music] to life. I want to put [myself] far inside of it.”

Book of Mae’bul marks the latest milestone on his tenacious road, released last month as the final installment of his Man’ish Boy trilogy launched in 2009. In quartet with pianist Matt Mitchell, bassist Trevor Dunn and drummer Ches Smith, Jones sparks a melting pot of styles and emotions. On “You Have Me Seeing Red”, he exudes an effusive momentum one minute and classic-tinged reflection the next. The first few seconds of “My Baby” hint at a sultry lullaby, but one belly-deep sax bellow veers the vibe into yearning exploration. That expressive unpredictability courses through each work of his triptych.

While Man’ish Boy prods the psyche with gurgles and echoes, Big Gurl jolts to life in angular blurs of brass. Book of Mae’bul lies somewhere in between, capturing both Jones’ roaring transformation and devotion to his roots. He trades prods for assertions and embarks on otherworldly threads of thought, climbing to the highest throes of throttling bliss. Yet his inspiration stems from a humble source. “Women,” he chuckles. “They’re fascinating, fascinating... In good ways, bad ways, neutral ways.” Each track on the new record was inspired by the unique women in Jones’ life, poignantly “Winkie”, a texturally exhilarating tune titled after his sister’s childhood nickname.

Since the start of his three-year journey, Jones reached emboldened heights, emerging with a confident but down-to-earth vision. “In my trilogy work, I don’t want you to sit there and try to figure out what I’m doing. I’m not going to let you figure it out,” he laughs. And more intensely; “I want you to feel like you’re experiencing something spiritual, no matter what the sound. I want you to take that chance to be more open.”

Jones, too, will expand his horizons in the near future. He plans on uniting his methodical chaos with the world of synthetics and electronics. The move won’t be too far a jump - Jones already integrates electronic textures into his acoustic compositions. He also looks forward to bringing his new work to the city’s diverse performance spaces and beyond. Above all, however, Jones will stay true to the series that started everything: “There will definitely be more Man’ish Boy records,” he says, voice rich with ambition. “We’ll start on a new chapter.”

That chapter is bound to be a thriller. But what Jones illustrates without words is most telling of all. When he picks up his alto sax and gives his band the signal, he soars to bare emotion and never looks back. Jones is so immersed in his message - so immersed in the act of creation - that listeners can’t help but be immersed in it too. Every wide-eyed stare, brow-furrowed nod and body-blowing tumble sends the ears tumbling into Jones’ raw wavelength. Perhaps a few of his words will do here, after all: “I am me.”

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For more information, visit aumfidelity.com/darius_jones.html.
Jones is at Roulette Jun. 12th as part of Vision Festival and The Jazz Gallery Jun. 17th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Shayna Dulberger - TheKillMeTrio (s/t, 2006)
• Darius Jones - Man’ish Boy (AUM Fidelity, 2009)
• Little Women - Throat (AUM Fidelity, 2009)
• Matthew Shipp/Darius Jones - Cosmic Lieder (AUM Fidelity, 2010)
• Darius Jones - Big Gurl (Smell My Dream) (AUM Fidelity, 2011)
• Darius Jones - Book of Mae’bul (Another Kind of Sunrise) (AUM Fidelity, 2011)
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Although he played his final notes over 20 years ago, Miles Dewey Davis III (May 26th, 1926-Sep. 28th, 1991) remains as timeless as ever. He was the blueprint for cool, a paradigm of black masculinity, inscrutable, generous, nurturing, genius. This month at Smoke “Dreaming in Blue: Miles Davis Festival 2012”, will celebrate the life and music of a man whose career spanned everything from bebop to hip hop. Playing throughout the celebration will be a phalanx of trumpeters who, in various contexts, will pay homage to a true American classic.

“I think I first heard Miles Davis when I was in middle school,” Tom Harrell recalled. “I heard a recording called ‘Sid’s Ahead’ and I was very favorably impressed. It sounded bohemian.” When Harrell met Miles a little later he received an unusual compliment. “When I was 13 years old I went to the Blackhawk in San Francisco where he was playing with his group. He was very friendly. He said I had good teeth.”

Harrell also had some thoughts on what has made Miles’ music so appealing. “The immediacy of his sound communicates to everyone - you can hear that cry. Also, if you want to be analytical, you could transcribe his solos and analyze them the same way you would analyze Bach or Beethoven or John Coltrane or Mozart; because the subtlety is at the highest level of musical creativity. In a sense he’s like a Zen master; he perfected himself on all levels. He didn’t compromise himself.”

Freddie Hendrix has a similar admiration. “I think Miles’ playing just stands out tremendously because he had the lyricism but then he also could play some complex things as well. He was the epitome of jazz. He just had a way to get inside people’s aura and their personality and just shake them up a little bit. He understood that music was not meant to stay the same. And that’s the way Miles was in his music. This was a man about change. He went with the times and didn’t wait for the industry to dictate ‘this is what it’s gonna be’.”

Bill Moby has led the Smoke Big Band for three years. “I grew up in Memphis and I was a friend of [the late] James Williams, who was a pianist and we went to the same high school. I remember being over at James’ house and we would jam a lot and he had all of Miles’ stuff. I think the first album I bought was Seven Steps to Heaven [Columbia, 1963]. I remember one night Miles was playing at the Memphis Coliseum, with Nina Simone, around 1969-70,” Moby recalled. “I think he was playing In A Silent Way [Columbia, 1969], he was playing that kind of stuff, like long, drawn-out pieces; one piece would last 30 minutes and it was pretty free. I was having trouble with it and I was deep into music! But as I’ve gotten older I just appreciate Miles more and more. He set an example for how you can assert your individuality [and] not to be afraid to sound the way you sound. That should be the goal of a jazz musician.”

Although Jeremy Pelt had been playing trumpet for several years before discovering Miles, he says, “Hearing him did, however, motivate me to become a jazz trumpeter. Almost immediately!” His take on Miles’ sound is rather unique. “His sound has always been masculine, but retained a bit of femininity and I’ve always found that to be an interesting dichotomy.” Pelt also shares Harrell’s observation about Miles’ steadfastness. “He was so uncompromising. It’s an ongoing lesson: You can’t please everybody!”

“When I was about 23 I started getting into Cookin’ and Relaxin’, Steamin’ [Prestige, 1956] and then Milestones [Columbia 1958], you know, that period,” Joe Magnarelli remembered. “There was just a warmth that attracted me, his phrasing, his sound with the Harmon mute, I loved it. I saw him in ‘88 in Nice, because I was touring with Lionel Hampton. It was a three-artist bill: Lionel Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles. One time Miles walked through the hotel with his entourage and everybody stopped what they were doing to watch him walk through. Everybody was just totally mesmerized. Miles was a genius. When I heard Miles play I said, ‘Wow! Okay, I get it. That’s the real sound.’”

Palle Mikkelborg, who wrote and produced Miles’ Grammy-winning album Aura [Columbia, 1985], had some misgivings about working with Miles. “I thought ‘Okay, do I dare to write a piece for this man who has a reputation for being so weird, so strange and arguing with everybody? So I worked for a year on this piece, which later on became Aura. I was nervous to hear what he thought about the music. We went to the concert hall and we rehearsed with the big band that I’d put together. And we played the whole piece for him. I looked back in the hall and Miles had gone. And I said to myself, ‘All right, he didn’t like it but I did my best.’ We [took] a 15-minute break and I went to the toilet and there was Miles. And he looked at me and he said, ‘Palle, it’s a motherfucker!’

“One night, a couple of months later, the phone rang in the middle of the night. And I took it and I hear this voice ‘This is Miles.’ And he said he was coming over in two weeks to record the piece. He came over and he was so sweet to all of us. He inspired us all and made us very, very happy. I said ‘Miles, you are like a Zen master. Sometimes I don’t know what you’re saying, I just know you’re right.’”

“Miles was the coolest person on Earth,” Wallace Roney declared. “He was like a prince. We’d walk into a room and he didn’t have to say nothing. And he had all the charisma without trying.” Roney had an enviable perspective on Miles, being one of the few trumpetists whom Miles actually mentored. “He said I reminded him of him,” Roney said. “I looked at him like he looked at Dizzy. I idolized him from when I was a kid.” Roney played with Miles during the latter part of Davis’ life and his tonal similarity has drawn both praise and brickbats. “What they don’t hear is that, as much as I play like Miles, I try to take it further and that is what my sensibility is. Miles didn’t think I cloned him. He said ‘I hear what you’re doing. You keep doing it.’ He showed me so much harmonically and melodically. Miles is an uncompromising artist. If you’re not the best, you can’t play his music.”

The driving force behind “Dreaming In Blue” is Paul Stache, co-owner of Smoke. “The Birthday Celebration has been going on for seven or eight years now,” Stache explained. “The first one came about from me meeting Jimmy Cobb [drummer on 1959’s Kind of Blue who, in a 2007 interview with this reporter, said, ‘Listening to Miles play, well not only did Miles play great every night but everybody played great every night. That’s a hell of a thing. That doesn’t happen all the time with everybody.’] So it was a natural choice to book a band with Jimmy to celebrate Miles. The festival evolved out of that. There are quite a few cats who come through Smoke who are associated with Miles. Some who played with him and others who indirectly worked with him. So we really had too many great choices for a Miles Celebration to fit them all in one weekend. That’s how we ended up with a five-week-long festival. Besides the headliners, I am very proud to have a great lineup of great young trumpeters as part of the festival as well. Trumpet is probably my favorite instrument in jazz so I’m always looking at what the younger cats are up to.”

Since Stache believes that it’s important to approach Miles from other angles, a play, Beyond Blue Light, is part of the celebration. “My business partner at Smoke, Frank Christopher, is a great playwright. Like so many people, he listened to Kind of Blue over and over again. It inspired him to write Beyond Blue Light. It’s a great play!”

“Miles was always cutting edge and always pushing the envelope,” Stache said. “People of all walks of life, not just musicians should be reminded of just how much Miles was by simply listening to his large body of work in terms of musical diversity. The musical journey from Birth of the Cool [Capitol, 1949-50] to We Want Miles [CBS, 1981] touches so many different sounds it’s hard to believe it’s the work of one person.”

For more information, visit miltedish.com. “Dreaming in Blue: Miles Davis Festival 2012” is at Smoke from May 25th throughout June, featuring Jimmy Cobb, Freddie Hendrix, Eddie Henderson, Allan Harris, Joe Magnarelli, Antoine Drey, Lenny White, Bruce Harris, Al Foster, Wallace Roney, Phillip Harper and Tom Harrell. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Miles Davis - Chronic: The Complete Prestige Recordings (1951-56) (Prestige, 1951-56)
• Miles Davis - The Complete Live at the Plugged Nickel 1965 (Columbia-Legacy, 1965)
• Miles Davis - The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings (1965-68) (Columbia-Legacy, 1965-68)
• Miles Davis - The Complete In a Silent Way Sessions (Columbia-Legacy, 1968-69)
• Miles Davis - The Complete Bitches Brew Sessions (Columbia-Legacy, 1969-70)
• Miles Davis - Live at Montreux: The Definitive Miles Davis at Montreux (1973-1991) (Eagle Rock Entertainment, 1973-91)
There are many ways of understanding Terje Rypdal. He has recorded prolifically, mostly on ECM, for 44 years, was early in bringing electronics to jazz and is a seminal figure in what became known as fusion. Rypdal is proof that European jazz has achieved independence and he has one of the most identifiable electric guitar sounds in jazz. It is a human sound with (in the words of critic David Fricke) a “sea-gull-cry sustain”. He belongs with the elite of living jazz guitarists. Yet he has played in the United States only three times in his life and not since 1997. This month, he will appear at Le Poisson Rouge with one of his working bands: Palle Mikkelborg (trumpet), Ståle Storløkken (keyboards) and Paolo Vinaccia (drums).

Rypdal lives in Tresfjord, Norway, 300 kilometers northwest of Oslo, on six acres that have been in his family for generations. On the telephone from Tresfjord, he reports, “I don’t travel so much anymore. I play mostly jazz festivals and in between I stay home and compose.” When he talks about his musical origins, the sources of his eclecticism begin to clarify. “I started on piano when I was five. My background is really classical. I probably could have continued and become a concert pianist.” But when he was 12 he heard the British guitarist Hank Marvin and began to teach himself guitar. He played in Norwegian pop bands then discovered Jimi Hendrix. Even today, the most obvious (though simplistic) description of Rypdal’s sound is that it is the thunder and shriek and ecstasy of Hendrix, filtered through the sophisticated sensibility of a jazz improviser.

But he was also listening to Miles’ Bitches BREeze and then, “by chance”, he heard Coltrane’s Meditations: “Of course I didn’t really understand it, but later that album became crucial for my ideas about improvisation.” When he was 22, he joined Jan Garbarek’s quartet and then, as he puts it, “Manfred Eicher heard about the group and ECM happened.” He played on Garbarek’s Afric Pepperbird in 1970, the label’s seventh release.

Rypdal’s ECM discography is now approaching 40 titles (including a forthcoming three-CD set as part of the label’s Old & New Masters Series), a vast and rich and diverse body of work encompassing rock, jazz, abstraction, ethereal ECM atmospheres, symphonies and choral and chamber works. (After Hendrix, Rypdal’s most lasting influences are the 20th century composers: Jorgy Leger and Krzysztof Penderecki.)

The best single overview of Rypdal’s music is his Selected Recordings, the seventh volume of ECM’s 20-volume:raum series. It contains touchpoints in a 27-year period from 1971-98. Rypdal’s power trio with bassist Bjørn Kjellemyr and drummer Audun Kleive is well represented, with pieces from recordings that changed jazz guitar, like Blue, Chaser and If Mountains Could Sing. It was a power trio capable of haunting poetry. Rypdal is known as a guitar god and there are some monstrous guitar workouts but his guitar is just as likely to evaporate into whispering electronic twilights. He is above all a thinker and conceptualist who has a guitar god as one tool at his disposal.

Threads of continuity recur through his career. In 2006, he released Vossabrygg. It is a free tribute, with similar instrumentation, to the album that helped shape his aesthetic, Bitches BREeze. The Miles role is fulfilled brilliantly by Palle Mikkelborg. Rypdal says, “For me, when jazz went in a more rock direction, it all fell together.”

His latest album, Crime Scene (2009), picks up another thread: Coltrane’s Meditations. Rypdal was commissioned to compose music for the Bergen Big Band of Norway. He says, “They sent me some of their recordings and I was surprised that they had actually made an album around Meditations, expanding on it. So we had a connection. I treated the band like a chamber orchestra but more open, with a lot of freedom, especially for the sax players.”

Crime Scene proves that Rypdal has lost none of his imagination, curiosity and courage. It is one of his most unusual and ambitious works, featuring the quartet with Mikkelborg, Storløkken and Vinaccia plus the 17-piece Bergen Big Band. The blend is unique: orchestral jazz; wild abstraction; belligerent rock ‘n’ roll; snippets of spoken dialogue from crime films. Rypdal was in a wheelchair, recovering from surgery, when he composed it: “I couldn’t go to the piano all the time. Maybe that’s why it’s so loose.”

In June, Rypdal will be performing music from Crime Scene with the quartet and the Bergen Big Band at jazz festivals in Vancouver, Montreal and Rochester. At Le Poisson Rouge, he will have the quartet only and says he cannot do Crime Scene without the big band. But whatever he does, it will be like nothing heard on these shores in years.

For more information, visit ECMrecords.com. Rypdal is at Le Poisson Rouge Jun. 27th. See Calendar.

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**Jackie Paris (1926-2004)**

by Andrew Vélez

Carlo Jackie Paris was born Sep. 20th, 1926 in Nutley, New Jersey. Although he never achieved the acclaim accorded other male singers of his era, Paris had intermittent successes. What did remain throughout his career was a consistently hip vocalizing much admired by some of the greatest jazz musicians.

Paris began his career as a popular child song and tap-dancing entertainer in vaudeville, where he was encouraged by legendary black headliners such as Bill “Bojangles” Robinson and The Mills Brothers. After serving in the army during World War II, he was inspired by his friend Nat “King” Cole to put together “The Jackie Paris Trio”, with himself on guitar and vocals. During the now legendary period of jazz on 52nd Street, the Trio played an unprecedented 26 weeks at the Onyx Club. During this time he met Charlie Parker and became the only singer who ever toured regularly with Parker’s Quintet with Miles Davis and Max Roach. Regrettably they never recorded.

His first recording was “Skylark” (1947) for MGM and it became Paris’ signature tune. In 1949 he became the first white vocalist to tour with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra. Exhausted by their series of 78 one-nighters, he turned down an invite from Duke Ellington to join his orchestra. Paris was the first singer to record Thelonious Monk’s “Round Midnight” and Charlie Mingus called Paris his “favorite singer” and used him on several recordings including Paris in Blue (1952), which was written for him. It was followed by the classic “Duke Ellington’s Sound of Love” (1974).

With his cool attitude and harmonically sophisticated style, Paris embodied the very essence of modern jazz. Straightforward in his delivery, with an acute respect for lyrics and well grounded in the blues, Paris could also swing and scat. Named “Best New Male Vocalist of the Year” in 1953, in the first-ever DownBeat Critics Poll, it was to be the first of many that he won. Among the musicians with whom Paris recorded are Hank Jones, Charlie Shavers, Joe Wilder, Wynton Kelly, Eddie Costa, Coleman Hawkins, Bobby Scott, Lee Konitz, Terry Gibbs, Neil Hefti, Johnny Mandel and Oscar Pettiford.

Yet despite all the acclaim and admiration from his peers, there were long periods during which Paris all but disappeared from music, even reportedly at one time to have been working as an elevator operator. Yet in 2001, he was back singing to a standing-room-only crowd at Birdland. He was the subject of Raymond De Felitta’s 2006 documentary, ‘Tis Autumn - The Search for Jackie Paris. Frail physically but still swinging, Paris opined, “To be alive is to play...otherwise why the hell are we here!” Paris passed Jun. 16th, 2004.

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Lest we forget.

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**Recommended Listening:**

- **George Russell - Electronic Sonata for Souls Loved By Nature** (Strata East-Soul Note, 1969)
- **Esoteric Circle - Eponymous (Flying Dutchman, 1969)**
- **Jan Garbarek / Bobo Stensson / Terje Rypdal / Arild Andersen / Jon Christensen - SART (ECM, 1971)**
- **Terje Rypdal - Odyssey (ECM, 1975)**
- **Terje Rypdal / Miroslav Vitous / Jack DeJohnette - To Be Continued (ECM, 1981)**
- **Terje Rypdal - Crime Scene (ECM, 2009)**
ShapeShifting Music and Art
by Fortuna Sung & Matthew Garrison

"Matt, are you sure you want me to write the article? Nobody knows who I am!" To which Matt responded, with much encouragement, "Yes, you have to do it eventually, one way or the other. You’re my business partner and the co-owner of this place. Don’t be shy." And here I am, writing away about the story of our venue ShapeShifter Lab.

The birth of ShapeShifter Lab came about one day when Matt and I were in Tokyo, casually chatting about our dreams. “I have two arts-related ideas I’ve always wanted to put into reality, Fortuna. One is to have my own space that allows for all musicians to come in and present their work without boundaries and the other is to continue developing my online work in a new format that no one else has ever done before.” He continued to explain, “After spending more than 20 years as a performing artist, I pretty much have performed at most major venues around the world. Very rarely have venues or organizations treated musicians like artists (in particular, the respect they’ve taken proper care of the sound systems, among a series of other issues).” Even though I am not a musician, I could feel his frustration. “Music is another world where people come together trying to forget about issues that set us apart – racism, color, religion and on and on. It’s a common language where we come to an understanding of each other when we interact artistically.”

