YOUR FREE GUIDE TO THE NYC JAZZ SCENE

REGGIE WORKMAN
WORKING MAN

JIM McNEELY
JONNY KING
RICHARD WYANDS
EDDIE JEFFERSON
While the title of our cover feature on legendary bassist Reggie Workman, who leads a band for a weekend at The 75 Club at Bogardus Mansion, is a play on his last name, it speaks to a jazz reality: very few musicians in this business ever get to slow down. Workman may have played with Coltrane but, even in his early 80s, still gigs regularly and holds down a professorship at The New School. Jazz musicians typically go straight from composing to decomposing. Another example of a workhorse is composer/arranger/pianist Jim McNeely (Interview), who has been plying his trade with various big bands around the globe for the past few decades. He returns home to lead the Manhattan School of Music Jazz Orchestra with guest Joe Lovano in two concerts dedicated to John Coltrane’s A Love Supreme. And in an extreme example of never stopping working, when pianist Jonny King (Artist Feature, featured for a weekend at Mezzrow) isn’t tickling the ivories, he is tickling ivory file folders as a partner in a law firm. Pianist Richard Wyands (Encore, also at The 75 Club) and late singer Eddie Jefferson (Lest We Forget, fêted at Smoke by Allan Harris) also know/knew a thing or two about the hard work that goes into a jazz career. And before you assume all that work is selfish, read our Label Profile on Minus Zero, where all proceeds from the imprint’s catalogue are donated to Planned Parenthood.

On The Cover: Reggie Workman (© John Rogers)

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**YOU JUST CAN’T PREDICT HOW CATHERINE RUSSELL IS GOING TO SOUND LIVE: SHE SINGS SO MANY STYLES, ALL WELL.**

**THE Artist/activist/vocalist Abbey Lincoln was a disrupter. As part of a series honoring ‘60s black female pioneers, Marc Cary, who logged 12 years as her pianist, staged Mothers of the Movements at Harlem Stage Gatehouse (Mar. 3rd). To help him (re)generate the disruptive spirit of his former employer, Cary enlisted veteran (but eternally youthful) bassist Reggie Workman, resilient drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, adaptively pliable trumpeter Vibha Gupta, pianist Randy Noel, tenor saxophonist Edmar Colón and vocalist Jackie Gage (who had the unenviable task of filling Lincoln’s shoes). Besides “Driva’ Man”, “Tears for Johannesburg” and “Freedom Day”, all from the iconic We Insist! Max Roach’s Freedom Now Suite, the set included Lincoln’s “Straightahead”, “Throw It Away”, “Down Here Below” and “Music Is The Magic”, Cary’s “Running Out of Time” (set to Lincoln’s lyrics) and Mango Santamaria’s “Afro Blue”. Spanning two hours, it had vertiginous peaks linked by long broad valleys. Cary and Carrington were the impetus behind many of the collective high points, each evoking animated crowd responses during solo features. Colón and Gage were equally compelling, if less charismatic. Gupta, too often drowned in the sea of notes, finally surfaced in a few places, his delicate finger-taps dancing over four tuned tablas. Some of the extended jams seemed to linger longer than necessary, though on “Down Here Below”, an extended lull in the middle eventually erupted with volcanic strength.**

**— Tom Greenland**

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**When are musicians going to realize that THEY have the power?” This statement from trumpeter Bill Dixon has often been repeated as he was incredulous at the things musicians had to put up with from venues, record labels, promoters and the like. 54 years after Dixon co-founded the Jazz Composers’ Guild, things haven’t changed much—that said, when a venue like Ridgewood’s H010 gets a reputation as a generally unfriendly pay-to-play spot, where improvisers are basically renting space against a sure-to-be-small door charge, folks start to fly the coop. So tenor saxophonist Ildephonso “John” Dikeman, guitarist Jasper Stadhouders, bassist Tony Piazza, drummer Adam Shead and trombonist Steve Swell (minus the latter, the group hails from Amsterdam and Chicago and was on tour) migrated from H010 to the Crown Heights art gallery Happylucky no. 1 (Mar. 3rd), joining up with pedal steel guitarist Susan Alcorn and American reedplayer Jim Denley, who were performing duo. Surrounded by a pig’s breakfast of fiber, paper and jeweled artworks, the quintet tussled with one another over two shortish improvisations, Dikeman’s rugged and hoarse squall mating well with Swell’s economical slush and quizzical flutter, and left the space warm. Denley and Alcorn hadn’t met prior and though both initially showed restraint, feeling one another out, the inevitable loosening up led to some remarkable passages of metallic prepared-horn grind and sine wave-like chordal bellows.— Clifford Allen**

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While fusion of jazz with Indian classical and traditional musics is hardly new—going back at least to the ’60s with Joe Harriott, Manfred Schoof and later Miles Davis, Pat Martino and John McLaughlin—what has changed over the past decade or more is that the fusion is coming from the other direction. Now we have post-colonial indojazz fusion, promulgated by musicians with direct heritage, whether it is Vijay Iyer, Rudresh Mahanthappa or, as was on display at National Sawdust (Mar. 11th), Aakash Mittal. The saxophonist was presenting music written under the auspices of a grant awarded by the American Institute of Indian Studies, which allowed him to visit Kolkata and compose Nocturnes, a five-section piece of music based on Hindustani evening and night ragas. The music was interpreted by Mittal’s Avaz Trio, completed by Miles Okazaki (guitar) and Rajna Swaminathan (mridangam, a tuned percussion instrument). The 50-minute composition was presented en suite, with a shifting hierarchy, cellular repetition, moments of formality contrasted by diffuse spaciousness and sections of lockstep movement. While Mittal’s playing exhibits a Western tone and tonality, its edge matched well with the deep throoms of mridangam and various electric soundscapes of guitar. The rhythmic aspects were omnipresent, usually maintained by Okazaki and echoed by Swaminathan. Later in the set, Mittal invited a guest ongastra, trumpet Amir ElSaffar, equally dedicated to exploring its Eastern roots. – Andrey Henkin

The Sony Corporation and Blue Note Media Group have announced a joint effort, Sony Hall, a venue with a capacity of 1,000 standing and 500 seated, with a full-service restaurant and bar equipped with Sony’s technologies, integrated throughout the 12,000 square-foot venue” to open in New York City this spring. Additionally, Sony has been named sponsor of the annual Blue Note Jazz Festival, taking place every summer. For more information, visit bluenote.net.

As part of Jazz Appreciation Month, the Louis Armstrong House will present two events: on Apr. 30th, there will be the first public screening of Satchmo Plays King Oliver, the only known film of Armstrong in the studio, at the Museum of the City of New York; and on Apr. 28th, trumpeter Bria Skonberg will present a Family Louis Armstrong Workshop at the Armstrong House. For more information, visit louisarmstronghouse.org.

The Brooklyn Academy of Music has named David Brinell as its new Artist Director, taking over for Joseph V. Melillo. For more information, visit bam.org.

Finalists have been named for the 23rd Annual Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition taking place at Jazz at Lincoln Center this May. Relatively local ensembles are Newark Academy (Livingston, NJ) and William H. Hall High School (West Hartford, CT). For more information, visit academy.jazz.org.

Recipients of the first round of 2018 funding from the National Endowment for the Arts have been announced. Local recipients include: Aaron Davis Hall; Afro-Latin Jazz Alliance of New York; Apollo Theater Foundation; Arts for Art; BRIC Arts; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Festival of New Trumpet Music; Issue Project Room; Jazz Foundation of America; Kaufman Music Center; National Sawdust and Roulette. For more information, visit arts.gov.

The American Pianists Association has announced five finalists for the American Pianists Awards: Kenny Banks, Jr., Emmet Cohen, Keelan Dimick, Dave Meder and Billy Test will compete for the Cole Porter Fellowship, given every four years to an American jazz pianist and awarded in April 2019. There will be a concert featuring all five finalists at Dizzy’s Club on May. 17th. For more information, visit AmericanPianists.org.

The Seattle Women’s Jazz Orchestra’s sixth annual Jazz Contest for Women Composers is now accepting scores. Winning and honorable mention composers will receive up to $25,000. The competition is open to composition performances at an Earshot Jazz Festival, taking place every summer. For more information, visit printedmatter.org/programs/events/876.

The Museum of Modern Art’s Modern Jazz Social, a benefit and the music performance honoring Donald Lee, chairman and CEO of BET Networks, Apr. 3rd. The evening will feature performances by Cécile McLorin Salvant, Aaron Diehl and Terrie “Black Thought” Trotter. For more information, visit moma.org.

Submit news to info@nycjazzrecord.com

WHAT’S NEWS
Jim McNeely, a superb pianist who has led recording dates with small groups and big bands, is known for his acclaimed work as a composer, arranger and conductor with large ensembles such as the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, Danish Radio Big Band and the Hessischer Rundfunk Big Band in Frankfurt and has made valuable contributions to albums by Stan Getz and Phil Woods. McNeely’s nine Grammy nominations attest to the respect he has earned in the world of jazz.

The New York City Jazz Record: Who were some of your mentors?

Jim McNeely: I went to a Catholic school with a big band, led by a priest named George Wiskirchen. He was the first to encourage me to write big band arrangements and comp. He was the first person I ever had in my life to sit in that piano chair night and day in guys’ lofts in Chelsea, so I got to know some of the folks in Thad and Mel’s band. There were jam sessions going on during the day in guys’ lofts in Chelsea, so I got to know a piano player named Ron Elliston well. Hearing him play and seeing how he led a trio was really instructive.

TNYCJR: How did you join Thad Jones and Mel Lewis?

JM: I had gotten to know Harold Danko, the pianist in the band. There were jam sessions going on during the day in guys’ lofts in Chelsea, so I got to know some of the folks in Thad and Mel’s band. Harold was really nice to me. We talked a lot about music and he had me sit in on gigs. At one point, Harold called me to sub in the band. I played, Thad wasn’t there, but Mel was. Then Harold called me to sub again, Thad was there and it worked out pretty well. A few months went by, Mel called me to join the band. They were going to do a 12-week tour of Europe and some of the guys were very active on the local scene and couldn’t afford to be Away. Harold was one of them. It opened the door for me and a couple other guys. It was a good opportunity.

TNYCJR: What did you learn while in the band?

JM: Several things. It’s the greatest arranging lesson I ever had in my life to sit in that piano chair night after night, play that music and hear the inner voices, the way Thad voiced his chords and rhythmically wrote music. Also, I could always hear myself playing with Mel. He wasn’t a loud drummer but swung like crazy and supported the soloists really well. I also learned about the role of the piano in a big band. With Thad and Mel’s music, there were a lot of piano solos, but most of them had a structural function in the arrangement. I think Thad got that from Basie. You think of all the solos Basie played, but they were either an intro to set up the tune or a bridge from one section of the chart to another or there’d be a big shout chorus and a little piano solo would help the dust settle before the last thing of the chart. The piano solos weren’t open-ended blowing things. Seeing Thad conduct and the joy that he brought to the process was really inspiring. It’s a big thing that I’ll always remember. He really loved what he did and expressed that to the band and the audience and really inspired everybody.

TNYCJR: Two important chapters in your career include your time with Stan Getz and Phil Woods.

JM: The first thing I think about with Stan is his sound and his time. I learned from playing with Stan and Phil that people respond to your sound, your time and the degree to which you really believe what you’re doing. People don’t care if it’s flat five or a sharp nine, what they want to hear is the belief in every note you play and Stan really had that. He was the best singer I ever worked with, because the way he could play a ballad melody, it was like playing with a really great singer.

Phil’s band was very different. Number one is he had remarkably stable personnel for so many years. It was like a writer’s workshop. He really encouraged me, Hal Crook and Brian Lynch to write. We’d have rehearsals and write stuff for the band. After four years, I told Phil that I was going to be leaving. They had a big tour of Europe coming up and I was so busy writing that I couldn’t afford the time anymore to do those kinds of tours. I told him I was leaving the band by such and such a date and he said, “Okay, we’ve still got all of these tunes to record, so let’s do a whole CD.” I was honored that he wanted to do that.

TNYCJR: Your tentet album Group Therapy is one of my favorite CDs. I felt like it deserved a Grammy.

JM: As the cliché goes, it’s an honor to be nominated. It means enough of your peers have heard what you’ve done to vote for you. Once it goes to the finals, it’s a lot about popularity or recognition. You learn to let it roll off your back when you lose, although I will say that every time I’ve been nominated and go out to L.A. and lose, that plane ride back home is a really long ride (laughs).

TNYCJR: You’ve probably written a lot of music that has yet to be recorded or performed, so hearing a large ensemble playing your works has to give you a thrill.

JM: It still does. Most of the time when I’m writing something, I get to the point where I say I can’t wait to hear this and then I do. That’s one reason I really enjoy working with the Frankfurt Radio Band and I write probably five to six hours of big band music for them a year. It’s really exciting to go over there and hear it played by a really good band. Sometimes when I write for the Vanguard Orchestra...same thing. I still get a big charge out of hearing what I’ve written.

TNYCJR: Do you usually write for a particular orchestra?

JM: I usually write for a specific band or orchestra, then they’re usually portable enough where you can play them with other groups. A number of things I’ve

(continued on page 42)
Jonny King is a busy man. He’s a full-time lawyer, married and the father of two daughters and a jazz pianist and composer who performs in New York jazz clubs with some of the finest musicians. And, he notes, is writing tunes. Even as the meeting to source this article began, “I was finishing up another tune,” says King. “And there are always many more in my head.”

King has made recordings as a leader and as a sideman and has had tunes recorded by a number of artists, including Billy Pierce, Tony Reedus and Billy Drummond. In some respects, he’s under the radar in the jazz world, but there’s a bigger story.

First, some background. King is a native New Yorker and his earliest memory of being drawn to music was seeing the film The Sting at age nine and coming home to try to pick out its ragtime melodies on his family’s spinet piano. “My folks signed me up for lessons with a classical teacher but, within months, I was always frustrated with having to play music as it was written. In other words, I wanted to and started to improvise.” So, abandoning the lessons, a jazz musician emerged and, with the help of a promoter friend of the family, King got to see Teddy Wilson, Earl Hines, Cannonball Adderley and more. And, in addition to listening to records, King soon started taking lessons with a “proper jazz teacher”, Tony Aless, one of the pianists on Charlie Parker’s Bird with Strings. Says King, “Tony instilled that reverence for the language of jazz—I got to appreciate the oral history of the music and find my voice.”

Harvard Law School was King’s next step yet he never gave up playing jazz, working with many of Boston’s greats, including Pierce, Alan Dawson, John Lockwood and more. He returned to New York in 1993 and began to play at Bradley’s, Sweet Basil, Knickerbocker Bar & Grill, Blue Note and more. He began work at his current law firm in 1994 but that fall was asked to go on tour with Joshua Redman and Peter Washington (bass), Joshua Redman (tenor saxophone) and Steve Nelson (vibraphone). Here were six more originals, including one, “Las Ramblas”, which blends island rhythms, chord changes of “I Got Rhythm” and an unusual, but danceable melody. The covers are Herbie Hancock’s “Blow Up” and the Fred E. Ahlert-Roy Turk standard “Mean to Me”. On 1997’s The Meltdown, Drummond is there yet again, this time in a larger group with David Sánchez (tenor), Steve Wilson (tenor and soprano), Steve Davis (trombone) and Larry Grenadier (bass). The musicians on these recordings are the ones with whom King finds his place of relaxed yet adventurous music-making.

Influences abound in King’s music and playing. According to him, it’s the early boogie-woogie players like Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson and then, later, Wynton Kelly, Sonny Clark, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett and McCoy Tyner. And, he says, “When I was starting to play professionally, there were so many great pianists I could see virtually every night, like Kenny Barron, John Hicks, Ronnie Mathews, Cedar Walton, Tommy Flanagan and others. And, on the younger side of the spectrum, Kenny Kirkland and Mulgrew Miller. Mulgrew ultimately became my teacher and mentor— he’d come to the house and we’d sit at the upright piano and take turns playing melodies and basslines.” And it was never about technique, though King certainly has it. “I’m not schooled, not an academic. But a listener responds, really, to the music.”

Lest we forget, King is a partner in a top New York firm. In fact, he had written a paper while in law school entitled “The Anatomy of a Jazz Recording”, in which he discusses how a version of an old standard could include nine copyrightable elements. And speaking of writing, in 1997 King authored What Jazz Is: An Insider’s Guide to Understanding and Listening to Jazz (Walker Books). In the introduction, he says, “... that breadth of emotional expressiveness is part of why jazz is such great music. With a little preliminary interest and willingness to listen, anyone can understand and respond to jazz.” The book originally came with a compilation CD of music that King discussed within its pages.

King made his most recent recording in 2010, the stunning Above All (Sunnyside). The pianist is joined by bassist Ed Howard and drummer Victor Lewis, both of whom have joined King’s special coterie. Now, he finds himself doing more trio gigs and pondering the challenges of recording and the future of same. “Since I write so much music, I’m opting, for new recordings, when they happen, for larger groups that could interpret that music,” King reflects. In addition, he’s working with his publisher, Don Sickler at Second Floor Music, in transcribing his music for educational purposes so that intimacy and sharing extends, one hopes, to new generations of players. ✺

**Recommended Listening:**
- Jonny King—In From The Cold (Criss Cross, 1994)
- Jonny King—Notes From The Underground (Enja, 1995)
- Jonny King—The Meltdown (Enja-Koch, 1997)
- Jonny King—Above All (Sunnyside, 2010)
- Anthony Branker & Ascent—Together (Origin, 2012)
Reflecting on a career spanning six decades, bassist Reggie Workman speaks with subdued restraint. Adding to a remarkable resume, Workman’s history of mentoring young jazz musicians led to a long-standing Associate Professorship of the New School yet, standing down 80, he’s as busy as ever. “Yes, there’s a lot going on. There always is,” he mused.

