EUGENE CHADBOURNE
NEW DIRECTION

MICHIE ROSEWOMAN
SULLIVAN FORTNER
DOUG HAMMOND
JACKIE MCLEAN
It is hard to believe that New York City has ONLY been under lockdown for 40 days. Seems more like 40 years and that we are with Moses, wandering through the desert, looking not for the Promised Land but an actual, in-person concert. Of course these protocols have been necessary to save as much life as possible and there have been online concerts, online record-listening sessions, online workshops, etc. to fill the void.

This is our second digital-only edition; we hope to resume our physical self soon. As was the case in our April edition, our planned coverage has all been cancelled, from a week at The Stone at The New School with guitarist Eugene Chadbourne (On The Cover), pianist/composer/bandleader Michele Rosewoman (Interview) at Dizzy’s Club and pianist Sullivan Fortner (Artist Feature) at The Jazz Gallery. The same goes for most of our CD Review coverage. We hope that you support us by continuing to read and these musicians, now all struggling, by buying their music.

At some point, we will responsibly flock to the clubs and embrace one another musically. Until then, please stay safe and healthy so that day can come sooner rather than later.
That’s nice that you want to put me on the cover,” said Eugene Chadbourne during our interview, "especially with so many glamorous options available.” Glamour, like beauty, is subject to the beholder’s eye and the expressionist guitarist exudes a charm of innovation that soars well above this year’s fashion. In fact, he’s held that distinction for decades.

Born in Mount Vernon, NY, 1954, but raised in Boulder, Colorado, Chadbourne was moved by the powerful changes in rock ‘n’ roll during his formative years, but just as inspired by the country and blues he encountered in record store bins. “The first song I learned to play was ‘I'm Not Your Steppin’ Stone.” Tellingly, Chadbourne was drawn not to the pop hit by The Monkees, but the raucous version by Paul Revere and the Raiders. Though the budding guitarist’s major influence was Jimi Hendrix, a guitarist, proto-punk inspiration was prominent and remains with Chadbourne still. And then there was the innovative guitarist Lee Underwood. “I went to see Tim Buckley when I was 16. He performed without his band, just Underwood, who played something I hadn’t heard before. The scales he was playing on the fretboard in conjunction with Buckley’s harmonies—you could hear the root chord, but it sounded like you could play anywhere and make it work.”

Moving to Calgary, Canada ("to avoid the draft") offered Chadbourne unforeseen opportunities for artistic growth. After encountering the music of Ornette Coleman, he sought out free jazz in local record stores. And, “I saw Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band play in Calgary. Most of the audience wanted to kill them, but his bass clarinet sounded particularly good to me. All that music jelled in my head around the same time, but it took a long time to translate it to the guitar. There were a few guitarist [playing this music] but not many you could imitate. Hendrix was like the Coltrane of guitar, so that took decades to absorb.”

Chadbourne made fast friends with the few local musicians of a similar mindset and became active in Calgary’s Jazz Society. While seeking performance opportunities, he quickly recognized that within such surroundings a scene needed to be grown, so began organizing shows. “The Jazz Society branch in Edmonton brought up the Sam Rivers Trio, so I presented Oliver Lake, among many others. And Anthony Braxton had a relationship with the Coda [magazine] guys. I finagled the University of Calgary to bring him up for a solo concert, which began an important professional relationship with the revolutionary saxophonist.

Chadbourne also became a music writer with The Calgary Herald. “The entertainment page had been doing poorly as no one knew anything about music. So, when I got that job, they assigned me reviews of these big rock concerts. But I was only listening to free jazz and roots music, so of course I pissed Kiss, Queen, all of them!” Taking on this harsh critical persona inspired a flood of hate mail while providing much needed attention to the paper. “The editors kept giving me raises, so I kept writing these reviews.” Even as he did Chadbourne was recording for his own Parachute Records (Solo Acoustic Guitar, Volume One and Two, 1976) and curating events while making relevant industry contacts. His efforts proved successful. “When I began, there were like three copies of Interstellar Space there,” but communication with the artists brought Calgary a wide array of new jazz.

Simultaneously, Braxton was encouraging Chadbourne to focus entirely on his guitar playing, leaving journalism behind. “The timing was right,” he recalled.

Moore, President Carter issued amnesty for ex-pats who had left to avoid a war many viewed as highly immoral, if not illegal. Chadbourne relocated back to the U.S., driving through the Midwest and into New York in a most fertile period. “I can’t recall when people started calling [NYC’s experimental arts scene] ‘Downtown’, but a certain kind of crowd were living downtown and a lot of the rehearsing went on there.” Voraciously absorbing his surroundings, Chadbourne quickly established important accompanists in both Frank Lowe and John Zorn. “John and I had so much in common, but he’d played almost nowhere except in college and then in his apartment [where Zorn had established a performance series]. I’d traveled across the country playing anywhere I’d made connections with my records. I read how Steve Lacy would knock on doors asking to play in delis. So I said, ‘Let’s go door-to-door to find new venues.’” That year he put out two more records while also performing with Zorn, Lowe, Lake and more. Simultaneously, punk rock was exploding with a cross-pollination of no wavers, free improvisers, performance poets and contemporary composers. “Everything was really splintered up. I recall someone forming a free band with a funk beat. That didn’t appeal to me, but the songs and their meaning—the content and the essence—that meant a lot.” As opposed to the edgy scene at CBGB’s, Chadbourne sought to fuse the roots music he loved with underground jazz. A step in this direction was meeting the former Mothers of Invention drummer Jimmy Carl Black. “Jimmy was the first drummer I worked with who played blues and rock so expertly. I’d played with great drummers before but Jimmy said, ‘I’m here to make you sound good.’ And it reminded me that I really like playing rock.” But Chadbourne decided to take it further, seeking to develop a true hybrid. “The roots music wasn’t embraced in New York back then. Most people associated it with mechanical bull.”

The guitarist also began teaching at Karl Berger’s Creative Music Studio in Woodstock, NY. There he met electric bassist Mark Kramer and drummer David Lichte, who joined him in the formation of Shockcabulary for which Chadbourne coined the genre “LSD C&W”. “Most critics didn’t get us. One said we sounded like Hank Williams on LSD, another went so far as to call us Frank Zappa on LSD! They kept writing that we were deconstructing songs, but we were actually creating” original music and fascinating adaptations of trad and rock. The Dawn of Shockcabulary (Rough Trade, 1982) featured Chadbourne’s blistering guitar as overtly as his satirical, affected lead voice. But for the level of musicianship, such profound reimaginings of The Beatles and Tammy Wynette may have been relegated to mere punk-era mocking.

The complex arrangements, unexpected tempo changes, sudden tacs and improvisational forays instead cast post-modernism at 33 1/3 rpm.

By 1985’s Vietnam, the activism of the band became central with radical songs and a piece with poet Ed Sanders towards a “freely improvised left-wing country bobo”. Over the next few years, Chadbourne released solo and collaborative multiple recordings and forged a partnership with alternative rockers Camper Van Beethoven. During the ‘90s, some 21 recordings under Chadbourne’s leadership could be found in his catalogue and into the 2000s his already astonishing list of collaborators grew vastly: Billy Bang, Tom Cora, Wadada Leo Smith, Joseph Bowie, Steve Lacy, Evan Parker, Charles Tyler, John Carter, Peter Brötzmann, Anthony Coleman, Mishia Mengelberg, Cooper-Moore, Derek Bailey, Marc Ribot, Davey Williams, Fred Frith, Gary Lucas, Henry Kaiser, Elliott Sharp, Charlie Haden, William Parker, Sunny Murray, Philip Wilson, Bobby Previte, Chris Cutler, Warren Smith, Han Bennink, Susie Ibarra and Shelley Hirsch. Likewise, Chadbourne’s instrumental arsenal grew to include banjo, dobro and his homemade electric rake.

The music-making, like the sense of adventure, has been tenacious. Most recently, Chadbourne scheduled an array of global dates, which were suddenly cancelled. “I’m sorry that my Stone at The New School performances have to be postponed until we knows when,” he said, painfully aware of the work required to book this expansive tour. “But this period has been devasting for so many. Imagine if we had a system that doesn’t let idiots like this [Trump] get elected and that our economic system wouldn’t fall apart as soon as we have a problem. There’s nothing in it that protects anyone.”

This year, Chadbourne released a pair of CDs containing both new and old material and, in response to the lockdown, established digital downloads on his website’s archive, allowing for a deep glimpse into his fascinating repertoire. But, as always, the guitarist can’t help but look far afield. “I’m also in the process of setting up a broadcast studio behind my house in Greensboro. It’s been a recording studio for years, but I’m expanding it for internet performances. This is a long-term plan, but at this point, it may very well be the direction we all need to go in.”

For more information, visit eugenechadbourne-documentation.squarespace.com. Chadbourne was scheduled to be at The Stone at The New School.

Recommended Listening:
• Eugene Chadbourne — The Lost Eddie Chatterbox Session (R/C—Corbett vs. Dempsey, 1977)
• Eugene Van Beethoven—5th Sun Funky (Fundamental, 1989)
• Eugene Chadbourne/Hellington Country — The Hellingtunes (Intakt, 1997)
• Zu & Eugene Chadbourne — The Zu Side of the Chadbourne (Felmay-House of Chadula, 1999)
• Aki Takase — Plays Fats Waller (Enja, 2003)
• Eugene Chadbourne — Monks Dream with Words (House of Chadula, 2017)
This month, covering the ‘live’ jazz scene gained a whole new aspect due to citywide club closures spurred by the COVID-19 outbreak. Fortunately there were options. Billing itself as “the world’s first fully live-streamed jazz festival”, the “Live From Our Living Rooms” series offered a week’s worth of fundraisers by and for out-of-work musicians. The first night (Apr. 1st) included a relaxed performance by vocalist/guitarist Margaret Glasby and guitarist Julian Lage. Seated at home, a few old black and white family photos visible on the wall behind them, the pair played original material, in tandem or solo, in a short but satisfying set. There were the inevitable technical glitches, particularly if one’s Wi-Fi wasn’t running at optimal speed (as your correspondent’s wasn’t), resulting in frozen or pixilated images. Several viewers posted complaints of the muffled “fishbowl” sound, presumably due to a noise-gated microphone. All of which could have been a bummer, but really wasn’t. Here we sat, alone but together, privy to Glasby and Lage’s most intimate musical and personal rapport, our number rapidly escalating from two to over 800 people, generating an incessant stream of rabid onscreen commentary. You couldn’t hear any shouting or clapping, but you could certainly sense the excitement. “We’ll be together soon,” promised Lage at last. “In the meantime, this suffices.” And we rejoiced.

— Tom Greenland

The second night (Apr. 2nd) of “Live From Our Living Rooms”, the live-stream festival/fundraiser organized by local musicians Thana Alexa, Owen Broder and Sirintip, included a relaxed performance by vocalist/guitarist Bill Frisell. There was a delay because, as we found out later, the Crowdcast virtual platform had crashed under global overload, so the scheduled 8 pm hit didn’t start until 45 minutes later, when Frisell, sporting an unfamiliar close-trimmed beard, was unfortunately cut off only 12 minutes later, right in the middle of a middle-of-the-night water-mediely of “Nature Boy” and “Crepuscule with Nellie”. He didn’t reappear online until another 45 minutes had passed, by which time the logged-in crowd had swelled to 2,000, its optimal speed (as your correspondent’s wasn’t), resulting in frozen or pixilated images. Several viewers posted complaints of the muffled “fishbowl” sound, presumably due to a noise-gated microphone. All of which could have been a bummer, but really wasn’t. Here we sat, alone but together, privy to Glasby and Lage’s most intimate musical and personal rapport, our number rapidly escalating from two to over 800 people, generating an incessant stream of rabid onscreen commentary. You couldn’t hear any shouting or clapping, but you could certainly sense the excitement. “We’ll be together soon,” promised Lage at last. “In the meantime, this suffices.” And we rejoiced that our collective jazz spirit had prevailed over the specter of COVID-19.

— Tom Greenland

The Sun Ra Arkestra of the ’70s would have been ideally suited for musical life in the era of COVID-19. Most of the band lived in the same house in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia and could have live-streamed cosmic music 24 hours a day in keeping with Ra’s constant rehearsals. Alas, now most musicians are stuck alone at home and the concerts being broadcast across myriad platforms are somewhat lonely affairs. Quarantine jazz is a thing now but one hopes not for too long, as musicians need an audience as much as we need them. Alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón gave a solo recital (Apr. 12th) on Instagram and Facebook Live, though the latter didn’t work. By the end of the shortish performance, there were about 50 people in the room and Zenón spoke encouraging and thankful words in both English and Spanish, plus a guest appearance by his daughter to say hello. While the intent was good, for those listeners easily distracted (such as this reviewer) the medium muddles the message. It felt less like a concert than a play-by-play voyeurism into Zenón’s practice regimen (kudos to his rehearsal space, however, and the creative drawings festooning its walls) and certainly the lag-time issues didn’t help, nor did the stream of comments and love balloons. Things worked better on a cellphone than on a computer and while Zenón dueting with himself slightly out of phase did have its appeal, it was hardly the point. If this really is the new normal, we will adjust but we don’t have to like it.