My little brain started calculating after this conversation. Two months later, I sent Matt a proposal and three months after, I found myself in New York. The timing was perfect. Matt had just finished a tour with Whitney Houston; I wanted to explore my entrepreneurial nerves in a new territory outside of Asia, continuing what my parents had been doing: providing opportunities for ideas in the art scene.

Growing up with him during the ’80s in Italy while we were teenagers had planted the seeds of this venture. And now 25 years later, we are making it happen at ShapeShifter Lab. We found this manufacturing space one year ago in Park Slope Brooklyn, put a few nails and some paint here and there (to put it very mildly) and here we are! Because of the flexibility of the space, it allows for live recordings. “With my recent record releases,” Matt has said, “sales have taken a hit over the last couple of years because of all these pirated downloads. Unless I’m on the road, selling CDs directly to the audience, it’s almost pointless to make records these days.” At first we wondered why CD and audio file sales plummeted at which point we went online to poke around here and there. We were nearly in tears; attempting over 20,000 downloads from bit-torrent sites. “So it’s not about my compositions. There’s got to be a way to bypass all of this lack of compassion for artists trying to make a living by selling their work to the public,” he said two weeks after his last release. So with the convenience of having a space, Matt is using it as his recording platform to release his next record in a revolutionary way within the virtual world. So far we have recorded Meshel Ndegocelo, Gene Lake, Arto Tuncboyan, Dave Douglas, Adam Rogers, Jojo Mayer, Sean Rickman, Mark Guillauna, Marko Djordjevic, Hadrien Feraud and Tobias Ralph. I would like to give you more details about it but this project is being patented at the moment. We will announce it shortly. And yet, this venue adds another spectrum to the whole picture: we want people who come here, artists and audiences alike, to have a forward-thinking mindset. Coming from a jazz background, Matt has never forgotten about his lineage. He told me proudly, among other things that set us apart: “I picked up playing the electric bass, ‘My father is well known, you know! His name is Jimmy Garrison, the bass player of John Coltrane.’” With my poor knowledge at that time, I had no idea what historical significance that implied. Only years later, I was able to grasp that simple statement and admire his ties with the revolutionary steps that those brave musicians had taken. “I want ShapeShifter Lab to be the place where musicians and audiences come gather, hang out and new concepts will blossom naturally and organically, always connecting to the original spirit of research bestowed upon us by such artists as my father.”

The idea is to give these musicians and artists entire evenings so they can curate projects where they can bring in dancers, live visual art, film scots or just an evening of pure creative music. However, the projects they bring in have to be forward-thinking, even better with different art forms intermingled with each other. We have to move into the future. To put it abstractly, music and art are about no boundaries, freedom of expression and working with open space and people with open minds. We have to work with visual artists, dancers, film-makers, photographers to create more interactive human dynamics."

For more information, visit shapeshifterlab.com. The official grand opening takes place throughout June. See Calendar for complete program and performers.

Mathew Garrison was born Jun. 2nd, 1970 in New York, spending the first eight years of his life immersed in a community of musicians, dancers, visual artists and poets. After the death of his father, his family relocated to Rome, Italy where he began to study piano and bass guitar. In 1988 he returned to the United States and lived with his godfather Jack DeJohnette for two years, studying intensively with both him and bassist Dave Holland. In 1989 Garrison received a full scholarship to attend Berklee College of Music in Boston and thus began his professional career with the likes of Gary Burton, Bob Moses, Betty Carter, Mike Gibbs and Lyle Mays, to mention but a few. Garrison has performed, toured and recorded with artists such as Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul, Chaka Khan, Pino Daniele, Meshel Ndegocelo, Joni Mitchell, Whitney Houston, Wayne Shorter, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Coleman, Rita Maractalli, Bill Cosby, Paul Simon, Cassandra Wilson, Wallace Roney, Geri Allen, Gary Thomas, John McLaughlin, The Gil Evans Orchestra, Tito Puente, John Scofield, The Saturday Night Live Band, Michael Brecker, Randy Brecker, Mike Stern, Pat Metheny and many others.

Fortuna Sung was born into an artistic family in the ’70s in Hong Kong. Her father was a trained classical musician and film director/producer. He had mentored world-class film directors such as Johnny Woo and Wong Kar Wai, among many others while her mother was an actress in many leading roles. Their daughter continues to carry on their passion into which they have dedicated a lifetime. Matt is the “music-brain” and Fortuna is the back-end support at ShapeShifter Lab.

by Katie Bull

H ow do we sleuth out who to go hear in vocal jazz? Who, what, where, when, why? The who and when are in the The New York City Jazz Record’s extensive Event Calendar. The what and why might arrive from a friend’s enthusiastic recommendation, or the influence of a balanced critic’s perceptions, providing context for reflective and fresh new listening. This month, the focus is on the where; there are vocal homes that you, the listening audience, can count on to find excellent singers. At the end of the day, “You just gotta be there.”

Zinc Bar, Jazz at Kitano, Metropolitan Room, The Jazz Gallery, Fat Cat, Cornelia Street Café, Smalls and Bar Next Door: all golden vocal venues. 55Bar has a tried-and-true dedication to solid regulars such as Kendra Shank (Jun. 29th). The newish midtown club Somethin’ Jazz Club won the 2011 DownBeat Award for best jazz venue and also features singers regularly such as sturdy jazz elder Dee Cassella (Jun. 16th).

I-Beam offers ear-opening programming such as mellow Yoon Sun Choi’s E-String Band (Jun. 8th). At The Stone, Brazilian-born Vinicius Cantuaria sings Jobim anew (Jun. 8th).

Smoke, a beloved jazz dinner club known for cream-of-the-crop straightahead singers, features finely attuned Allan Harris as part of its month-long Miles Davis Festival (Jun. 10th, 17th and 24th). Harris has also released Convergence (Love), a seamless duo with pianist Takana Miyamoto, and will celebrate late singer Jackie Paris at Tribeca Performing Arts Center’s Lost Jazzes Concert series (Jun. 9th). …

…At Blue Note mainstay singers Tessa Souther (Jun. 4th), Juili Sandino (Jun. 24th) and Cassandra Wilson (Jun. 28th-30th) will carry the room’s legacy forward. Souther’s soulful new release is Beyond the Blue (Motema) and note that she is also a 55Bar regular; Silvano’s hearty house combo Indigo Moon (Jazz at Midtown) and will have her music performed at Symphony Space (Jun. 7th). Before the breathtaking Manhattan skyline at Dizzy’s Club, hear jazz cabaret great Barbara Carroll sing and play piano (Jun. 20th-24th).

Outdoors, the fierce Gregory Porter is at the Madison Square Park Oval Lawn Series (Jun. 27th). The Jazz Journalists Association has nominated Porter for Best Male Singer (June 20th) as part of its annual awards package. …

Roulette hosts the Vision Festival this year, which features the 60th Birthday of the legendary saxophonist and pioneer Jay Clayton in “Bebop to Freebop” (Jun. 15th)! Vision/Facts for Arts also regularly hosts the bold Evolving Voices Series at Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center. At the Abrons Arts Center, jazz, blues, folk master Leon Redbone will bring the 20th Century Songbook on home. Be there. Where? At venues providing homes for song’s heart. ❖
Potlatch Records
by Ken Waxman

Performing music’s loss is recorded music’s gain since Paris-based Jacques Oger abandoned his gig as a saxophonist with the free music trio Axolotl in the mid ‘80s. Turning to market research, communication and translations, by 1997 he had saved enough to found Potlatch, which to date has released 35 high-quality CDs. Oger spent 10 years with Axolotl, during which the band recorded two LPs and gigged frequently. He stopped playing, he admits, “because I thought I was not creative enough to keep on in that area of music.” He was creative enough though when he translated his love for experimental music into a record label.

“My kids were older, so I had more time left to do something else,” Oger adds, describing the birth of Potlatch, which takes its name from the wealth redistribution system practiced by North American Indians. “I thought that a label was needed to promote musicians that I enjoyed and who weren’t known enough. Above all, there was the Internet starting and growing very fast. Suddenly it was very easy to have contacts with musicians, distributors and consumers all over the world via mailing lists, mail order and websites.” Another plus was his experience as an itinerant musician. Asked how he corralled well-known musicians such as Evan Parker and Joëlle Léandre to record for Potlatch, Oger replies: “I knew them personally. I explained that they could rely on me because I knew how to address the ‘market’; I had contacts with distributors, I knew journalists and reviewers in France and abroad.”

Early on output was divided between sessions specifically created for Potlatch and previously recorded material. As Potlatch’s sole owner and only employee, Oger uses different sound engineers and artists/designers on a project basis. “We often recorded at Les Instants Chavirés, the main venue for improvised music in Paris, or sometimes at great festivals such as Méto in Mulhouse.” One early CD, Outcome, by Derek Bailey and Steve Lacy, stands out because it was recorded 16 years before it was released. Engineer/computer musician Jean-Marc Fousset, who recorded the majority of Potlatch’s early CDs, had the master on hand. “It made sense because Steve Lacy was living in Paris. Since I had attended his master class, I knew him,” remembers Oger. “Afterwards, I decided to give up on older material. I have to release material focused on the present. Music is changing, so labels must reflect new tendencies and trends.”

That has certainly happened, as Potlatch has become one of the primary outlets for reductionist sounds. “There was a turning point with a new generation of musicians with other ideas of how to play. From 2002 on, my choices were orientated towards realms focusing on more spacious forms of music with new textures, slower pace, the presence of silence, a preference for collective sound rather than chatty ping-pong playing based on energy and spontaneity.”

Since Oger can’t afford to put out more than two or three CDs each year, selecting the right musicians and sessions to release is “the main job when you run a label, maybe the only one,” he asserts. “It’s hard even when you believe that you have some experience. I need to know what’s happening everywhere. I attend a lot of concerts; I listen to a lot of recordings. When I’m convinced by the quality of a musician or group of musicians, I ask if we can do something together. It can be a live recording and we can make several before choosing the best, or it can be studio sessions.”

One player who benefited from this due diligence is tenor saxophonist Bertrand Denzler, who has had four CDs on the label: two with Trio Sowari; another with a saxophone quartet and a solo saxophone disc.

“In the late ‘90s and early ‘00s, other labels published my CDs. Working with them was a good experience, so I wasn’t thinking about recording for Potlatch,” Denzler recalls. “I saw Jacques at many concerts though and we had interesting discussions about music. Then in 2004 Trio Sowari had its first concerts in France plus a two-day studio residency. Jacques came to one of those concerts in a tiny studio and enjoyed our music. He told me he would be interested in publishing a recording. I told him I would send him something. He immediately decided to release it.”

“Two years later, Trio Sowari did a new CD and I asked Jacques to publish it. But he needs time before he can sell enough copies to finance the next one. Two years later, he put it out. With Propagations, Jacques heard our saxophone quartet in concert, but after we recorded, either we or he thought the results weren’t good enough until we finally came up with something in 2007. I recorded the solo CD one day in Paris and...”

(Continued on Page 37)
dOek Festival

by Ken Waxman

Unexpectedly but appropriately, Sean Bergin, tenor saxophonist and tour-guide-for-the-day, added an extra stop to an afternoon bus tour of selected jazz clubs during the 10th anniversary of Amsterdam’s dOek Festival (Apr. 21st-22nd). On a narrow street beside a canal, at a construction site, which from 1974-2005 had been home to the Bimhuis, ground zero for advanced Dutch sounds, the South African-born Bergin passed out noise-makers and led the participants in a brief fanfare celebrating the exceptional music played there.

The salute was doubly significant. Not only was that location progenitor of the spacious, soft-seated, harbor-front location of the new Bimhuis, in which 2012’s festival took place, but long-time Amsterdam resident Bergin, who during the bus ride entertained with quirky songs and stories about the city’s musical history while playing saxophone, penny-whistle and ukulele, is a representative of the foreign improvisers who have contributed to the city’s musical gestalt.

Organized as a non-profit foundation promoting improvisation in the Netherlands, dOek’s global reach was emphasized during the fest with concerts that featured American, German and Australian musicians playing alongside their Dutch counterparts.

Take WoKali, a trio that melded the verbalized whinnies, mumbles and rapid lip motions of local trombonist Wolter Wierbos with two Berliners: pianist Achim Kaufmann, with his crisp key palming, and percussionist Christian Lillinger, who vibrated dual snares, slapped hard objects on drum tops and generally produced hyperactive rhythms. A climax was reached as Wierbos’ slurs turned to tongue-grinds, the drummer beat on the hi-hat with a stick while Kaufmann’s cascades kept the theme cohesive.

Oddly there was no piano present during the set by The Gap, a sextet organized by dOek founding member Cor Fuhler, who now lives in Australia. Usually a keyboardist, Fuhler instead played guitar and was backed by another dOek founder now in Berlin, reedist Tobias Delius; Germans Axel Dörner on slide trumpet and Jan Roder on bass; plus two Aussies: percussionist Steve Heath and vibraphonist Dale Gorfinkel, whose kinetic sound and light sculptures were on display on another floor of the Bimhuis. A suite of Fuhler-composed airy miniatures, the pieces usually depended on Gorfinkel’s four-mallet rubs and slides on the metal bars and Heather’s sensitive brush work. Ironically, despite the modernist playing of Dörner, whose distanced breaths often seemed to leak back into his horn, the taut voicing of vibes, guitar and Delius’ flat-line clarinet resembled that of Lionel Hampton, Charlie Christian and Benny Goodman.

The more assertive bass-and-percussion team of (CONTINUED ON PAGE 46)

Trondheim Jazz Festival

by Tom Conrad

When you fly into Trondheim in May, snow still covers the hills around the city. Norway has older, more famous jazz festivals, like Molde and Oslo and Kongsvig, but Trondheim has an intimacy all its own. The small venues are close together, on either side of a footbridge over the Nivelda River. In May, Trondheim Fjord and the river glow in the amber of very late sunsets.

One of the most important jazz conservatories in Europe, the Jazz Performance Program at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), is located in Trondheim. This year’s festival (May 9th-13th) included a Jazz Summit, with academically rigorous lectures and panel discussions. Participants included Erling Aksdal, Director of the NTNU Jazz Program, author Stuart Nicholson, John Kelman (Managing Editor of AllAboutJazz.com), Francesco Martinelli (Director of the Siena Jazz Archive) and several musicians (Bugge Wesseltoft, Django Bates, Iain Ballamy). The central theme of the Summit was that globalization is the key evolutionary development taking jazz into the future. The music of the festival confirmed this thesis, with an emphasis on three parts of the globe: the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway.

Americans set the bar high. Stacey Kent played the opening concert in Dokkhuset (“dock house”), a 280-seat space in a converted dry dock. She is an honest, unaffected singer with a small, pure voice. Her clear diction and objective phrasing made her Jobim interpretations (“Corcovado”, “How Insensitive”, “Dreamer”) sound egoless, even definitive.

After Kent, Ambrose Akinmusire’s incandescent quartet (Sam Harris: piano; Harish Raghavan: bass; Justin Brown: drums) played right across the street in Blæst, a dark upstairs room without chairs. Akinmusire lived up to the current critical consensus that he has a chance to be the next important jazz trumpet player. He organizes a solo like no one, with lines that are startling in themselves and more startling in their internal relationships. On “Richard” he erupted in huge sweeps and wild splashes of trumpet while his rhythm section soothed. Nominal ballads like “Regret No More” were eventually blown up by impulsive intervallic leaps. Akinmusire may not have listened to Tomasz Stanko, but in our globalized jazz environment Stanko is in the air. Like Stanko, Akinmusire slides off notes to slur and spit and flutter. Like Stanko, he is less a trumpet player than an expressive artist whose medium is trumpet. (Harris, unpredictable and orchestral, is a new pianist to watch.)

Kit Downes was the most impressive of the British musicians. The pianist’s quintet Quiet Tiger at Dokkhuset (Calum Gourlay: bass; James Mallesten-
Journeyman
Brandon Wright (Posi-Tone)
by Elliott Simon

With his understanding of jazz composition and a tone mature beyond his years, tenor saxophonist Brandon Wright has understandably carved out a niche for himself as a big band mainstay. And while Wright may think of himself as a Journeyman within the confines of the Mingus, Chuck Mangione and Max Weinberg big bands, his creativity and fresh approach as a leader are anything but mundane. Boiling Point (Posi-Tone, 2010) debuted integrative leadership as a strong suit and Journeyman picks up where that album left off.

Mingus bandmate/pianist David Kikoski is a welcome holdover from that debut session and the cuts on this sophomore release are evidence that he and Wright have become even more in sync. In the context of this quartet’s freedom, their in-tandem playing is quick, precise and masterful. Bassist Boris Kozlov and drummer Donald Edwards are also Mingus Big Band members and here they weave elegant rhythmscape that are crisp, fleet and structurally solid in support of the various stylistic realms through which Wright takes the quartet.

Whether the band is wailing on burners like the brawny “Big Bully” or opener “Shapeshifter”, melding jazz with greasy blues for a “Walk of Shame” or getting sentimental on an extended take of Hoagy Carmichael’s “Nearness of You”, Wright’s muscular tone impresses. His style is steeped in ’90s hardbop but Wright is most definitely a child of the ’90s. On his debut, he found the jazz in Stone Temple Pilots’ “Interstate Love Song” and here he employs a strapping Eddie Vedder-esque voicing for Pearl Jam’s “Better Man”, which cleverly contrasts with Kikoski’s more graceful approach. In addition, an introductory Tran’e-like soliloquy to Oasis’ “Wonderwall” creates a hymn-like atmosphere that retains the original’s naiveté but expands its reach across generations. Wright’s unique combination of chops, jazz savvy and Gen X diversity may signal a changing of the guard.

For more information, visit posi-tone.com. This group is at Jazz at Kitano Jun. 1st. See Calendar.

Convergence
Allan Harris/Takana Miyamoto (Love Prod.)
by Marcia Hillman

This album is being billed as a salute to the legendary Tony Bennett/Bill Evans duo recordings of 1975-76. But it is also a salute to the simple rendering of song by two musical voices - the human voice of Allan Harris and Takana Miyamoto’s piano. The pair had never worked together until a last-minute engagement in Atlanta wherein they realized their musical chemistry and decided to record together. Harris has been on the scene with other recordings to his credit as a singer and guitarist. His voice has settled in a lower register over the years and now possesses a warm raspiness that, in spots, is reminiscent of Nat Cole. Japan-born Miyamoto, a graduate of Berklee College of Music, enjoys a reputation as an accomplished accompanist, having worked with Nnenna Freelon and René Marie. She does not attempt to play like Bill Evans here but instead brings her own delicate and inventive touch to her fills and solos.

The selections, which appeared on the aforementioned Bennett/Evans recordings, are all recognizable and there are several highlights. Even though they are all ballads and mostly done in ballad tempo, there are two up-tempo song versions that really swing - “The Touch of Your Lips” and “Days of Wine and Roses”. Harris’ phrasing ability stands out on the latter as it also does on his rendition of “But Beautiful”.

“You Must Believe In Spring” is a fine example of Harris’ storytelling ability and Miyamoto delivers a memorable solo on the torchiest of all torch songs, “You Don’t Know What Love Is”. But the most heartfelt performance on this CD is Evans’ classic “Waltz For Debby”, which is approached as the lovely lullaby it is meant to be.