Born in 1937, just outside of Philadelphia, Workman was ingrained in musical activity from early on. “Many musicians lived in that community,” he explained. “Lee Morgan and I grew up together. Archie Shepp lived around the corner.” Others in his immediate purview were Benny Golson, Kenny Barron, Mickey Roker, Donald Bailey and Bobby Green. Workman’s father, a chef, owned a restaurant frequented by musicians who often visited the family home. The addition of a piano in their living room brought about an array of jam sessions. Jackie McLean was a regular when he played the area and after John Coltrane moved to Philadelphia, he too was drawn to the scene. “And Philly Joe Jones was a conductor on the trolley that passed the house,” Workman said. “He sometimes stopped his car, faking mechanical problems, just to come in and say ‘hello’ to the fellows.”

Through the visceral drive of the music, Workman’s role became increasingly active. “Archie went to college at Goddard to study drama and I continued playing the streets. We didn’t have universities to teach this, we sneaked into clubs. The Showboat and the Aqua Lounge hosted Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, they all came through. The bouncer at one of the clubs would let us in; he’d give us fruit punch and sit us in a dark corner.” But by 1956, upon high school graduation, Workman began organizing performances. Once he took over the hearse his father used for deliveries, he could get the gigs out of town and transport the players. A first taste of success occurred when Workman joined the quartet of popular pianist-vocalist Freddy Cole, brother of Nat. “The music took me out of the brickyard and around the country. For me, this was also an education on the art of the ballad.”

Performances with Cole centered on New York, so Workman moved his base to Harlem. “My evolution happened in New York. Many of the greats lived there. Gigi Gryce started hiring me regularly.” Calls began coming in from Sun Ra, James Moody and Roswell Rudd. “I also played Minton’s with Chick Corea and George Coleman and Babs Gonzales started hanging out uptown”, which led to gigs with the bebop vocalist. “Then in 1958 Frank Gant and I went to San Francisco to work with Red Garland. It was a two-week gig we couldn’t turn down due to his Miles association. Red wouldn’t pay for plane tickets so we traveled by train.” Quickly, Workman became established as a first-call bassist within the music’s highest order. “Thelonious Monk was very particular about what happened on the bandstand and he expected the bass to be in a certain place, at a certain time, regardless. It was like school. That was difficult for me because I was used to a more open setting. The band’s saxophonist Paul Jeffrey was a great help to me and Ed Blackwell too.”

Increasingly busy—and aware of the rigors—Workman became a founder of a musicians’ support and referral organization; however, the shadow of Jim Crow invaded the solidarity. “The group had conflicts because the black musicians had different problems than the white ones,” Workman recalled. Collective Black Artists (CBA) grew from this reality. Artists including Amiri Baraka, Jimmy Heath, Jimmy Owens, George Benson and Don Moore became central members. “We renovated a store front to make an office and organized classes taught by Leonard Goines and Owens. Our newspaper, Expansions, was filled with articles and poetry.” CBA also recorded an LP dedicated to Muhammad Ali featuring Gonzales’ vocals and ran a concert series at Town Hall with Ornette Coleman, Max Roach and Herbie Hancock among their features.

Within Workman’s tapestry, Coltrane stands out as a luminary. “It was 1961 and the band included McCoy, Elvin and Dolphy. I was working with Jaki Byard and Roy Haynes down the street from Coltrane’s band and invited Eric to check us out. He brought John, but they left soon after, so I thought nothing of it. However, they were going on the road and John called to ask if I wanted in. I said: ‘Is the Pope Catholic?’” After stateside shows, Norman Granz paired the band with Dizzy Gillespie’s for a European tour. “We boarded the plane together but John, Dizzy and Norman sat in first class. The rest of us rode coach...the salary was miniscule and we had to pay for our own hotel rooms. Meanwhile, Granz got a suite.” However, the gig cemented a powerful relationship with Coltrane, then on the cusp of ascendency. “We recorded Africa Brass. So many great musicians were in Van Gelder’s studio. Dolphy wrote voicings for the horns...the Middle East conflict was going on and I started going back and forth to Philadelphia. I couldn’t commit, yet leaving John is one of my saddest memories,” he lamented.

But by New Year’s Eve 1962, Workman was on a Japanese bandstand with Art Blakey. “That version of the Jazz Messengers was historic: Wayne Shorter, Curtis Fuller, Cedar Walton and Freddie Hubbard. Everyone worked hard and Blakey made sure of that. ‘Sgt. Blakey’ we called him.” The master drummer was dogmatic, but not as disciplined in his own life. “Buhaina [Blakey’s Muslim name] would direct us to be at Blue Note’s rehearsal room on 84th and Broadway at 6 pm. Then 8 pm came, no Bu. He’d sometimes keep us waiting four, five hours. He was having problems and as his marriage fell apart, so did the band.”

Workman joins Shepp and Bill Dixon’s politically revolutionary ensemble for their eponymous 1962 album. Commenting on the natural connection between the music and the rising Black Liberation Movement, Workman states: “Music means politics. Archie later wrote ‘Poem for Malcolm’, ‘Scag’, ‘Rufus’ and ‘Attica Blues’. But we all spoke up. We had to. You can’t put your head in the sand; that leaves your ass sticking up in the air.” In 1965 the bassist toured with Yusef Lateef’s combo, hitting California during the Watts Riots. “We were being shot at as we drove from the highway so we had to stay in the hotel.” Herbie Mann, then holding noted commercial success, next hired Workman. “The Middle East conflict was going on and Herbie became increasingly involved in this. He tuned his music to his own roots, but the Israeli-Palestinian conflict touched me differently as a black person. I became very vocal. It may have hurt my career, but artists shed light.” Workman then joined the New York Art Quartet, an ensemble that sonically and politically realized radical culture in an urgent time. Baraka was a common addition to the lineup, threading spoken word through streams of improvisation. “I don’t like the term ‘avant garde’,” Workman clarified. “It’s about the music, not about boxes people put it in. We are Sound Scientists.”

In 1970 Workman became musical director of the New Muse Community Museum, an organization of African-American arts. And with the fall of the CBA, he founded Artists Alliance, a network presenting a Village Gate concert series. However, in the harsh economic decline to follow, Workman experienced recession fallout of his own. He took a day job with a black-owned oil company and also with Crown Heights Community Service, guiding at-risk teens to college. In the ‘80s, he hosted a jazz radio program on WBAI-FM and led record dates with the likes of Julian Priester, Sam Rivers and Andrew Hill, before forming Top Shelf, a band sporting David Murray, Arthur Rhames, Steve McCall and others. “I’d been doing so many other people’s music and decided to finally perform my own. Top Shelf played the Tin Palace, the Cooler and the S-Spot for months at a time.”

The bassist mentored young artists through the African American Legacy Project and various colleges for years, focusing finally on The New School’s Jazz and New Music Program, in which he’s currently immersed. Trio 3, with Oliver Lake and Andrew Cyrille, is a long-term project and Workman also anticipates the release of a ‘70s recording by WARM with Rivers, Friester and Pheeroan akLaff. He’s also working on his biography. “There aren’t enough hours for me to stop,” he offered. “Besides, who’s counting?”

Workman is at The 75 Club at Bogardus Mansion Apr. 20th-21st. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- New York Art Quartet – Mohawk (Fontana, 1965)
- Alice Coltrane – Transfiguration (Warner Brothers-Sepia Tone, 1978)
- Reggie Workman – Summit Conference (Postcards, 1993)
- Trio 3 – Visiting Texture (Intakt, 2016)
Festival International Musique Actuelle Victoriaville

4 days of concerts, sound art installations, films and visual arts

17 to 20 May 2018

Walter Boudreau « De l’Infonie à la SMQ »
Lan Tung « The Giant Project »
Dálava
Charlotte Hug
Malcolm Goldstein
Liu Fang / Rainer Wiens
Anna Homler « Breadwoman »
William Parker « In Order to Survive »
Schnellertollermeier Fire!
David and the Mountain Ensemble
Audrey Chen / Richard Scott
Merzbow / Balázs Pándi
Mats Gustafsson
AfriRampo
Lori Freedman
PHEW
Saicobab
Phurpa
Erwan Keravec
Mette Rasmussen / Martin Tåxt
Toshimaru Nakamura
Rova Saxophone Quartet « Rova@40 »

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How fortunate we are in the 21st century to have living histories of jazz still among us. Pianist Richard Wyands, who turns 90 in July, is one of them. He not only clearly remembers the Swing Era, but was gigging at the birth of bebop and has known or played with a Who’s Who of jazz musicians.

As a youngster growing up in the San Francisco Bay area, Wyands was deeply into music early on, with piano lessons beginning at seven. He was also quite attracted to drums. “My mother was not for it,” he says, chuckling at the memory. “I just bought you a piano. I’m not buying you drums too.” Still, he found a way to learn both, soon moving ardently into jazz studies. Wyands was attracted to jazz listening to his parents’ records of James P. Johnson, Fats Waller and others. On the radio, the bands of Artie Shaw and Benny Goodman made an impression.

Around this time his mother took him to see Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra at the Golden Gate Theater in San Francisco. Billy Strayhorn eventually impressed Wyands, who came to appreciate him as one of his favorite composers, and his admiration for Ellington is strong. Wyands notes that on most of the trio recordings he’s done at least one Strayhorn or Ellington work is included. “Duke was underestimated as a pianist,” he adds. “He was a very good stride player.” The Ellington connection also continued in Wyands’ long-term association with guitarist Kenny Burrell, a noted Ellingtonia expert. It was Burrell who taught him about playing alongside a guitar, which he had found daunting: “I got the knack playing with Kenny.”

In San Francisco, Wyands regularly went to hear other big bands that came through the area, including Woody Herman, Louis Armstrong and the early Basie band. At 16, he became a member of a 6-piece jazz combo, playing both piano and drums. The group was accomplished enough to play professionally. “We were good!” he says emphatically. His own practice and gigging allowed him to develop a style early. He was especially attracted to the playing of Teddy Wilson and Nat King Cole, both with whom he eventually had the opportunity to play. Still impressed with Cole’s artistry today, he lights up as he declares it “extraordinary.” Wyands also had a passion for Art Tatum, with whom he also got to play opposite. “Tatum wasn’t easy,” he says, making moves on an air piano to indicate Tatum’s complexity.

Over the years, Wyands learned to play most jazz genres, developing the flexible and adaptable style that has made him a highly sought-after sideman. As a solo player his proclivity is toward a more cerebral and nuanced approach, in keeping with his quiet, direct, ‘let’s get it done’ personality. In this regard and in tone and delicate touch, he’s much in the mold of departed contemporary Ellis Larkins.

In the post-WWII era, when Wyands was leaving high school and entering San Francisco State College (giving him a degree in music in 1950), bebop came into his line of sight. Working his way through college brought him important exposure to the many groups coming through town. Upon graduating he worked with bassist Vernon Alley and became the house pianist at the Black Hawk club, a venue popular with visiting musicians.

During this time Wyands was experimenting with bop and a kind of stride piano during intermissions at the club and jamming around town. Wyands’ talent and connections paid off in a three-month stint as music director for Ella Fitzgerald in 1956. He remembers Fitzgerald with great affection. “I had a great time performing with her. She was amazing.” Of the many singers he’s worked with over the years, he cites Anita O’Day as among his favorites.

With the Fitzgerald gig under his belt, Wyands figured it was time to move on from San Francisco, where his future seemed limited. He landed a job at a singers’ showcase near Ottawa, Canada in 1957, working with the likes of Johnny Mathis and other big names. “A lot of singers came through,” he recalls. Another was Carmen McRae, who hired Wyands to go on a multi-city tour that ended in New York, the place Wyands knew he had to be. His professional life in the Big Apple was fraught at first. Union rules required a six-month residency (with no touring) before a card could be issued. Even though the gigs were limited in those months, Wyands became known around town. Fully unionized, he worked clubs in Manhattan and Brooklyn and joined saxophonist Gigi Gryce in 1958, who was organizing a band with bassist Reggie Workman, drummer Mickey Roker and trumpeter Richard Williams. “It was one of the best groups I ever worked with,” Wyands says.

When Gryce left the scene Wyands began his long career freelancing. He’s led his own trio for a handful of sessions, but has mainly built an astounding legacy playing and recording with the likes of Charles Mingus, Benny Carter, Zoot Sims, Freddie Hubbard, Milt Hinton, Roy Haynes, Illinois Jacquet and scores of others. His discography is in the dozens.

Looking back over what some might consider a magical career, Wyands is a satisfied and appreciative man. “I go to meet and play with incredible musicians and people I never thought I’d even speak to and I got to travel to so many places I never dreamed I’d visit.” As he approaches nonagenarian status, Wyands is still gigging, further solidifying his place in the remarkable living history of jazz.

Wyands is at Mezzrow Apr. 30th and The 75 Club at Bogardus Mansion Thursdays. See Calendar and Regular Engagements.

Recommended Listening:
- Gigi Gryce Quintet—The Hap’nin’s (Prestige New Jazz, 1960)
- Kenny Burrell—Stormy Monday (Fantasy, 1974)
- Richard Wyands—Then, Here and Now (Jazzcraft Studio Recordings) (Jazzcraft-Storvville, 1978)
- Richard Wyands—The Arrival (DIW, 1992)
- Frank Wess Quartet—Surprise, Surprise! (Live at the 1996 Floating Jazz Festival) (Chiaroscuro, 1996)
- Etta Jones—Sings Lady Day (HighNote, 2001)
MINUS ZERO
BY GEORGE GRELLA

One word—or more—response game: think “record label” and what comes to mind? The classic era of Blue Note, which defined the sound of hardbop and postbop and became one of the great names in graphic design. ECM and the pristine clarity of its production? Tzadik and its reflection of John Zorn’s curiosity? The common factor among those three is an aesthetic organizing principle. As a listener, it’s that which has you digging into their new releases. But what about a label that’s not organized around music, but a cause?

That’s the story of digital imprint Minus Zero. The catalogue numbers 30 releases, which range from Andrea Wolper singing standards and originals; a 20-minute improvisation by punk guitarist Joe Baiza; avant garde electro-acoustic music; and a good representation of contemporary musicians working at the edge of that idiom we call jazz. It’s not the musical content that brings this all together, it’s the cause. Minus Zero donates all proceeds to Planned Parenthood.

Drummer Vijay Anderson, one of the principals (along with clarinetist Ben Goldberg and string player/vocalist Dina Maccabee), described how Minus Zero came about: “Ben and I played a benefit shortly after Trump’s inauguration and we wondered if there was a way to bring this all together, it’s the cause: Minus Zero donates all proceeds to Planned Parenthood.” Though not a de jure non-profit, the label goes even further by passing on all the proceeds (not just profits) and are supported by Bandcamp, which doesn’t charge them any fees (it still takes a percentage of sales).

The name Minus Zero came from Bob Dylan’s song “Love Minus Zero” and was suggested by Maccabee. And, unlike Blue Note, there’s no specific, expected sound to be found. Even with the range already available Anderson sees more ahead: “I want to have diverse genres and styles, I want to make it more musically diverse” than it is currently, adding more musicians who come out of popular genres. That’s an impressive aesthetic ambition, considering that the one commonality of the label’s cause has brought together an already disparate set of musicians. It’s the style of their politics, not what they play, that matters, though as Anderson points out the label “is not political music, it’s music from people who care about politics.”

The practicality of collecting donated work means that the label has a grab bag of music that comes out of recordings musicians have stashed away while looking for a label, live sets not originally meant for issue and rereleases of older material. Anderson collects this “through word of mouth, I just started talking to musicians to see if they wanted to donate anything.”

Bassist Max Johnson leads an improvising trio with pianist Diane Moser and clarinetist Perry Robinson on The Small Hours, a recording he says “we had just sitting around for a while.” But then Vijay asked me about Minus Zero and I thought it’s probably not going to make us any real money and if I could donate the record to help people, why not?” Moser, who also plays on For My Mother, a live date with Anderson, tenor saxophonist Hafez Modirzadeh and bassist Mark Dresser, says, “I’m very excited about Minus Zero. They have provided a home for creative music and they are donating...to one of my favorite organizations. It’s wonderful to be a part of this community of like-minded folks and to be doing good in the world through music.”

The quality of those recordings means the label may seem second-hand, in a way, but there’s nothing second-rate about the material: there’s an EP from pianist Mara Rosenbloom’s trio recorded live at I Beam Brooklyn in 2014; Woler’s The Small Hours, a scintillating 2005 recording originally on VarisOne; Jazz; Vrrz Dzurinko’s lovely solo piano album Fun City, originally recorded in the late ‘90s and released on New Artists Records; and the remix album of Maccabee’s unclassifiable solo recording, The World is in the Work.

Maccabee shares Anderson’s eye towards expanding the range: “I look forward to broadening the styles of music Minus Zero offers and including as diverse a range of musical voices as possible. In this way, the drive to help others by improving access to health care in our communities will also help create a virtual, and sometimes physical—as with our recent first live festival—meeting place for artistic communities that might not otherwise cross paths.”

For more information, visit minuszero.bandcamp.com. Artists performing this month include Mark Dresser at Brooklyn Conservatory of Music Apr. 14th; Ben Goldberg at The Owl Music Parlor Apr. 20th; Max Johnson at Bar Lanático Apr. 17th; Ass Mendoza at Roulette Apr. 5th with William Hooker; Mara Rosenbloom at Roulette Apr. 5th with William Hooker, Happyluck no.1 Apr. 11th and I Beam Brooklyn Apr. 12th; and Andrea Wolper at Cornelia Street Underground Apr. 25th.

HOW TO WRITE SONGS
BY SUZANNE LORGE

Argentinian singer-songwriter Sofia Rei draws from a multitude of discrete musical sources to create her gripping, impassioned compositions. Free improv, flamenco, South American folk tunes, Klezmer, modern jazz—anything that is rhythmic and stirring and meaningful. This month, Rei will present representative selections from her manifold projects at The Stone at The New School, with a different set each evening (Apr. 24th-28th). Rei opens her run with an homage to Chilean singer-songwriter Violeta Parra, whose work she commemorated with the 2017 album El Cauillín (Cascabelera Records). On this duo album with electric guitarist Marc Ribot, Rei rearranged Parra’s much-beloved Latin American folk songs using looped vocals and electronic effects alongside acoustic instruments such as cuarango, a Bolivian guitar. Where Parra’s original work is gut-wrenching in its message and impact, Rei’s interpretation of the same is healing and redemptive. It’s a masterful piece of musical alchemy.