— Audrey Hepkin

Lucky are the musicians living together, at least in terms of online concerts (though one feels for an entire household bereft of income streams). This reviewer had planned on attending the duo concert with harpist Brandee Younger and bassist Dezron Douglas at Miller Theatre scheduled for the end of March before New York City was shut down. So it was great that the pair were still able to perform (Apr. 7th), just now from the confines of their living room (nice plants). Unfortunately the technological aspect left much to be desired—quarantine jazz is years behind cam-porn—but it was fulfilling to hear and see (sort of) musicians interacting with one another. The harp’s delicacy and mystical nature pairs well with the bass’s stolid woodiness (my cats liked it) and Younger and Douglas have been honing their craft together on regular brunch broadcasts on Facebook. They began with a tune from those sets, the timely-titled “TP Romance”. Errol Garner’s “Misty” followed and it felt like one was floating down a Venetian canal at sunset. “Games” (from Dorothy Ashby’s 1968 album Afro-Harping; being by and for out-of-research) found the player within each and enormous power together. Douglas essayed Charlie Haden’s “For Turiya” solo, Younger quipping that the quarantine had led to more solo bass concerts than ever. The pair managed to call up the soul bounce on Marvin Gaye’s “I Want You” and closed with Younger’s indie-pop like “Reclamation”. I can hardly wait to hear this duo in person.

— AH

Miles Davis’ Birth of The Cool sessions, were recorded in 1949 and 1950 and released in 1957. More than fifty years later, when young trumpeter Bobby Spelmman purchased a CD of these recordings, he became enchanted with the music. Spelmman’s fascination with these performances led him to chase that same spirit for his own collection of nonet recordings, Revenge of the Cool.

To build his nonet, Spelmman looked toward many of his NEC peers, including baritone saxophonist Tyler Burchefield, alto saxophonist David Leon, bassist Andrew Schiller, trombonist Tim Shieff, drummer Evan Hyde, pianists Ben Schwendener and Eli Wallace. Spelmman’s wife, alto saxophonist Emily Pecora who is featured on the first track, introduced Spelmman to French horn player Kyra Sims, whom she met in the composer’s own compositions would be influenced at every thousand tunes, simply entitled Romanian Folk Music. The work alongside Maneri on Transylvanian Concert (ECM, 2006) but also with his music of Romania’s famed composer George Enesco on Enesco Re-Imagined (Sunnyside, 2010)
Joe Lovano & Judi Silvano closed out with a spiritual, "The Solid Rock". This month our live reviews are redefined as New York continues through the coronavirus lockdown. While this writer mourns a return to reality as we once knew it, the concept of live-to-internet becomes the new normal. And with that in mind, the “Live From Our Living Rooms” series allows for an array of performing artists to make their statement—and raise funds for the creative community—in the face of the Great Quarantine. Saxophonist Joe Lovano and vocalist Judi Silvano have been an item for many decades and their shared telepathy is apparent. Broadcasting a highly improvisational live session (Apr. 4th), the pair floated through original compositions and a unique adaptation of Monk’s “Reflections”, with the Van Hendricks lyric, which well exhibited their musical skills and then some; Silvano painted an abstract piece inspired by the music during points away from the microphone. Though the spirit and sense of unity carried the concert, of course, the barrier of the computer screen was apparent (though we tried on this end, with cocktails and finger foods!). The static camera and lack of proper sound balancing were not friendly to the performance, unfortunately, though Lovano’s mastery of the tenor and soprano, as always, was more than obvious. And Silvano’s seemingly limitless range and innate swing are his perfect match, allowing for vibrant call-and-response segments, which enlivened this digital soundscape and crafted a real Saturday night of it. — John Pietaro

Shut out from its decade-old residency at Jazz Standard, the tradition of Mingus Mondays took to the internet for a series of solo concerts; the second of which featured guitarist Freddie Bryant (Apr. 6th). A 20-year veteran of the Mingus Orchestra, where his chords fill out the rich harmonies of the late bassist’s compositions, Bryant played by himself from the Caribbean island of Providenciales (forced to remain there since the onset of coronavirus pandemic), settling into a predominantly blues-based program highlighting Mingus’ earthy melodicism. Opening with “Devil Woman”, which he retitled “Devil Virus” for the occasion, the guitarist gave a sensitive reading of the song Mingus sang in a gritty voice on his Oh Yeah album. He followed with the New Orleans-tinted “Jelly Roll”, digging into its rhythmic drive. Describing it as a disguised blues, Bryant continued with a stirring rendition of “Goodbye Porkpie Hat”, which he dedicated to virus victims Ellis Marsalis, Bucky Pizzarelli and Wallace Roney, as well as the recently departed Mingus Orchestra bassoonist Janet Grice, calling for a moment of silence afterwards. Reaching into the more obscure recesses of the Mingus repertoire, the guitarist resumed by performing the Brazilian-flavored “Eclipse”, giving a shout out to Sy Johnson for his inspired orchestral arrangement of the composition. The one-man show concluded back in the blues mode with a funky extended take of “Better Git It In Your Soul”. — Russ Musto

On the night that they were scheduled to appear at Dizzy’s Club (Apr. 4th) playing together as part of the American Pianists Association’s celebration of the past and present awardees of its Cole Porter Fellowship, Sullivan Fortner and Aaron Parks met up in cyberspace for “music and musings” on the APA’s Facebook page. In what could be described as extreme social distancing that took them away from their usual bases, Parks streamed from his mother’s house in upstate New York while Fortner performed from the Florida home of the parents of his vocalist du duo partner, Cécile McLorin Salvant. The pair began by discussing the less-than-perfect tuning of their respective upright pianos, before getting down to making music. Fortner started, playing a deliberately delivered rendition of Bud Powell’s “I’ll Keep Loving You”, after which Parks followed appropriately with Porter’s “I Love You”, picking up the tempo on the second chorus as he improvised utilizing altered harmonies. The pair then engaged in a discussion of their admiration of each other’s different styles. Noting that the passing of Ellis Marsalis had left a void in Brazilian music, Fortner continued with his melancholy “Elegy”. A discussion of the writing process inspired Parks to play a new untitled original he said he’s been working on for a while. More talk of Marsalis prompted Fortner to play the late pianist’s “Swingin’ At The Haven”. Parks then played his “Solace”, a classically-tinged song of hope. Fortner closed out with a spiritual, “The Solid Rock”. — (RM)

WHAT’S NEWS

Roulette is partnering with Bang on a Can for a six-hour marathon on May 3rd, presenting new music composed specifically for the event and performed by musicians including Vijay Iyer, George Lewis, Miya Masaoka, Moor Mother and Mary Halvorson. For more information, visit roulette.org.

The inaugural class of Philadelphia Hometown Heroes has been named and it includes several jazz musicians: Marshall Allen, Terell Stafford, Orrin Evans, Pat Martino, Diane Monroe and the recently departed McCoy Tyner.

Record Store Day, celebrating independent record shops and originally scheduled for April 18th, will be held through a series of “RSD Drops”, taking place on three Saturdays spread across three consecutive months: Aug. 29th, Sep. 26th and Oct. 24th. For more information, visit recordstoreday.com.

The Jazz Journalists Association has named its 2020 Jazz Heroes, “honoring significant achievements in jazz music and journalism.” Local recipients are Matthew Garrison and Fortuna Sung of ShapeShifter Lab, Susan Cohen Brink of Sanctuary for Independent Media and Roberta Alloway, booker of many Harlem jazz venues. In addition, nominees for the 2020 JJA Jazz Awards have been named (including this gazette for Print Periodical/Website of the Year). For more information, visit jjajazzawards.org.

The Monterey Jazz Festival has announced the results of its 2020 Next Generation Jazz Festival, which took place virtually last month. Winners are scheduled to appear at the festival in September. For the complete list, visit montereylejazzfestival.org.

Jazz Club of Sarasota presented its Satchmo Award to Rachel Domber and and her late husband Mat of Arbors Records, the award honoring those that have “made a unique and enduring contribution to the living history of jazz.”

The 18th Annual Independent Music Awards have named their nominees for this year’s awards. For the complete list, including jazz-specific categories, visit independentmusicawards.com.

The Jazz Gallery’s online schedule will continue in May: May 1st: Melissa Aldana; May 4th: Jen Shyu; May 6th: Dezron Douglas; May 7th: Becca Stevens; May 8th: Johnathan Blake; May 11th: Orrin Evans; May 13th: Matt Brewer; May 15th: Kevin Hays; May 18th: Dayna Stephens; May 20th: Vijay Iyer; May 22nd: Tivon Pennicott; May 25th: Jaleel Shaw; May 27th: Jason Lindner and a special tribute to the recently departed Lee Konitz on May 3rd. For more information, visit jazzgallery.nyc

Academy Records has opened up an eBay store (ebay.com/str/academyrecords) and an Amazon portal (amazon.com/s/ref=APGAMQMYM6&marketplace=ATVPDKIKXODDER).

Submit news to info@nycjazzrecord.com

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | MAY 2020
The New York City Jazz Record: This is a difficult time for musicians. Clubs and concert halls are closed, festivals have been cancelled. How do you cope?

Michele Rosewoman: We all have to figure this one out as we go through waves of disbelief and realization and settle into this new reality. I’m taking stock of my life up to now and, little by little, figuring out how to proceed. Letting things reset spiritually, trying to stay positive and applying for financial assistance as opportunities become available. Looking forward to what might be creatively born of such a time.

TNYCJR: Critics have said that you unite players with different personalities into a communal voice. Your latest recording Hallowed is with Alex Norris on trumpet and flugelhorn, Román Filíu on alto and soprano saxophones and flute, Stacy Dillard on tenor saxophone, Chris Washburne on trombone, bass trombone and tuba, Andrew Gutauskas on baritone saxophone, Gregg August on bass, Robby Ameen on drums, both Román Díaz and Mauricio Herrera on batá, congas and vocals, Rafael Monteagudo on batá, congas and Nina Rodríguez as the lead vocalist. You contribute piano, Fender Rhodes and vocals. Talk about bringing the musicians for this project together. What was your inspiration? What makes Hallowed special?

MR: For all my ensembles, the cast of musicians has always taken its own shape as needed, evolving through the years and one configuration leading naturally to the next. The current ensemble members have been with me for many years. It feels like family. They are more bilingual than in the past, in that both have been with me for many years. It feels like family. We all have to figure this one out as we go through waves of disbelief and realization and settle into this new reality. I’m taking stock of my life up to now and, little by little, figuring out how to proceed. Letting things reset spiritually, trying to stay positive and applying for financial assistance as opportunities become available. Looking forward to what might be creatively born of such a time.

TNYCJR: Critics have said that you unite players with different personalities into a communal voice. Your latest recording Hallowed is with Alex Norris on trumpet and flugelhorn, Román Filíu on alto and soprano saxophones and flute, Stacy Dillard on tenor saxophone, Chris Washburne on trombone, bass trombone and tuba, Andrew Gutauskas on baritone saxophone, Gregg August on bass, Robby Ameen on drums, both Román Díaz and Mauricio Herrera on batá, congas and vocals, Rafael Monteagudo on batá, congas and Nina Rodríguez as the lead vocalist. You contribute piano, Fender Rhodes and vocals. Talk about bringing the musicians for this project together. What was your inspiration? What makes Hallowed special?

MR: For all my ensembles, the cast of musicians has always taken its own shape as needed, evolving through the years and one configuration leading naturally to the next. The current ensemble members have been with me for many years. It feels like family. They are more bilingual than in the past, in that both Latin and jazz feels more natural for all, which makes my musical presentation work best.

Hallowed consists of a suite presented as the first ten tracks, plus two other very different tracks. The instrumental suite “Oru de Oro” (Room of Gold) is compositionally built around sacred Batá language—rhythmic patterns in a set sequence that call forth various entities/energies [Oru Seco or Oru del Igbo]. We dance around THEM. Soloists are hitting hard as written and improvisational elements interact. The Batá and its tradition are central and fully intact. This appears to be a first—a fully orchestrated and intact Oru Seco. Those familiar with the form say it’s groundbreaking. It requires that one be equally immersed in both jazz and Cuban folkloric language and traditions and have the propensity to take a journey deeply into an oral tradition that masters teach to those they deem worthy. I didn’t learn jazz in a classroom either, have had to do “the deep hang” in more than one world. Track 11, “The Wind is The First To Know”, is built around traditional vocals and batá in a series of prayers and cantos [songs]. Horn interludes and solos lead into and out of Ninna Rodríguez’ beautiful lead vocals. This track is a complete contrast to all other tracks on this recording, as the final track is also purely instrumental. I first contributed “Alabanza” as pianist and composer to a Latin-grammy-winning release by the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra [led by Arturo O’Farrill] that we recorded in Cuba in 2014.