Harris and Miyamoto have used their respective interpretive gifts to create a warm comfort zone that brings out the best in these songs and the vocal/piano duo tradition.

For more information, visit allanharris.com. Harris is at Tribeca Performing Arts Center Jun. 1st as part of Lost Jazz Shriners and Smoke Jun. 10th, 17th and 24th as part of Miles Davis Festival 2012. See Calendar.

Other tunes are more composed, but still highly spontaneous, including three by Alessi, the most memorable of which is the slow building, nearly anhemitic “Yellow Cat”. Coltrane and Alessi are longtime cohorts and their ability to play off and push each other is powerful and deep. Lovano, meanwhile, is featured on a riotous reading of Ornette Coleman’s “Check Out Time” and a much more subdued, even tender, trio take (with Allen) on the late Paul Motian’s “Fanstasy”.

For more information, visit bluesnote.com. Coltrane is at Birdland Jun. 1st-2nd, Roulette Jun. 5th, ShapeShifter Lab Jun. 8th and The Schomburg Center Jun. 13th. See Calendar.

CD REVIEWS

Recommended New Releases

- Chick Cona - The Continents
- Linda Oh - Initial Here
- Evind Opsvik - Oversens IV
- Ulysses Owens Jr - Unanimous
- Phronesis - Walking Dark
- Larry Willis - This Time The Dream’s On Me
- David Adler, New York@Night Columnist
- Cannonball Adderley Quintet - Legends Live
- Ran Blake/Christine Corna - Donon Here Below
- David “Fuze” Fucyzynski - Planet Microjam
- Ravi Coltrane - Blue Note
- The Thing (with Barry Guy) - Metal
- Zanussi Thirteen - Live
- Laurence Donohue-Greene
- Managing Editor, The New York City Jazz Record
- Eivind Opsvik - Criss Cross
- Red Trio + Nate Wooley - Stem
- The Thing (with Barry Guy) - Metal
- Zürichorn - Wanderlust
- New York@Night Columnist
- Andrea Henkin
- The New York City Jazz Record

NEW RELEASES

- Blue Notes - Before The Wind Changes
- Ircha-Mikołaj Trzaska Clarinet Quartet - Watching Edward
- Kuhlhammer/Aalberg/Zetterberg - Basement Sessions, Vol. 1
- Mike Noordzy Quintet - Dream-a-chi-cho (Nacht)
- The Thing (with Barry Guy) - Metal
- Zürichorn - Wanderlust
Nino Rota (Solo Piano)  Mark Soskin (Kind of Blue) Me, Myself & I  Kenny Werner (Justin Time) Self-Portrait With No Hands - 13 adventures with more standards (including some lesser known), four of what he calls “sketches”, which serve as brief interludes, and one original composition. Imagine that you’re sitting in a living room with an artist simply demonstrating just what he can discover in the most familiar air; the pianist offers us Miles’ lesser known “Milestones”, not the tune “Miles” often mistakenly called “Milestones” that led off the album of the same name. Here, as in every selection, Berkman displays prodigious technique but it’s always in the service of what he can find out about a tune.

Beyond the Blue  Tessa Souter (Venus-Motéma Music)  by Ken Dryden British native Tessa Souter was a late bloomer. It wasn’t until after raising a son as a single parent, earning a college degree and various writing and editing jobs that she finally pursued her dream as a vocalist. Encouraged by her exposure to jazz through attending jam sessions and open mic nights in New York City, Souter retained her love for pop while also writing lyrics for well-known jazz works and composing new music of her own.

The Jazz Couriers were a twin tenor group co-led by the mercurial Tubby Hayes and the sane but never boring Ronnie Scott. The latter is best known to Americans for the London club that still bears his name while Hayes will also be familiar to many, owing to the fact that a couple of his best albums were recorded for American labels. During the brief period the Couriers were together (1957-59), this was the most popular jazz band in Britain. And though at this remove they will probably conjure up comparisons to the Al Cohn-Zoot Sims quintet, they drew their primary inspiration from the hardbop of Art Blakey and Horace Silver.

The Jazz Couriers (Gearbox)  by Duck Baker Pianist Terry Shannon’s fleet soloing and tasty comping are in the Sonny Clarke vein and drummer Bill Eyden is particularly fluent in the hardbop idiom. Between the fine rhythm section work and the high-octane blowing of the leaders, it’s easy to see why Dave Brubeck quipped during a tour that featured both groups, “they sound more like an American band than we do.” The opening title track proves that this wasn’t just empty praise. Hayes blasts out of the gate with a blistering solo that demonstrates his great facility and, for the time, advanced harmonic sense. His one weakness was always the tendency to play too much, but that’s mostly under control on this set. Scott is by no means introspective, but his sound is smoother and his solos slightly more playful. He was influenced by early Stan Getz and one wonders if he didn’t absorb some of trombonist Bob Brookmeyer’s humor in the process. Hayes’ arranging and writing skills are on display throughout, as is, on one track, his surprisingly good vibes playing. Seven won’t find a more lovingly produced release than this LP, pressed on 180-gram vinyl from analog tapes the way God and Rudy Van Gelder intended. The original recording is noisy in spots, but the sense of being in the room really comes through. The liners are excellent and since this is a limited edition, anyone who loves vinyl enough to pay a premium price is advised to grab this record before it inevitably sells out to the audiophile market.

For more information, visit gearboxrecords.com.
GLOBE UNITY: ICELAND

ADHD 2 Óskar Guðjónsson (s/t)
Mónókróm Andrés Pór (DIMMA)
Long Pair Bond Sunna Gunlaugs (Sunny Sky)

Nestled just beneath the Arctic Circle, Iceland supports an active jazz scene in its capital Reykjavík, host to an acclaimed annual festival now in its third decade and the spawning ground of artists like Mezzoforte, Petur “Island” Östlund, Björn Thoroddsen and Skúli Sverrisson. Special mention must also be made of Ótakr, whose tunes have been widely covered by the likes of Greg Osby, Jason Moran, The Bad Plus and even an entire big band dedicated to her work: Travis Sullivan’s Björkestra.

Saxophonist Óskar Guðjónsson leads a quartet with brother Omar (guitar/bass), Davíð Pór Jónsson (organ/keyboards) and Magnús Tryggvason Eliassen (drums) on its sophomore release, ADHD 2, a rootsy venture that draws deeply from the blues-rock well, the guitar cloaked in retro tremolo, at times recalling John Scofield’s slow-hand phrasing, the saxophone whispering delicately, half air, half tone. The music has a ‘creeper’ appeal, laced with restrained dissonance, spacey drums and humble soulfulness.

Mónókróm, guitarist Andrés Pór’s (pronounced “Thór”) third date as a leader, features Reykjavík’s first-call rhythm section: pianist/organist Ágnar Már Magnússon, bassist Porgrimur “Toggi” Jónsson and drummer Scott McLemore (a Norfolk, VA ex-pat). Gentle and unassuming, the outing highlights Pór’s beautiful tone on electric, acoustic, dobro, lap and pedal steel guitars - ironically, the acoustic often ‘bites’ harder than the distorted electric - demonstrating his delicate but assertive touch and talent for harmonic nuance and intelligent melodies. Most of the tracks unfold in relaxed rock tempos, though “X” and “Sjávargrund” have seven-beat meters and “1922” is funky. Pór’s slide work is full of subtle inflections, with nods to country, blues and Hawaiian stylings while Magnússon creates an equally broad sonic palette with electric and piano and organ; his solo on “München” is a standout. Jónsson and McLemore’s cohesive connection comes from being frequent gig-mates.

The dynamic rhythm duo reappears on pianist Sunna Gunlaugs’ Long Pair Bond, a similarly relaxed affair with compositions from each trio member. Like Pór, Gunlaugs isn’t trying to impress with her technique, but rather to draw listeners into her musical world, an impressionistic soundscape inspired by the Nordic landscapes of her country. Most tracks have pared-down themes and straightforward harmonies, though “Autumnalia” is through-composed and the compositions of McLemore (Gunlaugs’ husband) display a bit more edge. Standout moments include the piano/bass interplay on “Elsabella” and three-way dialogue throughout “Vicious World”, a Rufus Wainwright interplay on “Elsabella” and a similarly edge. Standout moments include the piano/bass interplay on “Elsabella” and three-way dialogue throughout “Vicious World”, a Rufus Wainwright

Across the Imaginary Divide
Béla Fleck/Marcus Roberts Trio (Rounder)
by Matthew Kassel

As much as jazz is about self-indulgence - consider all the soloing - it’s also very much about wise restraint. The banjoist Béla Fleck embodies those two poles: he’s a virtuoso but he seems to know when to step back, to let some space into the music. This is an important attribute for a banjoist who immerses himself in jazz settings. In Across the Imaginary Divide Fleck joins the Marcus Roberts Trio and he adapts well, which is to say the patterns he picks out on his instrument do not make the music too busy.

The excellent pianist Roberts - who got his start playing with Wynton Marsalis in the mid ’80s - is another sort of virtuoso: of awkwardly refined expression. (You can trace his style back to Ahmad Jamal and Thelonious Monk and the stride pianist James P.Johnson.) How Roberts and Fleck navigate their own differences is what makes this album interesting.

On “Petunia”, the musicians go back and forth between a lively hoedown and a slow, stride rhythm. It’s the most literal cross of styles on the album and still quite good. There’s a lot of rhythmic shifts and quick transitions on tracks throughout the record and bassist Rodney Jordan and drummer Jason Marsalis do a fine job of making them seamless.

The exchange of solos, though, is where it’s at - which makes you think that this would also have made a good duo record. Roberts and Fleck both have beautiful melodic ideas and give themselves plenty of space in which to reveal them. Of note: Fleck sometimes makes his banjo sound like a mandolin when he plucks between strings and his tone, when he lets it echo between notes, is sweet and satisfying. In the end, it appears that Roberts and Fleck have a lot in common.

For more information, visit rounder.com. Mehldau is at The Stone Jun. 6th in duo with Mark Guiliana. See Calendar.

Ode
Brad Mehldau Trio (Nonesuch)
by Sean O’Connell

Despite drummer Jeff Ballard joining pianist Brad Mehldau’s trio with bassist Larry Grenadier almost ten years ago, this is the first studio album featuring just the three of them. There are no orchestras or guests, just Mehldau’s working group burning through an hour of original material.

As the title suggests, the tunes on Ode find Mehldau in a reflective mode, paying homage to a host of characters living, deceased and fictional. Curiously, although this is the first studio album for the trio, 8 out of the 11 tracks were waxed over three and half years ago, with a few albums recorded and released in the interim.

The album opens with a skittering homage to late saxophonist Michael Brecker entitled “M.B.”. Mehldau’s fingers dash in ten different directions like cross-town traffic, swerving narrowly around each other. The title track - Mehldau’s “ode to odes” - recalls his earlier Jon Brion-produced pop approach with a gentle lull of pure, pulsating chords driven by Ballard’s vibrant cymbal. “Bee Blues” has the pianist in an angular Monk mode, Grenadier taking an elegant striding solo that Mehldau matches with a methodically playful one.

“For more information, visit nonesuch.com. Mehldau is at The Stone Jun. 6th in duo with Mark Guiliana. See Calendar.

For more information, visit facebook.com/AdHd.is, dimma.is and sunnagunlaugs.com. Gunlaugs’ Trio is at Scandinavia House Jun. 28th. See Calendar.

Elegiac Cycle
Ode
The late Stéphane Grappelli appears without Django Reinhardt on two of these discs yet even in most classical shape, he hearkens back to the spirit of his longtime companion and days in the Quintette du Hot Club de France. The violinist’s sound also weaves through two recent tribute albums, curiously reinterpreted by several contemporary hands.

*Bringing it Together* features Grappelli on a nonet of jazz and pop standards. His serenading cries weave through Toots Thielemans’ harmonica like warm streusel in “Bye Bye Blackbird”, hitting the lullaby chorus with heart-stopping melancholy. Thielemans’ breezy harmony complements Grappelli’s whines, grounded by Martin Taylor’s cool guitar. On “Hit The Road Jack”, Grappelli also coasts on cool sails while electric bassist Brian Torff tightens the air. Thielemans conjures the same magnetism as he whistles on “You’d Be So Nice To Come Home To”.

Grappelli takes an ornate turn in an orchestral recording of Jerome Kern pieces, illustrating the sultrier side of his virtuosity, particularly in “A Fine Romance” and “Long Ago And Far Away”. His violin swoops the former tune into a cinematic soundscape, echoed by his orchestra’s regal classicism. On the latter work, Grappelli returns to the instrument that sparked his musical beginnings, enveloping the air with his pensive piano. Just when his style tiptoes into florid verbosity, Grappelli sparks into radiant swing on “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man”. Marc Fosset’s shimmering vocals cinch the rich affair.

On the cover of *New Street*, Ben Powell cradles his violin while lost in a faraway skyward gaze - and this thoughtful scene captures the essence of his album. Powell’s Grappelli tribute trio mingles with airy ease, leaving plenty of room for introspection. “La Chanson Des Rues” ponders at Powell’s bittersweet pace, cresting into high-pitched reflections before retreating to silence. Julian Lage delicately seeps out intricate ribbons of guitar along the way. Vibraphonist Gary Burton shines in “Piccadilly Stomp”.

*Souvenirs*, actually a Reinhardt tribute, does more than just pay homage - violinist Daniel Weltlinger rejuvenates the gypsy jazz craft in evocative colors. “Minor Swing” immediately swells to vibrant life, feeding the soul with a medley of strings, woodwinds and accordion. Weltlinger conjures Grappelli’s grace amid his own folksy swing on “Djangology”. The title track emerges as the album’s curious outlier, remastered to sound eerily similar to an old LP. But clarinetist Edouard Bronson emerges most riveting of all in a brief yet captivating solo on “Swing 42”. Spiked with the slightest acerbic edge, his festive cheer charms the ears with the spirit of eras gone yet still to come.

For more information, visit lisem.com, justin-time.com, ben-powell.com and danielweltlinger.com. Powell is at Jazz at Kitano Jun. 7th. See Calendar.
English saxophonist Paul Dunmall has always seemed open to adventure. After turning professional at 17, he tested the US with the Divine Light Mission and even recorded with Alice Coltrane before hooking up with Johnny “Guitar” Watson for a year. On his return to England he discovered the European free music scene. He has operated in that heady realm ever since, allying a deep spirituality and humility with a prodigious imagination and presence.

Billed as the Dig Deep Trio, the combination with longtime associate bassist Paul Rogers and drummer Tony Bianco is not new, dating back to 2002 at least. But as revealed on this 2010 live date, they still have a lot to say. Two long form improvisations (helpfully demarcated into 7 tracks for those unable to devote the required 67 minutes at a single sitting) constitute a highly potent set. “Absolute” in particular is a tour de force of spirited playing, sustaining interest while barely dipping out of the red. Dunmall, on muscular tenor, expounds with utter conviction, unburdened even at the fastest tempos, as his lines turn themselves inside out in a Möbius strip of unpredictable invention. Bianco’s non-stop drumming constitutes one of the defining characteristics of the program. While it can be an acquired taste, the ex-pat American acquires himself well here in terms of his sensitivity to the ebbs and flows in the energy around him. When the going gets heavy Rogers wields his bow to cut through the density undercutoff by the boomy bootleg sound, especially on “Mary”, scrolling through nimble flamenco guitar-like plucking, ringing harmonics and wavering sawing, evoking a hyperactive cellist, before becoming enveloped in the ensuing tumult, even getting a bowed coda to himself to take out this superb disc in style.

Utilizing the same format, though with less intensity, is The Realisation Trio, Dunmall in the company of two young compatriots live in Birmingham in 2011. A more spacious ethos allows the reedman to open to adventure. After turning professional at 17, he tested the US with the Divine Light Mission and even recorded with Alice Coltrane before hooking up with Johnny “Guitar” Watson for a year. On his return to England he discovered the European free music scene. He has operated in that heady realm ever since, allying a deep spirituality and humility with a prodigious imagination and presence.

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Utilizing the same format, though with less intensity, is The Realisation Trio, Dunmall in the company of two young compatriots live in Birmingham in 2011. A more spacious ethos allows the reedman to stretch out without being pushed to the limits. Unusually for Dunmall, simple themes act as the launch pads for three-way exploration in a continuous performance, which has echoes of Sonny Rollins’ Freedom Suite. At times, as on “Part 2”, the leader draws inspiration from the material, but more often he seems unconstrained by his starting point, ably supported by Nick Jurd’s solid bass counterpoint and Jim Bashford’s pulsing drums. Often found in the middle register, Dunmall carves out asymmetric phrases, co-opting tonal dissonance for emphasis and only occasionally overthrobbing for his trademark head-turning guttural holler. At times he even sounds almost boppish, as on the driving groove of “Part 5” and the choppy bounce of the concluding “Part 7”.

Illustrating Dunmall’s approach, Montana Strange is a different again, a work written for the saxophonist by composer Brian Irvine and featuring the Northern Irishman’s contemporary ensemble along with the BBC Concert Orchestra. Two separate scores for each unit run in tandem, linked by a series of cue points while the saxophonist lives on his wits, navigating through the convergences and incongruities. Being inspired by the oeuvre of the iconic filmmaker David Lynch, a dark undercurrent percolates through even the brightest moments, accentuated by jarring clashes between the orchestral strings and the horns, electric guitar and bass, turntables and percussion of Irvine’s group. Dunmall predominantly sails parallel to the shore, spurned on by his surroundings as evidenced by his elongated slurs echoing the strings on the ominous “A dream of dark and troubled things”. Of course, he effectively counters the prevailing orthodoxy at other times and brings business to a passionate unaccompanied conclusion. Rounding out the program is a short piece for Dunmall and the Irish RTE National Symphony Orchestra, which feels strangely unresolved, compared to what has passed before.

Irvine’s introduction to Dunmall was a gig in Belfast some 20 years earlier, where he was completely drawn in by the magic and special connection between the threesome of the reedman, Rogers and drummer Tony Levin. That alliance, three quarters of improvising collective Mujician, which became known as the Deep Joy Trio thanks to an eponymous four-CD set on the hornman’s Duns Limited Edition imprint, sadly came to an end with Levin’s passing in late 2011. Live In Austria, recorded in 2007, discovers the band in an expansive mood on two organically evolving freebop cuts. Levin knew when to drive and when to lay out, allowing ample space, which benefits Rogers’ slashing arco work and Dunmall’s sinewy yet mewling soprano. However the quality of the proceedings is slightly undercut by the boomy bootleg sound, especially reducing the impact of Dunmall’s bagpipe soliloquy, which concludes the 40-minute “Looking Deep”. For more information, visit fmr-records.com. Dunmall is at Roulette Jun. 11th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

Matthew Shipp and Joe Morris have recorded together many times in various lineups over the years, including once before as a duo (Thesis, hatOLOGY, 1998), but Morris played guitar on that record while he’s heard on bass here (he added the instrument to his arsenal in 2000). It is doubtful if many would ever spot him in a blindfold test, because he certainly doesn’t just translate his guitar ideas to the bass (which would be pretty much impossible anyway). This is not to say that his musicality isn’t recognizable but only that Morris shows himself to be a real multi-instrumentalist with his differing approach. The way he relates to the pianist is recognizably Morris; he responds, but almost never in the most obvious ways, to what his counterpart plays. And some of the time finds a parallel path in less the music decide the course it wants to take from there or go off in another new direction altogether. Best is when he gets to working out of jazz-rooted ideas (as on “Four”, much of which sounds like a Martian interpretation of Randy Weston), but Shipp doesn’t confine himself to any one approach for long. He does spend less time in the harmonic outﬁeld than he used to and is more willing to use repetitive riffs, but the real challenge of this music isn’t in harmonic, melodic or rhythmical innovation so much as the wide-open way - or, more accurately, ways - that the artists let things unfold.