She also devotes two of the evenings to her work with composer John Zorn, whose writing for singers tends toward the soaring: On Apr. 27th Rei will reprise songs from the repertoire of the a cappella group Mycale, which Zorn assembled in 2010 to perform parts of his The Book of Angels. (In 2015 Israeli singer Ayelit Rose Gottlieb, Moroccan singer Malika Zarra and American singer Basya Schecter joined Rei to record Zorn’s many-layered vocal compositions, Gomory: The Book of Angels, Vol. 25, for his label Tzadik Records. Gottlieb, Zarra and Sara Serpa will perform with Rei at The Stone.) Then on Apr. 28th Rei will sing from Zorn’s Masada Book 3: Book Beriah, a series of compositions based on Jewish musical traditions and to which Rei contributed original lyrics.

The title track of singer-songwriter Kat Edmonson’s new album Old Fashioned Girl (Spiralnette) first gained traction earlier this year when NPR profiled the original on its show Songs We Love. Musically the tune evokes a Songbook standard, tinkling piano accompaniment and all, but lyrically it is set solidly in a technology-saturated 2018. This track is only one of many gruesomely humorous numbers on the recording: from “Sparkle And Shine”, a slow swing number, to “The Date”, a languid, laugh-out-loud duet offering a much-needed antidote to the lyrics in “Baby, It’s Cold Outside”, and Inga Swearingen on “The Moment”, which features close harmonies, soft strings and a peek into the endearing musical partnership.

Reid is back gits this month: Paul Jost makes his Dizzy’s Club debut as a guest of vibraphonist Joe Locke (Apr. 27th-28th); on the heels of her regular gig at 55Bar on Apr. 13th Tessa Souter is at Mezzrow (Apr. 17th); and trumpet-singer Bri Skonberg starts the month at Greenwich House Music School’s NY Hot Jazz Camp (Apr. 2nd-8th) and finishes it at Joe’s Pub (Apr. 25th).

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IN MEMORIAM

HEINER STADLER
BY ANDREY HENKIN

Heiner Stadler, a German-born/U.S.-based composer who made interesting contributions to mid '60s-late '70s jazz via albums released on Tomato and his own Labor Records, featuring a wide array of accomplished jazz musicians, died Feb. 18th at 75 from complications of pneumonia.

Stadler was born Apr. 9th, 1942 in Lessen, Poland (occupied by the German army at the time and part of the region known as West Prussia previous to World War II). He and his mother (his father had died during the war) relocated to Hamburg in 1947, after which time the young Stadler was first exposed to jazz via Sidney Bechet. In a 2012 interview conducted by Klemen Breznikar for It's Psychedelic Baby magazine, Stadler recounted that, “The big attraction in jazz for me was that it seemed to represent a completely different view of life, a different space than the confines I had experienced when growing up.”

Stadler came to New York in 1965 and happened to be introduced to Miles Davis, showing him some of his early scores. The trumpeter arranged for Stadler to meet with representatives at Columbia, a connection that went nowhere as Stadler learned that he needed to record his music in order to have it considered for release. That led to long periods of rehearsal with a number of current and future jazz legends. Stadler recalled, “They were all very open, often curious and without any attitudes or negative energies. There was a very creative atmosphere that stood in contrast to the struggle ahead and the difficulties of getting any record company interested in recording my works.”

The fruits of this labor were the two volumes of Brains on Fire, recorded between 1966-73 with such musicians as Reggie Workman, Lenny White, Tyrone Washington, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Jimmy Owens, Garnett Brown, Don Friedman and Barre Phillips and released in editions of 500 by Stadler on his newly-minted Labor Records. He would also release the fascinating Jazz Alchemy in 1975, a trio session with trumpeter Charles McPherson (Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Archie Shepp veteran), bassist Richard Davis and drummer Brian Blade. Probably Stadler’s best-known work is 1978’s A Tribute To Monk And Bird, lengthy reimaginings of pieces by the two jazz legends released on Tomato Records and performed by Thad Jones, George Adams, George Lewis, Cecil Bridgewater, Stanley Cowell, Warren Smith, Workman and White.

Stadler continued to run Labor Records and act as a producer for music as varied as Bach to John Lee Hooker and John Cage and though he composed music, little of it was recorded, a fact he told Breznikar was due to its complexity but also “that jazz composition as a discipline was never given the kind of support contemporary classical music, a comparable discipline, has enjoyed.”

ERROL BUDDLE (Apr. 29th, 1928—Feb. 22nd, 2018) The Australian reed player was credited with recording the first jazz solo on baritone in the early '50s, was a stalwart of the Australian Jazz Quartet and Quintet, groups that made several albums for Bethlehem in the '50s, had his own albums on His Master's Voice, M7, Broek and Powderworks and credits with Jack Brokensha, Don Burrows, John Sangster and others. Budde passed away Feb. 22nd at 89.


DIDIER LOCKWOOD (Feb. 11th, 1956—Feb. 18th, 2018) The French violinist was heir to the Gallic tradition of Stephane Grappelli and Jean-Luc Ponty, recording albums for JMS, Gramavision, Dreyfus, Frémeaux & Associés and Universal-France as well as having a remarkably diverse sideman discography with Magma, Gong, Herbie Mann, Bireli Lagrène and others. Lockwood died Feb. 18th at 62.

ALAIN RELLAY (1936—Feb. 9th, 2018) The French saxophonist was a part of the avant jazz collective La Marmite Fernérale and big band PotterMKINet and recorded with countrymen such as Louis Sclavis and Patrick Vollat. Rellay died Feb. 9th at 81.

ROBERT SUNENBLICK (Feb. 9th, 1949—Feb. 17th, 2018) The doctor, who was born in New York but made his practice up north in Montréal, Canada, founded Uptown Records in the late '70s with a live album by saxophonist Eddie Berger, going on to produce over 60 albums by such players as Barry Harris, Don Sickler, Freddie Redd, Benny Davis and others. Sunenblick passed away Feb. 17th at 75.

UWE WERNER (Dec. 28th, 1955—Feb. 13th, 2018) The German saxophonist led his own quintet and was a part of '90s group Südpool, which was sponsored by the State of Baden-Württemberg and recorded several albums for L+R Werner died Feb. 13th at 62.

WESLA WHITEFIELD (Sep. 15th, 1947—Feb. 9th, 2018) The Great American Songbook singer’s career was almost derailed by a shooting assault that left her paralyzed but she went on to record albums from the late ‘80s onwards for Landmark and, from 1997 on, HighNote, usually in collaboration with her pianist husband Mike Greensill. Whitefield passed away Feb. 9th at 70. ❖
Music festivals struggle to distinguish themselves from one another these days. Every genre seems to have its own little circuit and increasingly many of the same musicians end up hitting each even within genre or discipline. Borealis Festival in Bergen, Norway, which makes no bones about its focus on experimental work and recently completed its 15th edition (Mar. 7th-11th), manages to stand apart in all kinds of ways, whether in actual music programmed or manner in which it’s presented. Artistic Director Peter Meanwell seems intent both to satisfy a diverse array of constituents and question the very structure of the conventional music festival.

In addition, Borealis offers film screenings, panel discussion, and recently completed its 15th edition (Mar. 7th-11th). Borealis Festival in Bergen, Norway, which manages to stand apart in all kinds of ways, whether in actual music programmed or manner in which it’s presented. Artistic Director Peter Meanwell seems intent both to satisfy a diverse array of constituents and question the very structure of the conventional music festival.

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Guitarist Bill Frisell has released close to 50 albums since 1983. If he has a flaw as a recording musician, it’s one he shares with Wynton Marsalis in his Columbia period—putting out so much product fans barely have time to digest one release before a new one comes out. If you do try and listen to it all, however, you’ll be amazed by the consistent inventiveness of the music—putting out so much product fans barely have time to digest one release before a new one comes out. 

The duo is the most intimate of musical contexts. Clarinetist Anat Cohen (Israel) and pianist Fred Hersch (USA) are in their own way exceedingly lyrical and both routinely express themselves in varied contexts: Cohen in swinging straightahead postbop and Brazilian choro music; Hersch in solo and small-group settings as well as composing works for voices and collaborating with classical performers. For Healdsburg, this twosome essayed a few originals, some evergreens and Ellingtonia. Cohen has a cozy, full-bodied tone and Hersch is an heir to/descendant of Bill Evans.

Fats Waller’s “Jitterbug Waltz” gets taken on a spacious but especially effervescent jaunt. There are well-placed pauses and moments of near-silence but their lack of angular newness. Cohens and Hersch keeping a genial flow going at all times. Next is Ellington’s “Mood Indigo”, maintaining and playing up the bluesy ambiance further. It wouldn’t be stretching things to say that Cohen and Hersch give it an elegantly bereaved tone, each with the intensity of someone watching their last friend walking out the door. Jimmy Rowles’ “The Peacocks” is done in a virtually symphonic rendition, imbuing it with subtle drama, each adding emotive lower-register work, especially Hersch with oomphing rumbling, Cohen making with aching wails and elegiac, poetic playing worthy of Stan Getz or Lester Young.

What’s wonderful about this set is the utter ease and economy with which this duo communicates and interacts. There are no obvious or crowd-pleasing displays; any fireworks go off with great subtlety. This is one of those albums you can put on “repeat” until you dream, baby, dream.

For more information, visit anzicrecords.com. Cohen is at Dizzy’s Club Apr. 1st with DVA Jazz Orchestra. See Calendar.
Although Randy Weston interspersed a few solos on his records ever since 1954, it was not until the passing of Duke Ellington 20 years later that an unplanned solo tribute at Montreux led to his focusing on solo performance with spectacular results. Within a year and a half Weston had made five solo records (in fact, eight of the nine records he made between that Montreux appearance and the 1983-89 gap in his discography were solo outings). This creative burst established Weston as one of the most convincing solo pianists in modern jazz history, though we should note that he prefers the term “African Rhythms” for the music. This was part of a trend: solo records by modern pianists had been rare in the jazz world, but this began to change around 1970: Abdullah Ibrahim, Cecil Taylor and Mal Waldron all made their first solo flights on LP between 1969-73 and all kept right on flying throughout the mid ’70s. Many of Ibrahim and Taylor’s most memorable records were products of this solo piano renaissance and the same is true of Weston.

No doubt economics played a part in this trend, for concert organizers as well as for the small labels doing most of the recording. But it could hardly have seemed strange to Weston, who counts among his primary influences players never shy about solo outings: Ellington, Art Tatum and Thelonious Monk. The spirits of the latter two are always hovering in the wings when Weston sits at the piano and they are hardly alone; Earl Hines, James P. Johnson, Mary Lou Williams, Mississippi bluesmen, Jubilee Gospel Choirs and African Griots may be discerned at times. It would be difficult to explain how in technical terms, but Weston evokes myriad African traditions constantly in his playing. What might sound like filigree runs in the hands of another pianist evoke a marimba under Weston’s fingers and even those Monk-like chordal stabs hit the ear as would great percussive clangs from an African ensemble of some sort. And there is Remind Dance’s comment about Ellington getting the orchestra to make a SOUND that pundits could not identify. (And there is your lineage, back through the Master, Monk, and the Father, Ellington, to Grandmother Africa.)

This SOUND was recorded in 2001 but is being issued for the first time. Was this due to some contractual problem, some issue with a record company? “No,” laughs Weston. “That’s my fault. I just never got around to listening to the recording and when I finally did, I thought ‘hey, that’s some different sort of stuff there...’” The occasion was another Montreux date, during which Weston was approached by engineer Blaise Grandjean, who wanted to record him with some new microphones. “So we went into the concert hall, just he and I, and I sat down at the piano and when I was done, I had played what you hear on the record.” The program feels very improvisational, as Weston revisits many of his best-loved themes (originals like “The Call”, “Willie’s Tune”, “Tanjah”, “In Memory Of”, Sam Gill’s “Solomon Meditation”, Guy Warren’s “Love the Mystery of Love”) and previews a few that would get fuller readings later (“Blues Blues”, “Royal Duke”). Nor does he neglect some of his less obvious tunes, like the delightfully bent “Loose Wig”, which gets a short but completely ‘lipped’ reading. He even returns to the tune we know as “St. Thomas”, with what seems to be only his second recording of “Fire Down There”. His first recording of this West Indian folk song came a few months before Sonny Rollins would change the title for it to “Memories Collected” in 1956.

Of all the excellent solo records Weston has given us, this is probably the freest in feeling. He is captured at the peak of his powers as a pianist and also as an improviser. As with Rollins, we might think of it as ‘thematic’ improvisation, though in Weston’s case it applies not just to melody but the harmony, voicings, arrangements and the way one tune leads to the next. Hard to not think of Ellington, again, in this regard.

For more information, visit randyweston.info. Weston is at Tribeca Performing Arts Center Apr. 3rd and Jazz Standard Apr. 5th-8th. See Calendar.

The Canadian artist Emily Carr (1871-1945), remembered for modernist and post-Impressionist styles of painting, lived well before pianist Renee Rosnes’ time. On Beloved of the Sky, Rosnes, who like Carr grew up in British Columbia in Western Canada, presents music mostly written with Carr’s paintings in mind played by a quintet of Chris Potter (saxophones and flute), Steve Nelson (vibraphone), Peter Washington (bass) and Lenny White (drums).

Rosnes pays homage to Carr with a variety of material, showing her more forceful side on “Mirror Image”, “Let the Wild Rumpus Start” and opener “Elephant Dust” but taking a more contemplative and subdued approach on “The Flame and the Lotus” and “Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky”. “Rhythm of the River” has a strong Brazilian flavor while hard-swinging “Black Holes” recalls McCoy Tyner’s ’70s output on Milestone (at times, Rosnes and Potter’s interaction hints at the ’60s rapport between Tyner and John Coltrane).

“Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky” was inspired by a 1935 painting in which Carr depicted some hilly, largely barren terrain in Western Canada that had lost a lot of trees because of the logging industry. Nature was a recurring theme in Carr’s work, and Rosnes echoes that in her originals. “Elephant Dust” recalls a childhood experience of petting an elephant at a Canadian circus; Rosnes had a severe allergic reaction and she remembers that incident with aggressive angularity. “Let the Wild Rumpus Start”, which brings the album to a passionate conclusion, gets its title from a line in Maurice Sendak’s children’s book Where the Wild Things Are.

Apart from Rosnes’ originals, one of two covers is “Roisie”, an affectionate waltz the late vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson wrote for his wife; Rosnes played in Hutcherson’s bands extensively and Hutcherson is one of Nelson’s main influences. Whatever type of song Rosnes offers, her sidemen always rise to the occasion, Potter effortlessly moving between different saxophones and flute while White’s flexibility coming as no surprise given his diverse background.

In jazz, most tribute albums honor fellow musicians yet Rosnes’ expansive salute to an important painter yields consistently memorable results.

For more information, visit smokesessionsrecords.com. This project is at Village Vanguard Apr. 3rd-8th. See Calendar.

Canadian artist Emily Carr (1871-1945), remembered for modernist and post-Impressionist styles of painting, lived well before pianist Renee Rosnes’ time. On Beloved of the Sky, Rosnes, who like Carr grew up in British Columbia in Western Canada, presents music mostly written with Carr’s paintings in mind played by a quintet of Chris Potter (saxophones and flute), Steve Nelson (vibraphone), Peter Washington (bass) and Lenny White (drums).

Beloved of the Sky
Renee Rosnes (Smoke Sessions)
by Alex Henderson

In the ’80s, Jerry Valburn and his Meritt label put out a special LP series in which he reissued all of Duke Ellington’s weekly 55-minute radio broadcasts of 1945-46 sponsored by the Treasury Department, whose purpose was to sell war (and later victory) bonds but the music was often priceless. Valburn’s Treasury series resulted in the release of 48 LPs. The last couple of LPs skipped to 1953 and consisted of some rare broadcasts from that period.

Storyville, in their Treasury Show series for their D.E.T.S. subsidiary, has assembled 24 double-CDs containing all of the music from the Meritt series. Most include a pair of the 1945-46 broadcasts augmented with rarities (some previously unreleased) from earlier in the ’40s. Volume 24 brings back the music from the last two Meritt LPs. Featured is Ellington’s orchestra on broadcasts from Chicago’s Blue Note dating from Jun. 24th, Jul. 1st, 17th and 24th, 1953 and 13 minutes of music from the band’s appearance at the Hurricane Club in New York City from Apr. 1st, 1944.

Historians often think of the early ’50s as being an “off” period for Ellington, who was born 119 years ago this month. The end of the big band era resulted in less lucrative work, alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges and trombonist Lawrence Brown had left in 1951 to go out on their own and the orchestra was being taken for granted by many at the time, at least until the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival. But these broadcasts show that there was no decline in Ellington’s music. There were still 11 major soloists in the orchestra, as opposed to three or four in a more normal band: four very different trumpeters (Clark Terry, Willie Cook, Ray Nance and high-note phenomenon Cat Anderson), trombonists Quentin Jackson and Britt Woodman, clarinetists Jimmy Hamilton and Russell Procope, tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves, baritone saxophonist Harry Carney and the pianist-leader were all distinctive soloists and that is not counting Nance’s violin, valve trombonist Juan Tizol who plays the melodic lead on a few of his originals), drummer Butch Ballard (on a few drum features left over from Louis Bellson’s time in the band) and the occasional singing of Jimmy Grissom and Nance.

While most of the songs performed during these broadcasts are from the ’40s or before (“Satin Doll”, which was being used as a closing theme, was the only recent tune of significance), the orchestra sounds enthusiastic and very much in its prime, as if to ask “What off period?” Terry, showcased on “Harlem Air Shaft” and “Perdido”, is as exuberant as ever, Anderson’s stratospheric flights are well featured and all the other soloists get their spots.

The band from 1944 temporarily had a young Dizzy Gillespie in its lineup (in a two-week stint subbing for another tenor, too unfortunately he does not solo. A spirited “Blue Skies” is the best number from that brief broadcast).

Serious Duke Ellington collectors will want all of the CDs in this vast series.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com
The vibraphone is a funny instrument: percussive like a drum, lyrical like a voice and harmonic like a piano (especially when four mallets are used). And yet, in spite of this versatility and the work of Lionel Hampton, Milt Jackson, Gary Burton and others, it has retained a certain tributary status in the jazz tradition. Three releases from disparate points on the globe reveal why it merits mainstream attention.