TNYCJR: Tell me about your beginnings as a musician. Were you raised in a musical family?

MR: I first touched a piano at age six when my folks brought an old upright home. I never really had this thought until now, but how did they know? That piano felt like Christmas every day. I started exploring. After a few years, I took lessons and learned to read music. My parents were very artistic and politically active.

TNYCJR: How did your love for jazz develop? Who did you listen to? Who were you musical heroes?

MR: My first love was old school R&B. I loved The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, The Stylistics, Aretha [Franklin], Ray Charles, Smokey [Robinson], Curtis Mayfield, The Dells. My folks listened to a lot of traditional jazz: Ella, Duke, Oscar Peterson, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday. I also heard music from around the world: Calypso, Brazilian music from the mountains of Chile, East India, Africa. Spiritually-based music moved me. I was drawn to music that had detail, surprise, mystery, depth and to improvisation. The harmonic colors in jazz, the intricate melodies and rhythmic intricacies, I was hearing things and trying to play them. When I was in my early teens I read a book by Martin Williams about the social and political significance of jazz as America’s indigenous music. This music that compelled me so was now tapping my intellect and emotions on another level. Eventually, I began to have musical heroes: Monk, Coltrane, Lee Morgan, Bobby Timmons, Miles, Art Blakey, Wayne Shorter, Elvin Jones, Oliver Lake, Baikida Carroll, Julius Hemphill, Bobby Bradford, Dewey Redman, Nikki Giovanna, Betty Carter... When I auditioned for the Laney Junior College big band in Oakland and got in. Everything jumped off from there. Ed became my true mentor, my greatest direct influence and a beloved friend until his passing in 2005. He was a hands-on piano teacher. He made everything his. He was a completely original voice and a stone-cold traditionalist at the same time. He would play in the styles of Earl ‘Fatha’ Hines, Oscar Peterson, Bud Powell, and Sonny Stitt. He’d take over his glasses and ask, “Who’s this?” And then he’d hit some secret dissonant bell-tone chord and let it ring while we felt the air transform. Without saying a word, he taught us that music is sound. His playing was a slow boil; he would build it up and then burst out with incredible originality. He was full of humor, musically and personally. I hung, learned, jammed, started playing with R&B and jazz groups in nearby clubs.

I saw a sign on a street post on the Laney campus offering a summer class in Afro Cuban percussion. Marcus Gordon was the instructor. He was blessedly put in my path. We went straight into various forms of rhumba and spiritually-based Cuban folkloric music. As I often say, my musical path was born right then and there, although I did not know it at the time. Marcus was a percussionist and percussionist Orlanda “Puntilla” Rios arrived in New York from Cuba in 1980 and brought ancient traditions here that had not been accessible before. Many of us attribute any depth of knowledge and experience to having been invited into his world. We found in him our most valuable and profound foundation for all to come.

TNYCJR: What were significant early milestones in your career?

MR: Becoming next-door neighbors [1975-78] in San Francisco with the great trumpeter/composer Baikida Carroll, through whom I met and played with Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake, Julian Priester. Meeting and hearing BAG and AACM members who stayed with him during those years. Creating and performing with the great cornet player, composer and conductor Butch Morris. Jimmy Lyons of Cecil Taylor’s group telling me I should move to New York. Playing at The Keystone Korner on a double bill with my mentor Ed Kelly right before moving to New York. Oliver Lake giving me my first important performance opportunity in New York at Carnegie Hall in 1979. Performing with my own group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums. Meeting and hearing Butch performing with his group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums. Meeting and hearing Butch performing with his group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums. Meeting and hearing Butch performing with his group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums. Meeting and hearing Butch performing with his group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums. Meeting and hearing Butch performing with his group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums. Meeting and hearing Butch performing with his group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums. Meeting and hearing Butch performing with his group for the first time in NYC at PS. 41, featuring Baikida on trumpet, Abdul Wadud on cello and Skip Brown on drums.
Sullivan Fortner is a talented pianist whose career has lately been on the straight-up ramp: in the last few years he was Cécile McLorin-Salvant’s duo partner on the Grammy-winning album The Window; contributed to Paul Simon’s 2018 album In The Blue Light; released his own second album Moments Preserved (Impulse); and headlined for a full week at the Village Vanguard. At only 33, the sky’s the limit for Fortner. But like most people, musical or not, the coronavirus quarantine has put his career on hold.

He had been scheduled to perform an original six-movement suite at The Jazz Gallery this month. Fortner wrote it years ago [the first three movements were recorded on his 2015 debut album for Impulse, Aria], but with large gatherings in New York on hold, he won’t be performing it for several months, if at all. Nonetheless, Fortner says that he is revising the suite. “I don’t think [the performance] is happening,” he says “but since I have some downtime, I’m changing some things...it’s interesting looking back at it and thinking, ‘I would never do that now!’”

Fortner looks back with similar interest, and some surprise, at the beginnings of his musical career. Like many people, he is struck by the combination of random coincidence and important relationships that led him into his profession. It all started when, at the age of four, little Sullivan fell in love with the organ player at his local church choir. “She was always really sweet to me,” Fortner says, “and one day she sat me on her lap and showed me how to press a note on the organ. And I thought ‘Oh, it does this? This is really cool!’ So at home I would climb on the top of the television and the bannister and beat out the rhythms inadvertently discovered his musical talent when “one day, the Jeopardy theme song came on television and I played it back.” His mother was astonished, “I don’t think [the performance] is happening,” he says “but since I have some downtime, I’m changing some things...it’s interesting looking back at it and thinking, ‘I would never do that now!’”

Fortner’s career: he played with Hargrove’s band until months after Kendrick began watching Fortner play, he had to back out of a tour with Hargrove at the last moment. As his replacement, he recommended Fortner. Fortner says that Kendrick “gave my number to Ragman, who was Larry Clothier, Roy’s manager. But Ragman’s like, ‘I don’t know who this kid is. Who the hell is this kid? I’m not going on your recommendation. Let me get somebody else.’” Clothier then happened to call Jonathan Batiste, who also recommended Fortner. “So he’s like, okay, well Rodney recommends you and Jonathan recommends you, we’ll give you a shot.” Fortner played the tour, became a sub, then went on to become Hargrove’s full-time pianist for about seven years. “Still to this day,” Fortner says, “I learned more playing with Roy than I did going to any school. He taught me so much, he gave me so much.” A great compliment to Hargrove, considering that Fortner attended two of the most famous music schools in America.

This takes us almost to the present moment in Fortner’s career: he played with Hargrove’s band until 2017. In 2018, there was the Salvant (of her, he says: “Cécile is an amazing artist and an amazing person...I’m inspired by her all the time”) and Simon albums and Fortner releasing his own second album, Moments Preserved, which he says was inspired by his interest “in the older masters, the stride [piano style] guys: Fats Waller, James P. Johnson. I had a period where I’d research piano players that everybody talks about and then research their teachers...trying to figure out what made this music up in the past and what makes it up now. That was the theme for Moments Preserved.” And this year, he and bassist Rufus Reid released a duo album on LP, Always In The Moment, as part of Newvelle Records’ subscription series.

And although the music world has outwardly come to a standstill in 2020, he has much more planned. Alongside his Jazz Gallery suite, Fortner has plans for a solo album and for a grant-funded trip to West Africa to study percussion. His goal for the trip, he says, is to “pursue a different sound. My mind has kind of been wrapped around the sound and I’m not entirely sure what it is yet, but I know that it’s there.” Fortunately or not, Fortner now has some time to figure it out. Like most people’s plans, his are up in the air. ☁️
There are individuals, polymaths, in whom the creative impulse is so strong it seeks multiple outlets to express itself. Such a one is Doug Hammond, who shines as a composer, writer, poet, percussionist, singer, producer and coordinator. Of his various interests he says, “Doing all of these activities is living a complete life where all needed realities are available. The work is there if one has the passion, and I mean passion, to do the work wholeheartedly.”

This multi-parite journey has taken him far and wide internationally, working with and alongside giants of the music/jazz world, such as Betty Carter, Chet Baker, Smokey Robinson, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Kenny Dorham, Nina Simone and many more, in styles ranging from blues and bop to soul jazz, free funk and avant garde. Since 1989, Hammond has split his time between Detroit, MI and Linz, Austria where he taught drums, composition and ensemble at Anton Bruckner Private University. Although he retired from that position in 2008, he remains a part-time resident, working with European-based musicians.

Hammond was born on Dec. 26th, 1942 in Tampa, Florida to ballroom dancer parents who introduced him early on to the music of the day. “Jazz was ever present,” he says. “My mother and father were also tailors of the highest grade. My father made me a three-piece pin-striped suit when I was three or four and took me to see them dance to the Count Basie and Duke Ellington orchestras.” Hammond originally fell drawn to the violin, but a necessity was first directed to the trombone and eventually wound up with drums in junior high. He’s said about drums that rhythm is the key—since rhythm is the basis of life. His music composition training started then as well, under the tutelage of Thomas J. Simpson. “My first composing was for the snare drum,” he relates. “A few passages and short sketches, which I showed to the drum teachers. The feedback was critical, noting that young Doug Hammond was trying to be too complex. “He was right,” Hammond adds, “He said to me, compose like a rhythm melody and as simple as possible.” Hammond took his advice and began composing cadences for the school’s marching bands, adding tympani to his repertoire.

Privately, Hammond studied for four years with Don Templeton of the Tampa Metropolitan Symphony, which prepared him for a classical career that was never realized being the color barrier of the time. This issue was not the case in the Motor City, where Hammond headed in 1965. There he performed Focus Novi with James “Blood” Ulmer, Patrick Lanier, John Dana and William T. Wiggins. The group undertook dramatic presentations interweaving music, text, poetry, song and dance in styles from blues, jazz, R&B and spirituals to modern classical forms. Hammond also became a founding member of the Detroit Creative Musicians Association, serving as vice president and coordinator. He also became associated with Tritone Records, a student exchange label that was to focus on black independence, socio-political commentary and musical experimentation, founded in the early ‘70s by Phil Ranelin and Wendell Harrison.

Around that time Hammond composed “Moves”, which was eventually recorded by Charles Mingus on the Mingus Moves album, with Hammond, joined by Honi Gordon for a vocal duet. (Hammond joined Mingus’ band while living for a short time in New York City.) He also composed the more commercially oriented “Wake Up Brothers” and “For Real,” both protests against the Vietnam War. These three compositions were included in Hammond’s seminal work, Reflections in the Sea of Nurnen (a reference to the J.R.R. Tolkien The Lord of The Rings epic), which was recorded in 1975 after Hammond’s move to California. His thoughts about the album reveal Hammond’s lifelong pursuit of creativity out of the box, especially avoidance of the commercial. He says, “I composed ‘Wake Up Bothers’ and ‘For Real’ with hope the band would go on and make work for themselves, because that was never a direction I could embrace as a career.”

The album (on Tribe Records) featured Hammond on vocals, drums, melodica and ARP synthesizer, co-leading with David Durrah on piano, Fender Rhodes, Moog and ARP synthesizer. Charles Metcalfe on bass violin and electric bass, Otis Harris on alto saxophone, Thomas Taylor and Fredrick Boon on tenor saxophone, and Henning Ørsted Pedersen. McLean was named an NEA Jazz Master in 2001. His legacy lives on in his son René and many former students currently making up the modern jazz pantheon. McLean is buried, along with other jazz greats, in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Recommended Listening:

- Jackie McLean – Bluesnik (Blue Note, 1961)
- Jackie McLean – Let Freedom Ring (Blue Note, 1962)
- Jackie McLean – One Step Beyond (Blue Note, 1963)
- Jackie McLean/Michael Carvin – Antiquity (SteepleChase, 1973)
- Jackie McLean – Left Alone ’86 (Paddle Wheel-Evidence, 1986)

A tribute to McLean led by Eric Person was scheduled to be at Stiusos’ Place.

Recommended Listening:

- Jackie McLean – Bluesnik (Blue Note, 1961)
- Jackie McLean – Let Freedom Ring (Blue Note, 1962)
- Jackie McLean – One Step Beyond (Blue Note, 1963)
- Jackie McLean/Michael Carvin – Antiquity (SteepleChase, 1973)
- Jackie McLean – Left Alone ’86 (Paddle Wheel-Evidence, 1986)
Improvisational music is a search for beauty, a ruminatation on what is between the spaces and subsequent cracks between sonic forces. Indianapolis-based Family Vineyard has dedicated itself to documenting said cracks by expressing a love for improvisational and free jazz characteristics. Family Vineyard proudly states its motto as “newfangled and archaic sounds aim to perfection,” which is a fitting exclamation to its output. With a roster of artists including Loren Mazzacane Connors, Chris Corsano, Akira Sakata and others, Family Vineyard showcases what the Midwest has to offer in the modern jazz scene.