For more information, visit nottwo.com. Shipp and Morris are at Roulette Jun. 11th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

Matthew Shipp/Joe Morris (Not Two)
by Duck Baker

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For more information, visit nottwo.com. Shipp and Morris are at Roulette Jun. 11th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.
Elliott Sharp Trio (Clean Feed)

by Kurt Gottschalk

Even given the broad diversity in the numerous records Elliott Sharp has released over the last 35 years, one could be forgiven for thinking they know more or less what to expect from a new issue. From skronk rock to chamber ensemble, a mathematical rigidity and a remarkable precision has generally dominated the guitarist’s work. Even in his looser moments, playing Monk or blues improvisations unaccompanied, there is an exquisite control. His work is not always the same. Far from it. But there are rules that run through it, as proven by the exception that is his new trio.

Hiring a rhythm section like bassist Brad Jones and drummer Ches Smith almost guarantees a sort of intricate swing and that’s clearly what Sharp was looking for in the dozen tracks that make up Aggregat. Having worked extensively with the licks of Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Coleman and Roy Nathanson, Jones is well versed in taking a diversity of material and reading it as blues or swing, cinematic or vaudevilian. And while being the youngster of the group, Smith has had similar sensibilities called upon while working with Tim Berne and Marc Ribot or the rock band Xiu Xiu and his own Good for Cows and These Arches. Together they make, with no intended understatement, for a tight little trio.

As such, Aggregat is probably Sharp’s most easily-labeled “jazz” record to date, although it’s far from simply playing dress-up. His fast guitar geometries are certainly at play on some of the dozen tracks that make up the disc, although more of the tracks feature more emotive, nimble soloing. But to say Sharp can play any style he sets his mind to on the guitar is hardly a revelation. The bigger shocker here is his saxophone playing. In the past, his tenor and soprano horns have almost invariably had a harsh edge employed as a sustainer, arcing squall over a predetermined complexity. But here, the saxophone is moody, even soulful, from the outset. Album opener “Nucular” (referring either to an old neologism or an even older name for a section of a fruit) has its moments of sputter (as on “Sweet 22nd Street”) but Sharp’s happily jazziest.

Chicago has always been known as a city of jazz and one of its staunchest supporters and most respected ambassadors was the late Fred Anderson, free jazz tenor saxist and proprietor of the legendary Velvet Lounge. The original Velvet Lounge was in many ways a reflection of its owner: outside of the mainstream, no frills, old school and committed to music and the musicians who make it. Anderson presided over the club like a patient, benevolent father whose role was to show younger players the way to finding their own voices. When the original club aged beyond repair, Anderson was able to move to a larger place around the block, a bit more comfortable for its patrons but with a palpable loss of character. An era had ended and Anderson’s death in 2010 sealed it.

Saxist Ernest Dawkins, bassist Harrison Bankhead and drummer Hamid Drake - called the Chicago Trio for the concerts captured on Velvet Songs: To Baba Fred Anderson - came up through the Velvet system, Dawkins reporting that he played the club every weekend for two years. To Drake, of course, Anderson was a father figure and Bankhead would regularly play with Drake in Anderson’s own bands. Recorded over a pair of nights in August 2008, the music is made by a no-nonsense saxophone trio, but in its variety the music is infused with Anderson’s overriding guiding principle: to offer a platform for musical exploration and mutual communication.

Each of these tracks is spontaneously improvised and Dawkins demonstrates impressive range. On the gravity-defying “Astral Projection” and Drake’s signature reggae groove “Jah Music”, it’s soprano; on “Down in the Delta” and “Astral Projection” and Drake’s signature reggae groove “Jah Music”, it’s soprano; on “Sweet 22nd Street” his tenor swings and on “Galaxies Beyond” it squeals. “You Just Crossed My Mind” is a lovely alto ballad. Dawkins even plays two horns at once on the Dixieland-inflected “Down in the Delta” and for “The Rumble” he unleashes a torrent of jazz ideas on alto that proudly demonstrates the Velvet’s freedom principle. When Drake turns to frame drum, as on “Peace and Blessings” and “Moi Tre Gran Garcon”, he and Bankhead are featured in ringing cello/double bass and soft-percussion duets. To close, on “One for Fred”, Dawkins emulates Anderson’s style by playing the long lines that the master would build upward as layers of notes piled on top of one another, urged along by the sort of undulating and pulsating rhythm section of which Drake was so often a part. It’s a fitting tribute; reverent and inspiring in equal measure.

For more information, visit cleanfeed-records.com. Sharp is at Roulette Jun. 11th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

For more information, visit web.roguart.com. Hamid Drake is at Roulette Jun. 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th and 17th, all as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.
Back in 1988, Impulse reissued two of pianist McCoy Tyner’s early albums, Inception and Nights of Ballads and Blues, on a single disc. This recent Impulse reissue, however, offers Inception and Reaching Fourth on a 67-minute CD, a logical combination as both are acoustic piano trio dates from 1962 (the former with bassist Art Davis and drummer Elvin Jones, the latter with bassist Henry Grimes and drummer Roy Haynes).

Tyner was only 23 at the time, but he was already a major name in the jazz world thanks to his contributions to John Coltrane’s trailblazing quartet. So it made perfect sense for Impulse to start recording the Philadelphia-born pianist as a leader. However, both albums lack the intensity and sense of adventure that characterized many of those recorded with Coltrane (or, for that matter, some of the great albums Tyner recorded as a leader for Milestone in the ’70s).

But that isn’t to say that this reissue isn’t enjoyable. Tyner’s distinctive pianism is both lyrical and swinging and he is as recognizable on his own compositions as he is on tasteful performances of well-known standards like “Old Devil Moon,” “Speak Low,” “Have You Met Miss Jones” and “There Is No Greater Love.” Stylistically, there is very little difference between the two postbop albums, both of which were produced by Bob Thiele and engineered by Rudy Van Gelder so well that the audio quality is as impressive as the music itself.

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This reissue’s greatest flaw has nothing to do with the music itself but rather the packaging; the original liner notes that Nat Hentoff wrote for Inception and those of Dan Morgenstern for Reaching Fourth are shrunk to a tiny type size that is difficult to read. A musician of Tyner’s stature should not be held to such a standard.

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For more information, visit vervemusicgroup.com/vault.

Inception/Reaching Forth
McCoy Tyner Trio (Impulse-Verve)
by Alex Henderson

Rob Brown’s alto saxophone has been one of the bright spots in the jazz of the last two decades. He is a constant presence in many of bassist William Parker’s groups (including the late, lamented In Order To Survive quartet). He has also led his own ensembles and issued a stream of fine recordings under his own name. He’s always demonstrated himself to be a thoughtful and passionate improviser. Brown has a bright, singing tone that can change its complexion to darker hues from phrase to phrase and commands attention. While his early recordings betrayed a strong Jimmy Lyons influence (both in his playing and in his compositions), over the years he has achieved a more personal sound and his compositions have become more finely honed. But the late alto saxist Lyons clearly remains a totem in his pantheon.

Brown has always chosen his sidemen wisely. The group he assembled for his 2010 Vision Festival performance consisted of Matt Moran (vibes), Chris Lightcap (bass) and Gerald Cleaver (drums). The inclusion of Moran, currently one of the most innovative players on his instrument, building on the innovative techniques pioneered by Bobby Hutcherson in the mid ’60s, gives the group a unique sound and its textural work is one of the hallmarks of this session. Lightcap, who has played frequently with Brown, anchors the bottom end with assured phrasing. And drummer-for-all-seasons Cleaver fills out the music, adding drive and color to each track.

Brown’s compositions span a wide range. “Tic—to-c” quirky theme shows that Jimmy Lyons’ roots still lie at the base of his music but Brown’s solo is distinctly his own. “Lurking / Looking” is a slowly developing theme played over an ostinato and loping rhythm as Brown peppers his solo with artful distortion. The concluding “Bell Tone” is played over an upbeat 6/8 and everyone gets to speak his piece. Unexplained Phenomena is a strong addition to Brown’s discography.

For more information, visit futuramarge.free.fr. Brown is at Roulette Jun. 12th with William Parker, 16th with Steve Swell and 17th in duo with Daniel Levin, all as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.
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Drummer Paal Nilssen-Love has been exceptionally prolific in the last 12 years, appearing on numerous releases each year and traveling constantly throughout the world. First gaining international attention as a member of The Thing, Nilssen-Love has built lasting associations with such ubiquitous improvisers as Mats Gustafsson, Peter Brötzmann, Otomo Yoshihide and Americans Ken Vandermark and Joe McPhee.

Nilssen-Love is in possession of prodigious technical skill, but what distinguishes his work is the constant ebb and flow between subtlety and extreme intensity. He manages to function like the drummer in a group while essentially operating more like a sound generator. Three releases find him in different contexts, each reflecting his distinctive musical personality.

The standout from this batch is *Mechanisms*, the debut from a collective trio with two of Chicago’s most noteworthy improvisers - saxophonist Dave Rempis and cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm. The three extended improvisations find the former switching between alto, tenor and bari, with the latter incorporating his distinctive use of electronics. The extended structures provide ample opportunity to explore myriad sound worlds, to build intensity slowly, with purpose and intent. Lonberg-Holm manages to incorporate electronics in a way that transforms his instrument to the point of being completely unrecognizable as a cello - though still managing to sound like the same player he is with his colorful acoustic playing: the play between the two approaches is quite flexible and his fluency with both is inspiring. Rempis is a forceful player whose long phrases can generate dynamic contours out of minute shifts in the timbre of his instrument. So often Rempis and Lonberg-Holm create a profound sonic tandem, with Nilssen-Love approaching the drums not so much as a large instrument, but a handful of extremely varied sounds that can each be explored, separately or together.

Nilssen-Love and Dutch rock band The Ex have a long history and on *Hurgu!* he is joined by guitarist Terrie Ex in a set of arresting duets. The proceedings remain at a high level of intensity throughout, this being more of a brazen romp than the extended ruminations of Ballister. The textural palette is more consistent throughout and as such the general architecture relies more on the interplay between the two musicians. The emphasis here is on sustaining a level of intensity over a long period of time and the effect is more trancelike. Quiet moments like the opening of “Bedele” offer some of the most unexpected twists in the duo’s interplay while still ultimately delivering the goods with some intense blasts of sound.

*Slime Zone* by the collective trio Slugfield highlights the growing relationship between free jazz, noise music and so-called ‘non-idiomatic improvisation’. With Lasse Marhaug (electronics and turntable) and Maja S.K. Ratkje (vocals and electronics), this record is an amazing museum of unlikely sounds, at times recognizable or completely alien. Here Nilssen-Love’s approach to his instrument(s) is particularly focused on the collection of sounds each object is capable of producing. The line between rhythm and texture is all but nonexistent, as sounds and gestures blend together or cohabit in ways that constantly confound listeners’ expectations. The tracks here are generally shorter, with the opening cut “Get Out the Traps” being just under three minutes and most of the rest around ten minutes or shorter. This is noteworthy in that it reflects a much more abstract trajectory than Ballister’s collaborative development of structure or the punishing relentlessness of the duo with Terrie Ex. Bizarre sounds creep in and mutate - fitting that the artwork focuses on a sea of green slime and a parade of goopy slugs, as this is how the music often moves along. There is a joyfulness that calls to mind a child’s fascination with gross things; these sounds tend to suggest an affinity for tactile stimuli and sense that the best place to look for something pleasant is in very unsavory places.

“For more information, visit cleanfeed-records.com and paalnilssen-love.com. Nilssen-Love is at Roulette Jun. 13th with The Thing and Joe McPhee as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.”
The New York City Jazz Record | June 2012

Ingebrigt Håker Flaten has rapidly become one of the most prominent bassists in free jazz, in part due to his openness to varied musical situations, but much more so for the sheer power of his playing. First achieving a significant European profile in the late ’90s with Bugge Wesseltoft’s New Conception of Jazz, the first major ambassadors of Nu Jazz, Håker Flaten has since brought his ferocious drive to a host of prominent bands, often in company with the drummer Paal Nilssen-Love (The Thing, Atomic, Ken Vandermark’s School Days and Frode Gjerstad’s stellar improvising big band Circulasione Totale Orchestra) while showing off his softer side in duo with countryman saxophonist Håkon Kornstad. He’s now a significant musical presence in Chicago and Austin - where he resides - as well as Europe. These recent CDs track some of Håker Flaten’s American passages, all close to the beating heart of a fundamentalist free jazz.

Joe McPhee has been a frequent guest with The Thing and the senior saxophonist/trumpeter has previously recorded in duo with Håker Flaten (Chicago Blues, Not Two), so there’s clearly developed musical chemistry on Brooklyn DNA. The duets hinge on the special musical character of Brooklyn, with pieces invoking various individuals and scenes prominent in its musical history. The two musicians craft a compelling vision of community, Håker Flaten’s playing is both empathetic and prodding as he sometimes maintains very fast tempos while expanding his own expressive range. “Crossing the Bridge”, dedicated to Sonny Rollins, suggests compound points of view, with McPhee’s honking alto recalling Albert Ayler, until Håker Flaten enters and the piece assumes the Caribbean lilt of “St. Thomas” and Rollins’ roots. There are fine invocations of Brooklyn visits by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and homages to residents like the late saxophonist Dewey Redman, but the most arresting music is also the most radical: “Enoragt Maeckt Haght”, named for the Brooklyn motto of “Unity Makes Strength”, is a probing exploration of bowed bass and airy pocket trumpet that represents the borough as terra incognita.

Remi Alvarez is a Mexico City-based tenor saxophonist whose work, like McPhee’s, has a direct expressiveness that’s immediately compelling. First Duet Live chronicles an Austin performance by the two musicians. On the 22-minute “First Duet”, Alvarez reveals himself as an incantatory tenor player and one hears his work as testimony, whether it’s creating a song-like stream, worrying a motif into new shapes and meanings or suddenly erupting into multiphonic cries and wails. Håker Flaten roots this discourse in time, surrounding, encouraging, framing and driving it forward. On “Second Duet”, the bassist comes to the fore with some wonderful bowed playing. Alvarez has a strong sense of voice, but he can touch on very different moods and different areas of his horn. There are moments when he finds a new effect in a series of high register yips or, alternately, wisps of sound, ably matched by Håker Flaten’s sudden flights into upper-register harmonics.

Håker Flaten’s aesthetic includes a kind of brutalist spirituality, certainly evident in his work with The Thing, but there’s a far subtler take on the legacy of Albert Ayler and other energy players embodied in The Hymn Project with the great Texas trumpeter Dennis González, his sons, bassist Aaron and percussionist Stefan González, and cellist Henna Chou. The CD opens with the hyper-resonant sound of Stefan González’ balafon and one eventually has a sense of this resonance echoing globally, touching spirits of Håker Flaten’s native Norway and the González family’s Latin American heritage. There’s a sense of continuous melody here, a stream of sound running from instrument to instrument. It’s a chance for Håker Flaten’s lyricism to emerge and it does so in guitar-like lines and subtle pitch-bends, dovetailing with the other strings, the percussion and Dennis Gonzalez’ own inspired, soulful trumpet. Highlights abound, from the pensive mix of instrumental voices on “Doxology” to the rising tension of “Sweet Hour of Prayer” with Håker Flaten’s spare and intense solo. But it’s the cumulative power of the whole program, imbued as it is with an exalted musical nobility, that stays in memory.

For more information, visit cleanfeed-records.com, ingebrigtflaten.com and dennisgonzalez.com. Flaten is at Roulette Jun. 13th with The Thing and Joe McPhee as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.
Primarily known for his yeoman work in any number of Chicago-based groups, guitarist Jeff Parker is the most accommodating of sidemen and leaders. Bright Light in Winter, one of his infrequent solo dates, demonstrates why. Nowhere on this agreeable, nine-track trio session does Parker pull rank or try to overshadow stalwart bassist/flutist Chris Lopez or adaptable drummer Chad Taylor, both of whom performed with him in Rob Mazurek’s Chicago Underground combos. Tellingly as well, although both Parker and Lopes use monophonic synthesizer attachments, the organ-like quivers and tremolo echoes never surpass the live musicians’ contributions. Want another example of this collegial spirit? The writing chores are divided, with the bassist contributing three compositions, the drummer two and Parker four.

That said, with the date dependent on light, almost Latin-esque skin-pattening, moderato bass plucks and clean finger-picking and melodic guitar runs, often only technical finesse prevents some tunes from becoming enervating rather than merely relaxed. That nadir is reached on Lopes’ “The Morning of the 5th”, which is all pucked flue lines and guitar strums.

Happily even if some of the other pieces have lines closer to jazz samba than jazz soul, rhythmic smarts make them balladically rather than bathetically. On Taylor’s “Istvan”, for example, the surging delicacy of Parker’s exposition is muted by sequences of sound delays and reverb plus the bassist’s straightahead walking. Rim shot clips and a chromatic bassline provide additional ballast for Parker’s graceful spidery comping and Taylor’s percussion kicks. Most impressively, the leader’s “Freakadelic” is no George Clinton cop, but a way to highlight Parker’s ability to spin out seemingly endless dextorous theme variations while maintaining the tune’s melodic content.

Overall, Bright Light in Winter has enough of a romantic overlay to please jazz dilettantes, but with equivalent skillful, yet understated tonal wizardry to appeal to more sophisticated listeners.

For more information, visit anzicrecords.com. Avital is at Smalls Jun. 5th, 12th and 19th. See Calendar.
Possessing a visionary creative spirit, Wadada Leo Smith has traversed an artistic path so broad during a career spanning six decades as to go well beyond the promise prompted by the inventiveness of his early work with Anthony Braxton, Muhal Richard Abrams and other AACM colleagues. More accurately, the trumpeter-composer-theoretician has explored divergent musical galaxies, merging them through his own unifying concept of music. Jazz, blues, improvised and world musics coalesce within his ensembles, unbounded by the customary restrictions that accompany categorization. The newest of his numerous assemblages, Mbira, with drummer Pheeroan akLaff and pipa player Min Xiao-Fen, marvelously exemplifies the soundness of his methodology.

Smith's music is, as he describes it, “non-metrical”, offering longtime colleague akLaff a central role in its rhythmic construction, utilizing the dynamics of sonance and space to provide each piece with a narrative structure that is dramatically driving and tonally absorbing. Xiao-Fen’s unique approach to her instrument, simultaneously traditional and futurist as it recalls a Far Eastern lute, bottleneck guitar, Appalachian banjo or microtonal synthesizer, provides an expansive sonic environment within which the broad palette of Smith’s trumpet and flugelhorn sound his imaginative lines.

The opening “Sarah Bell Wallace”, introduced by unabashedly bluesy pipa, unfolds episodically, with Smith blowing piercing long tones over processional malleted tom toms. A middle section, driven by crisply ringing cymbals, alternates spirited horn lines and jagged string articulations that ultimately connect in a startling synergy preceding the piece’s melancholic plunging cymbals, alternates spirited horn lines and jagged string articulations that ultimately connect in a startling synergy preceding the piece’s melancholic juncture. The celebatory anthem “Zulu Water Festival” references both Far Eastern and Native American folkisms while the title track floats about Xiao-Fen’s stirring reading of Smith’s poignant poem memorializing Billie Holiday. The closing “Mbira” is a sprawling tapestry of sound intermingling contrasting moods and modes in an invigorating musical amalgam.