Bulgarian vibraphonist Errol Rackipov, a mentee of Burton, recorded Distant Dreams, his second album, with the assistance of saxophonists David Leon and Lubomir Gospodinov, pianist Martin Bejerano, bassist Peter Slavov and drummer Ludwig Afonso. The Bulgarian influence is present in the personnel (Rackipov, Gospodinov and Slavov all hail from Sofia), song titles (“Shopeto in NY”, “Miami - Sofia (via Havana)”, “Bosphorus”, “Todora (to Dobri Paliy)”) and melodies and rhythms, which draw on Eastern European folk musics. On “The Dream of the Little Gypsy”, the 18-beat meter is tricky yet still danceable while “Shopeto in NY” has a Middle Eastern flavor. Improvising chords are mostly handled by Rackipov, Bejerano and the amazingly dexterous Slavov, solos generally restricted to a chorus or two to keep focus on the leader’s durable compositions.

Mulatu Astatke, revered progenitor of Ethio-jazz, wasn’t so well known in 1972 when he released Mulatu of Ethiopia, an LP many consider the first, perhaps definitive, crystallization of his unique hybrid of African pentatonic modes and jazz. Formed by his shimmering vibraphone, a small horn section (usually a tenor and alto saxophone or tenor and flute with flute, adding trumpet on several cuts), metallic, wah-wah-pedaled keyboard, electric bass and drums (plus occasional congas), the sound is lean, transparent, each voice a vital part of the hypnotically imbricated textures. Horns and vibraphone take brief expressive solos, but the guiding ethos is groove, heard in extended vamps that drift and linger, often ending abruptly, complementing the attractive themes – “Dewel”, “Kulumankueshli”, “Kasalekut-Hulu”, “Mulatu”, “Chifara” – many of which Astatke has revisited throughout his career.

Swedish percussionist Kjell Nordenos is an ethnomusicologist in both the academic and applied senses, an investigator of improvisative possibilities. Walking with Mirabeau is a solo effort, comprised of alternating soliloquies performed either on drumkit or vibraphone, revealing contrasting faces of his artistic temperament. The drum pieces (5 of 12 tracks) combine sticking or bare hands with bass pedal, hi-hat, bells, gongs, bowed or scraped cymbals and frictional effects, creating interest through juxtaposed timbres and timbres. On vibraphone, the limited dynamic range enjoins an approach that counterpoises muted and open tones, high and low ranges, dense and sparse passages. Ironically, the strongest statements come during the final two movements, when Nordenos eschews motion for stillness.

For more information, visit originarts.com, strut-records.com and nottwo.com

For more information, visit std.de/2x. Label: Chick Corea & Steve Gadd (Concord-Stretch)

Chick Corea & Steve Gadd (Concord-Stretch)

Chick Corea, 76, is one of the fathers of jazz fusion. Master drummer Steve Gadd, 72, worked with superstars like Eric Clapton and Paul Simon but remains a jazzman at heart. Gadd and Corea first recorded 45 years ago as part of an iteration of the latter’s Return To Forever. Chinese Butterfly, a two-disc set, is their first joint venture.

The pair did not rest on their extensive laurels. They did not produce a “Best of…” album. Instead they recruited talented younger collaborators, tapped into uncharted territory and used their superb talents to create a stunning album. The members of the sextet are Steve Wilson (saxophones and flute), Lionel Loueke (guitar and vocals), Carlitos Del Puerto (bass) and Luisito Quintero (percussion).

CD 1 starts strong with “Chick’s Chums”, a catchy tune written by guitarist John McLaughlin for Corea’s 75th birthday. It has a 70s vibe and a great groove full of funk and Latin elements. “Serenity” is ethereal, sensual and meditative, a dreamy piano intro followed by structures that turn it into a Latin American-inspired rhythmical web—Loueke adds wordless vocals and Gadd and Quintero provide the pulsing beat. “A Spanish Song” starts with almost baroque magic and transforms into a spirited dance. Ephemerinal piano play develops into enchanting melodies, followed by speed and rhythmic precision. Corea is clearly the power center of the band.

CD 2 opens with a catchy new version of “Return to Forever” from 1971. Keyboard sounds flicker through the ether, a soft melody rises, a rhythm is found, followed by a breathtaking fireworks display of drums, bongos and rattles, funky bass and guitar runs and wild saxophone. Everything threatens to collapse, but again and again the delicate melody appears.

Chinese Butterfly offers five more excellent tunes. The listener will feel nostalgic for Corea’s music of the 70s yet enchanted by this new work.

For more information, visit concordmusicgroup.com. Corea is at Rose Theater Apr. 5th-7th. See Calendar.

For more information, visit firehouse12.com/label. This project is at Jazz Standard Apr. 3rd-4th. See Calendar.

What do you think, are you interested in learning more about Chick Corea and Steve Gadd’s Chinese Butterfly album? Would you be interested in attending a live performance featuring this album? Please feel free to share your thoughts in the comments below.
Esteemed saxophonist Joshua Redman joins forces with the game changing string quartet Brooklyn Rider, for an entirely unique convergence of their respective worlds.

"At his best, Joshua Redman seems a class apart for technique, invention and artistry."
— Evening Standard

"Brooklyn Rider is recreating the 300-year-old form of string quartet as a vital and creative 21st-century ensemble."
— NPR
Drummer Gene Jackson has appeared on over one hundred recordings, but Power Of Love with his Trio NuYorx is his remarkable debut as a leader. The rapport of the group gives the listener the impression they can do anything. Each musician brings inspired compositions to the date, which helps change up the character of the music from piece to piece.

The set opens with Cole Porter’s “I Love You”, a standard that got a lot of mileage when Jackson held the drum chair in Herbie Hancock’s trio. Interpretations of Monk often lead to an over-emphasis on the ‘angularity’ found in his music, but the group performs “Played Twice” and “Ugly Beauty” straightahead with its own personality. The collective is more angular on Jackson’s “Great River” and his Ahmad Jamal-inspired “Before Then” grooves hard. “A Peaceful Tremor” is a compelling ballad by bassist Carlo De Rosa that contrasts with his brisk “Neptune”. Pianist Gabriel Guerrero contributes three pieces: themes in “Land of the Free” invoke early 20th century piano music; “Lighting” is inviting with open harmony and an infectious groove over changing meters (the A section is in 9 [4+5] for three bars, then a bar of 8 [6+2] for the first ending; the first three bars repeat and then it’s straight into B, which consists of a three bar phrase of 6, 4, and 6 beats respectively, repeated four times); and the hypnotic groove of “Lapsos” closes the record.

While emphasizing the original creativity of this group, this reviewer is reminded of Tony Williams and his bands with Mulgrew Miller. Jackson, playful and always grooving, has a lighter touch; with relaxed urgency he is explosive when needed. De Rosa recalls Jay Anderson and Guerrero evokes classical piano tradition as well as Miller, Keith Jarrett and others. But, again, this brilliant ensemble has a sound all its own. The album is beautifully recorded and has a wonderful quality of being somehow familiar while engaging and surprising.

For more information, visit whirlwindrecordings.com. This project is at Small’s Apr. 5th. See Calendar.

Hope
Kevin Hays/Lionel Loueke (Newvelle)
by George Kanzler

When the two main instruments are acoustic piano (Kevin Hays) and acoustic guitar (Lionel Loueke), intimacy is a given. Empathy is a welcome addition, one fully on display here as the two musicians share a rapport so real and nuanced it could be called spiritual. And since Loueke hails from West Africa (the small country of Benin), he lives and breathes polyrhythms and contributes discreet hand and mouth percussion (tongue clicks, pops) to the music. That isn’t all; the complete aural landscape the pair create is also enhanced and completed by vocals, off-hand ones often delivered almost sotto voce, as if being tossed in conversationally like the dialogue in the background of a Robert Altman film.

The musical world created by these two is both intimate and wide. There are only eight individual pieces—three, plus an adaptation of a traditional Haitian song, by Hays, four from Loueke—yet they encompass a variety of rhythm and melodic soundscapes. They range from the highly, buoyantly rhythmic: two Hays tunes inspired by South American singer-musicians and Loueke’s clattering, sprightly “Aziza Dance” to the guitarist’s softly flowing, lullaby-like title track and Hays’ sumptuous closing ballad “All I Have”, with its grand, arching theme that manages to suggest the grandeur of a power ballad without the pomposity.

The musicians interact with telepathic grace, trading leads and solos in ways that make the music flow as an unsegmented whole. There is a subtle virtuosity in the quickstep piano lines and snappy choked guitar chords clinging to the rushing polyrhythms of “Violeta”, Hays’ dedication to Chilean singer Violeta Parra. And Loueke and Hays revel in the quirky 5/4 time and dancing rhythm undertow of the latter’s paean to Milton Nascimento. Hays sings the Haitian Creole lyrics of “Feuilles-O”, Loueke adding his own wordless vocals to his solo that gently fades out the track. The pair manage to mesh contrasting staccato and legato attacks fully on a pair of Loueke tunes, “Twins” and “Veuve Malienne”, which employ the full range of emotions these remarkably simpatico musicians embrace.

For more information, visit newvelle-records.com. Loueke is at Iridium Apr. 5th-6th. See Calendar.

NIGHTLY MUSIC UNPLUGGED!

JAZZ-OLOGY • APRIL 2
FRANGLAIS NYC GYPSY JA
MARK BERMAN BAND FRIDAY, APRIL 6
STAN CHOVNICK & FRIENDS • APRIL 20
MIKA: SAMBA JAZZ TRIO • APRIL 22
JIM SELF • APRIL 23
CHIRP SHELTON ENSEMBLE • APRIL 28

TUESDAY’S BIG BAND NIGHT
Wednesday’s Blues • Keith Gamble
Thursday Latin Night / Salsa Dancing
Saturday, April 14 Doo Wop Night
Freddy Velas & The Silvertones

Mark Berman Band
Friday, April 6
8:00 PM

Www.clubbonafide.com
Diversity of color and emotion inform every note in this exquisite and absorbing new recording by trumpeter Josh Lawrence. From loss he has created poems of difference and unity.

The album is divided into two “suites”. The first poems of difference and unity. Trumpeter Josh Lawrence. From loss he has created this exquisite and absorbing new recording by the theme) and elegant piano. “In the Black Square” songbook balladry with lovely use of solo trumpet (on opener while “Accompanied Contrast” suggests classic “Dominant Curve” is, possibly, more frenetic than the Gibson, punctuated by trumpet and saxophone. “Sometimes It Snows in April” is the final delicate statement of understanding the various events and forces in life, led by gorgeously intimate muted trumpet.

For more information, visit posi-tone.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Apr. 7th. See Calendar.

Tamuz Nissim was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, played classical piano as a young child and at 13 realized that her real musical talent was as a singer. She grew up loving jazz and was performing at concerts in Israel shortly after she began singing. Nissim moved to the Netherlands in 2007 to study music, performed at a variety of festivals in Europe and Israel and in 2015 moved to New York City. Echo of a Heartbeat is her third CD as a leader, following 2013’s The Music Stays In A Dream and last year’s Liquid Melodies.

Nissim has a lovely and alluring voice that is certainly easy to appreciate. She embraces the lyrics she interprets, scats quite well and swings at every tempo while not being afraid to stretch out. On Echo of a Heartbeat, she is joined by pianist James Weidman, bassist Harvie S, drummer Tony Jefferson and, on two songs, her longtime guitarist George Nazos. The nine songs include three of her originals, two bop standards for which she provided new lyrics (“Fried Bananas” and “Groovin’ High”), her vocalese for Charlie Chaplin’s “Smile”, two other jazz standards and transformation of Jim Croce’s “Time In A Bottle” into a jazz waltz.

This CD is full of welcome surprises. To name a few beyond the Croce song, Weidman quotes “Yes We Have No Bananas” as an intro to “Fried Bananas”, Duke Ellington’s “Just Squeeze Me” is given an unusual treatment partly taken out of tempo and “Smile” fares well as a bossa nova. Other highlights include the singer’s duet with bass on a scat-filled “Groovin’ High”, cheerful original “My World” and a conventional but hot version of “What A Little Moonlight Can Do”.

In an era when there are so many talented female jazz singers, Tamuz Nissim should not be overlooked.

For more information, visit tamuzmusic.com. This project is at Cornelia Street Underground Apr. 8th. See Calendar.
Based on the company he keeps, tenor saxophonist Walter Smith III can only be a badass. He was a member of Ambrose Akinmusire’s groundbreaking quintet and played on When the Heart Emerges Glistening, one of the most acclaimed jazz albums of the new millennium. He is part of Jason Moran’s epic multimedia Monk project In My Mind. He has also worked with Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah and Terence Blanchard. On Twio, his fifth recording under his own name, Smith continues to collaborate with people on the A-list. They are Eric Harland (drums) and either Harish Raghavan (from Akinmusire’s band) or Christian McBride (bass). Joshua Redman (tenor saxophone) guests on two numbers.

Because Smith has often been associated with leading-edge projects, two aspects of Twio are surprising. First is the program: eight standards and only one original. Second is the vibe. Smith’s tone is smooth as suede and he mostly tempers his aggression. But Twio does not sound conservative, because Smith’s creative process, even when he plays softly, tends toward extravagance. He overpowers every melody with his own content. It is exhilarating to be swept up in his momentum as ideas flood from his horn in free association. You may think of “I’ll Be Seeing You” as 80 years old, under the spell of “all the old familiar places” and no longer entirely relevant. Think again. Smith rephrases it, accelerates it and flows into new ramifications of Sammy Fair’s song. “The Peacocks” is a piece with its own intense atmosphere, yet even here Smith digresses freely, in fits and starts, only occasionally finding his way back to the hovering trills of Jimmy Smith. Another factor that keeps things au courant is the rhythm section. Raghavan and Harland rarely keep time. They fragment and scatter it. McBride’s more straightforward power is felt like an underground fire. As for Redman, in keeping with the album’s vibe and ambience, he stays within himself. Ferde Grofé’s “Sun Prelude I” (there are three sprinkled around the album) is a gentle, soft-spoken welcome. The former feels almost like a free-form piano excursion while the latter is a gentle blues of the Bill Evans/Brad Mehldau school.

The album ends with two “bonus tracks” versions of Cuban singer-songwriter Marta Valdes’ “Llorá” and Elton John’s “Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters”. The former feels almost like a free-form piano excursion while the latter is a gentle blues of the Bill Evans/Brad Mehldau school.

For more information, visit manuelvalera.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Apr. 11th. See Calendar.
Various collective groups have formed in modern jazz history, typically lasting for an album or two. One of the challenges is allowing equal input from members used to leading their respective bands and performing their own originals. Since its conception in 2004, the SFJAZZ Collective has managed to walk this tightrope and the ensemble has drawn appreciative audiences during their brief annual concert schedule. Now with their own dedicated venue, they are able to record live over several days in one familiar place. The 2016 series focuses on the post-1957 repertoire of Miles Davis. Each member arranged a piece for the band and there are more than a few surprises.

Alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón, the sole remaining charter member, reshapes “Nardis” into a firestorm with a number of sudden tempo changes and Middle Eastern-flavored interludes. Bassist Matt Penman’s unique arrangement of “Milestones” has a reggae groove in support of the soloists and a melody hidden until well into the performance. The inclusion of Marcus Miller’s “Tutu” may be controversial for some, as the bassist’s over-reliance on long vamps and heavily overdubbed works written during Davis’ Warner years have not stood the test of time, but trombonist Robin Eubanks’ fresh approach reveals its possibilities in a stunning adaptation.

The second CD features original music, though these selections aren’t as compelling as the works on the first disc, as several of them take awhile to get going with overly long introductions. Penman’s humorous “Your Turn” initially puts the focus on the brass and horns sans rhythm section and they rise to the challenge of his tricky rhythm. Warren Wolf’s leisurely “In The Heat Of The Night” has a bluesy air with Sean Jones’ weary trumpet and the composer’s spacious vibraphone. The engaging Latin rhythm of pianist Edward Simon’s “Feel The Groove” is a springboard for exciting interplay between the brass and reeds.

For more information, visit sfjazz.org. This project is at Jazz Standard Apr. 12th-15th. See Calendar.

Alto saxophonist Caroline Davis’ new release has the air of a Wayne Shorter album circa 1965. That’s not just because the only cover is a Shorter composition—“Penelope”, originally recorded in 1965 but released on El Cetera in 1980. It’s that this group of Marquis Hill (trumpet), Julian Shore (keyboards), Tamir Shmerling (bass) and Jay Sawyer (drums) exudes a windy, mysterious air in line with the postbop tradition extending from the middle of the 20th century. (Rogério Boccato, percussion, and Benjamin Hoffman, organ, join in on two tracks each.)

The music goes beyond that, of course. It’s possible to hear Steve Coleman in the fast, funky polyrhythms—7 laid over 4, for instance, on “Air” —or Herbie Hancock in the interplay between electric keyboard and bass guitar on opener “Footloose and Fancy Free”. There’s a lot to take in, but Davis (born in Singapore, cutting her teeth in Chicago and now in New York) collates it all with a sensitive ear. Her tunes are by turns plangent, contemplative and ethereal. Her dry tone pushes through, both on the kinetic tracks (“Ocean Motion”, “Dionysian”) and the slower, heavier ones (“Loss”, “Constructs”).