Since its inception in 1999, Family Vineyard has received acclaim from notable periodicals. Additionally singer/songwriter John Darnielle in his blog Last Plane to Jakarta sang his praises for the label by stating, “Family Vineyard occupy a particular corner of the music universe, serving up equal parts talent, ambition and pretension from people who don’t shrink from the word ‘artist’ and who make honest, blood-leaking efforts to be worthy of the name.”

The genesis of Family Vineyard began with the establishing of a different label. In 1996, Eric Weddle, while a student at Indiana University, co-founded the label Secretly Canadian with three friends. Weddle and Co. modeled the label based on the punk ethos of independent labels such as Touch & Go, K and Dischord. As Weddle states, “We were drawn to artists who held an unquestionable vision. A few years later I started Family Vineyard as a means to release more avant garde music.” Family Vineyard’s first two releases came out in 1999. The first was Strict by Bruce Anderson and Dale Sophie. It traversed the thin line between experimental rock music and noise textures. The website Aural-Innovations in their review said, “this is an intriguing set that will appeal to fans of experimental guitar landscapes that straddle the border between ambience and noise.” The second was The Lost Mariner by Darin Gray and Mazzacane Connors. In his review in AllMusic, Dean McFarlane states, “proving that delicate and pensive moments can exist in even the most challenging diversions of avant garde music, The Lost Mariner is a beautiful slow-motion study of the small corners music which could only be achieved by a duet with mastery in improvisation.” In their review, The Wire stated, “there are hints of turbulence, half-repressed shivers of feedback, but the dominant mood is one of desolate beauty set against the backdrop of a vast horizon.”

Speaking on the two releases, Weddle states, “Musically, both albums stand as some of the best work by all the artists involved. I love both dearly. Subsequently, we probably should have released Strict under the band name O-Type, which those guys all had used previously and eventually we did on later releases.”

Some of the early lessons that Weddle had to learn was the idea of bitting off more than you could chew: “You fail in love with a record you’re releasing and believe rightly that so everyone else should love it too. That can lead to spending too much money on promotion and getting everyone involved expecting a big splash and there isn’t one. I think anyone releasing records can relate to that. It is important to be straightforward with what the label can provide an artist, especially very small labels like Family Vineyard. I am always learning lessons as the music industry and listeners, no matter what level you are operating at, change every few years.” Most of the challenges comes from balancing work and life. Weddle points out that “operating the label has never been a full-time endeavor. I’ve worked as a journalist for almost the entire period of the label. Finding the right balance of time to manage everything is an ongoing challenge. In the past few years the frequency of releases has slowed in relation to the time available.”

As a one-man operation, Weddle’s passion for the music is what keeps him wanting to work with artists on a consistent basis. “Truly, it’s what speaks to me musically and the artistry of the musician. I generally ask an artist or people I’ve already worked with share new recordings or projects to see if it would be a fit. Sales potential, publicity, streamability are not really considered when I decide to work with an artist or release a particular album.” Amid the uncertain times that we currently see ourselves in, Weddle is unsure of where Family Vineyard will be in the foreseeable future. “All of the record stores I love are shuttered. Most of my friends are without jobs. Tours, festivals are cancelled. The neighborhood bar I see bands at is no longer open. I have four manufactured titles—two LPs, two 10” records—and I’m unsure when each will be released due to all of this.” Whatever is on the horizon for the label, Family Vineyard has firmly placed a footprint on the modern avant garde community with a musical yield that is unlike any other.

For more information, visit family-vineyard.com
McCoy Tyner, the legendary pianist, one-quarter of one of the most famed groups in jazz, the 1960-65 John Coltrane Quartet, and having his own impressive discography, died Mar. 6th at 81 after a long illness.

Tyner was born Dec. 11th, 1938 in Philadelphia. In an interview with our own Russ Musto, Tyner recalled early exposure to Bud Powell: “He got an apartment around the corner from me and they didn’t have a piano. So my mother did hair and the lady who was the superintendent’s wife said, ‘There’s this guy around here and he’s a great pianist but he doesn’t have a piano. Can he play on your son’s piano?’ So, I lunged. I said, ‘Sure he can come around anytime he wants.’”

Tyner was only 21 when he waked his first session, Curtis Fuller’s Imagination (Savoy, 1959). He toured and recorded in early 1960 with Art Farmer/Benny Golson’s Jazztet but didn’t accept an invitation to continue because he had already pledged himself to Philadelphia transplant John Coltrane; as he recalled to Musto, “I had already played with John when I was 17 and we knew each other, like family, it was really that close.”

Tyner’s first work with Coltrane came in the summer of 1960 and he and Coltrane entered the studio for the first time together on Sep. 8th, 1960 to record a band that competes with the Miles Davis Quintet as one of the most famed groups in jazz, the 1960-65 John Coltrane Quartet, and having his own impressive discography, died Mar. 6th at 81 after a long illness.

Tyner was born Dec. 11th, 1938 in Philadelphia. In an interview with our own Russ Musto, Tyner recalled early exposure to Bud Powell: “He got an apartment around the corner from me and they didn’t have a piano. So my mother did hair and the lady who was the superintendent’s wife said, ‘There’s this guy around here and he’s a great pianist but he doesn’t have a piano. Can he play on your son’s piano?’ So, I lunged. I said, ‘Sure he can come around anytime he wants.’”

Tyner was only 21 when he waked his first session, Curtis Fuller’s Imagination (Savoy, 1959). He toured and recorded in early 1960 with Art Farmer/Benny Golson’s Jazztet but didn’t accept an invitation to continue because he had already pledged himself to Philadelphia transplant John Coltrane; as he recalled to Musto, “I had already played with John when I was 17 and we knew each other, like family, it was really that close.”

Tyner’s first work with Coltrane came in the summer of 1960 and he and Coltrane entered the studio for the first time together on Sep. 8th, 1960 to record a band that competes with the Miles Davis Quintet as one of the most famed groups in jazz, the 1960-65 John Coltrane Quartet, and having his own impressive discography, died Mar. 6th at 81 after a long illness.
SIMEON SHTEREV (Oct. 24th, 1973-Mar. 26th, 2020) The Bulgarian flutist worked in both jazz and classical spheres, released albums on his country’s state label Balkanton and later Polysound, was a member of the famed Jazz Focus 65 band alongside pianist Milcho Leviev and drummer Peter Slavov (father of bassist Peter Slavov) and recorded with Leviev, Václav Zahradník, Bosko Petrovic, Debrecen Jazz Group, Dinamit Brass Band and Pliva Jazz Laboratory among others. Shterev died Mar. 26th at 76.


BUBBA THOMAS (1937-Mar. 28th, 2020) The drummer began as a session musician, then released several albums in the ‘70s with his Lightmen (which included at times Ronnie Laws, Doug Harris and Hugh Ragin, among others) on Judnell and his own Lightnin’ imprint, which also released his 1985 boogie album. Thomas died Mar. 28th at 82.

DANNY RAY THOMPSON (Oct. 1st, 1947-Mar. 12th, 2020) The reed and wind player was a member of the Sun Ra Arkestra from the late ‘60s to the present day (toured in the late ‘80s and returning several years after Ra’s death), appearing on over 100 albums, including such seminal dates *It’s After The End Of The World - Live At The Donaueschingen And Berlin Festivals* (MPS, 1970), *Space Is The Place* (Blue Thumb, 1973), *In Egypt* (Praxis, 1985), *Reflections In Blue* (Black Saint, 1987) and *Blue Delight* (A&M, 1989) and managing the band for a period, as well as a couple of non-Ra credits with Phil Alvin and Scott Robinson, plus a co-led record with fellow Arkestra member Marshall Allen, trombonist Roswell Rudd, keyboard player Jamie Saft, bassist Trevor Dunn and drummer Balázs Pándi for RareNoise’s *Ceremonial Healing*, released in 2019. Thompson died Mar. 12th at 73.

SUSAN WEINERT (Jun. 24th, 1965-Mar. 2nd, 2020) The German fusion guitarist had several albums to her credit since the ‘90s on Select, Intuition, Skip and her own Tough Tone label, most with her bassist husband Martin Weinert. Weinert died Mar. 2nd at 54.


---

**Your Gift To The Jazz Foundation Provides Emergency Support For Basic Needs To Our Beloved Community of Jazz and Blues Musicians.**

TAKTLOS
BY JOHN SHARPE

She’s been such a fixture on the downtown scene that it’s easy to forget Brooklyn-based pianist Sylvie Courvoisier’s Swiss origins. But it meant she was perfectly placed to curate an exciting mix of American and homegrown acts for the 34th edition of the Taktlos Festival (Mar. 12th-14th) in Zürich, held in the roomy surroundings of the Kunstraturn Wachteturm, within the city’s old arsenal complex.

That the event was such a success—and indeed happened at all—owed much to the improvisatory skill of the organizers in adapting to the changes wrought by the rapidly developing coronavirus pandemic on both availability of musicians and social climate. Courvoisier both opened and closed the festival, affirming her status as one of the most complete creative musicians.

For the first set she paired with longtime collaborator violinist Mark Feldman in an unscripted, restless, uncompromising but nonetheless spellbinding duet. From the outset, the level of interaction was preternatural as if they were conversing in a deeply personal secret language. Feldman’s querulous wisps floated into the air, before Courvoisier answered by running her thumbnail along the edge of the keys. Feldman moved between whistling glissandos, vinegary sawing and plucked notes rounded off withCX.

Whether on the brooding timbral adventure of “Nightmare”, the explosive “Just Twisted” or the bright bounce of “Eclats For Ornette”, astonishing three-way interplay within the contours of Courvoisier’s slyly crafted charts formed the touchstone of a wonderful closing set.

Courvoisier’s bookending appearances weren’t the only highlights. With prospective partner Japanese drummer Akira Takase grounded on doctor’s orders, saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock reconvened Sleepthief, her improvising outfit with Rainey and British pianist Liam Noble that has released a pair of albums on local imprint Intakt. While Rainey and Laubrock enjoy a near-perfect telepathic chemistry, Noble’s prancing with them much less frequently, but his richly voiced percussive presence, repeating motifs and blocky countermotion fulfilled a key role in this unit, helping set off Laubrock’s shifts between reflective multiphonics, choppy skronk and breathy impressionism while Rainey engineered contrasts and juxtapositions as the three elements meshed in unexpected ways.

As well as being a groundbreaking electric guitarist, improviser and composer, Fred Frith also teaches at the Basel Academy of Music, an hour’s drive to the west. He conducted the 19-strong, student ensemble entitled Sonic Space through his Samuel Beckett-inspired composition “Failing Better”. Among the staggered rhythmic layers of a largely notated piece, two accomplished vocalists, Lara Miriam Süss and Marie-Louise Schneider, declaim the text in a manner recalling Kurt Weill or even Henry Cow while controlled eruptions of improvisation within the overall architecture showcased scratchy rasping cello, bowed percussion and a thorny oud/cello duet, among others. The prevailing vibe was disciplined and elegant, the outcome superb.

Pianist Cory Smythe gave a captivating and slightly unsettling solo performance, which resided at the interface between contemporary new music and free improvisation. What was remarkable was how Smythe subtly used an array of electronics and implements to alter or supplement the sound, without in any way suggesting that what we were hearing was anything other than piano. One of two Midi keyboards situated within the body of the grand enabled microtonal flourish, making it seem that Smythe was flexing the tonality of the instrument. Towards the end, in apparently surreal anticipation of the looming pandemic, Smythe donned a gas mask with a tube linked into the electronics, which made it possible to give sustained tones a vocalized shape. Add to that passages of spectral resonance and crashing thunder and the whole recital took on a dream-like, otherworldly dimension.

Feldman’s Maniac was comprised of Courvoisier and Swiss guitarist Dave Gisler, and saxophonist Tobias Meier and drummer Jonas Ruth, with guest Ramon Landolt on keyboards; without solos they gradually built to a thumping crescendo, from which they slowly withdrew. Similarly selfless, Special Circumstance also included Landolt in their number along with his brother guitarist Dominik, saxophonist Tapiwa Svosve, accordion player Tizia Zimmermann and drummer David Meier to display impressive shared restraint across similar but more open terrain. Initially delicate with sporadic flare-ups, none of the instruments appeared constrained to their customary roles, an approach that continued even when they took an aggressive turn into a synchronous beat with a middle eastern modality.

Two days after the festival finished, the Swiss authorities prohibited all public gatherings, restrictions that have now covered most of the continent. It now seems to belong to another time. But when normality is restored, Taktlos should figure highly in anyone’s concert calendar.