For more information, visit tumrecords.com. Smith is at Roulette Jun. 15th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

Six Feet Under
Wooley/Weber/Lytton
(NoBusiness)

by Clifford Allen

One of the crucial things about this music is that the concept of a band’s instrumentation is, ultimately, less important than who is playing. We think of the format of a piano trio, an organ group, or a piano-less quartet as given, into which one plugs the holes with artists who have (or can have) a good rapport and the music works itself out in that context. Such ideas have defined ‘jazz’ to some degree for generations. But the last few decades have introduced an incredible amount of flexibility both in how ensembles approach the music, as well as the possibilities inherent in each instrument. Two of trumpeter Nate Wooley’s most recent releases are poised to defy any traditional assumptions about ‘trumpet and rhythm’ even if he’s the only horn.

Six Feet Under joins Wooley with a frequent collaborator, English percussionist Paul Lytton, as well as Swiss bassist Christian Weber on a program of five improvisations. As a trumpet and percussion duo, Wooley and Lytton have circumvented any notions of a drum-and-bugle corps through extensive use of electronics, amplification, voice and close mic’ing, to the point that sound sources are indistinguishable. Six Feet Under isn’t that kind of record, though - Lytton’s kit is more or less traditional, albeit played with light, open concentration and controlled metric wrangling. Wooley’s screams, growls, circular breathing and unsettled chuffs are out in full effect, buttressed by Weber’s massive arco on the opening “Pushing up Daisies”. If it is a fracas, it is conscious of the logic behind group motion. “Nickel Eyes” opens with a syrupy cry, the kind not quite heard from Wooley in this way. He’s translated the barren-ache of Albee Ayler from tenor to trumpet and he pulls it into a dry, laconic swing against precision flits and a meaty pizzicato anchor. Much of “La Grande Mort” is rooted in long, murky tones and ancillary subversion - the latter almost comedic when bright, muted trumpet and scratched drumheads supplant a protracted, guttural pinch. As both a power trio and an exploratory vehicle, Six Feet Under is a brilliantly equilateral recording.

Six Feet Under features pianist et al.

Stem
Red Trio + Nate Wooley
(Clean Feed)

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com and cleanfeed-records.com. Wooley is at Cornelia Street Café Jun. 16th with Harris Eisenstadt, Red Hook Jazz Festival Jun. 17th with both Harris Eisenstadt and as a leader and Seeds Jun. 20th as a leader. See Calendar.
Active on the New York scene since the ‘80s, bassist Arthur Kell came up playing with the late saxophonist Thomas Chapin and drummer Bobby Previte, among others. Something of a Renaissance man, he spent about ten years as an environmental activist, extensive world traveler and music instructor. Since the late ‘90s, he’s focused on leading bands and composing music, with *Jester* his fourth release. Eschewing formulaic head-solo-head constructions, the pieces boast quirky unison figures for saxophonist Loren Stillman and guitarist Brad Shepik to maneuver, propelled by Kell and drummer Mark Ferber. The music never strays into free skronk, remaining tethered to the compositions even as the soloists roam.

Kell’s percolating bass opens “Quarter Sawn”, setting the mood for the shuffling drums and off-kilter sax line as the musicians coalesce for a buoyant ensemble theme. The leader’s thrumming support of Shepik’s flight dissolves under Stillman’s turn, opening up before the return to the unison finish. The title track similarly features a tight group passage pushed by Ferber’s insistent pulse, inviting concise solos from the others: bright Shepik flashes, fluid Stillman phrases and throbbing Kell retorts.

A repeating bass motif bolsters a yearning saxophone on the emotively unfurling “Song for the Jester”. Shepik’s elegantly considered response to Ferber’s snare stabs, with the poignant melody is followed by Kell's urgent solo, the spry tune. Kell also stretches out, cleverly spinning tight single-note runs prodded by Ferber’s insistent pulse, inviting concise solos from the others: bright Shepik flashes, fluid Stillman phrases and throbbing Kell retorts.

There is no sense in dithering, so instead this review will start with what sounds like hyperbole but is in fact well-considered and deserved praise. Aaron Novik’s *Secrets of Secrets* has the same impact upon first (and subsequent) listen as albums of long-established excellence such as Soft Machine’s *Third*, King Crimson’s *Starless and Bible Black* and Voivod’s *Voivod*. Talmudist Eleazar Rokeach’s five-volume treatise on Jewish mysticism - makes it an apt entry into the Tzadik label’s Radical Jewish Culture Series. But Novik’s particular vision of ‘Jewish’ music breaks down the walls of that ghetto with his choice of musicians: Fred Frith’s guitar is like a laser drill; the regal Jazz Mafia Horns’ brief contribution could open the gates of heaven; the various acoustic and electric clarinets of the leader, Cornelius Boots and Ben Goldberg add subversive legitimacy and legitimate subversion; Carla Kihlstedt’s electric violin takes the plaintive wail to terrifying extremes; Willie Winant’s percussion and Matthias Bossi’s drums are as crucial as the tropes of Torah.

Each of the album’s five pieces run over 10 minutes but there are no static moments. Patience and attention to detail are required of the listener. If lacking, the various components Novik has brought together will lose their cohesion and *Secrets of Secrets* its grandeur. There are bleak, sonic landscapes and celebratory clarinet features. String quartet-led chamber music has as much heft as (Mahavishnu) orchestral sections. Death metal drones vie for space with electronically-processed abstractions. Sparsereness is followed by density, reflection by mania. A single piece can have all the moods of an entire symphony.

Yet for all of its disparity and the fact that Novik had to convey his vision to musicians from different realms, taken as a whole - again, the only way it should be and as its composer must have intended - the album is a phenomenal achievement, hopefully soon to receive the accolades it deserves.

For more information, visit tzadik.com. Novik is at The Stone Jun. 19th. See Calendar.
Pianist Cyrus Chestnut is central to these two diverse albums, one his first recording leading a quartet, the other a trio date led by bassist John Brown. Throughout Chestnut demonstrates his jazz populism - an ability to connect with and entertain audiences - as well as his prodigious technique and chameleon-like talent for inhabiting a variety of jazz styles and approaches.

Cyrus Chestnut Quartet is round out by tenor and soprano saxophonist Stacy Dillard, bassist Dezron Douglas and drummer Willie Jones III. Dillard’s tenor sax, with its big, vocal sound reminiscent of Gene Ammons and Hank Mobley, is a perfect match for Chestnut’s robust effervescence. Another tenor he suggests is the composer (misidentified as Chestnut) of the opening track “No Problem”, Barney Wilen, who recorded with Miles Davis on the Elevator to the Galleries soundtrack. Douglas contributes the other non-Chestnut track, “What’s Happening”, the album’s fastest swinger. Chestnut’s six originals tend more toward heartbeat tempos, shuffles and even a jazz waltz. “Waltz for Gene and Carol” is one of the highlights, with an exotic tom-tom and cymbal beat, lead soprano sax and a diaphanous, silky piano solo with weaving lines like curtains wafting in a breeze. The one slow ballad, “Dream”, has a resonant melody, with weaving lines like curtains wafting in a breeze.

From its opening vamp, a spiky bass riff that jabs like a welterweight, it’s clear that Initial Here is a bassisted- leadership, a potential problem when this translates into extended bass solos ad nauseum but only in the hands of lesser players than Linda Oh. Her debut for Greenleaf Music (following the self-released Entry in 2008) is an arresting project, replete with dazzling chops, compelling tunes and a progressive sound that puts the ‘fuse’ back in fusion.

Opener “Ultimate Persona” has a complex 10-plus-11-beat pattern that nevertheless lunges forward in relentless expectation. Leonard Bernstein’s “Something’s Coming” from West Side Story begins with a ruminative acoustic bass solo, but soon rumbles along in hyper-swing, with sparkling solos by Dayna Stephens (tenor sax) and Fabian Almazan (piano) and a heated drum-bass ‘debate’ with Rudy Royston, capped by a waltzing coda section. “Mr. M” (as in Mingus) evokes the down-home futurism of “Goodbye Pork Pie Hat”, Oh injecting punchy couplets into the ethereal ambiance, then burning up the neck like a lead guitarist on her extended exploratory solo. “No. 1 Hit” is drastically syncopated, quirky but catchy, featuring Royston’s leap-over-the-bar phrasing. “Thicker than Water”, a duet with chameleon vocalist Jen Shyu, her personifying June Christy’s quirky cool, is enhanced by Oh’s dubbed-in bassoon counterpoint. “Little House”, “Deeper than Happy” and “Desert Island Storm” all feature Oh’s sparkling electric tone, fuel-injecting the groove a la Jaco Pastorius’ seminal work with Weather Report. Initial Here seals the deal with a soulful cover of Ellington’s “Come Sunday” and “Deeper than Sad” (recalling John Lewis’ “Django”), which plods through a polyphonic climax to a placid conclusion.

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Mitt hjerte altid ranker - I (Live at Oslo Jazzfestival)
Ingebrig Håker Flaten/Håkon Kornstad/Jon Christensen (Compunctio)
by Tom Conrad

Full disclosure: I was present when this album was recorded at the Oslo Jazz Festival in 2009. The setting was Kulturkirken Jakob, a 19th century converted church with excellent acoustics, on a leafy residential street just north of downtown. Tenor saxist Håkon Kornstad and bassist Ingebrig Håker Flaten played songs from Elise, their 2008 duo album. Joining them was Jon Christensen, Scandinavia’s greatest drummer. Elise, perhaps the first jazz album based on traditional Norwegian folk hymns, had popped up on several Top Ten lists. Its fascination came from hearing simple pure melodies outside of time brooded over and followed to their furthermost implications.

Most live albums of material previously recorded in a studio offer looser, longer versions. This is different - a single, focused, rapt, burning meditation. “Du bøye fryd for rene sjeler” is a small, solemn incantation, introduced by Flaten, darkly. Kornstad’s gradual destruction of the melody breaks out in hoarse rasps, but only momentarily. Soon his passion is reabsorbed back into song sung by his forebears in farmhouse prayer meetings. Most pieces are like “For himmerigs lodd maa man kjempe”: intensely quiet, lingering on their minor key themes, flowing away and returning, sustaining the concentration.

Christensen picks his spots, sometimes erupting with the natural peaks of this music but more often arraying subtle details of texture and color. Kornstad is one of the most exciting young reed players in jazz. He is a storyteller who stays in character even as he keeps outdoing himself with fresh narrative ideas. Flaten, too, is a master of atmosphere. He can play really fast in the context of a very slow song.

This beautifully recorded album renders its moment so vividly that you live it even if you weren’t there. It is even better if you were and can live it again.

For more information, visit compunctio.com. Kornstad is at Nublu Jun. 24th. Flaten is at Roulette Jun. 13th with The Thing and Joe McPhee as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

Even Closer Palle Mikkelborg/Thomas Clausen (Arts Music)
So Soft Yet Dennis González/João Paulo (Clean Feed)
If Duo - Songs Giovanni Falzone/Bruno Angelini (Abeat)
by Fred Bouchard

Three duos between veteran trumpeters and pianists come in from Denmark, Portugal and Italy. Veterans of cold wars and glacial ice-bound ECM silences, pianist Thomas Clausen and trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg weave ice-fogged, watercolors of shining aqueous hues and drifting interplay on Even Closer. Their melodic offerings, distilled into eerie exhalations and carved in icy sculpture, are straightforwardly crystalline. Glinting, spooky muted Miles Davis (cryopreserved from 1957), looms gently over the minimalist “When Lights Are Low” and “My Funny Valentine”. Anything but fragmented, these miniatures evoke Arctic winters: the cryptic “Do Not Speak” fades with unearthly whale whimpers, the flamento-tinged “To Read Is To Dream” blues on a shimmery horizon.

So Soft Yet is cantabile poems in a classic Euro-folk style. Texas trumpeter Dennis Gonzalez plays four-square with little vibrato and affectation; Lisbon pianist João Paulo sounds classically schooled with a down-home bent. They weave in special effects from track to track, fueled by motoric rhythm loops. Gonzalez pre-programs thirds on “Broken Harp” and the spooky closer “Augúrio”. Paulo strokes electric plunking basslines on “El Destierro”, folksy accordion stutters on “Deathless” and “Taking Root”, electric loops on “Broken Harp”. A couple of tracks recall the Enrico Rava/Paolo Fresu Italianate school, with blue tado wisps; one is reminiscent of Jill McManus’ Hopi melodies played sotto voce by Tom Harrell. Yet the duo’s sliding from one easy vamp to the next, rather than building their case with strong melodies, results in a date of pleasant if aimless noodling.

Following the Danes’ chill intensity and the Transatlantic duo’s breezy atmospherics, the team of Sicilian trumpeter Giovanni Falzone and Marseilles-born pianist Bruno Angelini convey nine edgy pieces, credited to Falzone, in a mutually sparking, downright theatrical atmosphere. By dint of varying tempos, timbres and moods, this highly accomplished pair succeed in putting across a vividly dramatic, witty, consistently engaging set. “Mari” leads with splashes of edgy avant guardia, as chance-taking improvisations whirl and fragment. Falzone shows splendid tone and superior melodicism while Angelini dazzles with double-time runs and darting notions that push on into “Salto nel Vuoto” as Falzone opens up handsome swirls expanding to a sweeping legato. Yet the duo’s sliding from one easy vamp to the next, rather than building their case with strong melodies, results in a date of pleasant if aimless noodling.

For more information, visit arts-music.dk, cleanfeeds-records.com and abirecords.com. Mikkelborg is at Le Poisson Rouge Jun. 27th with Terje Rypdal. See Calendar.
Real freedom is a mysterious and rare phenomenon, a fact that is especially disheartening in a music too often mislabeled ‘free jazz’. What sets pianist Joel Futterman’s work apart from so much of what is catalogued under that misleading phrase is the way he incorporates traditional elements in structures that find themselves as they emerge. This precarious relationship between history and innovation is one of the few characteristics these two discs share.

To catalogue the minute changes that can occur from moment to moment in this music is beyond the scope of a review. A treatise could be constructed tracing the way Perception’s gargantuan opening movement springs from just two notes; its slowly expanding processes veer through various modalities and passages of stasis only to see a dramatic increase in the next moment, as the entire keyboard becomes an orchestra where interregistral counterpoint abounds and phrases connect and resolve on many dynamic levels. Listen to the way Futterman provides a bassline to his sinewy melodies, almost sounding as if another pianist is playing it, so nuanced and rhythmically free are his dynamic shadings. Incredible torrents of tone vie with quartal passages of staggering beauty until, without any warning, that opening two-note figure returns, more than 20 minutes after it was first heard. The gestures are then collected and reorganized into some gorgeous postbop melodic musings, providing insight into Futterman’s unified vision of jazz history.

Conversely, The Fall does not so much emerge as collide with the silence preceding it. Its opening movement is a maelstrom of apocalyptic import, dense clouds of micropolyphony delineating a downward spiral occasionally interrupted by bare octaves, like the tossed ropes or branches a drowning man grabs in his descent. Any fleeting sense of diatonicism is thrust aside as the music slowly dissipates and vanishes into the crystalline silence, engendered by Futterman’s explorations inside the piano.

Yet, all of this is bean counting. The real mystery in the music lies in the journey itself, in the way each group of events connects improbably but so naturally to the next and these accumulated relationships are essentially beyond the ability of words to relate. How does one explain the element of surprise when the ballad-like beginning of The Fall’s “Recovery” suddenly transforms and fragments, after a three-note moment of repose? How does the ten-note saxophone invocation opening Perception’s second part give way, unceremoniously but perfectly, to the sparse pointilisms that follow, again inside the piano? It seems inconceivable that such diverse elements can coexist in this sort of harmony, but anyone familiar with the five volumes of Futterman’s Creation series, just to cite a small portion of his vast discography, will have an idea of the multifarious unity being described. As for comparisons or models, only Coltrane’s late works, perhaps Meditations’ gradual shift from tonal complexity to modal stability, approximate Futterman’s vision in terms of scope and breadth. As James Joyce did with world history, Joel Futterman tells the story of creative music’s development on an epic scale.

For more information, visit joelfutterman.com
The Freight and Salvage Coffee House is a Berkeley, California venue that originated when traditional Appalachian, folk and blues had a paradoxical cutting edge that fit perfectly into the counter-culture. Those were heady times and while the Freight is still going after more than four decades, its view of traditional music is broader. Witness Live at the Freight, from tenor saxist Jessica Jones and French horn player Mark Taylor.

While both these artists’ past work has been a bit arcane, bassist John Shifflet and drummer Jason Lewis are a tight rhythm section and the compositions here encourage focus. Taylor is one of only a few musicians who has taken on the difficult task of bringing the combination of tone and range that the French horn possesses into jazz surroundings. His presence is way more than novelty and the order of the day is interplay with Jones’ seductive tenor, compositional structure and a vibe that is a reeking of the cool.

Taylor penned five of these tunes and Jones four. The two have guested on each other’s releases and played together multiple times so there is an obvious comfort level with the material. The Wayne Shorter tribute “Waynopolis” and the swinging portrayal of “Manhattan”, both off of Jones’ Od (New Artists Records, 2004), acknowledge influences and are quite simply great jazz in a hip milieu. Taylor’s “By the Park at Midnight (Zamindar’s Promenade)” and “The Zamindar Gambit” are from his recent At What Age (Artists Recording Collective, 2011) as are CD opener “Furious George” and closer “Breath Eyes”. The former cuts continue Taylor’s self created Osmin Zamindar opus and are a combination of avant exotica and beautifully-put-together structures showcasing the horn’s unmatched capacity for emotive storytelling. The latter two present an opportunity for Taylor and Jones to engage initially in a casually swinging format and then wrap things up in erotically intimate fashion. Live at the Freight is jazz with an experimental tilt but a traditional feel custom-made for this context.

For more information, visit newartistsrecords.com. This group is at Brooklyn Friends School Jun 8th. See Calendar.

Jazz Violinist
BEN POWELL
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NEW STREET
featuring
The Ben Powell Quartet
& a tribute to
Stéphane Grappelli
with Gary Burton
& Julian Lage

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For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. Harrell is at Smoke Jun. 29th-30th as part of Miles Davis Festival 2012. See Calendar.

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For more information, visit newartistsrecords.com. This group is at Brooklyn Friends School Jun 8th. See Calendar.

Vocalist Judi Silvano is celebrating 20 years of her recording career by putting forth her tenth album, entitled Indigo Moods. A familiar figure on the vocal scene up and down the East Coast, Silvano has been performing for the last few years with pared-down musical accompaniment consisting of pianist Peter Tomlinson and trumpeter Fred Jacobs, both of whom join her on this offering. This makes for a well-connected musical communication and a relaxed, intimate feel.

Silvano has a pleasing voice with enough range to hit the high notes when necessary, maturity for thoughtful interpretation and, obviously, a love and respect for material she has done many times over the years. She delivers a collection of 14 of the best out of the Great American Songbook in a program just over an hour. It is, perhaps, an overabundance of riches and too much material to absorb on one CD. It would certainly be difficult to choose, but this listener feels it might have been wise to save some tracks for another album.