The album is so named because when Davis moved to New York in 2013, she struggled to adapt to the ebb and flow of excitement and disappointment that is life in The Big Apple. Around this time as well, she found out that her father had heart arrhythmia, which led her to do in-depth research on the physical vagaries of the human heart (Davis holds a PhD in music cognition from Northwestern University). There is not much audible to suggest influence from the palpitations of that organ, apart from undulating organ at the beginning of one song and that each track is in a particular meter, in keeping with the idea that the heart is a metronome. But there is no doubt that this album comes straight from the heart.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project is at The Jazz Gallery Apr. 13th. See Calendar.
Pianist/singer Dawn Clement adapts to any musical situation in which she finds herself. On her latest effort she carves out attentive improvisational spaces for a range of high-profile colleagues, content in leading and following in equal measure across an eclectic terrain of 10 tunes. Clement’s welcoming spirit is more alive than ever, as demonstrated by two dialogues with Julian Priester. “Blues for Wayne” (a Clement original) finds its composer and the legendary trombonist engaged in serious play. Clement swings with a willingness to go wherever the journey may lead, her fingers always two steps ahead. “Improvisation #3”, by contrast, comes across mournfully and makes artful use of silence. Vocalist Johanye Kendrick joins on “I Think of You” and Clement’s own “Memory”. The latter’s pathos leads into some meaty improvisation while the former’s quest is found. Whether gilding the edges of a theme or adlibbing new directions, Taylor navigates every wave by keeping the North Star of Clement’s companionship in sight at all times. The leader’s deepest dives, however, are with drummer Matt Wilson. In both Thelonious Monk’s “Bemsha Swing” and the concluding “Stay Awake”, Wilson’s cymbals shine like sunset, thus emphasizing darker shades within. Two stand-alones round out the set. “My Ideal” is a heartfelt duet with bassist Michael Glynn while “In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning” finds Clement alone. Her voice resonates poignantly, a beacon for listeners at a time when such equalities of exchange and waste-not-want-not philosophy are all too rare.

For more information, visit originarts.com. Clement is at Baruch Performing Arts Center Apr. 13th with Jane Ira Bloom. See Calendar.

That drummer Andrew Drury calls his band Content Provider may be a wry commentary on the multivalent role of today’s musician, those attempting to provide stimulation in an already over-stimulated world, all with heady expectations of diminishing returns. Or it was simply better than the Andrew Drury Quartet. The group’s debut in 2015 was the second release on Drury’s Different Track Recordings and for its follow-up, the drummer has expanded upon the palette by having Briggan Krauss play guitar in addition to his customary alto saxophone, Ingrid Laubrock complementing her soprano and tenor saxophone arsenal with autoharp and guitarist Brandon Seabrook bringing along his banjo. These are merely flourishes, as Drury’s concept of jittery compositions layered by nearly bipolar contributions from his band has not changed. The jazz cliché is that composers write for their instrumentalists; Drury could not have found three more individual players, even within the rich NYC scene, and gives them five lengthy pieces in which to ply their iconoclastic trade. Within each composition there are varied elements and disparate group and individual textures. The opening “Diving into the Wreck” sounds just like its title and there is some subversive honky-tonk to “The Country Between Us”. More important though is the architectural bent of the album in its entirety. The latter two tunes in their wild abstraction lead into the shortest song, “Cassandra”, which stretches out the space and becomes the most ethereal number, like an alien palate cleanser. And out of this valley come two more long pieces, “Ask Why” and “I’m Doing My Job, Are You Doing Yours?”, which are the mirror images of the first two compositions in that they are more form-dependent. The cohesion of the band is at its highest here, made more effective by the path taken to arrive.

For more information, visit andrewdrury.bandcamp.com. This project is at Greenwich House Music School Apr. 13th. See Calendar.

"...a stunning and highly enjoyable seven-song suite...This is music that should be heard - like the best work of the afore-mentioned composers and arrangers (Ellington, Brockmeyer, Schneider), the music builds off the past but is clearly of its day." Richard B Kamins

"A unique album in the non-traditional style, "Barefoot Dances and Other Visions," delivers on many fronts with a host of compositions that challenges the listener." Ed Blanco - WDNA/Allaboutjazz.com

"Jim McNeely is a true composer. He doesn't string together riffs or rehash tired licks, but produces works for jazz ensembles that are highly original and technically sophisticated." - David Franklin

NOW AVAILABLE ON Amazon, iTunes and CD Baby www.PlanetArts.org

This project has been supported by a generous grant from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music
As classically trained musicians embraced the NYC downtown in the ‘80s-90s, technique and form frequently trumped melody and passion. Saxophonist Patrick Zimmerli’s Shores Against Silence, recorded in 1992 (Songlines, 2016), bucked that trend, using contemporary classical techniques without sacrificing the music’s soul. Clockworks evokes this earlier work with a greater deference to the relationship between structure and freedom and regard for the listening experience.

Pianist Ethan Iverson, a longtime Zimmerli collaborator, works perfectly to maintain compositional integrity and match the composer’s more asynchronous style. Zimmerli’s precise shifting rhythms, as on “Boogaloo of the Polyrhythmic Palindrome” and elsewhere, are reminiscent of Frank Zappa’s more stylistically separate but interrelated compositions that define the innards of Zimmerli’s musical mechanism. Save for “The Center of the Clock”, which finds a more mature Zimmerli using his early work as a touchstone while eloquently weaving a quarter-century of acumen into an elegantly structured, expressive suite.

For more information, visit songlines.com. This project is at Merkin Concert Hall Apr. 14th. See Calendar.

Once in a while, an album shows an unexpected influence. For this disc, led by Canadian tenor saxophonist Nachoff, it’s soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy, who put out a handful of excellent saxophone-bass-drums albums featuring constant, active interplay and expressing episodic compositional thinking.

Those two things are prominent on Ethereal Trio. Nachoff, of course, sounds vastly different than Lacy—he’s part of the current school of tenor players who combine a warm sound with a slight quiver that comes off as a feeling of self-consciousness. Eras and generations change and whereas in the ‘60s Coltrane would use his inner life to fuel an extroverted fire, many of today’s players maintain a precarious balance at the edge of solipsism.

And that is the one real flaw on this otherwise strong recording. The opening track, “Clairvoyant Jest”, grabs the listener with force. Nachoff presents his compositional idea and then runs through it with a muscular focus. Meanwhile bassist Mark Helias and drummer Dan Weiss erect one responsive, imaginative rhythmic structure on top of another. Nachoff has a touch of David Murray’s articulation and approach to rhythm, individual attacks and little bursts of notes carrying surprise. There are tracks like “Gravitas”, where Nachoff turns inward, brings the rhythm section with him and the energy dissipates. The issue is not playing quietly and slowly, it’s playing so privately with him and the energy dissipates. The issue is not playing quietly and slowly, it’s playing so privately with him and the energy dissipates. The issue is not...
There were few bands in the mid-'70s more exciting than bassist Charles Mingus’ quintet with Jack Walrath (trumpet), George Adams (tenor saxophone), Don Pullen (piano) and longtime collaborator Dannie Richmond (drums). This group released two stunning studio albums for Atlantic: Changes One and Changes Two, both recorded in December 1974. In 1975, they appeared at the Montreux Jazz Festival, where this recording was made (initially released as a DVD).

The excitement of hearing this group playing that material live after substantial road work is mitigated by some low-fidelity sonics and a less than stellar performance, although there are some wonderful highlights, especially by Walrath and Pullen, who make the most of the opportunity to stretch out. The disc begins with Adams’ “Devil Blues”, opening with a wicked Mingus a cappella solo performed almost entirely in thumb position. Unfortunately, the bass sound is horribly over-amplified and quite sloppy. Adams is too far off mic, reducing the enjoyment of his impassioned performance. Walrath and Pullen take the tune to a much higher level. “Free Cell Block F” comes off as a wonderfully layered, prototypical Mingus postbop celebration, despite the ominous title. Adams begins with screaming whinnies and wild altissimo in his ebullient fashion and Pullen continues with flying fingers and the occasional fist and forearm. Richmond almost steals the show with a brilliant exposition. The magnum opus of the session is definitely the 33-minute version of “Sue’s Changes”, perhaps the one instance where the inherent looseness and excitement of the band manages to transcend the poor audio quality. Each band member gets several moments to themselves, beginning with Walrath’s incredibly tasty solo, adding fire and passion to the rhythm section. Pullen combines brutal and jagged rhythms with blistering articulation that references both Cecil Taylor and John Coltrane. Stabinsky displays a virtuosic mastery of a range of techniques on an incredible variety of instruments, from the piri to the gongs. Usually on the Ellington cuts, he is joined by Adams and Pullen, the three of them trading solos, and taking the lead on the affectionate rendition of the Ellington cut “Hollow Goose”, which may or may not have been titled after the town of the same name. Adams remains a driving force, and as a consequence this may be one of the most deconstruction in the way beloved of his predecessors.

But there is also more space for Elliott to expose his devil-may-care attitude has gone. But though the subversion may be less obvious, it nonetheless endures. As Elliott’s writing eschews solos unless for structural reasons, Stabinsky takes the limelight for much of the set, a feat he pulls off in entertaining style. But there is also more space for Elliott to expose his chops, reveling in melodic counterpoint with bow in hand on the affectionate rendition of the Ellington cut and taking the lead on minor key waltz “Plum Run”. Stabinsky displays a virtuosic mastery of a range of hardbop tropes, taking to the heart of the instruction to play as many notes as possible at the start of the slow blues “Orangeville”. But he doesn’t default to free jazz deconstruction in the way beloved of his predecessors and as a consequence this may be one of the most accessible albums under the MOPDíK banner.

For more information, visit hotcuprecords.com. This project is at Greenwich House Music School Apr. 21st. See Calendar.

The Unknown
Dave Liebman/Tatsuya Nakatani/Adam Rudolph
(RareNoise)
Settings For Three
No Fast Food (Corner Store Jazz)
by Robert Iannapollo

Saxophonist Dave Liebman has spent the past 50 years of his career defying categorization. He’s referred to as a fusion player, neo-classicist, neo-bopper, avant-gardist, academic and probably a few other terms. Truth is, he is all of these things and he does all of them well. Perhaps the best term would be intrepid musical explorer. He’s a commanding leader and magnum group collaborator.

The Unknown is an unusual session. Liebman, multi-instrumentalist Adam Rudolph and percussionist Tatsuya Nakatani had all played with each other at various points but it was Rudolph who proposed this second time around, knowing they might have something to say as a trio. He was correct. The two percussionists are easy to distinguish: Rudolph focuses mainly on a hand-drum set, skewing the music toward America, while Nakatani focuses on gongs and metallic percussion, frequently using gongs, bowls and minimal percussion toward an outer dimension. When Rudolph plays electronics and Nakatani bows his gongs, it’s difficult to tell which is the electronic instrument. Liebman responds by switching instruments, including his beloved wooden flutes. “Present Time” is an almost perfect distillation of what this trio does. Starting with a robust, a cappella Liebman on tenor saxophone, Rudolph soon falls in with an omni-directional conga rhythm. Nakatani adds roughly bowed cymbals, bringing an alien element that meshes perfectly with the path. The most unusual track, “The Turning”, finds Liebman playing a mournful melody on piri (a Korean double reed instrument), accompanied by Rudolph playing a figure on sintir (Gnawan bass lute) and Nakatani rumbling softly in the background. It’s highly effective. The recording has a flow with a beginning and end. The Unknown stands out in the discography of all three of these players.

Slightly more familiar turf is found in No Fast Food. Drummer Phil Haynes formed the group but this is a trio of equals. Settings For Three is the third release by the band, following the superb two-disc set In Concert. This studio date finds the trio diving into eight Haynes compositions. Liebman (tenor, soprano and wood flute) rides above the formidable rhythm team of bassist Drew Gress and Haynes. They’ve been playing together for over 30 years but the music is anything but predictable. “String Theory” is scored for wood flute and arco bass, an unusual and effective combination. “El-Smoke” is a tribute to Haynes’ mentor Paul Smoker first found on the 1987 joint album; all three have played with Smoker so one could consider this a collective tribute. “Joy”, a beautiful ballad with Liebman on soprano, opens into a free duet with Haynes, an excellent demonstration of improvisational elasticity. While Settings For Three may be more familiar terrain, it is no less for that. And both discs further illuminate the vast expanse of Liebman’s musical universe.

For more information, visit rarenoiserecords.com and cornerstorejazz.com. Liebman is at Mezzrow Apr. 26th with Bobby Avey. See Calendar.

Paint
Mostly Other People Do The Killing (Hot Cup)
by John Sharpe

Having expanded in size to a seven-piece for Loafers Hollow, Mostly Other People Do The Killing veers in the opposite direction by contracting to the trio format for Paint, the band’s 13th release overall. Bassist Moppa Elliott remains at the helm, contributing all the originals named after small Pennsylvania towns, alongside long-standing drummer Kevin Shea and more recent addition pianist Ron Stabinsky. The ringer this time out is a cover of Duke Ellington’s “Blue Goose”, which may or may not have been titled after the town of the same name.

In spite of the changes, Elliott retains his talent for catchy tunes peppered with unlikely juxtapositions, tied up in witty arrangements with more than a touch of anarchy. Without the likes of Peter Evans and Jon Irabagon on board you might worry that some of the devil-may-care attitude has gone. But though the subversion may be less obvious, it nonetheless endures. Just listen to Shea’s merriweather outbursts behind the theme of the opening “Yellow House” for reassurance. On each piece thereafter, similar passages abound where someone stretches out in places where you would least expect while the others maintain the thread of melody or meter.

As Elliott’s writing eschews solos unless for structural reasons, Stabinsky takes the limelight for much of the set, a feat he pulls off in entertaining style. But there is also more space for Elliott to expose his chops, reveling in melodic counterpoint with bow in hand on the affectionate rendition of the Ellington cut and taking the lead on minor key waltz “Plum Run”. Stabinsky displays a virtuosic mastery of a range of hardbop tropes, taking to the heart of the instruction to play as many notes as possible at the start of the slow blues “Orangeville”. But he doesn’t default to free jazz deconstruction in the way beloved of his predecessors and as a consequence this may be one of the most accessible albums under the MOPDíK banner.
German guitarist Volker Kriegel is a quintessential MPS artist: relatively unknown at the time, he was given an early chance to exhibit the full range of his creativity. 1971’s aptly titled Spectrum can be called an early attempt at world music. It is however grounded in the blues tradition, not standard fare for a young guitar player from then-West Germany. The album kicks off with sitar-like guitar underlined by percussion in the blues-imbued “Zoom”, featuring a fluid solo by Kriegel supported by Peter Trunk’s bass and John Taylor’s solid electric piano. “So Long For Now” is an uptempo ballad built on the close interaction between bass and Coes See’s drums along with very melodic yet intricate solos by Kriegel and Taylor. “More About D” is suspenseful, evolving from alternating tempos and themes. This is followed by “Suspicious Child”, an early Americana-like ballad; “Instant Judgment”, a fast-paced walk into jazz-rock territory; and “Ach Kina”, a lovely ballad executed in trio with dubbed guitars dialoguing with exquisite basslines. The well-rounded program is completed by “String Revisited”, introduced by a guitar/cello conversation, then by Trunk’s cello solo followed by Taylor’s somewhat restrained solo and Kriegel’s bluesy statement.

Englishman Taylor’s Decipiter (also 1971) was his second outing as a leader and finds him shifting from electric to grand piano. This trio album with countrymen bassist Chris Laurence and drummer Tony Levin reveals maturity as a composer, clearly indicating further evolution into one of the most accomplished pianists in modern jazz. Taylor’s originals are quite varied: Chick Corea’s influence is evident through sharp attacks and shifting tempos, providing unique dynamics within an unwavering melodic approach. Bill Evans’ legacy is also present and would become increasingly evident in Taylor’s subsequent development. The music is scintillating thanks to Laurence and Levin’s contributions. All of this is showcased in the opening “Decipher/Wait For Me” and “White Magic”, which closes the album, the trio swinging hard and playing as a very tight unit. In between these two compositions, “Speak To Me” starts as a slow waltz but is also characterized by shifting tempos and a thoughtful bass solo, whereas “Leaping” ventures into a freer territory. The lovely ballad “Song for a Child” rounds out the program. A forgotten album, whose reissue was way overdue.

By 1973’s Soaring, American trumpeter Don Ellis’ music had developed into an unique take on traditional big band swing infused with electronic instruments, strings and Eastern influences. Opening track “Whiplash”, with its exciting call and response between trumpets and strings, reflects his interest in movie soundtracks, although the piece had to wait more than 40 years to be featured in an Academy Award-winning picture. Ellis’ eclecticism further emerges in Milcho Leviev’s Bulgarian-inspired “Sladka Pitka”, sustained by a jazz-rock bass riff and Ellis’ electronic trumpet intervention, ending in an ethereal coda. The music bends toward Spain with “The Devil” and back with “Go Back Home” to what could have been a typical 70s movie score featuring Vince Denham’s dynamic saxophone and Ellis himself at the drums – the last time he did so according to the liner notes. Two ballads, “Maria” and “Nicole”, follow, the former featuring a string section and latter Ellis’ intimate trumpet – it may be time to reassess his contribution to the instrument – along with Leviev’s tasteful piano. Finally, in “Invincible”, Denham takes the spotlight once again, strings underlining the overall sadness of the melody and a solo until Ellis kicks in prior to landing back on the main theme. The band is superb in handling the challenging material. This was sadly one of the last projects Ellis had the opportunity to complete prior to his untimely passing. Kudos to MPS for making this music available once again.

For more information, visit mps-music.com
“You start from where you are. You’ll get to the rest in time.” This is a quote from trumpeter Bill Dixon regarding young musicians less steeped in the prehistory of modern jazz. Many of us who have been exposed to documents of this music in the postwar era, let alone new millennial developments, may not be so keyed into the earlier forms in New Orleans and Chicago, where cornet player Joseph “King” Oliver, who died 80 years ago this month, plied his trade in the 1910s, ’20s and ’30s. Sure, New Orleans polyphony is mentioned as the blueprint for works like Ornette Coleman’s Free Jazz but that music is tonally and rhythmically different, even if the spirit of the blues is a common denominator.

Trumpeter and cornet player Ted Daniel, who emerged in the Loft Scene during the late ’60s-early ’70s, was reminded of Oliver in 2009, apparently after buying a King Oliver Creole Jazz Band 78 while on tour, and began arranging the cornet player’s music for his International Brass and Membrane Corps. The IBMC has been a going concern since 2004 but Zulu’s Ball is their first recording and joins Daniel with tuba player Joe Daley, violinist Charles Burnham, guitarist Marvin Sewell and drummer Newman Taylor Baker. The quintet works through seven tunes by or associated with Oliver, including both full band and duet takes of “Riverside Blues”. While the music is unflinchingly modern, with Daniel’s effusive smears and compressed gulps cutting swaths across the charged economy of shuffling, snappy rhythms, there’s a timeworn quality to the homage. The steel guitar-cornet duet that makes up the closing “Riverside Blues”, a loose paean to the version with Jelly Roll Morton, emphasizes the crackle of the brusque instrument Daniel has chosen, fleet and light above the twang of strings as they engage in a detailed and floral dance. The opening ensemble version is rousing and, with the gutsy line of tuba and guitar established, takes in a dose of rockabilly with its jubilant swing. The group is remarkably balanced, cornet and violin operating in an upper and upper-middle range while guitar and tuba stairstep a bit lower and all are framed by the malleability of a modern jazz drumkit. Baker is able to move between second line drumming, stirring with an unflagging press roll and free or loose modern time—key to the IBMC’s atemporal versatility.