For more information, visit taktlos.com

Mark Feldman & Sylvie Courvoisier

For more information, visit taktlos.com

883fm
WBGO.org

Sundays on WBGO
8-10AM
WBGO Swing Party with Bob Porter
10AM-2PM
Singers Unlimited with Michael Bourne

12 MAY 2020 | THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD
Ellington’s orchestrations and compositions; I live there, am home there. Phillip Elwood, a Bay Area jazz critic, out of nowhere, asked in ’73 if I wanted to be a guest at the Keystone Korner to hear Cecil Taylor. I went four out of six nights. I realized months later that I had been deeply transformed as a pianist. Randy Weston I heard later in life. When I did, I was struck by what felt like heavy parallels. His angularity, rhythmic orientation, synthesis of idioms and influences add up to something I feel very close to. He loved Duke and Monk and Billy Strayhorn, as I do I. We became friends. I had the dream to play duo with Randy.

MR: Of course, it has had its challenges and I do have stories to tell. I started my own groups because I was ready to go—writing and ready to play—but wasn’t getting calls. So that was not a bad thing ultimately. When I was 18-19 and realized my position as a woman in this society, damn straight I was mad. That was a part of my necessary process and good for me. But I identified with the jazz field as a whole as well as all others who were wronged, mistreated, left out. In hindsight, many things happened that I just felt puzzled about and I moved on. When I look back, I can say, “oh yeah, that probably went down like that because I’m a woman.” I had my strategies and avoided many pitfalls. I’ve learned to surround myself with all the right people, feeling nothing but love and support from ensemble members and my advocates and allies. It’s changing but in some ways maybe never will. Racism and sexism go deep. Once the ‘quota’ is met, you are dispensable. Only so many of us are allowed through at one time.

MR: Heath smiled at me on stage throughout all of my solos. Billy Hart, incredibly humble, serious and funny, quirky and deep. When Reggie Workman and I played duo he kept calling tunes I didn’t know. I was truly embarrassed and apologetic and said so afterwards. He looked angry and said, “you ain’t ‘POSED to have that all memorized. You’re a composer and busy creating your OWN musical standards.” In all honesty I might have taken that too much to heart. I could stand to have a greater repertoire of memorized standards.

MR: Let’s talk about some of your recordings. Your first recording was as a pianist and arranger for the Cuban group Los Kimy in 1981. What is it about Latin, especially Cuban music, that fueled your lifelong passion?

MC: Can’t fully put it in words. Once it touched me, it never let go. And it has followed me as much as I have followed it. I don’t believe that we come to this life as a blank slate, besides the fact that my roots include ancestry from Spain and North Africa and Cuba IS Spain and Africa. The Los Kimy band members found me. That was a crazy and exciting time in my life. I love this recording to this day.

MR: That was a deep compliment. A first recording as leader is always a landmark moment, to the public as well. It garnered my first major reviews. I chose to record in an uncompromising way, not knowing if the broader public would receive it well, as it was quite avant garde from beginning to end. For me, it represents early stages of development.

TNYCJR: Talk about your ensembles and recordings. Who were your most important collaborators?

MR: I mainly presented trios and my Quintessence and New Yor-Uba ensembles. Trios with masters Rufus Reid, Billy Hart, Freddie Waits. My first trio recording was with Rufus and Ralph Peterson. Later, I had the ongoing trio with Kenny Davis on bass and Gene Jackson on drums that recorded Spirit live at the Montréal Jazz Festival. They were the rhythm section for my Quintessence ensemble for a lot of years and we were so connected.

MR: Quintessence was my main vehicle as pianist and composer for creating and presenting unique, challenging music. This ensemble always had a two-horn original voice front line including Greg Osby, Steve Coleman, Gary Thomas, Steve Wilson, Mark Shim and Miguel Zenón. The rhythm section players and approach were equally vital to the ensemble sound I strived for.

MR: This has been a journey of more than 35 years. New Yor-Uba is my longest-standing ensemble, having debuted in 1983. Puntilla was with me for 25 years. He brought Pedrito Martinez and Román Díaz in. So when he passed in 2008, they became central. We forever play in Puntilla’s honor. We finally released our debut recording, New Yor-Uba, 30 Years!, in 2013. Two original members are on it, Oliver Lake and Howard Johnson, and it features Pedrito Martinez on vocals and Román Diaz, Pedrito and Abraham Rodriguez on bata, Freddie Hendrix and Mike Payen and tuba player Jon Sass; and Czech avant garde bassist Jiří Slavík. In 2010, after a 16-year run, Hammond ended his work as Coordinator of the Jazz am Berg series in Linz, Austria for world-class, international jazz and blues artists. As for poetry, which he began writing as a schoolboy, his works include In This Maze of Seeming Wonders (1974), Lonely Music Man (1982), Times on the Planet Earth (2000), The Offer (2001) and e-book The Dope of Power (2011). About his artistry he concludes, “One defining, fact—99 percent of my work is not about me or my attitude or personality. It is only about the music and creative input and much more, which words cannot describe. There is no commonality even in one area. If there is such, it is for the listeners to enjoy.”

For more information, visit doughammond.org

Recommended Listening:
• Doug Hammond & David Durrant—Reflections In The Sea of Nurnen (Idibib/Tribe—Pure Pleasure, 1975)
• James “Blood” Ulmer—Reveling (In+Out, 1977)
• Doug Hammond Trio—Perspicuity (L+R, 1981-82)
• Doug Hammond—Spaces (Idibib-Manufactured, 1982)
• Doug Hammond—New Beginning (Blue Marge, 2009-10)

FIDOqrtet
Maryanne de Prophètes... Shoko Nagai
Ron Horton... Satoshi Takeishi

Available on fidoqrtet.hearnow.com AmazonMusic
VISIT...ennarecords.com/new

“Quite original and extremely creative...it’s very easy to get drawn deeply into their creations...sublime and exciting”
Maurice Hogue—onemanasjazz—March 5, 2020
FIDOqrtet is filled with extravagant decisions, modern ideas and dynamic turns, bright and luminous—*
Avant Scena, February 2020

***CD Release Concert Date TBA @
Zürcher Gallery
33 Bleecker Street, NYC
Please visit galeriezurcher.com for concert dates

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | MAY 2020 13
Most jazz tributes take the logical, if uninspired, approach of assembling a band to perform the music of a noted artist. Sometimes the rearrangements can be quite radical, as on trumpeter Nate Wooley’s 2015 CD (Dance to) the Early Music, on which he interpreted and paid tribute to the early ‘80s work of Wynton Marsalis. Too often, though, they’re just wannabes.

Trumpeter Dave Douglas prefers a different method. In February 2018, he prepared a concert program, presented by Jazz at Lincoln Center and showcasing a band of Ambrose Akinnusie on second trumpet, Bill Friess on guitar, Gerald Clayton on piano, Linda May Han Oh on bass and Joey Baron on drums. They performed a few Gillespie compositions, but most of the music was written by Douglas, with Gillespie as inspiration. This studio album features an almost entirely different ensemble. Dave Adewumi is in the second trumpet spot; Matt Stevens, who has worked with Esperanza Spalding and Christian Scott, is on guitar; Fabian Almazan is on piano; and Carmen Rothwell is on bass. Baron is still behind the kit.

Ultimately, this is an album that stands on its own—its main source of inspiration is Douglas’ “Pickin’ the Cabbage” and “Manteca.” The former, with its shuffling beat and old-timey growing horn riffs (it was written when Gillespie was a member of Cab Calloway’s band), has an off-kilter exuberance that brings to mind the Ghost Train Orchestra; the horns go at each other hard, the guitar has real bite and when Baron takes a solo before the final head, he drags the whole thing straight into the gutter. The latter embraces the energy of Latin jazz while dodging all the genre’s clichés; Stevens’ solo recalls Marc Ribot’s work with Tom Waits. Among the original tunes, “Cadillac” has a spacious warmth not unlike the music of Douglas’ recent quintet; the call and response of Gillespie’s “Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac” are affectionately hinted at, but not mimicked.

Some things happen by accident. Sometimes the best things happen almost by accident. Saxophonist Dave Remps assembled the starry crew of improvisers on Of Things Beyond Thule at Chicago’s Hungry Brain for a one-off meeting when he found them all either in town or available in December 2018. While some connections existed between reedplayer/trumpeter Brandon Lopez, pianist Cedar Walton, 30 and bassist Reggie Workman, 26, since taking the Jazz Messengers from a collective to his own band in 1956, Blakey was already establishing it as a jazz “finishing school” for young musicians, something it would remain for the rest of his life.

Reissues of vinyl LPs like these have plusses and minuses. On the plus side is the rich, vibrant sound quality of the discs themselves, the sound unmediated by digital alteration. But that also makes the sound more alien, especially in the case of live on-site recordings like the two Jazz Corner of the World ones. Unfortunately Birdland wasn’t an ideal location for live recordings and the sound, while immediate and very alive, also includes such distractions as an out-of-tune piano and horns that don’t always face the microphones. Indestructible! is much better; recorded by Rudy Van Gelder at his studio, it is a completely satisfying aural experience.

But what distinguishes these LPs most is the high quality of the music. The Jazz Messengers heard at Birdland had just returned to Blakey’s Big Apple base from a European tour, during which they played boppish West Coast. The repertoire was well seasoned and the performances are assured, everything clicking in place with rhythmic panache. The Birdland session (the whole night in two volumes) displays the breadth of the band’s command, from the bluesy mood of Hank Mobley’s “High Modes”, featuring a rare Harmon-muted Morgan solo, to a “Round Midnight” adapting aspects of Gil Evans’ chart for Miles Davis’ 1956 recording, but shifting the coda to an intro. Turnarounds and tempo shifts also occur effortlessly on “The Breeze and I” and Shorter’s “The Summit”, with the aplomb only a constantly working band can execute perfectly.

The studio sessions on Indestructible!, obviously not as well known as the Birdland repertoire, is just as flawlessly played. Fuller is fully integrated—Shorter was the musical director—and he contributes two originals, including a “Sortie” enlivened by polyrhythmic 12/8 time shifts by Blakey, whose drumkit rallies, pushes, cheers and goads soloists. Walton’s “When Love Is New” also demonstrates that although the Jazz Messengers were a hard-driving, swinging unit, they could also caress a ballad with proper tenderness.

Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 1

Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 2

Indestructible!

Indestructible!

The Complete Piano Duets

Psychedelic Backfire I

Eponymous

AfroHORN

Who Sent You?

Ralph M. Jones/Hamid Drake—Live in Willisau

Imaginary Archipelago

Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner—Always in The Moment

Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner—Always in The Moment (Newvelle)

For more information, visit bluepointmusic.com. A Blakey tribute was scheduled to be at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.

For more information, visit aerophonicrecords.com. McPhee was scheduled to be at 244 Rehearsal Studios.

These three reissued LPs present two versions of the early 60s Jazz Messengers that featured trumpeter Lee Morgan and tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, who were 22 and 27, respectively, when the live Jazz Corner of the World sessions were recorded. Birdland on Sep. 14th, 1960. Drummer/leader Art Blakey was the elder at 40 while recently departed bassist Jymie Merritt was 34, pianist Bobby Timmons, 24. So three 20-somethings were the main soloists in what is considered one of the classic editions in the over-three-decades of Jazz Messengers history.

Morgan and Shorter were still on board over three years later when the studio album Indestructible! was recorded in April 1964, adding Curtis Fuller, 29, on trombone and featuring pianist Cedar Walton, 30 and bassist Reggie Workman, 26. Since taking the Jazz Messengers from a collective to his own band in 1956, Blakey was already establishing it as a jazz ‘finishing school’ for young musicians, something it would remain for the rest of his life.

Reissues of vinyl LPs like these have plusses and minuses. On the plus side is the rich, vibrant sound quality of the discs themselves, the sound unmediated by digital alteration. But that also makes the sound more alien, especially in the case of live on-site recordings like the two Jazz Corner of the World ones. Unfortunately Birdland wasn’t an ideal location for live recordings and the sound, while immediate and very alive, also includes such distractions as an out-of-tune piano and horns that don’t always face the microphones. Indestructible! is much better; recorded by Rudy Van Gelder at his studio, it is a completely satisfying aural experience.

But what distinguishes these LPs most is the high quality of the music. The Jazz Messengers heard at Birdland had just returned to Blakey’s Big Apple base from a European tour, during which they played boppish West Coast. The repertoire was well seasoned and the performances are assured, everything clicking in place with rhythmic panache. The Birdland session (the whole night in two volumes) displays the breadth of the band’s command, from the bluesy mood of Hank Mobley’s “High Modes”, featuring a rare Harmon-muted Morgan solo, to a “Round Midnight” adapting aspects of Gil Evans’ chart for Miles Davis’ 1956 recording, but shifting the coda to an intro. Turnarounds and tempo shifts also occur effortlessly on “The Breeze and I” and Shorter’s “The Summit”, with the aplomb only a constantly working band can execute perfectly.