Although there is an overall sameness about this album of basic ballads, there are items of interest such as Silvano’s choosing to do the seldom-done verses to “Let’s Fall In Love”, “I’ll Had You” and Tadd Dameron’s “If You Could See Me Now” while adding a Latin rhythm to “You’ve Changed” and the Gershwin’s “Embraceable You”. And listen to Jobim’s “You Never Come To Me”, where Silvano does the English lyric and then some wordless scatting in conversation with Jacobs’ trumpet, or the rendering of Thelonious Monk’s “Still We Dream” (known instrumentally as “Ugly Beauty”), the only waltz he ever wrote. Jacobs’ trumpet is given a healthy chance to stretch here and although it is a difficult song to sing, Silvano has the skill to pull off the vocal. Tomlinson is an excellent accompanist, knowing when and just how much to play as well as being able to provide a tasty solo here and there. Jacobs’ trumpet fills, especially when muted, add to the picture. It’s worth a listen as Silvano shares her milestone in the best of company.

For more information, visit jazzedmedia.com. Silvano is at Blue Note Jun. 24th. See Calendar.

JUDY SILVANO
 Indigo Moods
 by Marcia Hillman

Come celebrate Dakota’s birthday! It’s a Party! Saint Peter’s Church, 819 Lexington Ave (at E. 54th Street)

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. Harrell is at Smoke Jun. 29th-30th as part of Miles Davis Festival 2012. See Calendar.
Pianist Jesse Stacken immersed himself in the New York City jazz scene in 2002 when he came to work on his Master’s degree at Manhattan School of Music. Since completing his studies in 2004, Stacken has led a trio with bassist Eivind Opsvik and drummer Jeff Davis and worked in a duo with cornetist Kirk Knuffke. In addition to his recordings as a leader or co-leader, Stacken has recorded with Peter Van Huffel and Liam Sillery and performed with Tom Rainey, Darcy James Argue’s Secret Society, Tyshawn Sorey and Michael Blake, among others.

Stacken made two earlier recordings with Knuffke, focusing on the music of Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington. For their third session Like A Tree, they add drummer Kenny Wollesen to free up the pianist’s rhythmic role in exploration of more avant garde pieces. The late Steve Lacy is somewhat overlooked as a composer; the trio’s interpretation of “No Baby” features plenty of fireworks from Knuffke and Stacken’s driving attack. Fans of Eric Dolphy’s Last Date will be delighted with the presence of pianist Misha Mengelberg’s demanding “Hypochristmutreefuzz”, which the trio devours whole, adding a humorous touch not present on the original recording. The trio reaches a climax in John Coltrane’s “Saturn”, building it from a chant into a majestic improvisation, with Stacken blending world music, classical influences and free jazz into his solo.

Their explorations of the music of Carla Bley (“Olhos de Gato”, “And Now The Queen”, “Jesus Maria”), Ornette Coleman (“Peace” and “Free”), Albert Ayler (“A Man is like a Tree”) and Julius Hemphill (“The Painter”) are equally rewarding. The pianist’s Bagatelles for Trio, featuring his working trio with Opsvik and Davis, is a series of 13 short compositions designed to take the listener on an unusual journey with striking sounds and a variety of moods and tempi. The influence of Bartók, Stravinsky and Schoenberg can be heard at times while portions of the music would make an effective soundtrack for a suspense film. There are numerous surprises in this collection, which the trio regularly performs in the order the bagatelles are programmed. The opening piece features Stacken manipulating the piano strings and at one point achieving a sound suggesting a toy piano while Opsvik’s mournful arco bass in the introduction adds to its edginess. In the third bagatelle, piano is complemented by brooding bass and off-center percussion. Stacken’s extensive use of the sustain pedal in his deliberate, spacious fifth bagatelle builds a formidable tension. Bagatelles For Trio is music that demands the listener’s full attention to appreciate its nuances.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk and freshsoundrecords.com. Stacken’s trio is at Tenri Cultural Institute Jun. 29th. See Calendar.

Pianist Alfredo Rodriguez is only 26. Although he hails from Cuba, he isn’t a ‘Cuban’ pianist, he’s a jazz one. He may use a few montunos and the occasional Spanish word in his song titles but this release goes far beyond that Caribbean nation.

He has a lot of weapons at his disposal, including a man named Quincy Jones offering his production expertise. What Jones’ contributions are isn’t immediately obvious but he has lent his credibility to a unique young artist. This is a straightforward, unadorned debut that most importantly highlights Rodriguez’ impeccable command of the 88.

Within the first 30 seconds Rodriguez establishes himself with a display of playful versatility, over dubbing a melodica over his jittery piano-led melody “Quebrica”. Countryman Francisco Mela, who plays drums on a couple of the tracks, provides a subdued cross-stick pulse that drives the tune without getting in the way. “Cu-Bop” has the pianist channeling a twisting Bud Powell with tricky lines over a pulsating backbeat from the album’s other drummer Michael Olivera. “Transculturation”, driven by Rodriguez’ loping left-hand, draws a shimmering performance from soprano saxophonist Ernesto Vega, who also contributes fine clarinet work elsewhere on the album. Album closer “Fog” gets gloomy assistance from the Santa Cecilia Quartet, which adds cinematic touches to Rodriguez’ high-register ambling.

The highlights of the album, however, are Rodriguez’ two tour de force solo performances. The brooding “April” hinges upon his resonating keyboard as much as it does on his pyrotechnics while “Crossing the Border”, a reference to Rodriguez’ entry into America by way of Mexico, is a breathless assault of mutant montunos, deliberately disjoined harmonies, a fearless left-hand and a brief uncredited clave. In just under seven minutes, Rodriguez lets it all out on the keyboard, occasionally firing at the speed of light before collapsing into a legato crawl only to close with an even faster pace than before.

It is easy to see why someone like Quincy Jones would be interested in a talent like Rodriguez. Thankfully the album isn’t peppered with guest stars or a heavy-handed ProTools approach. Just an ambitious young pianist giving it his all.

For more information, visit mackavenue.com. Rodriguez is at Highline Ballroom Jun. 27th as part of Blue Note Festival. See Calendar.
Adapted from Milton Nascimiento's recording of the 'new generation' of jazz, each classic pluck of Dan Loomis' bass and Danny Fischer's cymbal wisps and gently rolling drum rhythms evoke the warm comfort of a scratchy 78. But halfway into “Satya Graha”, Andy Hunter’s pitchy trombone blurs slowly unravel an eclectic undercurrent of avant garde erraticism. Hunter's pitchy trombone blurts slowly unravel an experimental spark into full force, oscillating between an acerbic skirling lyricism to create contrast. At times his pure toned incantations take on a transcendent liquid beauty, not least on "An angel’s disquiet". After a martial drum break midway through, the madcap tenor dash vies for attention with equally compelling topographies from bass and drums to make this the highlight of a strong album.

Perelman first recorded with a string quartet to wax The Alexander Suite (Leo, 1998), but his revisitation of the format with the Sirius Quartet on The Passion According to G.H. is even better. From the opening confluence of hushed cello notes and plaintive tenor chant, this is an amalgam that keeps the listener on the edge of their seat. It helps that the string players prove themselves as inventive improvisers, conversant with a wide range of extended techniques and able to respond quickly to the saxophonist as he slides between tones, their singing lines intertwining and soaring. Less forced to the extremes, Perelman works between tones, their singing lines intertwining and soaring. Though mostly residing in the upper register, the reedman intersperses earthy honks with percussive clatter. Though mostly residing in the upper register, the reedman intersperses earthy honks with percussive clatter.

For more information, visit leorecords.com. Perelman is at Roulette Jun. 14th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

The Foreign Legion/The Passion According to G.H.
by John Sharpe

Inevitably when considering a musician who also has a reputation as a painter, visual art metaphors tend to be spattered across the board. That’s even more the case when there is such an apparent equivalence as with saxophonist Ivo Perelman, whose freewheeling approach to improvisation bears such parallels with his expressionist canvases. When Perelman first came to the prominence in New York back in the early ’90s, he was cast as a charismatic screamer coming out of Albert Ayler and Archie Shepp but he also confirms a love of melody, even as he has become less reliant upon written materials, and both traits are in evidence on these two outings.

For The Foreign Legion, he focuses on a trio, completed by pianist Matthew Shipp and drummer Gerald Cleaver, for five spontaneously conceived excursions. If the principal appeared to be mellowing in recent years, he seems energized by his new bandmates, his keening altissimo wail insistently probing the interstices between Shipp’s harmonically ambiguous piano and Cleaver’s busy but unpredictable percussive clatter. Though mostly residing in the upper register, the reedman intersperses earthy honks with an acerbic skirling lyricism to create contrast. At times his pure toned incantations take on a transcendent liquid beauty, not least on “An angel’s disquiet”. After a martial drum break midway through, the madcap tenor dash vies for attention with equally compelling topographies from bass and drums to make this the highlight of a strong album.

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For more information, visit leorecords.com. Perelman is at Roulette Jun. 14th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

The Foreign Legion/The Passion According to G.H.
by John Sharpe

One had best be careful about what tricks one calls ‘new’ or what dogs one calls ‘old’, but the septuagenarian saxophonist Kidd Jordan’s meeting with New York’s Chonto/Tamura Sonic Insurgency certainly stands out as one of the most unusual records in his catalogue. The pairing came to pass after a video of Jordan playing at the Vision Festival was aired on drummer Joe Chonto’s Manhattan cable access show Some Real Music several years ago. On the same program, Chonto aired a video of Japanese psych rockers Acid Mothers Temple and Jordan expressed an interest in playing with them. While that meeting is still in the works, the suggestion set the ball rolling for Jordan to play with Chonto’s psych-improv band.

With a lineup of two electric guitars, sax, bass and drums, Chonto’s Sonic Insurgency (co-led with reedman/keyboard player David Tamura) already makes plenty of sound. In fact, the opening cut (the only one with Jordan) barely seems to leave room for another player. And with the title “Violence For Your Furs (and Diamonds, Ivory and All That Other Expensive Meaningless Crap for Oblivious Idiots)”, the instrumental piece sets the ideological stage as well.

The freeform rockish attack of the first track bears some resemblance to Bill Laswell and Sonny Sharrock on old Material records, but that doesn’t define the whole of this unexpected record. The second cut, “For C, as in Percival, With Gratitude Immeasurable”, is a dedication to Cecil Taylor with a clear awareness of his ’70s records. That’s followed by a spoken anthem for Occupy Wall Street with musical interjections both impassioned and comedic. An organ-led piece dedicated to Larry Young proves again their sensibilities while the final track (actually a sound check which they held on to) harkens back to vintage Pharoah Sanders. While the band has a clear interest in the free era just after Coltrane, they manage to keep their music lively and contemporary. And hearing Jordan in conversation with the electric guitars makes this a noteworthy release.

Jordan is heard on On Fire in a solid trio with Harrison Bankhead on bass and cello and Warren Smith on percussion. It’s an elemental studio session with a nice diversity over the four tracks. While the titles suggest an ideology similar to the Chonto/Tamura session (the opener is called “Officer, That Big Knife Cuts My Sax Reeds”), this is Jordan stripped bare, solid and intuitive, at times powerful at others introspective. To hear him as the only horn and with a relatively delicate rhythm section presents him in a different light, especially on “We Are All Indebtied to Each Other”, Bankhead slipping in and out of the blues and Smith’s roving vibraphone abstractions, Jordan clearly feeling free to move around the sonic room.

In very different senses, these two titles show Jordan’s different sides, part of one of the most expressive saxophone voices around today.

For more information, email somerealmusic@earthlink.net and steven.engine@gmail.com. Jordan is at Roulette Jun. 15th and 17th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

The Foreign Legion/The Passion According to G.H.
by Kurt Gottschalk

The Foreign Legion/The Passion According to G.H.
by John Sharpe

For more information, visit envoirecordings.com. This group is at Red Hook Jazz Festival Jun. 17th. See Calendar.

with Kidd Jordan

The Chonto/Tamura Sonic Insurgency (Somerealmusic)
On Fire

Kidd Jordan

(Engine)

by Kurt Gottschalk

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Clean Feed, Enja and many more
Spectrum Road is, on the surface, a tribute band that follows in the line of succession. By following her lead, reason that in this incarnation, Blackman-Santana and it stands to see Calendar.

Kullhammar's improviser is heard at length on "Den Stora Vantan", a baritone exploration, uptempo blowouts that dominate the disc, perhaps the most surprising use of timpani on "Borkum Riff". Although Kullhammar’s freebop-based quartet has the cachet, Nacka Forum at its best sometimes eclipses Kullhammar’s main group.

With his first album Salat (2000), recorded with his quartet, Swedish saxophonist Jonas Kullhammar came seemingly from out of nowhere to make a major impact on the Swedish jazz scene. Released on his Moserobie label, Kullhammar soon established the label as an operation documenting similar-minded players on the Swedish jazz scene (trumpeter Magnus Broo, singer Lina Nyberg, et. al.). Kullhammar’s quartet has been the mainstay of the label and in 2010 celebrated its tenth anniversary with the release of a superb eight-CD boxed set.

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Les Douze Sons
Joëlle Léandre (Nato)
by Stuart Broomer

Recorded during four days in June, 1983, at the Théâtre DuoNois in Paris, Les Douze Sons was a landmark in bassist Joëlle Léandre’s career. That title invocation of Schoenberg’s tonal system is both homage and irony: the music reflects the radical equality of the tone row without its insistent sense of order. Titles of individual pieces like “Pavane” and “Instant Opus 3” further suggest and mock the classical sense of form.

The ultimate effect of Les Douze Sons is of a suite - episodic but subtly connected - in which instruments and voices keep reappearing. A trio with singer Annick Nozati and pianist Irene Schweizer appears at regular intervals, whether offering brief explosions that touch on atonal art-song and music hall or the sustained creation of “Les trios dames”. Barre Phillips appears just as often, both in two-bass dialogues with Léandre and in a trio with Léandre and trombonist George Lewis. The extended “Ballade de Chien” is actually a quartet, as Lewis’ trombone belches inspire Léandre’s melody alternates with a more staccato line. Irregularly moderated funkiness. The suite-like “Journey on a Thread” is probably the finest instance of her articulated and animated storytelling, as an innocent melody alternates with a more staccato line. Irregularly vibrated breaths and mouth buzzes give the piece a time-stretching pattern, intensified by Parker’s circular comping and Bankhead’s string pulsing.

For more information, visit web.roguart.com and delmark.com. Mitchell is at Roulette Jun. 16th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.

The Ethiopian Princess
Indigo Trio/Michel Edelin (Rogue Art)
by Ken Waxman

Even after nearly 60 years as a double for woodwind players - and first choice for a select few - the flute can’t shake off its reputation as a secondary jazz axe. But Nicole Mitchell is doing her best to overcome this stigma. As these CDs demonstrate, impressive improvisations are created even as the flute retains its lyrical characteristics. Recorded in Strasbourg with Paris-based Michel Edelin as the other flutist, The Ethiopian Princess Meets The Tantric Priest is formal and delicate. Bassist Harrison Bankhead’s pulsing coupled with drummer Hamid Drake’s inventive slaps and rebounds pace the eight selections, allowing Mitchell and Edelin to extemporize distinct flute sequences in turn. “Inside the Earth” finds avian wisps and whistling peeps from the flutists giving way to mellow pitches while “Wind Current” balances low-intensity and low-pitched glasssand ato pedal-point basslines and rim shots. “Call Back”, one of Edelin’s two compositions, has a stealthy, elongated theme framed by a martial beat from Drake. As the flutists solo in turn, one produces pitched chirps and the other evocative lowing. As glottal slurs, tongue stops and growls are added to the mix, the piece resolves itself capriciously with arpeggios from Bankhead, rat-tat-tats from Drake and mixed tongue pressures from Edelin and Mitchell.

Awakening’s precursor could be a session where a polite flutist like Moe Koffman improvised with an orderly guitarist like Ed Bickert. But when the session’s momentum increases, guitarist Jeff Parker’s linear work suggests Herb Ellis, with bluesy asides cozying up to Mitchell’s staccato fluter tonguing. Contributing to the mood swings are the guitarist’s chiming chords and Bankhead’s popping thumps or measured bow slides. Since Mitchell’s narrative skill also encompasses fortissimo whistles and gritty blowing, varied emotions are on tap throughout, from slow romanticism to unrelenting funkiness. The suite-like “Journey on a Thread” is probably the finest instance of her articulated and animated storytelling, as an innocent melody alternates with a more staccato line. Irregularly vibrated breaths and mouth buzzes give the piece a time-stretching pattern, intensified by Parker’s circular comping and Bankhead’s string pulsing.

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What Matters
Vitaly Golovnev Quartet (Tippin’)
by George Kanzler

Maybe shorter is better. This CD’s 47 minutes, divided into seven tracks, could easily be an LP and it seems the concision of the form has concentrated the creativity of the musicians accordingly, making for a bright, memorable and entertaining outing. Other associations with old LPs also linger: the trumpet-sax-bass-drums ensemble conjuring up memories of early Ornette, Mingus with Ted Curson and Eric Dolphy and even Gerry Mulligan’s Quartet with Chet Baker or Art Farmer. The empathy between Vitaly Golovnev’s trumpet and Zhenya Strigalev’s alto sax also recalls the pairing of Dolphy and trumpetmer Booker Little.

A nimble trumpeter whose tone can range from clarion to pugilistic, Golovnev has synthesized influences ranging from Clifford Brown and Little to Dave Douglas and Tom Harrell into a broad personal style. Strigalev not only shadows and blends with the trumpet on unison and harmony lines, but also displays a style combining the leapy intervals and bird-song, flavor of Dolphy with a penchant for developing melodic kernels through repetition-embolaboration. The rhythm section of bassist Nathan Peck and drummer Pete Zimmer responds with quicksilver flexibility to the two hornists’ line of the tunes. The album is crammed with what Rhaasaaan Roland Kirk called “bright moments”. They start with the bop-leaning, two-horn opening of “Three Wishes”, continue through the catchy AfroLatin accents of “Family Plan” and reach an early peak on Golovnev’s third original, “Brown Waltz”, full of polyphonic interplay by the horns and contrasting solos. Tightly muted trumpet, brushes and fast trades between the horns beginning with chorus and ending with two-bar and tandem, invigorate the title tune. Peck contributes the only ballad, a resonant “In Retrospect”, and Zimmer’s “Cut Off”, with its AABA form of seven-bar (instead of the usual eight) sections, recalls the snapp of Max Roach’s quartets. The “clownish attitude in melody” (Golovnev) of “Because Together”, along with its Latin accents, recall the joie de vivre of the Mulligan Quartet. But memories of the past don’t overshadow the unique pleasures of this agile quartet.

For more information, visit tippinrecords.com. Golovnev is at Small’s Jun. 27th and Fat Cat Jun. 29th. See Calendar.
Landscape Scripture, guitarist Scott DuBois’ third release for Sunnyside Records featuring his go-to crew of Gebhard Ullmann (tenor sax and bass clarinet), Thomas Morgan (bass) and Kristen Osgood (drums) continues a trajectory established on Banshees and Black Hawk Dance, combining meditative modal musings with snarky, jabbing free exploration. Like impressionist painter Claude Monet, whose series of canvases treating haystacks was a direct inspiration for this recording, DuBois too is a master of tone and texture, using broad strokes and subtle shadings to evoke cycles of sound and nuances of structure.

Each season is represented here: “Spring Haystacks” emerges gradually, like blooming flowers following a thaw; “Summer Haystacks” rushes along, its bare-bones melody fleshes out over throbbing tom-toms; “Autumn Haystacks” pulses ominously beneath the little smears and slides of the tenor sax and “Winter Haystacks” is sparse and contemplative, fading finally in gentle resignation.