It’s especially nice when a ‘home girl’ makes good. Alto saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin epitomizes local:

For more information, contact theodore_56@msn.com

Raised in Washington Heights, a graduate of Eleanor Roosevelt Junior High School 143, Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School and The New School’s jazz program, she has supported herself since 14 with merengue, R&B and jazz gigs. Rise Up is her third project as a leader, a role she fills naturally, delegating chores to the 22 musicians listed as collaborators. Some of them are jacks-of-all-trades, handling a variety of instruments in the studio; others, notably vocalist China Moses and trumpeter Maurice Brown, add a distinctive touch.

Less of a jazz-loaded experiment than a hard-partying foray with a serious undertone, the album is notable for catchy themes, highly engaged arrangements, strong guest vocalists and spoken word artists and an intelligently diverse repertoire, ranging from electro-metallica and slo-jam funk or pop to Prince to industrial reggae, romping soca and old-school stride blues. Think: Sly and the Family Stone, Maceo Parker, Earth, Wind & Fire and Headhunters-era Herbie Hancock—all refried for a post-millennial New Year’s Eve send-up.

However, a more serious implication, one of survivorship and self-empowerment, is evident in the opening (title) track’s exhortation to live one’s dream, not one’s fear and in its closing quote from Grandmaster Flash’s “The Message”. And Benjamin? She’s the eye, the calm at the center of the storming, telling tales in tones both sweet and sour, smooth or rough, just as the occasion requires. On “Flashback”, “Lonely” and “Cornbread” she’s warm and wistful; on “Little Children” she echoes the gritty vocals with obbligatos; and on “Takeback” she builds and sustains an emotional plateau, which, even in its most climactic moments, suggests she is still holding something in reserve.

For more information, visit ropeadope.com. This project is at Ginny’s Supper Club Apr. 14th. See Calendar.
This is the fourth album by Berklee-trained pianist Mamiko Watanabe. She digs Latin music and her trio is completed by a Panamanian bassist (Santi Debriano) and Cuban drummer (Francisco Mela). Those are the bare facts, but they don’t really convey what’s in the grooves of Flying Without Wings. Piano trio albums rarely hit the charts these days, as they did when Erroll Garner’s ‘Concert by the Sea’ (a gold record!) and Oscar Peterson’s ‘Night Train’ were current. But this recording could stand in that company, if Americans grew big ears. Critics have evoked Bill Evans and early Herbie Hancock; also audible is Art Tatum (and, by extension, Peterson) in her approach. Monk is in the mix and the swirling “Palette” shows the master’s influence.

Debriano is a big reason the album succeeds as it does. He’s with Watanabe all the way and has an especially effective solo on “Different Angles”. Mela is down in the mix and not as much of a presence. To be fair, the leader’s tricky music is tough on drummers—pivoting on ideas so quickly it leaves skid marks. Not many of her tunes settle into easy grooves. “It Will Be” kicks off proceedings and is bright, punchy and full of start-stops. Japanese koto music is in there, somewhere, as a deep influence. A standout is the original “Waterfall”, which begins with growling bass, then changes directions when Watanabe enters with a typically twisty melody. She plays fast, but articulates every note. Debriano takes out his bow and Watanabe supports him firmly as the intensity builds.

Watanabe’s approach to standards—“Caravan”, “Like Someone in Love”—is equally satisfying. The latter is played up tempo, but retaining the song’s inherent lyricism and it finally gives Mela a chance to shine. The former is taken solo and Watanabe really explores the structure of the song, taking chances like mad and never settling into straightforward swing. “Letter” is also solo and has the gospel overtones that comes from Watanabe’s regular church gigs. For more information, visit mamikowatanabe.com. Watanabe is at Jazz at Kitano Apr. 12th. See Calendar.

Burton Greene (Improvising Beings)
by Mark Keresman

Born in Chicago in 1937, pianist Burton Greene was one of the first generation of musicians making serious waves in New York’s New Thing jazz scene. Greene resides mostly in the Netherlands now, Europe proving more receptive to his music. Compendium collects 2016-17 Amsterdam performances in trio, duo and solo settings.

Greene has mellowed somewhat over the years. Take, for example, “Believe in Love” (co-written with Silke Röllig), jaunty to the point (almost) of carefree, Greene playing bright, stride-like phrases with the quirky angularity of Thelonious Monk (whose “Monk’s Dream” is performed herein) while bassist Stephan Raidl and drummer Roberto Halififi provide a slightly fractured but certain swing. Enrico Pieranunzi’s “Don’t Forget the Poet” begins as a lovely pensive ballad with a few judicious dissonant notes before elegantly segueing into a genteel, upbeat swinger. Herbert de Jonge’s “Mirjam” is a free-ish Burton/Raidl duet in which the latter coaxes un-bass-like sounds (whooshes, buzzes, sawing, moans) from his instrument while Greene gets rhapsodic, playing single notes that aggressively ring with the presence of grand church bells; the contrast is engrossing, as if hearing two sides of a story. “New Music 1” is solo piano wherein Greene lures us in with playing that seems tentative but is driven by an inner logic. “Buddy’s Bitonal Blues” is the trio of Greene, Halififi, and flutist Tilo Baumheier; it shares more Monk influence but evolves into a march where Baumheier duets/duels with Halififi. “Little Song Revisited” is solo Greene, contrasting morning light and restless dark.

Greene has worked aspects of a free approach into a more conventional presentation. He has a distinctive style, spare without being austere, cerebral with harmoniousness, a touch of old-school warmth. Compendium is a fine presentation of his still-evolving artistry.

For more information, visit improvising-beings.com. Greene is at Scholes Street Studio Apr. 2nd and First Unitarian Church Apr. 5th with Patty Waters. See Calendar.

CD RELEASE CONCERT: APRIL 21 7PM THE CUTTING ROOM DAN PUGACH NONET “PLUS ONE” DAN PUGACH - DRUMS NICOLE ZURAITIS - VOICE | INGRID JENSEN - TRUMPET MIKE PAHDE - TENOR/ALTO SAX | JEREMY POWELL - TRUMPET | ANDREW GOULD - ALTO/SOPH. FLUTE | Jami Shmerling - BASS | TAMI R - BASS |ingRID JENSEN - TRUMPET

“I CAN’T GUSH ENOUGH ABOUT THE JOYFUL ENERGY THAT DAN AND HIS NONET EXPRESS IN THE MOST OPEN OF WAY. DAN’S MUSIC IS THOUGHTFUL, EXCITING AND IMMENSELY ENGAGING.” —INGRID JENSEN

“HIS MASTERY OF THE MUSIC FROM THE SUBTLE INNER WORKINGS OF HIS HORN ORCHESTRATIONS TO HIS LARGE MUSICAL STATEMENTS PUTS DAN IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN.” —ALAN FERRER

APRIL 2018 27 THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | APRIL 2018 27
In pop culture, woodwind player Dick Oatts (who turns 65 on Apr. 2nd) is best known for contributions to ‘90s pop-jazz group Film & the BBs and one of the themes from the daytime soap opera All My Children. He has also backed Luther Vandross, Everything But the Girl and other pop and R&B stars along the way but the Des Moines native, who moved to New York in 1977, has devoted most of his career to straightahead jazz and is known for his many years as lead alto saxophonist in the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

This solid bop outing finds Oatts strictly on alto, leading a quintet of trumpeter Joe Magnarelli, pianist Anthony Wonsey, bassist Ugonna Okegwo and drummer Chris Smith. The leader sticks to his own material except for the title track, a vibrant performance of one of Cole Porter’s lesser-known songs. Use Your Imagination ranges from exuberant to introspective: Oatts favors a funky groove on “Do Da Day”, “Yesteryear” and Latin-tinged “Como Uno”; “Midwest Mideast” has more in common with Miles Davis’ second great quintet; Oatts is moody on “Speaking Relative” and ballad “Loss of You”.

Oatts and Magnarelli blend together perfectly in the frontline, the former swinging with subtlety and the latter in the lineage of Lee Morgan and Freddie Hubbard, with Wonsey, Okegwo and Smith especially cohesive. Wonsey’s melodic pianism serves the quintet well on both the uptempo selections and moodier ones. Oatts has been recording for SteepleChase since the ‘90s. Those albums have been solid mainstream efforts. Use Your Imagination is no exception.

For more information, visit steepchase.dk. Oatts is at Blue Note Apr. 9th with the Purchase Jazz Orchestra, The Django at the Roxy Apr. 24th with Dom Salvador and Village Vanguard Mondays with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. See Calendar and Regular Engagements.

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11 years seems ages for a band to work together, but the days, months and years have borne beautiful fruit in this new recording by the inventively evolved bassist Mark Zaleski. This is a band—whose members hail from various eras from the 30-something’s life and musical education—who sense the needs of each other due to the incisive talents of the individuals and intelligently crafted music Zaleski has written and arranged for them. And, in addition to everything else he’s accomplished here, Zaleski pulls off the feat of playing both saxophone (alto and soprano) and bass on this recording.

“Mark in the Park” is, essentially, the band’s theme song, displaying swing, groove, modern jazz, a funky backbeat and more. Zaleski opens the soloing passionately over his own basslines, going from a whisper to a scream and back, while younger brother Glenn Zaleski’s piano lead shows fluent dexterity in the moment. A smart surprise is the funky arrangement of Thelonious Monk’s “Epistrophy”. The pulse is reimagined and the guitar of Mark Cocheo (who met the leader at New England Conservatory) is ever so danceable, yet the appeal of the original tune shines through the groove. The same can be said of the slow beat of Charlie Parker’s “Big Foot”, as bass throbs in quiet movement. “Cerina” opens with a potent glimpse into the chemistry between two truly simpatico musicians. Zaleski and tenor saxophonist Jon Bean (another connection from New England Conservatory) begin in an a cappella duet, leading into a zesty rhythmic section from the rest of the band over which the pair continue in a composed dialogue of the theme. Later we get an appealing, soft guitar interlude. All is held together thanks to the leader and powerful yet refined drumming of Oscar Suchenek (whom Zaleski met in their shared duties as part of Either/Orchestra).

This sophomore recording heartily rewards the ten-year wait.

For more information, visit markzaleskimusic.com. This project is at Smalls Apr. 14th. See Calendar.

Theo Hill began playing the piano 30 years ago when he was 5, studied jazz piano with Lee Shaw at 12 and was playing in clubs at 16. After college, he moved to New York, where he has been a part of the jazz scene since 2004. Along the way Hill has worked with such notables as Jeff “Tain” Watts, Charles Tolliver, Wallace Roney, Jeremy Pelt, Bobby Watson, T.S. Monk, JD Allen, Willie Jones III, Chico Freeman and the Mingus Big Band. He has also recorded with many of those names plus Eddie Henderson, Nicholas Payton, Dave Liebman and Vincent Herring. In 2015 Hill released his first album, Live at Smalls. Promethean is his follow-up.

From the start of this trio outing with bassist Yasushi Nakamura and drummer Mark Whitfield, Jr., it is obvious that McCoy Tyner has made a major impact on Hill’s style along with Mulgrew Miller and early Herbie Hancock. Hill’s percussive playing includes an occasionally thunderous left hand, an intensity felt even during the quieter pieces, and consistent enthusiasm.

Promethean features mostly lesser-known songs by top jazz artists: a song apiece by Hancock, Bobby Timmons, Victor Lewis, Duke Pearson, Hale Smith and Chick Corea with two from Kenny Kirkland and Tony Williams and an original from the leader. The program begins with the only standard, Timmons’ “This Here”, which is actually closer to Miller’s version with Williams than the author’s famous recording with Cannonball Adderley. Lewis’ “Hey, It’s Me You’re Talking To” is a bit catchy and almost sounds like an early Hancock piece, leading logically into Hancock’s “Finger Painting”, which is given a melodic and tasteful treatment. Other highlights include a somber rendition of Williams’ “Pee Wee”, Hill’s up-tempo modal original “The Phoenix”, an exciting and somewhat intense version of Corea’s “Litha” and Hill’s solo piano version of Kirkland’s ballad “Chance”. Nakamura and Whitfield are excellent in mostly supporting roles, providing stimulating accompaniment throughout this fine set of modern mainstream piano.

For more information, visit posi-tone.com. Hill is at Smalls Apr. 6th with Jay Rodriguez, Dizzy’s Club Apr. 10th-14th as a leader and Jazz Standard Apr. 21st with Mingus Big Band and Apr. 28th as a leader. See Calendar.
Saxophonist Roxy Coss released a self-titled debut album in 2010, but seems to be having her moment now. After two albums with trumpeter Jeremy Pelt (2013’s *Water and Earth* and 2014’s *Face Forward, Jeremy*, both on HighNote), she signed with Origin for 2016’s *Restless Idealism*, on which Pelt guested. The following year, she joined the Post-Tone roster.

Her label debut, 2017’s *Chasing the Unicorn*, is a quintet outing with pianist Glenn Zaleski, guitarist Alex Wintz, bassist Rich Rosato and drummer Jimmy MacBride. Together, they interpret tunes like Joe Henderson’s “A Shade of Jade”, The Beatles’ “Oh! Darling”, Wayne Shorter’s “Virgo”, Lionel Loueke’s “Benny’s Tune” and Willie Nelson’s “Crazy”, along with a half-dozen Coss originals. On the album-opening title track, she demonstrates a willingness to play around with the studio, overdubbing multiple saxophone lines in order to harmonize with herself in a fluid and lyrical manner. She switches to bass clarinet for the Shorter tune, diving into a mellow zone at the bottom of the instrument’s range as the rhythm section sways gently behind her. And her tenor playing on album-closing “Crazy”, with sharply strummed guitar as an equally dominant voice, is relaxed and melody-minded, with a deep blues feel.

*The Future is Female* is different…sort of. The band is mostly the same, except that Miki Yamanaka has taken over the piano spot and Lucas Pino contributes bass clarinet to one track. But the music is all original this time and the presentation is explicitly feminist, verging on woman-warrior. On the cover, Coss stands at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge at night, wearing an outfit from the John Zorn Collection—black tank top and camouflage pants—and carrying her instruments like weapons. Track titles include “Females Are Strong As Hell”, “Feminist AF”, “Nevertheless, She Persisted” and the like. Still, anyone expecting the music to be equally angry will be extremely surprised. Coss’ compositions are fleet, bluesy hardbop numbers with taut, bouncy rhythms and fast, melodic solos. The most surprising piece is probably “Mr. President”, which features deep bowed bass drones over a martial rhythm. Wintz is often even more of a co-lead voice, his lines in order to harmonize with herself in a fully cohesive ensemble.

In 1972, two guitarists from seemingly different worlds came together with monumental results. British jazz fusionist John McLaughlin and Mexican-American psychadelic rocker Carlos Santana recorded *Love Devotion Surrender* as an expression of their shared admiration for John Coltran and Sri Chimnoy. It was one of those cosmic confluences that can happen when musicians find each other. Fast-forward over 40 years and a similar convergence happened with the duo recording *Room* by Julian Lage and Nels Cline. Though both Californians, the men are over 30 years apart in age and, like McLaughlin and Santana, exemplars of different traditions, yet intertwined like expert macrame. Now Cline has assembled his own *Love Devotion Surrender* moment with *Currents, Constellations*. Just as McLaughlin brought in members of his Mahavishnu Orchestra to complement players from Santana’s eponymous group, Lage’s regular bassist in Scott Colley is placed in the rhythm section with drummer Tom Rainey, with whom Cline has been working since the early Aughts.

But it is the spirit of an earlier McLaughlin that hovers over this release in the chunky *Extrapolation*-like feel of “Swing Ghost ‘59” or the dark ballad “As Close As That”, which could have fit well on *Where Fortunate Smiles*. There are other guitar precedents to be found: Attila Zoller and Jim Hall on the slick, boppish conversation of opener “Furtive”; Zoller and pianist Don Friedman’s fabulous 1966 explorations with “Amenette”; and the longest track, the two parts of “River Mouth”, recalling the twin-guitar vibe of Pat Martino and Bobby Rose on the former’s *Batujina*.

Yet these are wisps of recollection rather than direct lines of inquiry. Cline wrote all but one of the eight pieces and what he is most interested in doing is continuing the rapport established with Lage. Surprisingly, given the almost voyeuristic intimacy of *Room*, the addition of Colley and Rainey actually heightens that rapport rather than stilling it: Cline and Lage are free to be freer, open to openness, knowing that there is a solid yet fluid foundation beneath them. Of note is that there are not really discrete guitar solos or, when there are, these tiptoe through the footsteps of the other guitarist’s statements. So while this is Cline’s album and its compositions, this becomes that most elusive of musical beasts: the fully cooperative ensemble.

It is that one outside piece that becomes the misstep. Hard as it is to say a bad word against Carla Bley, her “Temporarily” is a speedbump. Until that point, five songs had covered an enormous amount of territory in just over 25 minutes. The song itself is only five-plus minutes long itself but Cline didn’t need it. Without it, this could have been a perfect 39 minutes.

For more information, visit bluesnote.com. This project is at Le Poisson Rouge Apr. 16th. See Calendar.
The Poetry of Jazz
Benjamin Boone/Philip Levine (Origin)
White Dust
Yusef Komunyakaa/World Cieri/Mike Brown (Ropeadope)
Yu
Elliott Levin/Gabriel Lauber Duo (Dimensional)
by John Pietaro

The tendency of poets to break out of the two-dimensional boundary is often seen as a post-War phenomenon, yet poetry was oral long before written language emerged. The African-American jazz tradition, begotten from a brutal melding of divergent cultures, cast a certain boundlessness. The music’s central swing and hop allows the poet to emote and embellish with shifts in meter, stress, dynamic, repetition and surely through improvisation.