The studio sessions on Indestructible!, obviously not as well known as the Birdland repertoire, is just as flawlessly played. Fuller is fully integrated—Shorter was the musical director—and he contributes two originals, including a “Sortie” enlivened by polyrhythmic 12/8 time shifts by Blakey, whose drumkit rallies, pushes, cheers and goads soloists. Walton’s “When Love Is New” also demonstrates that although the Jazz Messengers were a hard-driving, swinging unit, they could also caress a ballad with proper tenderness.

Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 1

Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 2

Indestructible!

Indestructible!

The Complete Piano Duets

Psychedelic Backfire I

Eponymous

AfroHORN

Who Sent You?

Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner—Always in The Moment

Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner—Always in The Moment (Newvelle)

For more information, visit bluepointmusic.com. A Blakey tribute was scheduled to be at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.

Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 1

Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World, Volume 2

Indestructible!

Indestructible!

The Complete Piano Duets

Psychedelic Backfire I

Eponymous

AfroHORN

Who Sent You?

Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner—Always in The Moment

Rufus Reid/Sullivan Fortner—Always in The Moment (Newvelle)

For more information, visit bluepointmusic.com. A Blakey tribute was scheduled to be at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.
Robby Ameen’s leader work showcases his distinctive druming, applied to a wide array of musical contexts, from straightahead and fusion to pop and rock. Diluvio (Spanish for flood), his third effort, finds him in the company of saxophonists Troy Roberts and Bob Francescini, trombonist Conrad Herwig, pianists Edsel Gomez and Bill O’Connell, electric/acoustic bassist Lincoln Goines and conguero Mauricio Herrera.

The music, predominantly Ameen’s compositions, is jarring in its originality, both rhythmically and harmonically much unlike anything else heard today. The opening “Fast Eye” lives up to its title, rapid-fire drumming and insistently ringing cowbell driving the two tenors in their harmonically distinctive directions. Francescini’s use of electronic effects conjures Eddie Harris and Rahsaan Roland Kirk, before Herwig swings straightahead, introducing a series of exchanges between the horns and drums followed by a Fender Rhodes interlude, the exchanges continuing to an exhilarating finish. “Crement” is a funky tipico outing with a steady conga beat underpinning soulful solos by Herwig, Francescini (again utilizing effects) and Gomez (now on piano) and Goines (on electric), which kicks off the ensuing “Tempest Dance”, a melodic Caribbean-tinged excursion with a climactic drum solo.

Ameen’s beautiful arrangement of Bach’s “Herr Jesu Christ, wahr’ er bitt bist” (Will Anderson) and “Aria” has intertwining soprano saxophones in an ascendant dialogue over the slow cadenced foundation of the rhythm section. O’Connell joins the fray on Fender Rhodes, in tandem with Gomez piano, for “The Drifter’s Plan”, reminiscent of Herbie Hancock’s Headhunters. He then takes over the piano chair for the remainder of the date, beginning with “Mixology”, a two-tenor quintet romp through rhythm changes culminating with a lyrical acoustic bass solo. “Into The Clear” is a lilthly wafting ballad that features Roberts’ tenor and Herwig’s sensitive brushwork. The soulful arrangement of Gerry Mulligan’s “Line For Lyons” has trombone and baritone (Francescini) filling the frontline with tenor (Roberts). The date comes to an exciting finish with Roberts’ arrangement of “Impressions”, on which he overdubs several harmonized horn parts on top of a tenor-drums duet.

This is an odd record, though that’s not a pejorative. This live set was recorded back in 2007, not so distant a point in history that one cannot recall the period, the exhaustion of what had then been only six years of war, growth of the surveillance state, contempt for humanity shown through torture and the neglect of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Yet nothing about the playing sounds like 2007, nor any era in which it is featured is where the duo is at its best, notably in dialectical contradiction with the real units of a post-nations world—communities. Newton’s theory had an unforeseen posterity in the work of French pianist François Tusques. This new archival release featuring a live 2007 duet with drummer Sunny Murray clearly references—up to the cover’s typography—Tusques’ 1971 masterwork Intercommunal Music. Recorded for the Shandar label with Murray and five other Americans-in-Paris, that 1971 date was not originally supposed to be an occult affair. It is easy to imagine that it is in a “what if” spirit that the 2007 duet was organized and filmed for Antoine Prum’s Murray documentary Sunny’s Time Now. Although identified with free jazz’ heydays, Tusques has always been a composer first. His great strength has been to constitute a deep but unaffected repertoire of personal, often blues-based compositions offering enough contact surface to work back anew in many contexts. “Au Chat qui pêche” is titled after the Paris club where Don Cherry perfected the suite form heard on Complete Communion. Tusques is one of the rare musicians who carried on Cherry’s approach, segueing from theme to theme with an improvisational ease, magnifying them into renewed assemblages. It is the modus operandi used here, on four ten-minute walks through a dozen Tusques pieces, plus a Monk tune that feels at home. Murray is mostly in the accompanist’s role, focusing alternately on different parts on the kit, playing his unique take on cymbal swing, classic left-foot-hi-hat free pulse and compact solos. The one direct musical nod to Intercommunal Music is “Portrait of Ericka Huggins”, a wonderful theme that had slipped out of Tusques’ repertoire. The side on which it is featured is where the duo is at its best, notably providing the opportunity to hear Murray’s low-intensity playing in excellent sound quality.

By 2007, Huey Newton had been dead—shot by a crack cocaine dealer—for almost two decades, the Black Panther Party was a distant memory shrouded in the shadows of COINTELPRO and music just wasn’t made as it used to in 1971. But it continued to be something else, and a great something at that.

For more information, visit outsideinmusic.com. The Andersons were scheduled to be at Birdland and Dizzy’s Club.

The Complete Night: Live at The Stone NYC
The MacroQuartet (Out Of Your Head)
by George Cetella

Featuring Jimmy Cobb
Peter and Will Anderson (Outside In Music)
by Marilyn Lester

Identical twins Peter and Will Anderson are versatile reed masters, the former specializing in tenor saxophone and the latter in the latter in the latter’s soprano, clarinet and flute. They were mentored by giants of the reed, chiefly Joe Temperley, Benny Golson (who wrote the liner notes) and Victor Goines. For their latest album, their tenth, they concentrate strictly on their respective saxophone talents, applied to a mix of standards and new tunes (many of them contrafacts).

Their choice of Jimmy Cobb respects tradition. There’s no heavy lifting required of the drummer, but his steady, creative work undergirds the totality of the ten tracks. His brief solos on “Rhythm in F” (Peter Anderson) and “Jeannine” (Duke Pearson) demonstrate his prodigious chops the best. These two pieces are the most adventurous and energetic, cooking with fast-paced bop tempos and creative phrasings and riffs. By contrast, two ballads, “Autumn in New York” (Vernon Duke) and “Polka Dots and Moonbeams” (Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke), are gently played works and don’t drift too far from the melody but still include enough creative ideas to make the pieces fresh.

What’s remarkable is the synergy between the brothers, paradoxically individualistic in their playing and yet at the same time eerily similar in their voicings. Beyond receiving the same training, this phenomenon is likely due to that psychic bond that twins often share. Hence, when they harmonize together, notably on “Pick Your Spot” (Will Anderson) and “Jeannine”, the sound has a special, soulful quality. Another high point is Will Anderson’s “Hot and Cold”, a contrafact of that favorite jazz standard “Body and Soul” (Johnny Green), transmuted into an uptempo romp with Will’s fast and expert fingerling driving the work forward to a satisfying conclusion.

Aside from the steady, solid presence of Cobb, the rhythm section is rounded out by pianist Jeb Patton and bassist David Wong. Both expertly provide supportive backup. Their playing never overwhelms, and bassist Wong’s work in particular from 1959 on.

For more information, visit originarts.com. This project was scheduled to be at Nublu 151.

For more information, visit outsideinmusic.com. The Andersons were scheduled to be at Birdland and Dizzy’s Club.

The Complete Night: Live at The Stone NYC
The MacroQuartet (Out Of Your Head)
by George Cetella

Featuring Jimmy Cobb
Peter and Will Anderson (Outside In Music)
by Marilyn Lester

Identical twins Peter and Will Anderson are versatile reed masters, the former specializing in tenor saxophone and the latter in the latter’s soprano, clarinet and flute. They were mentored by giants of the reed, chiefly Joe Temperley, Benny Golson (who wrote the liner notes) and Victor Goines. For their latest album, their tenth, they concentrate strictly on their respective saxophone talents, applied to a mix of standards and new tunes (many of them contrafacts).

Their choice of Jimmy Cobb respects tradition. There’s no heavy lifting required of the drummer, but his steady, creative work undergirds the totality of the ten tracks. His brief solos on “Rhythm in F” (Peter Anderson) and “Jeannine” (Duke Pearson) demonstrate his prodigious chops the best. These two pieces are the most adventurous and energetic, cooking with fast-paced bop tempos and creative phrasings and riffs. By contrast, two ballads, “Autumn in New York” (Vernon Duke) and “Polka Dots and Moonbeams” (Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke), are gently played works and don’t drift too far from the melody but still include enough creative ideas to make the pieces fresh.

What’s remarkable is the synergy between the brothers, paradoxically individualistic in their playing and yet at the same time eerily similar in their voicings. Beyond receiving the same training, this phenomenon is likely due to that psychic bond that twins often share. Hence, when they harmonize together, notably on “Pick Your Spot” (Will Anderson) and “Jeannine”, the sound has a special, soulful quality. Another high point is Will Anderson’s “Hot and Cold”, a contrafact of that favorite jazz standard “Body and Soul” (Johnny Green), transmuted into an uptempo romp with Will’s fast and expert fingerling driving the work forward to a satisfying conclusion.

Aside from the steady, solid presence of Cobb, the rhythm section is rounded out by pianist Jeb Patton and bassist David Wong. Both expertly provide supportive backup. Their playing never overwhelms, and bassist Wong’s work in particular from 1959 on.

For more information, visit originarts.com. This project was scheduled to be at Nublu 151.

The playing has a remarkably consistent emotional and intellectual tenor (free music throughout). There are individual titled tracks, but each blends together with an unstoppable flow that maintains the same pace for the duration of both discs—heard digitally, it is close to two hours of what seems like a single piece. It’s close to Ornette Coleman’s Free Jazz in the way it courses along with an intuitive naturalness. That album was more like the Jackson Pollock painting used on the cover; this is more like watching ripple after ripple course through a pond.

For more information, visit outofyourheadrecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Greenwich House Music School.
Steve Swell continues to record at a rapid clip, a function of his continuing growth as a musician. In fact, now in his mid-60s, the trombonist is at a high point in his career. These two recordings are wonderful examples of his ability to rise to challenges in small groups alongside performers with whom he does not perform regularly.

Brain In A Dish is a fine trio outing with the highly compatible Robert Boston on piano and organ and Michael Vatcher on drums. While the group plays tightly with strong synchronicity, the focus, for the most part, is on Swell who, unsurprisingly, is stellar. Those who have watched the trombonist’s evolution through the years will be particularly pleased with the range of his performance on this recording.

The 11 tracks are fully improvised. The title opener strikes early, Swell’s rough-hewn splats, swooshes and bursts covering much of the horn’s range. He is in good form as he dries and bends, curves and strikes, machine-gun-like patterns interspersed among little sounds. Vatcher adds a strong kick while Boston lightly fills in the holes. On the following “New Use for Old Neurons”, the latter switches to organ, his classical training contrasting with Swell’s slick lines. “Feed Me” and the closing “Psychopath in a Church Pew”, each with their overpowering sounds, drive triumphantly. Vatcher coming to the fore and Boston offering delightful, quirky bursts on the latter. Swell is particularly impressive on these pieces, his distinct growls and contrasting with Swell’s slick lines. “Feed Me” and the latter switches to organ, his classical training.

Those who have watched the trombonist’s evolution through the years will be particularly pleased with the range of his performance on this recording. The mere fact that the Art Ensemble of Chicago (AEC), the revolutionary band of singular instrumental and conceptual icons, continues to survive 51 years after its inception—despite the loss of founders Lester Bowie (trumpet) in 1999; Malachi Favors (bass) in 2004; and Joseph Jarman in 2019 (woodwinds)—should not come as a surprise. Bowie himself envisioned the expanded line-up that populates We Are On The Edge (19 musicians, plus conductor Steven Rush at its most fulsome iteration). The trumpet visionary told Musician Magazine back in 1994, “I know it’s going to take another 20 years...it will be world music by then.” We are talking about the Art Ensemble of Mexico.”