In between these markers are two suites - “Prairie” builds from medium swing to ebullient elation; “Lake Shore” oscillates like swarming insects or rolling tides - and two sketches: the ethereal “Goodbye” and the restless “The Passing Spirit”. DuBois’ compositions typically feature drones and sparse but suggestive melodies, often rendered in loose ‘unisons’ by guitar and sax, where first one, then the other, assumes a leadership role. Morgan and Osgood provide a sturdy and sax, where first one, then the other, assumes a leadership role. Morgan and Osgood provide a sturdy framework for the improvisations of DuBois and Ullmann, creating a sound that is both soothing and surging, introspective yet extroverted, aggressively graceful.

For more information, visit sunnysidercords.com. DuBois is at Cornelia Street Café Jun. 21st. See Calendar.

Art Pepper was easily one of the top alto saxophonists to emerge in the ’50s, developing a distinctive approach to his instrument without slavishly following Charlie Parker. However, battles with drug addiction and several stints in prison took him away from the recording scene for extended periods in the ’60s. But once he got out for good, he rehabbed at Synanon for several years, developing a harder tone and recording prolifically as a leader between 1975 and his death 30 years ago this month at 56.

Live in Japan/Live in the U.S.A
Art Pepper (Storyville)
by Ken Dryden

Pepper’s first working band that played the music as he envisioned it, giving their all in support of his frenetic extended interpretations of standards and originals. Bluesy opener “Ophelia” is very much in the pocket; Pepper disguises the introduction to “Besame Mucho” with a hard-blowing solo supported by a dark vamp and a spirited uptempo setting of “Caravan” builds considerable excitement with Pepper’s far-ranging solo. The leader’s music, loping, “The Trip” has a haunting air, topped by his emotional interpretation of Michel Legrand’s ballad “The Summer Knows”.

Live in the U.S.A. pairs dates by two different bands. The 1975 concert at Foothills College features Pepper at the start of his great comeback, with Tommy Gumina playing the Polychord (an electronic accordion/organ that he invented), bassist Fred Atwood and drummer Jimmie Smith. The improvised opener “Foothill Blues” is a rhythmic powerhouse with potent solos and the leader offers vigorous explorations of “I’ll Remember April” and “Creeoke” and a spacious, lush rendition of “Here’s That Rainy Day”. The 1975 concert showcases Pepper with pianist Smith Dobson, bassist Jim Nichols and drummer Brad Bilhorn, a pickup band that he previously worked with and requested for this engagement. Though the rhythm section is a bit over-modulated, resorting in some distortion, the playing is superb. Pepper’s midtempo blues “Mr. Yohe” reveals his grittier side as a soloist. “The Golden Gate Bridge” is Pepper’s somewhat rambling monologue that introduces the band. Pepper’s exotic “The Trip” doesn’t quite reach the heights of the Japan concert, though it stands the test of time. The alto saxophonist delights by closing with a tight interpretation of “A Night in Tunisia”, full of weaving intricate solos.

For more information, visit storyville-records.com.

Landscape Scripture
Scott DuBois (Sunnyside)
by Tom Greenland

Those who hear this combo as an updated version of Miles Davis proved him wrong, with one groundbreaking “second act” after another, his final one, referred to simplistically as “Electric Miles”, in itself a series of subtle revolutions, as revealed here. These highlights from the 10-DVD boxed set opens with “Ifé” from Miles’ first Montreux Jazz Festival appearance (1973). The 27-minute outing is a slowly unfolding textural tapestry woven over Michael Henderson’s vamping electric bass, with a plugged-in Miles (doubling on Yamaha organ) and saxist Dave Liebman spitting out oblique lines around Pete Cosey and Reggie Lucas’ guitars, with rhythmic reinforcement from Al Foster and Mtume’s percussion in a fluid ambient tête-à-tête.

With his return in 1984, as heard on “Speak: That’s What Happened”, the music is more structured, opening grandly and swiftly settling into an uptempo dance rhythm propelled by Darryl Jones’ bassline. The trumpet is strong, shrieking more than sighing over Robert Irving’s orchestral keyboards, with Bob Berg and John Scofield equally energetic in the context of Steve Thornton’s sprawling AfroCuban rhythms and Foster’s potent beat. The following year, the group with Vince Wilburn replacing Foster, is tighter, with dramatic dynamic modulations surrounding lyrical solos on “Code MD” and “Pacific Express”. With David Sanborn guesting and Robben Ford on guitar, the group is grittier in 1986 on a bluesy “Jean-Pierre”.

On 1988’s “Heavy Metal Prelude” (featuring Marilyn Mazur’s percussion and Joe “Foley” McCreary’s lead bass guitar) and 1989’s “Jo-Jo” and “Hannibal”, although Kenny Garrett adds intelligence and imagination, as he does on the final two selections, “The Pan Piper” and “Solea”. On these 1991 performances, Quincy Jones conducting the Gil Evans Orchestra and George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band months before he plucked the weakened trumpeter’s poignant playing justifies his rare once-time look back on a remarkable career.

For more information, visit eagle-rock.com. The Miles Davis Festival 2012 is at Smoke from May 25th throughout June. See Calendar.
When Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in “Self-Reliance”: “To be great is to be misunderstood”, he could have been thinking of trumpeter Louis Armstrong. Even in Armstrong’s lifetime, his work was reconfigured by journalists and critics into Early Promise, Great Peaks, Sellout to Commercialism, Lengthy Decline. This seven-CD set, tracing Armstrong’s 1947-67 live small-band performances, reminds us that the Sellout and Decline were fallacies created by those who could not understand that Armstrong could be simultaneously popular and creative. He said he was playing better in his 40s and 50s than in his ‘Golden Era’ and trumpeters like Randy Sandke, Jon Faddis and Wynton Marsalis agree.

The set begins with recordings that predate the ‘official’ start of the Armstrong All-Stars - a small group formed when big bands everywhere cost too much to sustain. They feature splendid work by Bobby Hackett, Jack Teagarden, George Wettling and others associated with Eddie Condon. From there, the set follows the aptly-named All-Stars, who began as Teagarden, Barney Bigard, Earl Hines, Arvell Shaw, Big Sid Catlett, Velma Middleton and their later replacements, as they toured the world until Armstrong’s death in 1971.

Throughout, Armstrong’s energy and joie de vivre are evident on slow blues and novelty numbers, jazz classics, show tunes from “St. James Infirmary” to “You’ll Never Walk Alone” to his hits “Mack the Knife”, “Hello, Dolly” and “Cabaret”. He treats “The Dummy Song” and “Auld Lang Syne” as if they were jazz classics “Mahogany Hall Stomp”, “High Society”, “Muskrat Ramble” or “The Bucket’s Got A Hole in It”. When the personnel changed, a few later sidemen are competent rather than inspired, but one cannot fault Edmond Hall, Trummy Young, Joe Muranyi, Billy Kyle and others. These discs are a priceless document of a durable working jazz group, rare even then.

Some of the most heartwarming moments are when we hear the crowd (in a club or concert hall) go wild, demanding encores. Audiences did not condemn him for ‘showmanship’, ‘entertainment’, or ‘Uncle Tomming’; they were too busy clapping and cheering. Oddly, the critics who spoke so sharply of Armstrong’s “clowning” and “pandering” to audiences rarely wrote so harshly of Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker and others not above ‘showmanship’. The set ends with a DVD of 1958-59 television appearances, with Armstrong alongside Lionel Hampton, Anita O’Day, an exuberant Dizzy Gillespie, Hoagy Carmichael and others. In the last 50 years, Armstrong’s later work has often been issued, but with inadequate or deceptive annotation and in poor sound. One of the best aspects of this set is the stewardship of jazz scholar and Armstrong authority Ricky Riccardi, who has shared performances new to devoted collectors and provided a fine narrative that is a brief overview of his book, What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong’s Later Years (Pantheon, 2011). Riccardi’s devotion is not idolatry: one of the most fascinating segments of the set is a 1967 Copenhagen concert where Armstrong plays heroically even as his embouchure occasionally betrays him. The sound on this set is clearer than ever before, so that new details await the most experienced Armstrong collector.

As for the canard that Armstrong played the same solos every night, the 15 widely-spaced versions of “When it’s Sleepy Time Down South” are master classes in improvisation, phrasing, subtlety and feeling. One comes away from the seven CDs convinced that Armstrong wholly gave himself in what he called “the cause of happiness” and that audiences felt that joy. The set also shows a mature artist dealing with popularity and reminds us of the sheer physicality his public appearances required. Armstrong comes through, subtle and forceful, a great improviser, hardly in the twilight of his career, not in a Lengthy Decline. This is an in-depth study of creative energy over a long period of time by someone who merged ‘high art’ and ‘low art’ so beautifully, simply because he found such divisions irrelevant.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com. The music of Louis Armstrong as played by Joey Morant is at Lucille’s at BB King’s Blues Bar Jun. 17th. See Calendar.
When I go to LA I’m very lucky. Since 1970 I became very close to [drummer] Jim Keltner. We do sort of drum weeks and look for people playing. Once we caught Roy Haynes at Catalina’s and then went over to see Elvin Jones at the Jazz Bakery in one night.

**TNYCJR:** You put out a record with Jim Keltner. How did that collaboration come about?

**CW:** It was an accident. It was never to be anything. The Rolling Stones were recording and we took the whole of whatever studio it was. Well, we didn’t take it over. It just so happened we were using all the rooms in the place. There was a room there not being used and Jim and I went in there. He always asked me to play on his electronic things. We had [drummer] Kenny Aronoff knocking around. It just grew out of that. I should have taken more time and done it properly but it was never meant to be anything. I took it to Paris with me. I was waiting to start a tour. I got this guy in Paris, Phillipe Chauveau. He started playing around with it a lot. He put all sorts of samples of things on it. It was just Jim’s electronics stuff and me overdubbing on them. Some of it was live. The Latin stuff was live.

**TNYCJR:** You guys honored a wide variety of drummers. How did you settle on particular drummers like Max Roach, Art Blakey, Billy Higgins, etc.?

**CW:** When we were recording we had no way of saying what song it was. We were just talking and started naming my favorite drummers. If you got to call it “Stormy Weather”, you might as well call it Shelly Manne. I thought it was a way to get the drummers names on the label. Give the drummer some. One planned was Elvin’s suite. The other ones were Airtight, Tony Williams. That was the week Tony died. Jim was on his megaphone period. Mick [Jagger] was mucking about on the Rhodes and we started doing this. Jim read an article on his megaphone that Tony had written. That was really for Tony. The rest are just things.

**TNYCJR:** Whose idea was it to get Sonny Rollins to play the saxophone solo on the Rolling Stones’ Tattoo You album?

**CW:** That was Mick. Mick asked me. We’ve always used saxophone players. Mick asked, “who could we use to overdub a couple of tracks?” I said the best saxophonist alive. This was the late ’70s but he still is. “But you’ll never get him,” I told him. “It’s Sonny Rollins! The god of gods!” Sure enough when we were in New York, Sonny said yes. My only disappointment was that we didn’t do it live. Since then I’ve sort of spoken to him. He’s a lovely, lovely man. A real gentleman, Sonny Rollins. And still for me in the same way Roy Haynes is, he has a terrific sort of wow. An amazing talent and terrific sort of dignity. I love them. Both of them.

**TNYCJR:** Your recent CD project (The ABC&D of Boogie Woogie: Live in Paris) shows you’ve been recently playing with some boogie woogie piano players. How does your approach to that sound change versus a bebop band?

**CW:** Dave Green is the bass player, me in the middle and two grand pianos. It’s great. Very unusual. People don’t play that anymore. People don’t play it as a way of piano. [In the Rolling Stones] Mick and Keith [Richards] write the songs. Here most of it is jamming. It keeps you on the edge. Some of it is kind of predictable and you’ve done it but we never rehearse anything. I never know what they are going to play. It’s not very professional but it is more fun. The Rolling Stones is enough being on it all the time for me. Mind you, playing with Keith is fun. But when this band gets going it’s like a steam train. That was one of the things. In the late ‘70s when it was kind of developed it was fantastic. It’s just swing. It’s swing all the time, which is really nice to do.

For more information, visit rosebudus.com/watts. Watts is at Dummerston Jun. 28th as part of Midsummer Night Swing and Iridium Jun 29th-Jul. 2nd. See Calendar.

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**Recommended Listening:**
- Charlie Watts Orchestra - Live at Fulham Town Hall (Columbia, 1986)
- Charlie Watts Quintet - From One Charlie (Continuum, 1991)
- Charlie Watts Quintet - A Tribute to Charlie Parker with Strings (Continuum, 1991)
- Charlie Watts - Long Ago & Far Away (Virgin, 1996)
- Charlie Watts and The Tentet - Watts at Scott’s (Sanctuary, 2001)
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Santi Debriano, bass
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Friday, June 1

- Mike Davis Festival 2012: Jeremy Cobb Sextet with Vincent Herring, Eric Alexander, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, John Weider
- 6:15 pm@ Church For Nature: Taylor Haskins, Richard Nant, Diego Urcola, Sandro Tomasi, Ben Monder, guests; Mari Kimura; The Afro Horn: Aruan Ortiz, Rashaan Carter, Roman Diaz, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, John Webber
- 9:30 pm@ The Jazz Gallery: Mark Whitfield Jr
- 10:30 pm@ Nash Gullermo, Leah Gough Cooper and guest Erin Blatti

Saturday, June 2

- 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 pm@ The Afro Horn: Myron Walden Momentum with Darren Barrett, Eden Ladin, Yasushi Nakamura, 38
- 9:30 pm@ Eric Reed UNMONK Quintet with Seamus Blake, Etienne Charles, Matt Clohesy, Rhythm in the Kitchen Music Festival: White Out: Lin Culbertson/Tom Surgal and Mike Lattimore Quartet

Sunday, June 3

- 9:00 pm@ Taylor Francis/Philip Johnston: Martin Robinson’s Cafe
- 9:30 pm@ Joe Riley’s All Stars with Daniel Helen, Nat skidmore, Dave Mmumu, John Webber

Monday, June 4

- 7:30, 9:30 pm@ The Flax: Brian Marsala, Reid Taylor, Darin Bishop, Stephen Mootz, Mato Zumbado
- 9:00 pm@ Andra Moto Quartet with Jacob Stacks, Abram impulse, Matt Mazzaropi, Mike Longe, the Baby Bear Quartet
- 10:30 pm@ Mike Longe’s State of the Union Assembly with Andrew Moot, Mike Mazzaropi, Adam Cika
- 11:30 pm@ John Webber’s Afro Horn: Aruan Ortiz, Rashaan Carter, Roman Diaz, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, John Webber

Tuesday, June 5

- 8:30 pm@ Bala Flock and The Marcus Roberts Trio with Rodney Jordan, Jason Marsalis, Monty Alexander
- 9:30 pm@ Aki Kuroda’s 70th Birthday Party: Aki Kuroda, Hideki Nakamura, Yasuyuki Tanaka, Masayoshi Suo
- 10:30 pm@ John Webber’s Afro Horn: Aruan Ortiz, Rashaan Carter, Roman Diaz, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, John Webber
- 11:30 pm@ John Webber’s Afro Horn: Aruan Ortiz, Rashaan Carter, Roman Diaz, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, John Webber

Wednesday, June 6

- 6:00 pm@ Monty Alexander’s Harlem-Kingston Express with guests Tarrus Riley, Dean Fraser
- 7:30 pm@ The Flax: Brian Marsala, Reid Taylor, Darin Bishop, Stephen Mootz, Mato Zumbado
- 8:00 pm@ John Webber’s Afro Horn: Aruan Ortiz, Rashaan Carter, Roman Diaz, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, John Webber
- 9:00 pm@ Aki Kuroda’s 70th Birthday Party: Aki Kuroda, Hideki Nakamura, Yasuyuki Tanaka, Masayoshi Suo
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- 11:00 pm@ John Webber’s Afro Horn: Aruan Ortiz, Rashaan Carter, Roman Diaz, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, John Webber
Friday, June 8

- **Mike Davis Festival 2012**: Eddie Henderson Quintet with Wayne Escoffery, Dave Kikoski, Doug Weiss, Bill Stewart
  - The Stone 6 pm
  - Dizzy’s Club 6 pm
  - 55Bar 6 pm

- **Kristen Slipp/Dov Manski**: Vinnie Sperrazza
  - Roulette 8 pm

- **Chris Washburne, Hollis Headrick, Rob Henke, Michael Attias, Nicole Poole, Billy Drummond, Dave Kikoski, Doug Weiss, Bill Stewart**: Jake Goldbas
  - Festival Hall 7 pm

- **Vince Sperrazza**: Wycliffe Gordon Quartet with Aaron Diehl, Yasushi Nakamura, Marion Marsalis
  - 55Bar 6 pm

- **Karrin Allyson**: Derek Beckvold Quartet with Anthony Coleman, Henry Fraser, Jason Nazary
  - Roulette 7 pm

- **Allan Harris Band with Pascal LeBoeuf, Leon Boykins, Lucio Ferrara**: Who Knows?: Richie Nagan, Perry Robinson, Mark Whitecage
  - Village Vanguard 9 pm

- **Lucy Ferrara**: Farmers By Nature: Craig Taborn, William Parker, Gerald Cleaver; Darius Jones Quartet
  - Dizzy’s Club 8 pm

- **Ron Stabinsky, Moppa Elliott, Kevin Shea**
  - The Garage 10 pm

- ** diferent 3**: Tranice Morris/Elliott Sharp; Kyoko Kitamura, William Parker, Hamid Drake, Gerald Cleaver, Michael Wimberly; Vanessa Trouble and Company with Steve Salerno and guest
  - North Square Lounge 11 pm

- **Brian Wilson/Bruce Harris**: Wycliffe Gordon Quartet with Aaron Diehl, Yasushi Nakamura, Marion Marsalis
  - 55Bar 6:15 pm

- **Paul Carlon Group**: Paul Carlon Group; Hayes Greenfield/Roger Rosenberg Quartet with Dean Johnson, Nick Di Maria
  - 55Bar 8 pm

- **Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest**: Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest
  - Village Vanguard 6:15 pm

- **Sarah McLawlor and Les Jazz Femmes**: Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest
  - Village Vanguard 7 pm

- **Paul Dunmall, Matthew Shipp, Joe Morris, Gerald Cleaver**: John Davis; Curtis Taylor Group
  - Village Vanguard 8 pm

- **Miles Davis Festival 2012**: Allan Harris Band with Pascal LeBoeuf, Leon Boykins, Andrew Drury
  - 55Bar 7:30 pm

- **Kevin亵**: Johnathan Blake, Ravi Coltrane, Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Lionel Loueke, Dafnis Prieto
  - Roulette 7 pm

- **Jeb Patton, Ray Drummond, Miles Davis Festival 2012**: Allan Harris Band with Pascal LeBoeuf, Leon Boykins, Stephen Scott, Tony Malaby, Mary Halvorson
  - 55Bar 9 pm

- **Danny Gottlieb**: Jen decisão/Allan Harris Band with Pascal LeBoeuf, Leon Boykins, Andrew Drury
  - 55Bar 9:30 pm

- **Richard Benetar Quartet**: Who Knows?: Richie Nagan, Perry Robinson, Mark Whitecage
  - Village Vanguard 10 pm

- **Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest**: Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest
  - Village Vanguard 11 pm