The fusing of verse and music is exhibited quite classically on *The Poetry of Jazz*. This encounter pairs Philip Levine, Pulitzer Prize recipient and U.S. Poet Laureate, with alto saxophonist and composer Benjamin Boone. The two collaborated while teaching at Cal State, the latter a musician constantly drawn to words and the formal jazz fan who grew up with the music. The album was recorded in 2012, three years before Levine’s death, documenting the moment and the movement. The poetry flows through Levine’s lips most fluidly. Of special note are homages to jazz heroes backed by charts embracing the honorees and poet alike. The album opens with the poet’s musings on drinking gin in youth and its symbolism of adulthood’s challenges. Boone’s music effortlessly captures the vibe of the late ‘40s-early ‘50s, particularly the West Coast sounds. Arrangements are clean, sumptuous and driving and the album boasts an array of musicians including Greg Osby and Tom Harrell (on a gorgeous piece dedicated to Clifford Brown). Karen Marguth’s vocalization tops off the melody on two cuts, describing summer in the west within a cool waltz that ends abruptly, only to land upon “The Unknowable”, a piece dedicated to Sonny Rollins’ quest for a higher musical truth on the Williamsburg Bridge. “Singing through the cables of the bridge that were his home,” recites Levine as Chris Potter’s tenor obbligato becomes a solo flight and the poet wonders “how he knew it was time to inhabit the voice of the air.” While most of the journey is a celebratory exercise of Levine’s poetry of (and through) jazz itself, the album closes with a somber recollection of “What Work Is”, here the struggle for dignity among the unemployed in painful experience and those lost in toil.

*White Dust*, the project of poet Yusef Komunyakaa, however, focuses on the subtlety of emotion within this chapter of the author’s cultural- and self-awareness. The CD opens with the words: “I love how it swells into a temple where it is held prisoner, where the god of blame resides” and affirms his individualism as well as African heritage. Komunyakaa states: “A ghost hums through my bones like Pan’s midnight flute” and later speaks of “West Africa’s dusty horizon”, where it seems he may have composed this piece. A Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Komunyakaa was a correspondent during the Vietnam War which works and Shahad Ismaily carefully complement the poetry, read in a dark baritone, static but never unmoving. Drawing on the legacy of blues as much as an ethereal timelessness, the music embraces the atmosphere as much as the words. “Dolphy’s Aviary” makes artful use of space to build tension and then colors it with the waterphone and distant, Eastern-sounding vocalization of Cieri. The mix is magic. And yet the pianist, who created the score for Ken Burns’ outstanding *Vietnam* series, leaps into a raw, almost rural blues just as cannily (i.e., “Letter to Bob Kaufman” and “More Girl Than Boy”). Brown, Ospovat and Ismaily appear to welcome the ambience like it’s another improviser. Ospovat’s brushes tell the story as do Ismaily’s of found metals, percussives and Moog. Take special note of Brown’s probing, searching counterpoint to all spoken and left unsaid.

Philadelphia’s Elliott Levin is a monster of the tenor saxophone and flute, a musician of unique command who plunders his instruments’ histories in a manifest of experimentalism. His early work with Cecil Taylor notwithstanding, Levin has left an indelible mark in the annals of the underground. But he’s also a studied poet with several books of verse to his credit. On *Yu*, his duet CD with drummer Gabriel Lauber, Levin makes judicious use of both his musical and spoken word skills in this tour de force of free jazz. Lauber, a Swiss musician residing in Mexico, founder of the Dimensional record label, flawlessly reflects and expands via a barrage of skin and metal. The album is comprised of nine varied selections, with opening and closing pieces “Yu” parts 1 and 2, respectively. The first is a sonic blast, a joyously manic conversation, which leads into the subtler “Be Tasty, Be Poetry, Be Fado”. Levin blows and then moves into spoken word, initially at a whispery tone which feels Ginsburg-ian. Then, with full-voiced, Kerouac-like jazz phrasing under Lauber’s post-postbop accompaniment, the spoken word serves as another lead line, colored with neologism and vocalization. There is an enduring magic in this art. “Some Are of Sadness” and “Berlin Mystic Dawn” put Levin’s voice at center, under which Lauber’s breathless improvisation speaks to the ages.

*Radiant Imprints* by James Brandon Lewis/Chad Taylor (Off-Record)

James Brandon Lewis is far from the first—and assuredly not the last—tenor saxophonist to fall under the influence of John Coltrane. But what has made him the kind of musician from whom you eagerly await the next album or live appearance is how he has come out from under that influence. From the keening, classic C-F flat-F he opens with on “Reflections”, the first track from his debut album *Moments*, to the luscious slow jam of “Bittersweet” to conclude his last release, *No Filter*, Lewis has been broadening and deepening his sound, aesthetic palette and musical ambitions. The new album, *Radiant Imprints*, is not the usual homage to a giant—Lewis doesn’t play “Giant Steps” or “Naima” or anything else Coltrane made famous. At his release concert at Spectrum last month, Lewis explained to the audience that the record came out of just that idea, a Coltrane tribute in Philadelphia in which he played. But the new album is homage not by following but by responding to him—in this is the sound of Lewis interrogating Coltrane’s legacy. The tenor/drum pairing sounds nothing like *Interstellar Space*—Taylor is far different than Rashied Ali or even Elvin Jones, much more centered on the beat and on pushing it forward at Lewis. The leader took some of Coltrane’s material and rearranged it to his own liking, turning “One Down, One Up” into “Twenty-Four” and “Lonnie’s Lament” into “With Sorrow Lonnie”, accompanied by Taylor’s kalimba—outlining Coltrane’s shadow and then stepping out of it.

Lewis plays with the sound of seeking. Without trying to divine his spirituality, there is the constant feeling, often overt, of him blazing a path from one personal or social state to another. His phrasing and round, darkened sound have the prayerful quality of Tina Brooks. On the album, Lewis balances intensity with a delicate beauty and live he was so involved in playing pieces like “Imprints”, finding so much to explore, that a few times he kept on going after Taylor (maybe keeping a closer eye on the clock) wrapped up the tune. No awkwardness with that, though, it was generous and personal. Lewis, who was warm and genuinely interested in talking with a group of young composers and musicians after the set, embraces the fundament that making music is a social activity and even as he achieves lift-off to some faraway place, there is a plainspoken directness to all his playing.
The Cubist movement, led by Pablo Picasso, came out of Paris in the 1910s-20s and rendered the human form as a series of jagged geometric forms. The rubato approach taken by pianist Hal Galper, who turns 80 this month, on his new album embraces similar liberties. _Cubist_ was recorded live before a studio audience at the Gill and Tommy Li’l’uma Center for Creative Arts in Cleveland. Galper enlarging his usual trio palette with tenor saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi. Joining the pair are bassist Jeff Johnson and drummer John Bishop. The whole band is heard to good effect on Galper’s sole composition “Scufflin’”, an uptempo charger out of Blue Note’s ’50s heyday.

Ellington’s “In a Sentimental Mood” opens as a ballad feature for Bergonzi, whose playing is full of vibrato and smeary asides. Galper slips in gently, playing the melody solo before Johnson steps forward. It’s lovely. Four of the tunes are by Johnson. “Scene West” starts in a loping tempo, slows down and then bounces back, a sneaky little melody with lots of changes and dynamic tension. Galper is in mysterioso mode, with a somewhat jagged solo. Bergonzi starts moody, gets intense, and then stops abruptly.

On the title track and “Artists”, Bergonzi’s playing is marked by post-Trane experimental, the kind of music encouraged in a live setting. “Artists” is emotional and yearning—it should be heard emerging from a paint-splattered boombox in a painter’s studio. Rounding out the program are two tunes from the repertoire of Miles Davis—“Israel” from _Birth of the Cool_ and “Solar” from _Walkin’_. They’re not the strongest entries here, both taken slower than the Miles originals. But the latter has great interplay between Bergonzi and Galper at the end and the former features a strong Galper solo.

_Friedlander’s approach is unique; at times he sounds more like a violinist_. On opener “The Great Revelation” Friedlander swings with a fluidity and easy grace comparable to the late Stéphane Grappelli. Caine shines too, his solo combining spiky assertiveness with sly, amiable tunefulness. “Sparkotropic” finds Friedlander on a much more aggressive tack, cello taking on a surging, dark-hued cast that’s almost horn-like, then switching gears for genuinely poetic, soulful playing, all while Helias and Smith construct a swirling, compelling, hard-swinging matrix.

_Closer “Drop by Drop” is practically breathtaking_. With its cyclical, near-loping construction, it straddles the line between being contemplative and ominously tense and by some means—electronics? extended techniques?—Friedlander draws out textures sounding like an organ or synthesizer. Caine’s luminous, lyrical keys sparkle like raindrops yet the sun shines still. If you want to hear a cello sound simply like a cello, the title track has some of the most rapturous and rhapsodic playing you’re likely to hear outside of a Yo-Yo Ma session.

_Styles_ically _Artemisia_ blurs the seeming distinctions of/between swing, Third Stream and the avant garde. It’s not just for cello fans only.

_Pugach showcases vocalist Nicole Zuraitis on a hymn-like reading of Dolly Parton’s “Jolene”, her singing reflecting the passion of the country roots blossoming through her own lovely arrangement, with pianist Carmen Staaf and Jensen adding individual colors to this glorious performance_. Two other powerful covers with Zuraitis are a directly simple version of Chick Corea’s “Crystal Silence” and sensual, bossa-ish “Love Dance” by Ivan Lins, featuring trumpeter David Smith. And then there is the raucous and riotous “Our Blues”, co-written by Pugach and Zuraitis (spouses as well as musical collaborators) with sassy lyrics like “I’ve got some news before I kick you out / You’re much more clever when you shut your mouth!”. _Plus One_ is a vital statement about commanding arrangements, sharp solos and the powerful presence of a leader who can marshal all those forces.

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The Happenings (The Music of Herbie Nichols)

Howard Alden/Marty Krystall/Buell Neidlinger (K282)
by Ken Dryden

Duke Ellington kept his band on the payroll year-round so he could immediately hear what he had written. Most artists don’t have that luxury and many prolific jazz composers leave behind file cabinets packed with originals they never had the opportunity to record. Then there have been gifted musicians whose compositions are heralded today but barely noticed during their lifetimes. Pianist Herbie Nichols made a few LPs as a leader, which sold poorly for Blue Note, dying in obscurity from leukemia in 1943. The groundswell of interest in Nichols began with Mosaic’s 1987 boxed set of his complete recordings for Blue Note. Since then his work, which defies easy stylistic classification, has been sporadically performed, though his friend Roswell Rudd long championed their value. CDs by Buell Neidlinger (who played with Nichols and died last month at 82) and Marty Krystall, collective The Herbie Nichols Project and Misha Mengelberg have also explored Nichols’ music.

This trio session, led by guitarist Howard Alden and featuring Neidlinger and Krystall, includes some of the most fascinating interpretations of Nichols’ works. The lack of piano is not an issue, as Alden’s seven-string guitar enables him to create basslines to accompany his leads. The combination of Alden with Neidlinger on cello (to which he recently returned after long focusing on bass) and Krystall’s adventurous flight on bass clarinet, flute and alto flute make for intriguing music. “Another Friend” is a playful waltz pairing guitar with infectious arco cello. Bass clarinet joins for the quirky, upbeat interpretation of “The Happenings”, Neidlinger’s inventive pizzicato line in support of both soloists. Deliciously quirky waltz “Valse Macabre” belies its name, as humor rather than death comes to mind in this whimsical performance. “The Bebop Waltz” is a magical duet by Alden and Krystall (on alto flute), but “Strange City” is the tour de force of the session as the trio (Krystall back on bass clarinet) negotiates its constantly shifting melodic line with ease.

For more information, visit k282.com

Floating in Winter
Jim Self/John Chiodini Duo (Bassett Hound)
by Andrey Henkin

Tuba player Jim Self is one of those people you might meet at a cocktail party. Over Harvey Wallbangers and Lime Rickeys, you ask him what he does for work. He tells you he is a musician. Oh, that’s nice, you say. Anything I might know? Maybe, he replies. Have you heard of Don Ellis or Mel Tormé or David Byrne or anything like that? No? I was the voice of the mothership. The Parody Guy? Ever seen the film The Fifth Element? We’re the same guy.

There aren’t many recurring reeds/piano/bass configurations in jazz. There was a GREAT one in the early ‘60s Jimmy Giuffre, Paul Bley and Steve Swallow. The latter is now part of another such trio under the leadership of saxophonist/clarinetist Mike McGinnis with pianist Art Lande. Apart from a couple of Swallow and Lande originals, the majority of Singular Awakening is freely improvised, but these fellows play with such awareness and unity of purpose as to sound composed.

Concentrating on soprano saxophone, McGinnis is a force with which to be reckoned. He plays with a richness of tone one might expect to hear from an alto and is never domineering, knowing when to hold back and when to pull back. There’s plenty of variety in this followup to the trio’s previous opus Recurring Dream. There’s the impish “Mini’s Can-Do Club”, McGinnis engaged in blues ambiance, swinging with New Orleans looseness. The wonderfully lyrical Lande takes on an oboe-ish hue, Chiodini dropping bereaved notes around him, Swallow undulating gently. Closer “Bite Your Grandmother” is a spunky bit of bebop, Swallow swinging compellingly yet parsing out notes with great care, Swallow a one-person rhythm team.

For more information, visit bassethoundmusic.com. This project is at Club Bonafide Apr. 23rd. See Calendar.

Singular Awakening

Mike McGinnis/Art Lande/Steve Swallow (Sunsyde)
by Mark Keresman

It is 7:30 and John Corbett has just arrived at the Bistro Nu, a small club in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. It is 8:30 and John Corbett is still at the Bistro Nu. If you are a record collector, then you know the name John Corbett. If you aren’t a record collector, then you must be a record collector.

Don’t let the notion of free improvising scare you off. The trio coalesces in a mostly harmonious manner and swing is never completely out of the equation. For jazz that’s a wonderful surprise, THIS is the place.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Apr. 19th. See Calendar.

Vinyl Freak: Love Letters to a Dying Medium

John Corbett (Duke University Press)
by Clifford Allen

The subtitle to John Corbett’s latest volume is a bit misleading. After all, the presence of LPs in the bins at airport kiosks and in Whole Foods or Urban Outfitters stores herald at least more than a passing interest in the format. Furthermore, Record Store Day, featuring limited new and rereleases, has helped to bring numbers up for quite a few independent record emporia since 2007. But with all music sales down, these are a faint lift for a sighing dedication to physical objects that disseminate sound. Corbett, critic, producer, festival curator, label honcho, onetime professor and gallery owner, contributed the “Vinyl Freak” column to DownBeat from 2000-12 and this book collects each column as well as linking ruminations on the subject and a fascinating coda detailing his acquisition and placement of the Alton Abraham Collection of Sun Ra (now housed at the University of Chicago)—an embarrassment of historical riches that “cured” his insatiable freakdom.

The columns emerged during the full swing of CD reissue madness and on the heels of his own releasing a number of exceedingly rare free music sides. Corbett still values CD reissues immensely—the label associated with Corbett Vs. Dempsey (CVD), the gallery he co-runs with Jim Dempsey, issues documents from Chicagoan improvisers as well as work not previously seeing reissue. Corbett’s tastes are more diverse than one would guess from either CVD or UMD, both of which focused on the “outside”—certainly there’s a predilection for the avant garde and especially for small-label or private-pressed documents, but the columns also discuss lesser known Chicago soul jazz on Argo; standard fare with either incongruous artwork (whether on the jacket or, in one case, the inner sleeve) or discographical fascination; strange pop music sides; and significant slabs of dub reggae or stretchy electric groovers from Sub-Saharan Africa. Surprisingly, in the nearly 18 years since the column began, there are only a handful of the 207 records discussed remain un-reissued. Corbett writes with both enthusiasm and a keen ear, a faint lift for a sighing dedication to physical objects that disseminate sound.
Berlin-based percussionist, accordionist, vocalist, painter and poet Sven-Åke Johansson is an artist who defies categorization, even as much as European free music and “Berliner Improvisation” are handy aesthetic generalities that allow critics and connoisseurs to think that they know what they are getting themselves into. Johansson was born in 1943 in Sweden and decamped to Germany in the late ’60s, gaining notoriety as a drummer with the groups of trumpeter Manfred Schoof and saxophonist Peter Brötzmann. His approach was controlled and resonant yet marked by dynamic impulsions, which is why he was a logical choice for Johansson does present one orchestra.

The latter was released on his SÅJ imprint, later brought under the FMP umbrella as a home for (mostly) non-Germanic releases. In the ensuing decades Johansson has made field recordings, explored the world of torch songs (in a suitably Bertolt Brecht-ian fashion) and engaged seriously the tonal and rhythmic imprint of West Coast jazz. But as committed as that arc has been, Johansson can place his tongue firmly in cheek: in 2009 he assembled an orchestra of 12 farm tractors, their guttural pitches and engine timing commingling and falling out of phase like a ramshackle ensemble.

Blue for a Moment is a seven-album boxed set (two of the enclosed albums are double LPs) that acts as a soundtrack, of sorts, for the Antoine Prun documentary of the same name, which premiered in 2017 (Prun has also directed superb films on British free improvisation and the late drummer Sunny Murray). Some of the performances were captured with the intent of being used in the film, but naturally they stand on their own as complete recordings; in addition to six albums of new music, one archival performance from 1978 of the duo with pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach is also included. The whole thing is a handsome package, housed in a heavy linen-bound box with a booklet containing notes by Thomas Millroth and Karl Bruckmaier, as well as a fancy fold-out shot of the 12 farm tractors being lined up for performance. The only bugaboo—and this happens often with heavy vinyl housed in similarly heavy, pretty-looking inner sleeves—is that the LPs get a bit scuffed and that can be a challenge with quiet, sparse playing of which Berliner improvisers are fond. Note to labels: include poly inners as well!