The sole survivors of the post-Europe version of the quintet, founder Roscoe Mitchell (saxophones) and Famoudou Don Moye (percussion), have swollen the group to include singers (Rodolfo Cordova-Lebron, Christina Wheeler), a spoken word artist (Moor Mother), two trumpeters (Hugh Ragin and Fred Berry), flutist (Nicole Mitchell), string ensemble (violinist Jean Cook, violinist Edward Yoon Kwon and cellist Tomeka Reid), three bassists (Silvia Bolognesi, Jaribu Shahid and Junius Paul) and three new percussionists (Dudu Kouate, Enoch Williamson and Titos Sompa).

We Are On The Edge is a double-disc set featuring a studio album and a 2018 live concert from Edgefest, the annual festival in Ann Arbor, Michigan, some 250 miles east of the group’s titular home. Moor Mother (Camae Ayewa) does not appear on the live disc.

Excellent music pervades throughout. Mitchell’s “Variations and Sketches from the Bamboo Terrace” is chock full of gorgeous orchestral implications done in AEC fashion. The full-on percussion explorations that appear on so many classic albums of the past are represented with “ChiCongo 50” and “Saturday Morning”, which appear in both studio and live settings. Bowie’s “Villa Tiamo” is a highlight on the studio album and Reid also delivers on Mitchell’s “Fanfare and Bell” from that same session.

The musical zenith occurs on the live disc during an absolutely stunning large ensemble reading of the “Su Mimmi non si spara!” piece. During our conversation earlier this year, we asked what clock to in approximately 20 minutes and each one of those moments feels vital to the process and a righteous celebration of the AEC motto: “Great Black Music—Ancient to the Future.”

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com and true-recordings.com. Swell was scheduled to be at 244 Rehearsal Studios.
Three-dimensional figures and perspectives are created through distinctive and subtle combinations new to the trio’s framework. Anning’s bass is a forum for the trio to interact within its gorgeous cut, which refers to a Hawaiian word for “open skies”, allowing a dynamic element to the music that is surprisingly amenable to curiously harmonious overdubs that create a consistency that is not often found in the jazz world. Unresolved “Outro”, bassist Sam Anning and drummer Rajai Jayaweera capably expand upon and support Morgan’s ethereal core. In between, loops, echo, dynamic shifts and overdubs create a consistency that is surprisingly amenable to curiously harmonious explorations.

All three musicians hail from Australia, share a variety of stylistic influences and are informed by a European aesthetic. Several styles are apparent on close listening but they are adapted to the band’s more meditative approach: “Kleine Ahnung (Little Idea)” is an unhurried space-jazz featuring fellow Australian Sean Wayland on synth; a chordal take on the German hymn “Gott Liebt Diese Welt (God Loves this World)” delicately portrays the song’s lyricism; and the title cut, which refers to a Hawaiian word for “open skies”, is a forum for the trio to interact within its gorgeous melody. The real strength on these cuts, however, is built on Morgan’s facility with lyricism and space. Through distinctive and subtle combinations new three-dimensional figures and perspectives are created without losing sight of the tune. “Ripples” features Morgan skillfully tossing in notes that resonate and slowly alter over what is the session’s steadiest beat while “Losdy”, despite Anning’s best attempts, does not find its groove. Recorded in Morgan’s home studio, Laniaka is welcoming and with a warmth often absent in music that relies on electronics to shape its sound. But Morgan doesn’t overdo it and the listener is easily in touch with, if not drawn into, the music. With its aversion to swing and a veneration of sway, Laniaka flows as a complete trip.

For more information, visit earshift.com. Jayaweera was scheduled to be at Birdland.

To the jazz tradition of addressing social issues—think Charles Mingus, Billie Holiday and more—pianist Lynne Arriale adds this brilliant and subtly impasioned set. Chimes of Freedom speaks to the issues of immigration but also, by extension, gets to where we live in 21st Century America. Arriale is a virtuoso whose technique is always about telling a real story. The recording opens with a dark rendering of the spiritual “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child”. Arriale, bassist Jasper Somsen and drummer E.J. Strickland roll and take on all the power of that song and its poignancy at this moment. “Journey” suggests a trip towards sanctuary with a more uptempo sense of hope, Arriale fluid as she works in the pulse of the rhythm section and travels around the keyboard until Somsen finds that power in his swirling solo. Strickland understands this as well and his solo is quick and very much to the point.

Movement is very much a theme. “3 Million Steps” are what refugees have to slog from Guatemala to the southern border of the U.S. It’s a slow but hopeful trek. “The Dreamers” is a wistful and deeply moving narrative of the immigrant children who got stuck in America. “Hope” is what underlies all of this, smart and a little sad with the composer’s stunning transparency above the rhythm and Somsen’s beautiful solo. The album is about courage as well. Bluesy “The Whole Truth” drives hard at the power of hearing that reality. “Reunion” is the most joyous tune, inspired by Caribbean rhythm and painting a picture of families brought back together. “Lady Liberty” is a glorious hymn to what could and should be in our country.

The two covers that close the album are now part of our collective consciousness and soar thanks to the heartbreakingly beautiful vocal of K.J. Denhert. The Bob Dylan-penned title tune is done in a striking 12/8 meter while Paul Simon’s “American Tune” is a melancholy but decidedly unsentimental finale. Lynne Arriale brings us powerfully to where we are in this moment.

For more information, visit challengerecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Birdland Theater.

For its third ECM outing, pianist Carla Bley’s trio with saxophonist Andy Sheppard and bassist Steve Swallow mixes up an antidote for these times of uncertainty and quarantine. The title suite is the first of three comprising the program. Given that “Life Goes On” came out of a recent brush with illness, it’s fitting that Bley should begin in the dark whimsy of the blues. Her left hand plows fertile soil before leaving Sheppard and Swallow to sow their thematic crop.

A sardonic humor assumes center stage in the three-part “Beautiful Telephones”. The title, quoting a certain leader of the free world, speaks of dire political circumstances, which, like the dial tone of a nation on hold, keeps us hopeful for something that may never come. The central movement reveals some of the deepest conversations and finds Sheppard in an especially soulful mood. The jagged finish is about as artistic as anyone could pen on the current state of things without words.

The trio saves its most lyrical for last in “Copycat”, another threefer that holds a candle to some neglected parts of the human condition. There’s so much beauty in the opening “After You” that only the vessel of the playful title section is big enough to contain it. Setting a tongue in every cheek, it coaxes us with a promise of better times.

Holding it all together is an almost photorealistic approach to life. Like the score pages above Bley’s face on the cover, time feels suspended at just the right moment to reveal a smile of hope beneath it all.

For more information, visit ecemrecords.com. Bley and Swallow were scheduled to be at Town Hall.
In the December 2019 issue of this gazette, Stephane Wrembel was asked how Django Reinhardt, Romani-French guitar master, became aware of Flamenco and Spanish classical music. Wrembel responded: “In 1914 my mom took him and his brother to Spain and North Africa. But who knows?... My personal feeling is that the Spanish sound that he found on the guitar is connected to a childhood memory and to his imagination and his world of dreams.”

Wrembel expands on this personal feeling to explore a world of dreams, imagination and childhood memory on The Django Experiment V. Wrembel introduces a seemingly whimsical tempo to each song and the atmosphere that he creates, by means of technically incredible but playful guitarng, is like a waking dream. This album clears your head, fires up

For more information, visit cellarlive.com. This project was scheduled to be at Birdland Theater.

There is luminescence and overarching tranquility in Chris Dingman’s newest CD we can all benefit from in the current circumstances. This recording marks a departure from Dingman’s more complex and highly praised The Subliminal and the Sublime. The trio format puts the onus on Dingman’s composing and capacity to carry each tune, even if both are wonderfully supported by the supple rhythm duo of bassist Linda May Han Oh and drummer Tim Keiper. The compositions are complex from a harmonic point of view and yet maintain a very melodic approach. Although inspirations and sources vary across the nine originals, there is a cohesive, suspenseful and hypnotic quality conveying a thoughtful approach to improvisation. Echoes of Gary Burton come across frequently but Dingman is his own artist and commands the full range of the instrument.

For more information, visit inner-arts.org. This project was scheduled to be at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning.

There are plenty of potential.

For more information, visit peterslavov.com. This project was scheduled to be at Smalls.

For more information, visit stephanewrembel.com. Wrembel was scheduled to be at Town Hall.

There are plenty of potential.

For more information, visit inner-arts.org. This project was scheduled to be at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning.

For more information, visit cellarlive.com. This project was scheduled to be at Birdland Theater.

For more information, visit inner-arts.org. This project was scheduled to be at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning.

For more information, visit stephanewrembel.com. Wrembel was scheduled to be at Town Hall.

For more information, visit stephanewrembel.com. Wrembel was scheduled to be at Town Hall.

For more information, visit stephanewrembel.com. Wrembel was scheduled to be at Town Hall.
Event Horizon
Michael Thomas (Giant Step Arts)
by Thomas Conrad

Event Horizon is the fifth release from Giant Step Arts (GSA), a visionary, groundbreaking nonprofit program founded by photographer/recording engineer Jimmy Katz. The first four excellent releases were led by Jason Palmer (two), Johnathan Blake and Eric Alexander. With Event Horizon Katz, for the first time, has chosen to work with a player under the radar.

Michael Thomas is a badass. Anyone who doubts it should go to “Sax Intro”, a four-minute cadenza with manicaisl runs in towering arcs and torrents of scales upon scales. It sounds perhaps like an alto saxophone virtuoso practicing, except that Thomas shapes it all into a spontaneous symphony. Then, after this wild celebration of chops, he segues seamlessly into “Chant” and into what this album is truly about: daring, in-depth collaborative ventures based on Thomas’ intelligent compositions, conducted by a formidable chordless quartet of trumpet Palmer, bassist Hans Glawischnig and drummer Blake.

Like all GSA releases to date, this two-CD set is a live recording. In The Jazz Gallery in New York, four committed improvisers lay it on the line, again and again, responding to Thomas’ challenging forms, to another, to the dug-in crowd, to the night. Tunes may need 16 minutes, but remarkably few notes are wasted. Thomas’ solos are valiant attempts to keep up with the flood of his arriving ideas. Palmer is more analytical. His statements are voluminous, arcane expositions filled with twists and subplots.

Blake oversees the excitement. On “Dr. Teeth”, he freely breaks up time yet arrays irregular fragments into insidious grooves. His drama is powerfully rendered in the recording. Katz has translated his renowned artistry as a photographer into the realm of sound: he gets both a telephoto-close focus on the band and a wide-angle perspective on the ambient room.

Thomas has said that Event Horizon, recorded in August 2019, was conceived as a reflection on “the role technology plays in modern life” and how our dependence on “computers and smart phones…creates a devastating paradigm”. Though once considered non-essential, the album and its significance as an all-time introspective and evocative work is now clear. Though it can feel all over the place, it’s not hard to understand why it was one of her favorites. Each track is written and arranged by Simone, and despite the immense distress she was facing at the time, her creative hunger shines through. Though her voice had settled into its lower register, it should go to “Sax Intro”, a four-minute cadenza with room to breath.

For more information, visit 577records.com. Cleaver was scheduled to be at Rockwood Music Hall.

Drummer Gerald Cleaver is an omnivorous musician, equally comfortable in free jazz and postbop contexts. With Signs, his catholic taste now extends to electronics. Electronics are not alien to the jazz world, but Cleaver’s approach goes far beyond casual addition. It represents an in-depth exploration of the genre’s golden age in the late ‘90s.

Unlike traditional electronics, which tends to stay within the confines of one tonal mode or rhythmic trajectory, Cleaver presents a wide range of forms, times integrating them within a single piece, as on the opening “Jackie’s Smiles”. Present across 11 tracks are the pounding beats of drum ‘n’ bass; patient arcs of the Chemical Brothers; meditative trance and more while shying away from some sub-genres such as traditional techno and dark ambient; one can speculate that Cleaver can move between sub-genres such as traditional techno and dark ambient; one can speculate that Cleaver doesn’t find electronica genres reliant on repetitive (or no) beats sufficient to provide a platform for his erudite jazz drumming techniques.

Cleaver’s layering of complex rhythms is one adaptation of his jazz skills. Another is found on the elegiac “Tomasz”, which displays a melodicism less common in the contemporary world, in this case delivered via a sonorous, almost harp-like line. Cleaver is also unpredictable. His organization of beats, sonic effects and soundscapes shift and plunge, as on “Signs II”. This manifests even on some of the most straightforward tunes, like “Signs III”, which relies on a deep, resonant pulse reminiscent of classic drum ‘n’ bass.

Signs could just as easily be filed under electronica as jazz and probably would be a clearer fit there. Regardless of label, Cleaver applies his substantial skills to offer an enjoyable, unexpected experience.

For more information, visit toddmarcusjazz.com. Marcus was scheduled to be at 24th Rehearsal Studios.
Sun Ra’s range and influence is expansive and enduring. Haverford College 1980 (Solo Rhodes Piano) and Barrence Whitfield Soul Savage Arkestra’s Songs From The Sun Ra Cosmos travel the arc of Ra’s cosmic journey from jazz standards to atonal improvisation to soul and funk. They represent a kaleidoscopic cross-section of Ra’s wide-ranging body of work.