- **Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest**: Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest
  - Village Vanguard 11:30 pm

Saturday, June 9

- **Dave Liebman/Sam Newsome Quartet with Tony Marino, Jim Black**: Peter Bernstein
  - Roulette 7:30 pm

- **Charlie Parker Institute**: John Davis; Curtis Taylor Group
  - Village Vanguard 8 pm

- **Donald Edwards; Carlos Abadie Quintet with Joe Sucato, Peter Zak, Jason Stewart, Donald Edwards; Carlos Abadie Quintet with Joe Sucato, Peter Zak, Jason Stewart, Donald Edwards**: Vanessa Trouble and Company with Steve Salerno and guest
  - North Square Lounge 8 pm

- **Paul Carlon Group**: Paul Carlon Group; Hayes Greenfield/Roger Rosenberg Quartet with Dean Johnson, Nick Di Maria
  - 55Bar 8 pm

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  - 55Bar 8 pm

- **Federico Aducci**: Federico Aducci
  - Roulette 8 pm

- **Bill Stewart**: Bill Stewart
  - Village Vanguard 8 pm

- **Alfie Smith, Mark Maxwell, Marcus Strickland**: Johnathan Blake, Ravi Coltrane, Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Lionel Loueke, Dafnis Prieto
  - Roulette 8 pm

- **Chris Washburne**: Chris Washburne
  - Roulette 8 pm

- **Kari Bremnes**: Kari Bremnes
  - Roulette 8 pm

- **Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest**: Steve Lehman Trio with Matt Brewer, Damion Reid and guest
  - Village Vanguard 8 pm

- **Michael Attias, Nicole Poole, Billy Drummond, Dave Kikoski, Doug Weiss, Bill Stewart**: Jake Goldbas
  - Festival Hall 7 pm

- **Chris Washburne, Hollis Headrick, Rob Henke, Michael Attias, Nicole Poole, Billy Drummond, Dave Kikoski, Doug Weiss, Bill Stewart**: Jake Goldbas
  - Festival Hall 7 pm

- **Vince Sperrazza**: Wycliffe Gordon Quartet with Aaron Diehl, Yasushi Nakamura, Marion Marsalis
  - 55Bar 6 pm
Friday, June 15

**Vision Festival:** Children of Music is Mine with Jean Carlos Rocha, William Parker, Daniel Carter; Peace Poets/Tribes Poets: Luke Nephew, Frank Lopez, Emmanuel Candelario, Frank Lopez; Miles Davis Festival 2012: Lenny White Quintet with Wallace Roney, Victor Bailey, Antonio Sanchez, Reuben Rogers, Victor Bailey; Arturo O'Farrill's The Offense of the Drum

Saturday, June 16

**Vision Festival:** View of the World with Richard Galliano, Peter Brötzmann, Jana Winder, Elena Filatova, Marlena Shaw, Mary Halvorson, Nina Simone, John Talabot, Eivind Opsvik, Yusef Lateef, John Medeski, Fred Moten

Sunday, June 17

**Vision Festival:** Ingrid Laubrock's Anti-House with Mary Halvorson, Kris Davis, John Hobbie, Tom Rainey, Bruce Harris Sextet with Alex Hoffman, Vincent Gardner, Rick Germanson, Yasushi Nakumara, Aaron Kimmel; Kunst Percussion

**Miles Davis Festival 2012:** Brice Winston, Fabian Almazan, Joshua Crumbly, Kendrick Scott, Cristian Macelaru, Evan Perri with guest Greg Osby; Jean Michel Pilc Trio with Francesco Orsini, Antonio Calia; Tony Malaby Quartet with Andrew Cemex, Johnathan Blake, Eivind Opsvik, Kris Davis; Vision Festival: Ingrid Laubrock's Anti-House with Mary Halvorson, Kris Davis, John Hobbie, Tom Rainey

**Blue Note Jazz Festival: Gaby Barbieri**

**Jazz at Lincoln Center:** The Fabric of Sound with Jason Kao Hwang, Burning Bridge with Taylor Ho Bynum, Ken Filiano, Andrew Drury, Nancy Mercado; The Mystery Collective: Kidd Jordan, Jean Carla Rodea, Emanuel Candelario, Frantz Jerome, Edwin Torres, Latasha Diggs, Sheila Maldonado, Daniel Carter; Peace Poets/Tribes Poets: Luke Nephew, Frank Lopez, Johnny O'Neal

**New DVD/CD Combo**

LIVE IN CONCERT

**Blue Note Jazz Festival: Gaby Barbieri**

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- Three horns and a bass (Mahieu-Verploegen-Boudesteijn-Van Kemenade)
- Duo Ernst Reijseger-Paul Van Kemenade

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- Duo Stevko Busch-Paul Van Kemenade
- Markus Stockhausen-Markku Onuaskari-Busch-Van Kemenade

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June 22

- Miles Davis Festival 2012: Al Foster Quartet with Wallace Roney, Doug Weiss Smokey 7:45, 9:10 pm $25
- Sacha Peru Trio with Jon Roche at Cornelia Street Café. Neil Flory, Chad Johnson, Kieran Werner, Miguel Atencio. Da Capo 8:30, 10:30 pm $25
- Joe DeFiori's New-Trad Quartet with Bill Slaptop, Dan Berlin, Brad McNeill. The Garage 9:30, 11:15 pm $15

June 23

- Ben Genesth/Thyrah Sonny. Smoke 7:30, 10:30 pm $10
- kaleidoscope Trio: Freddie Bryant, Patty Blanchard, Willard Dynson. Bar Next Door 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 pm $10

Saturday, June 24

- Joren Larson with Chad Johnson, Neil Flory, Chad Johnson, Kieran Werner, Miguel Atencio. Da Capo 8:30, 10:30 pm $25
- Joe DeFiori's New-Trad Quartet with Bill Slaptop, Dan Berlin, Brad McNeill. The Garage 9:30, 11:15 pm $15

Monday, June 25

- Jean-Michel Pilc/Rudresh Mahanthappa. ShapeShifter Lab 7, 9 pm $30
- Ryan Anselmi. 3Below Jazz Club 7, 9 pm $10
- Hal Kromelow, Raviv Markovitz. Church 7, 9 pm $15
- Alimah Baylor, Clarence Bucaro. Scott McCloud 7, 9 pm $15

Tuesday, June 26

- Blue Note Jazz Festival: Stanley Clarke/George Duke Trio. Blue Note 8, 10 pm $20
- Marc Ribot with Henry Grimes. Char’s Tavern 5 pm $10
- Eric Von Dolden. Firehouse 12 8, 10 pm $10

Wednesday, June 27

- Toré Rydqvist with Palle Mikkelborg, Stale Storløken, Paal Nilssen-Love. Cornelia Street Café 7, 9 pm $25
- Blue Note Jazz Festival: Michel Camilo/Latin Pochette. Smoke 7:30, 9:30 pm $25
- Lenny Harris. Smoke 7, 9 pm $10

Thursday, June 28

- Charlie Watts' The ABCD of Boogie Woogie with Axel Zwingenberger, Ben Waters. Cargo 7, 9 pm $25
- Cassandra Wilson. Smoke 7, 9 pm $15
- Curtis Davis Quartet with Ron Blake, Marcus Strickland, Albert DaSilva, Cipriano DaSilva. Smoke 7, 9 pm $20
New York City’s most famous jazz clubs profit from musicians every night—but they refuse to contribute a few dollars toward pensions that would allow older jazz musicians to retire with dignity.

Tell The Blue Note, Birdland, The Iridium, The Jazz Standard, The Village Vanguard and Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola that hardworking jazz musicians deserve better.

To sign the petition and learn more, visit: JusticeforJazzArtists.org

Older jazz musicians are living in poverty while jazz club owners are getting rich.

ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ

SOUNDS OF SPACE

the debut from Cuban pianist and composer Alfredo Rodriguez

“He is very special, and I do not say that easily because I have been surrounded by the best musicians in the world my entire life. And he is one of the best.” - Quincy Jones

“His playing, proficient and soulful, projects a spirited, youthful charm.” - Nate Chinen, The New York Times

“classical melodies within a uniquely spacious approach” - NPR Music

“elegant yet explosive technique and command of an array of musical idioms” - Reed Johnson, Los Angeles Times

“young Cuban pianist Alfredo Rodriguez sounds the way Monk might have sounded if he had been born in Chick Corea’s body and raised on a diet of Bach, Chopin and Stravinsky in a Havana conservatory.” - Richard Scheinin, San Jose Mercury News

Alfredo Rodriguez Trio

appearing at the Blue Note Jazz Festival

at the Highline Ballroom June 27

available wherever you like to buy music mackavenue.com
Amsterdam’s Wilbert de Joode and Chicago’s Hamid Drake demonstrated contemporary Dutch-American fusion, with The Now quartet. The frontline was similarly divided between American flutist Nicole Mitchell and saxophonist Peter van Bergen from the Netherlands; that’s divided only in nationality, for the players were equally proficient in mixing multiphonics, minimalism and mellowness. Drake’s frame-drums and occasional reggae backbeats didn’t preclude him from preserving a press-roll-and-rim-shot jazz pulse while no matter how many bass wood scratches or vibrating buzzes dOeK de Joode emphasized, his sturdy walking was omnipresent. Meantime Mitchell matched lyrical glissandi with rough piccolo tweets while van Bergen moved between New Music-like spaciousness and mewing near-blues. The most notable cooperation occurred when flute, tenor saxophone and bass held a single, continuous tone as Drake decorated the line with hand-drum pops.

A stirring Dutch-dOeK variant on the Tough Tenor tradition was apparent at two funky performance spaces during the bus tour. At Kwiskiets, a combination cabaret gallery and bicycle repair shop (!), reedist Ab Baars went mano-a-mano with Brazilian-born tenor saxophonist Yedo Gibson, backed by Finnish guitarist Mikael Szafirowski and drummer Gerri Jäger. Playing mostly Baars’ tunes, the two tenors’ styles were distinctively even playing shoulder-to-shoulder. The Brazilian’s snickering extensions encompassed reed bites and tongue stops while Baars played mid-range, excepting sporadic altissimo leaps. With Baars on clarinet, shaggy group harmonies approximated those of Tim Berne’s recent bands, especially when Szafirowski alternated finger slides and slashing distortion as the drummer smacked wood blocks or bounced handfuls of straw on drum tops for unique rhythms. Sticking to tradition, the band also alluded to Monk, Trane, Cool Jazz and the blues.

Meanwhile at OT301, the former Netherlands Film Academy, contrasting tenor saxophone stylists American John Dikeman, another dOeK member, and Delius were set off by Wierbos’ trombone skills. Sometimes the trombonist’s cup-muted growls and Delius’ spacious vibrate sounded like they migrated from a foot-tapping Swing-Era jam session, although the rhythm section included synthesizer and electric bass. Still chief attraction was the rugged power created by the two tenor saxophonists. Playing originals ranging from ballad approximations to rocking bar-room stompers, the two maintained their individuality. In contrast to Delius’ studied classicism, Dikeman extended energy music. And if energy was needed there was no better example than the sextet’s first tune, an African-influenced piece composed by Bergin. A go-for-broke workout, the dynamic performance combined joyous Township jive, staccato rhythms and snapping solos, whose mulch of blues, jazz and that indefinable other went a long way towards defining the sounds that characterized the dOeK Festival overall.

For more information, visit doek.org

For more information, visit jazzfest.no

Drums: James Allsopp; reeds; Adrien Dennefeld: cello) played airy, clean, fresh concepts that left you wanting more.

Allan Holdsworth filled Dokkhuset to overflowing, but his trio burned you out in four or five tunes. Holdsworth is a guitar god in a domain he helped invent, progressive jazz-rock. But every piece was a blistering onslaught of guitar overkill. There was one sonority (shrieking) and one tempo (turbo). It made you realize how varied a Pat Metheny concert is. From a large poster on the wall, Frank Zappa observed the scene with his baleful black-eyed stare.

The low point of the festival was an hour in Blast by the British/Norwegian band Food (Iain Ballamy, reeds; Thomas Strønen, drums; guests Petter Vågan and Prakash Sontakke, guitar). It kept getting worse: Sontakke’s moaning, quavering vocals, then Vågan’s glacially slow solo, scraped with a violin bow, then long periods of catatonic ensemble silence broken randomly by electronic burbles and oscillations.

But the bad taste left by Food was temporary. This festival was populated by brilliant Norwegians, many just starting out, most from NTNU. An irresistible likable trio called Pelbo played plunging, bucking jazz-rock with only a drummer, a straight-faced singer and a kick-ass tuba player (Kristoffer Lo).

Two piano trios were up-to-the-minute examples of what Stuart Nicholson has called “the Nordic tone”: Splashgirl played the electronic version, Moskus the acoustic. Anja Lauvdal of Moskus, with her fragmentary lyricism floating outside of time, is another pianist to watch. A ten-piece student band, the NTNU Jazzensemble, performed diverse, complex material with fervor and precision (compositions by Ivar Gafseth, arrangements by Erik Johannessen). Not a single soloist played anything obvious, including Peder Simonsen, the festival’s second fully articulate tuba improviser.

The Trondheim Jazzorkester packed Blast and no wonder. They are a hilarious troupe of performance artists who are also an airtight ten-piece band. Their shtick included mimes, clowns, balloons, champagne servings and trombonists who took smoking solos with red balls on their noses.

One concert at this festival stood alone. It was enclosed and magical. Bugge Wesseltoft’s solo piano recital under the dome of an old church, Vår Frue Kirke, opened with “My Foolish Heart”. It was freer than Bill Evans’ version at the Village Vanguard, pieced out even more slowly. But it unfolded within a similar hush that drew the large crowd into a rapt shared experience. Wesseltoft played only ballads and standards. He flowed very far from their forms but distilled their emotions. “Moon River” was bare chimings. “When I Fall in Love” was a whisper of tenderness. In this marvelous acoustic environment, he could lightly touch one piano key and fill the large church with sound.

Earlier, during the Jazz Summit, Wesseltoft had the scene with his baleful black-eyed stare. From a large poster on the wall, Frank Zappa observed the power created by the two tenor saxophonists. Playing originals ranging from ballad approximations to rocking bar-room stompers, the two maintained their individuality. In contrast to Delius’ studied classicism, Dikeman extended energy music. And if energy was needed there was no better example than the sextet’s first tune, an African-influenced piece composed by Bergin. A go-for-broke workout, the dynamic performance combined joyous Township jive, staccato rhythms and snapping solos, whose mulch of blues, jazz and that indefinable other went a long way towards defining the sounds that characterized the dOeK Festival overall.

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IN MEMORIAM
By Andrey Henkin

BARBARA BUCHHOLZ - Originally a bassist, Buchholz went on to become one of the leading performers on theremin, a type of electronic instrument played by proximity of the hands to a pair of antennae, going on to work with Arve Henriksen and Jazz Bughanditar and as well as in the worlds of ballet and opera. Buchholz died Apr. 10th at 52.

BILL CALDWELL - The stalwart Kansas City jazz saxophonist, who also tripled on clarinet and flute, was a member of several large jazz orchestras such as Woody Herman and short-lived Bud Shank Band, Tommi Dorsey Orchestra, Kansas City Boulevard Big Band. Caldwell was featured on recordings of the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra. Caldwell died in late March at 49.

TEDDY CHARLES - One of the pioneering vibraphonists in jazz, Charles was also a composer and occasionally working during the '50s-60s with Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Art Farmer and others along with releasing a number of solid albums as a leader in the '50s, mostly on Prestige. Charles dropped out of music in the early '60s, eventually becoming a charter boat captain before returning to the jazz spotlight in the early aughts largely through the efforts of saxist Chris Byars. Charles died Apr. 16th at 84.

ROGERS GRANT - The pianist, who worked with many important artists was also known as a composer, penning such tunes as "Just Say Goodbye", "Mordor" and "Yeh Yeh", later given lyrics by Jon Hendricks. Grant died Apr. 12th at 76.

PHOEBE JACOBS - The philanthropist was first introduced to jazz and jazz legends like Sarah Vaughan, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald by the uncle of another Chattanooga native, Lena Virginia Memmert. Later she became Louis Armstrong's publicist and then the Jazz Foundation of America, which maintained the trumpeter's legacy. Jacobs was also a founder of the Jazz Foundation of America. Jacobs died Apr. 9th at 93.

ART JENNINGS - Many of the vocals featured in the Sun Ra Arkestra were performed by Jenkins, who first joined the band in 1960 and has been an arkestral mainstay since 1971, as well as appearing on a pair of Eddie Gale albums. After stepping away from music for a couple of decades, Jenkins rejoined the band on another seven albums. Jenkins died Apr. 13th at 77.

VIRGIL JONES - The trumpeter worked with a wide range of artists such as Milt Jackson, Archie Shepp, Johnny Smith and Charles Tolliver in the '60s-70s. Then later in his career in the brass sections of big bands led by McCoy Tyner and Jimmy Heath. Jones died Apr. 20th at 73.

TONY MASH - A longtime member of an unrecorded trio with Evan Parker and John Edwards, the British drummer was in the bands of Harry Beckett, Mike Westbrook, Didier Levallet and Mike Osborne, took part in a number of collaborative improvising groups and in 2009 released his only album as a leader, a series of duets with Veryan Weston, on Evan Parker’s p’s label. Marsh died Apr. 9th at 72.

ON THIS DAY
By Andrey Henkin

By the time of his 40th birthday, pianist Thelonious Monk was a bona fide jazz legend, having recorded with and what many consider to be his best album (1956’s Brilliant Corners with Sonny Rollins and Coleman Hawkins) and collaborated with Art Blakey and John Coltrane on this album may also feature two key players known as '60s jazz of the 1950s: trumpet player Ray Copeland, alto saxist Gigi Gryce, tenor saxist Howard McGhee and bassist Cus Wailer. The material mixes new-sound-to-be classics like “Creepin’ With Monk”, “In My Own Style” and “Off Minor” and “Epistrophe”.

The promise of trumpeter Howard McGhee, a peer of Dizzy Gillespie, McGhee worked with Most was the promise of Dizzy Gillespie and Count Basie, as well as a sidekick through the Space Jazz project of the early ‘60s Mitchell had come out as a leader, adapting a wide range of pop and American standards for a career that ended with his 2001 death. For his third and final Xanadu album, Goodrow paired with Bobby White, Billy Cobham, Michael Thompson and Teddy White to create an environment for the set of mostly bandmember originals.

Despite the many accolades, the trumpeter played a key role in the lives of several important artists, including Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk and Charlie Mingus. A short string quartet is added to a couple of works on the album and then Hall works with a number of other artists, including John Scofield, John Abercrombie, Mick Goodrick and Peter Bernstein, exploring a variety of textures that are remote yet familiar, evoking the spirit of one’s own “Careful”.
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June 10
Béla Fleck & The Marcus Roberts Trio

June 12 - 17
Savion Glover w/ McCoy Tyner, Jack DeJohnette & Roy Haynes

June 14
Yasiin Bey (formerly Mos Def)

June 17
Central Park Summerstage
Groove Theory/Soulive/Black Thought & Rakim/DJ Kool Herc

June 21 - 24
McCoy Tyner
Africa/Brass & Charles Tolliver Big Band

June 24
Buika

June 26
Stanley Clarke & George Duke

June 28 - 30
Cassandra Wilson

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JACOB FRED JAZZ ODYSSEY • SIERRA LEONE’S REFUGEE ALL-STARS • JEFF LORBER

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