On to the music, of which there is much and resoundingly diverse: far from merely ‘lowercase’, the stasis and cool ruggedness that marks this Berlin school is often marked here by a steadfast motion, something to be interrupted by flits, electroacoustic glitches, erasure and palimpsests. While trumpeter Liz Allbee and guitarist Annette Krebs fuzz and ululate late in the story of Frost, Johansson puts on an incisive softshoe, his brushy motion linking through parallel action the furrowed distance of the trumpet and guitarist’s free play. Lind is a beautiful document of Johansson solo; recorded in 2010, the set presents 15 short unaccompanied works for fingers, mallets and feet, metallic warp and woof, directed voice-like growls and minuscule rattle, all carried with an earthy beat and warm, human touch. Compare this with the vocals and piano of Hudson Songs, warbling and with a gravelly, tart dissonance, poems and instructions delivered with pointillism and clustered harps falling somewhere between deadpan and wryly absurd (think Art & Language conceptual songster Mayo Thompson).

While most of these discs are small groups—trios with percussionist Burkhard Beins and harpist Rhodri Davies, or trumpeter Axel Dörner and piano string manipulator Andrea Neumann, for example—Johansson does present one orchestra. Das MarschOrchester is just what it says, a two-LP set of marches played by the cream of the European avant garde, elevating banality to spirited parkmusik with soli that sound as if they’ve been superimposed. Even without film, the sound and texts of Blue for a Moment present a vivid, rousing portrait of one of creative music’s most compelling artisans.

For more information, visit ni-vu-ni-connu.net
BIRTHDAYS

April 1
John LaPorta 1902-2004
Harry Carney 1910-53
Duke Jordan 1920-2001
Eric India 1947
Frank Tusa 1947
Gil Scott-Heron 1949-2011
Anthony Romey b.1963

April 2
Mas Greer 1926-2015
Bluesie Little 1938-61
Sid Nissan 1940-91
Larry Coryell 1943-2017
Rahsaan and Roland Barber 1980

April 3
Bill Potts 1928-2005
Scott McCreery 1927-2008
Harold Vick 1928-93
Linda Sharrock b.1947
Evan Parker b.1944

April 4
Kerne Ramsey 1913-84
Blueser Cooper 1929-2016
Haakon Tveiten 1931-2000
Hugh Masakela 1939-2018
Stefano Bollani 1940-89
Allan Holdsworth 1950

April 5
Stan Levey 1925-2005
Stanley Turettino 1934-2000
Evan Parker b.1944
Håkon Kornstad b.1977

April 6
Eric Dolphy (New Jazz)

April 7
Charlie Rouse 1924-88
Bobby Watson 1935-2015
Herb Pomeroy 1930-2007
Joe Dixon 1917-98
Peter Kowald 1944-2002
George Tucker (bass) and Roy Haynes

April 8
Kenny Dorham 1924-92
Ray Brown 1926-2002
Steve Kuhn 1947
Paul Chambers 1935-69

April 9
Jimmie Noone 1895-1944
Barnes Wallace 1925-96
Herb Ellis 1927-99
Johnny Griffin 1926-2005
Paul Chambers 1935-69

April 10
Ray Brown 1926-2002
Gene Ammons 1923-74
Monty Waters 1938-2006

April 11
Bill basist Martin Riveras 1936-87
Bill Burrell in the mid '60s and finished

April 12
John Lee Sizemore 1938-93
Bill Remington 1940-97
Harold Vick 1928-93
Sid Weiss 1914-94

April 13
Ray Russell b.1947
†Jake Hanna 1931-2010
†Buster Cooper 1929-2016
†Beaver Harris 1936-91
†John Levy 1912-2012
†Paul Jeffrey 1933-2015

April 14
†Fess Williams 1894-1975
†Sidney Bechet 1897-1959
†Johnny Hodges 1901-85
†Art Taylor 1929-95
†Herb Pomeroy 1930-2007
†Joe Bonner 1948-2014

April 15
†Charlie Smith 1927-66
†Victor Feldman 1934-87
†Herman Dunaway 1941-2000
†Bill Harris 1969
†Rahsaan Roland Barthe 1964

April 16
‡Hans Williams 1894-1975
‡Monty Carroll 1927-99
‡Frazier McPherson 1928-93
‡Claude Bolling b.1930
‡Dexter Gordon 1925-99
‡Omar Sosa b.1965

April 17
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 18
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 19
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 20
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 21
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 22
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 23
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 24
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 25
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 26
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 27
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 28
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 29
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

April 30
‡John Lee 1912-2012
‡Emil Mangelsdorff b.1925
‡Bessie Smith 1894-1937
‡Bob Berg 1951-2002
‡Tony Mottola 1918-2004
‡Esther Phillips b.1941

MELVIN RHINEY’S “Killer Ray” may be the new mood of all musicians who have been in the 50’s. Appleton had a smattering of credits since, most notably with John Coltrane, Freddie Hubbard and Montgomery disciple Fat Patino. He also had albums as a leader, of which this is the first, a multi-collaboration of Steve Lapointe (trumpone), Charles McPherson (alto saxophone), Ran Blake (piano).
Sunday, April 1

[Events listed with details such as venue, time, and performers.]

Monday, April 2

[More events listed with similar details.]
John Coltrane’s A Love Supreme

MSM Jazz Orchestra
Jim McNeely, Conductor
Featuring Special Guest Joe Lovano, Tenor Saxophone
Arranged for Jazz Orchestra by Jim McNeely

APR 5 2018
7:30 PM
Aaron Davis Hall
The City College of New York
W 135th St & Convent Ave
adhatccny.org

APR 9 2018
7:30 & 9:30 PM
MSM Jazz Arts
At Dizzy’s Club
Coca-Cola
Jazz at Lincoln Center
10 Columbus Circle
jazz.org/dizzys or 212-258-9595

Randy Weston in Conversation
Tuesday, April 3 at 7PM

NEA Jazz Master Randy Weston is one of the world’s foremost pianists and composers today. Find out Mr. Weston’s person, place and thing in conversation (Randy Weston will also entertain on the piano).

“Person Place Thing” is an interview show based on this idea: people are particularly engaging when they speak not directly about themselves but about something they care about. Guests talk about one person, one place, and one thing that are important to them. The result? Surprising stories from great speakers.

Host Randy Cohen won three Emmy awards writing for Late Night with David Letterman.

Remembering Fat Tuesdays:
A Betty Carter Celebration
Musical Director: Pianist, Composer & Bandleader
Marc Cary
Friday, May 4 at 8:30PM

Alumni from Betty Carter Jazz Ahead, a renowned jazz education program, will celebrate the works and legacy of Betty Carter.
Musicians - TBA.
Sunday, April 8

- Jim Cimolais Piano Trio with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld
- The Metrika at the Iridium
- "In the Tradition of Jerry Cimolais" with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld

Monday, April 9

- Alex Taylor's Pa' Band at the Iridium
- "In the Tradition of Jerry Cimolais" with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld

Tuesday, April 10

- "In the Tradition of Jerry Cimolais" with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld

Wednesday, April 11

- "In the Tradition of Jerry Cimolais" with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld

Thursday, April 12

- "In the Tradition of Jerry Cimolais" with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld

Friday, April 13

- "In the Tradition of Jerry Cimolais" with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld

Saturday, April 14

- "In the Tradition of Jerry Cimolais" with Tony Malaby, Todd Neufeld
Monday, April 16

• Mike Stern 5:30 pm $20
  • Tal Farlow’s Rosadow with Alomg Sh край, Ben Street 6:30 pm $10
  • Julian L. Thompson Trio with Kung-Hwa Jang, Jeong Hwan Park; Next Door North 8:30 pm $10
  • Max Mingus / New Directions 8:30 pm $10
  • David McFerrin 9:30 pm $5

Tuesday, April 17

• Max Johnson 7 pm $15
  • Ronnie Aronson Band with Alan Blake, Alex Goodman Trio with Paul Gil, Bill Potts, John Snider 9 pm $30
  • Brian Wise Quartet with Gary Smulyan, Todd Coolman, JimLocations 9:30 pm $30
  • Max Maisel 10 pm $15

Wednesday, April 18

• Mike Stern 7 pm $20
  • The Jazz Epistles: Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya with Jonas Gwangwa, Ethan Iverson Quartet with Billy Harper, Buster Williams, Billy Hart 9 pm $45
  • Ronnie Aronson Band with Alan Blake, Alex Goodman Trio with Paul Gil, Bill Potts, John Snider 10 pm $30

Thursday, April 19

• Celebrating The Jazz Epistles: Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya with Jonas Gwangwa, Curtis Stigers with Matthew Fries, Paul Gil, Paul Wells, John Snider 7:30 pm $20
  • Celebrating The Jazz Epistles: Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya with Jonas Gwangwa, Curtis Stigers with Matthew Fries, Paul Gil, Paul Wells, John Snider 9 pm $30

Friday, April 20

• Reggae Woman Soprano with Sonny Fortune, Earl Zierl, Frank Carter, Eric Jerome, Brown Brothers, Carla Bley 5 pm $20
  • Cockpit Arndt, Greg Tardy, Cadillac, voc. Brian Blade, Sandy Cullum, Kitayama, Reuben Riles, Christian McBride 7:30 pm $20
  • Michael McGee, Bob Pickett, Graham Beckel, Peter Baugh, Graham Beckel, Bob Pickett, Graham Beckel 9 pm $20

Saturday, April 21

• Reggae Woman Soprano with Sonny Fortune, Earl Zierl, Frank Carter, Eric Jerome, Brown Brothers, Carla Bley 4 pm $20
  • Cockpit Arndt, Greg Tardy, Cadillac, voc. Brian Blade, Sandy Cullum, Kitayama, Reuben Riles, Christian McBride 6 pm $20

Sunday, April 22

• Ngai Lomppant with Greg Ward, Jonathan Fishman, Chris Tordini, Kenny Groovehoss 5 pm $20
  • Ronny Acosta with Nicky Winters, Alex Norris, Michael Dease, Steve Davis, Donald Norris, Steve Wilson, John Hollenbeck, Cesar Garabini, DJ Currie 7 pm $20
Tuesday, April 24

- **Jonah Udal Trio with Noah Becker, Steve Williams; David Rosenberg's Trio**
  Bar Next Door 6:30, 8:30 pm $30, 10:30 pm $12
- **Karmi Allinson**
  Birdland 6 pm $30
- **Trakke 45: Chacho Valdes**
  Cornelia Street 11:30 pm $10, 1:30 am $20
- **Four by Four: Juliana Lee, Sofia Bandura, Chloe Cline, Chana Chen**
  Brooklyn Bowl 9 pm $30, 11 pm $40
- **Matt Rosenblatt, Ken Rosenblatt**
  Bar Next Door 6, 8:30 pm $20
- **Monika Brown; Jonathan May, Cody Carter, David Jordan, Adam Driane**
  Cornelia Street 6 pm $10
- **Jacob Turner**
  Birdland 6 pm $30
- **Naj Hakham**
  Diva Club 11:15 pm $15

Friday, April 27

- **Craig Handy and 2nd Line Smith**
  The Owl Music Cafe 7:30 pm $10
- **Black, Brown & Beige & The Best of Basie: Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra**
  Birdland 6 pm $30
- **Allan Mednard; Aaron Seeber**
  Radegast Hall 9 pm $20
- **Arcoiris Sandoval Quintet with Roxy Coss, Shareef Clayton, Marty Kenney, João Luiz**
  Cornelia Street 8 pm $30, 10 pm $40
- **Takatoshi Nakahora**
  Hudson House 8 pm $20
- **Javon Jackson Quartet with Jeremy Manzanita, Danilo Perez, Guy Beyer, Blackwell**
  Palmetto 8 pm $20
- **Jazz Standard**
  Monday, 12 pm $10-35; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 8 pm $35-125; Sunday, 5 pm $30-125

Saturday, April 28

- **Craig Handy and 2nd Line Smith**
  The 75 Club at Bogart Mansion 8, 10 pm $20
- **Allan Mednard; Aaron Seeber**
  Radegast Hall 9 pm $20
- **Avery DeSanto's Big Band**
  Bar Next Door 7:30, 9, 11 pm $40
- **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra**
  Birdland 6 pm $30
- **Naj Hakham**
  Diva Club 11:15 pm $15
TNYCJR: Do you get to know the players well enough to write with them in mind?

JM: Oh, yeah, definitely. I remember it started when I used to write a lot for the WDR in Cologne, Germany. I realized one day I was seeing their faces on the score papers I wrote. You really get familiar with the sound of every player, their strengths and limitations. Same with the Vanguard Orchestra. Any of the bands I’ve spent a lot of time working for, the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, the Danish Radio Band and the Frankfurt Band, I really write for the individual players.

TNYCJR: How does a piece evolve for you from the initial idea to the completed work?

JM: It’s a kind of a patchwork process, I’ll start with simple ideas on two different levels: one I call the high level, that’s conceptual stuff, how long is it going to be, how big is it going to be, how noisy is it going to be, how dissonant, what kind of harmonic language I’m going to use. All these general ideas and who are the soloists, what’s the audience going to feel like after it ends. What I call the low level is very specific musical ideas, sometimes just a phrase or a vamp that I start playing with and expand on. I’ll make notes and jot down a whole lot of things that come to me without judging if they’re good or bad. It’s a mistake when people start writing music and they judge an idea as stupid. When you think about it, “Bom, bom, bom... bom”, Beethoven’s Fifth, that’s a dumb little idea. Well, look what he did with it. It’s what you do with your initial idea that really makes the piece. It’s not whether the idea itself is good or bad, that doesn’t even come into the discussion; it’s an idea, you start to work with it, play with it, expand it, that’s the important part of the process.

Then I start linking things together. At that stage, it’s mostly pencil and paper and piano. Finally, I start making bigger connections, then fine-tune all the decisions I made on the high level, which are the things about form and shape. Gradually it all meets in the middle somehow, then I really start writing the piece, scoring it. Actually the first thing I do is a big sketch of the piece, then I start scoring on the computer because of the convenience.

TNYCJR: What recordings are completed or in the planning stages?

JM: A couple of things I’ve done are in the can. One’s a big suite that I wrote for the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Frankfurt Big Band. Another project we did with [saxophonist] Chris Potter. I’m in talks again with the Vanguard Orchestra to start working on a new CD with them. Then I’ve always got interesting projects coming up with the Frankfurt band; I’m writing arrangements for [Brazilian songwriter] Ivan Lins in April.

TNYCJR: It’s exciting to hear about your upcoming concert with Joe Lovano playing A Love Supreme.

JM: I’ve known Joe Lovano for 40 years. He’s a part of the two concerts with the Manhattan School of Music [this month]. I’ve written several projects for him with some of the European bands and the thing I did on A Love Supreme is a natural extension of all that work that we’ve done together. Then the way I arranged A Love Supreme, some of it is more writing for the band as a group improvisation rather than standard big band stuff, because I wanted to capture the spirit and energy of Coltrane’s recording. Part of it is to inspire Joe to build a really exciting peak then have the band in there with him, driving him on. It’s a little different writing than people would associate with me, but it’s part of my old history. I used to do that when I was in college, but it’s nice to get a chance to do that with A Love Supreme.

Part of what we did last week in Frankfurt was recording it. Also, they record the concerts. Both of them we did were really inspiring. I hope it works out with Joe’s contractual obligations that it can be released, because I think it is a really powerful statement by Joe, myself and the band. 🔵

For more information, visit jim-mcneely.com. McNeely is at Aaron Davis Hall Apr. 5th and Dizzy’s Club Apr. 9th leading the Manhattan School of Music Jazz Orchestra with guest Joe Lovano. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Stan Getz—Pure Getz (Concord, 1982)
• Jim McNeely—Live At Maybeck Recital Hall, Vol. 20 (Concord, 1992)
• Phil Woods Quintet—Plays the Music of Jim McNeely (TCB, 1995)
• Jim McNeely Tentet—Group Therapy (OmniTone, 2000)
• Vanguard Jazz Orchestra—Up From The Skies, Music of Jim McNeely (Planet Arts, 2006)
• Jim McNeely/Frankfurt Radio Big Band—Barefoot Dances and Other Visions (Planet Arts, 2014)
When Randy Weston touches a piano, he reaches way, way back, to a time before pianos, back before civilization begins. Like the great spiritual diviners of Africa and the bluesmen of the Diaspora, he reaches into the world of sound not yet born, creating statements of such startling originality that terms like "modern" or "avant-garde" are meaningless. He demolishes distinctions between traditional and modern, enveloping us with what really counts: the music's spiritual essence. And there is no better way to capture the spiritual dimensions of this great music than Weston, in his solitude, singing, praying, meditating, shouting, through the medium of a grand piano, which he transforms into a giant 88-stringed kora. Weston's left-hand is a rumbling, majestic drum chorus while his right hand is a spirited circle of dancers. Everything he plays is a praise song to the ancestors, especially his musical predecessors. He has absorbed the spirits of all the great "ticklers"—Duke, Art Tatum, Earl Hines, Nat Cole, Monk, all of them—and through his fertile imagination he always takes us on a journey from the ancient to the future and back again.

Robin D. G. Kelley
Gary B. Nash Endowed Chair in U.S. History, University of California at Los Angeles
Author of Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original

SOUND Double-CD Set from African Rhythms Label available at cdbaby.com
Tomas Fujiwara at The Stone

TUESDAY, APRIL 10 / 8:30PM
Patricia Brennan (vibes), Tomeka Reid (cello), Tomas Fujiwara (drums)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11 / 8:30PM
Amir ElSaffar (trumpet), Ole Mathisen (tenor saxophone), Tomas Fujiwara (drums)

THURSDAY, APRIL 12 / 8:30PM
Stone Edifice Trio
Walter Smith III (tenor saxophone), Drew Gress (bass), Tomas Fujiwara (drums)

FRIDAY, APRIL 13 / 8:30PM
Double Double
Bill Frisell (guitar), Mary Halvorson (guitar), Kendrick Scott (drums),
Tomas Fujiwara (drums)

SATURDAY, APRIL 14 / 8:30PM
Triple Double
Ralph Alessi (trumpet), Taylor Ho Bynum (cornet), Mary Halvorson (guitar),
Brandon Seabrook (guitar), Tom Rainey (drums), Tomas Fujiwara (drums)