Though known more so for the aggressive improvisation and Afrofuturist explorations of his Arkestra, Ra was often restrained in solo performances. Irwin Chusid, radio DJ, historian and administrator of Ra’s catalogue, diligently restored Ra’s solo set at Haverford College, unveiling an intimate and meditative side of Ra. The only known solo recording of Ra on the Fender Rhodes, the release also includes a 25-minute solo by saxophonist Tony Malaby. The latter’s extended improvisation is bright and whimsical, a complement to Ra’s cerebral set. As is typical with many of his solo performances, Ra plays a mix of crowd favorites, interpolated with spells of philosophical improvisation and familiar standards. His iconic “Love in Outer Space” becomes a cozy lullaby on the mentholated keys and his academic range is on full display in a medley of “Space Is The Place” with Harold Arlen’s “Somewhere Over the Rainbow”, which is playfully yet masterful in how it swings from space jazz to romantic lyricism.

Ra’s influence takes on new dimensions in Songs From The Sun Ra Cosmos. Co-produced by Chusid and Brother Cleve, this collection of Ra interpretations was recorded over the span of 25 years by the renowned garage and soul "screamer" who, like the Sun Ra Arkestra, is known for his high-octane live shows. This record is more akin to the vigorous atonal motifs typical with many of his solo performances, Ra plays a mix of crowd favorites, interpolated with spells of philosophical improvisation and familiar standards. His iconic “Love in Outer Space” becomes a cozy lullaby on the mentholated keys and his academic range is on full display in a medley of “Space Is The Place” with Harold Arlen’s “Somewhere Over the Rainbow”, which is playfully yet masterful in how it swings from space jazz to romantic lyricism.

The wit and originality ar are of a streamlined shift-and-flow here and more of a countervailing ideology at play in the trio’s bump and groove. On the opposite end of the program sits an isolated incident to a fluid, literally wave-like, playing synthesizer. The opening “Waves” builds from isolated incidents to an insistent New York band; the second is a spotlight for Malaby’s warm balladry. “Good birds waking up, is sufficiently slow for the musicians to give way to an increasing intensity. The erratic drumming and the evolving piano figures create a thick weave in which voices move in contrary patterns trigger the ultimate mayhem of “Gradual Decline”. The opening “Waves” builds from isolated incidents to an fluid, literally wave-like, playing synthesizer. The opening “Waves” builds from isolated incidents to a fluid, literally wave-like,
Since the turn of the century, Danish drummer Kresten Osgood has been involved in nearly 90 recordings as leader and sideman. He’s a drummer for all seasons, comfortable crossing stylistic boundaries, and also a very adept piano player. His range of international collaborators is amazingly wide: Dr. Lonnie Smith, Paul Bley, Sam Rivers, John Tchicai, Michael Blake and others. He always adds a unique energy. Below are three recent recordings that are a great demonstration of this.

Vinyl-only As Of Not is credited to Osgood and late drummer/multi-instrumentalist Jerome Cooper, the latter one-third of The Revolutionary Ensemble, one of the finest trios of the 70’s (reuniting in the new millennium). Cooper subsequently played drums in various bands but his own music took on an unusual cast as he incorporated chirimira (a Latin American reed sounding like a a East Indian shawm), piano and electronics. Cooper also took to composition as a means of expression as much as improvisation. He and Osgood struck a friendship in the mid-2000s and Cooper was invited to Denmark to conduct workshops, during which time he realized Cooper’s title piece. It features Cooper on the above-mentioned instruments and Osgood on drums and piano. It’s a seven-part suite spread out over four sides of an LP. The piece begins with a passage of sustained stasis over an electronic drone and carefully placed piano. Midway through Osgood starts playing a motif matched by Cooper on balafon for a minimalist interlude. “Part 2” extensively features chirimira over wandering piano lines and an electronic rhythm. The one drawback is that some of these electronic rhythms are rather clunky but as the piece develops, it’s what’s placed over the top that lifts it out of clunkiness; “Part 4” is an excellent example of that. Cooper clearly was going for something universal and succeeds for the most part. And Osgood is there along with him. The two were a good duo, ready to realize Cooper’s title piece.

Osgood appears on alto saxophonist Laura Toxværd’s Tidens Strøm. Although his presence isn’t forward in the quintet, it’s crucial to the music. Toxværd scored this with an unusual instrumentation of tuba, accordion, saxophone and drums plus singer Marta Laurette Friis, who delivers the six songs with Toxværd’s Tidens Strøm sound nicely.

Energy and Osgood is subtle but very effective. Drums are succinct, mostly in the six-minute range, diverse idea (too bad it never materialized). The compositions the horns enter, Lifetime with horns seems to be a good team to realize this music.

It’s relatively rare that a reedplayer focuses solely on the clarinet—Benny Goodman and John Carter come to mind. While Mike McGinnis is also a saxophonist, he relies on the straight-reed instrument entirely on Time is Thicker, a trio set with bassist Elias Bailey and drummer Vinnie Sperrazza. This type of format can be a naked listen, yet the full-bodied production and caliber of the performance make it a compelling date.

On the briskly invigorating opener “Get In The Car”, McGinnis sticks mostly to his instrument’s middle range, getting all kinds of mileage out of a warmly woody tone and liquid execution while Bailey and Sperrazza create a persuasive yet not overbearing forward motion. The Chano Pozo-Gil Fuller bebop anthem “Tin Tin Doo” has a swell, slyly bluesy statement of the theme, otherwise darting in a deceptively carefree way, Bailey taking a piquant solo. “Bow Legged Releve” begins with what could be a collective free improvisation but then settles into a groove in which McGinnis dances about amid growing winds stirred by Bailey and especially Sperrazza. Closer “Just One of Those Things” is given a surging fare-thee-well treatment—McGinnis swirling and dashing, making with a bit of Dixieland-styled phrasing in his solo. Sperrazza is volatile here, javishing rolling crashes and cymbal splashes over his cracking bursts while Bailey anchors with a lively, sinewy throat. This concludes the platter with a hearty restatement of the theme and the laughter of the players.

Time “Thicker” is an album of lively contrasts. There are moments of cerebral intellectual mien and good-humored swagger. This combo is making jazz that can appeal both to old-school hepcats and art-snobs alike.

For more information, visit openstreammusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Café Bohemia.
Jazz guitar is all too frequently the realm of musicians who play as if they’re afraid someone might hear them. Not Ray Suhy. His melodies simmer and gleam and his solos have genuine bite. This willingness to step forward and seize the spotlight is doubtless related to his parallel career; he’s a member of extreme metal bands like Cannabis Corpse and Six Feet Under, where high-volume, maximum-force riffing is the name of the game.

This album isn’t some kind of Mahavishnu-Orchestra-meets-Metallica assault, though. The combination of guitar, fed through a variety of effects, and Lewis Porter’s nimble switching between acoustic piano and Fender Rhodes, depending on the track, works extremely well in service of the compositions, all of which are originals, five by the guitarist and three by the pianist. Stylistically, they’re a blend of high-energy hardbop of the late ’70s Milestone All-Stars/VSOP school—which pianist/blogger Ethan Iverson refers to as “stadium jazz”—and fusion of the baroque rather than overpowering school. A lot of the pieces have the feel of something Chick Corea could have written; the melodies spiral upward like model rockets, exploding into florid solos that bloom in the sky, showering multicolored sparks in all directions but dissipating quickly.

What’s most interesting about the album, particularly on the tempo tracks, is not the work of the two co-leaders, but how powerful the rhythm section is allowed to get. They’re stompimg as much as they’re swinging and Rudy Royston in particular is going absolutely wild throughout. He seems to have added four or five drums to his kit, the better to let his inner Billy Cobham out to play. Bassist Brad Jones has worked with both Elvin Jones and Marc Ribot, so he’s perfectly suited to support anything else in this band throws at him and James Dellatacoma, who mixed and mastered the album at Bill Laswell’s Music Sound Studio, gives everyone plenty of space to breathe, exploding into florid solos that bloom in the sky, showering multicolored sparks in all directions but dissipating quickly.

The title track is a contemplative outing, a melancholic excursion with absorbing solos by Renfroe, Gable and Louis. Dowszynky’s “Haiku” rhythmically moves things forward, driven by pianist Biographical and informational writing, broken up into three categories: General Works, Regional Studies and, this new volume updating his work through 2019. Its simple cover is a demonstration of its author’s seriousness. Across over 500 pages and 5,513 references, plus another 74 pages of indices, Gray presents a comprehensive accounting of critical and informational writing, broken up into three categories: General Works, Regional Studies and, taking up the preponderance, Biographical and Critical Studies.

While the density and $150 price tag skew Gray’s intended audience towards professional researchers flush with grant money, university music departments and public library systems, those with time on their hands (read: everyone these days) and who have more than a passing interest in critical jazz analysis should consider this as a necessary part of their library. Jazz listeners are arguably more aware of/interested in history and current form as AllAboutJazz-New York and current form as The New York City Jazz Record, is referenced within this book.

One hopes that, given the current world situation, a corollary benefit down the road will be a renewed respect for rigorous scholarship, of expertise and the long, committed path it takes to get there. When floods on world stages make ignorant, potentially lethal claims and the internet has become a black lagoon of mis- and disinformation, those analyzing genetic codes, parsing population trendlines and just generally being thorough and responsible are to be counted among the heroes of the age.

While bibliographers aren’t saving lives, they are saving researchers time. Eminent scholar John Gray has released a follow-up to his 1991 tome Fire Music: A Bibliography of the New Jazz, 1959-1990, this new volume updating his work through 2019. Its simple cover is a demonstration of its author’s seriousness. Across over 500 pages and 5,513 references, plus another 74 pages of indices, Gray presents a comprehensive accounting of critical and informational writing, broken up into three categories: General Works, Regional Studies and, taking up the preponderance, Biographical and Critical Studies.

The sophomore release from drummer Jonathan Barber finds the Hartford, Connecticut native advancing his tradition-rooted/forward-looking concept with the same quintet of alto saxophonist Godwin Louis, guitarist Andrew Renfroe, pianist Taber Gable and bassist Matt Dwonszyk. He’s been a part of the city’s Artists Collective and Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz, where he, Renfroe, Gable and Dowszynky all trained. The date concludes with the metrically charged “29”, an exciting feature for Barber’s dynamically expansive rhythm section, which has earned him the drum chair in the bands of JD Allen, Jeremy Pelt and Pat Metheny, among others.

For more information, visit jonathanbarbermusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at 244 Rehearsal Studios.

“Seconds & Seasons” is an appealing melody supporting inspired solo work by Dowszynky, Louis, Taber and finally Renfroe, buoyed by briskly escalating drumming. “Son Of Hartford” is a rocking tribute to the legacy of the city’s Artists Collective and Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz, where he, Renfroe, Gable and Dowszynky all trained. The date concludes with the metrically charged “29”, an exciting feature for Barber’s dynamically expansive rhythm section, which has earned him the drum chair in the bands of JD Allen, Jeremy Pelt and Pat Metheny, among others.

For more information, visit jonathanbarbermusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.

“Seconds & Seasons” is an appealing melody supporting inspired solo work by Dowszynky, Louis, Taber and finally Renfroe, buoyed by briskly escalating drumming. “Son Of Hartford” is a rocking tribute to the legacy of the city’s Artists Collective and Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz, where he, Renfroe, Gable and Dowszynky all trained. The date concludes with the metrically charged “29”, an exciting feature for Barber’s dynamically expansive rhythm section, which has earned him the drum chair in the bands of JD Allen, Jeremy Pelt and Pat Metheny, among others.

For more information, visit jonathanbarbermusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.

“Seconds & Seasons” is an appealing melody supporting inspired solo work by Dowszynky, Louis, Taber and finally Renfroe, buoyed by briskly escalating drumming. “Son Of Hartford” is a rocking tribute to the legacy of the city’s Artists Collective and Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz, where he, Renfroe, Gable and Dowszynky all trained. The date concludes with the metrically charged “29”, an exciting feature for Barber’s dynamically expansive rhythm section, which has earned him the drum chair in the bands of JD Allen, Jeremy Pelt and Pat Metheny, among others.

For more information, visit jonathanbarbermusic.com. This project was scheduled to be at Jazz Standard.
When it comes to “legendary”, singer-songwriter/composer Sonny Burke. “He’s A Tramp” is Lady and the Tramp animated Walt Disney feature arrangement. She also wrote the songs for the 1955 in a happy, uptempo, foot-tapping instrument-forward known “It’s a Good Day” (Dave Barbour) is presented On A String” (Harold Arlen-Ted Koehler). Lee’s well-swing—an ability also applied to “I’ve Got The World it undeniably proves the often ultra-cool Lee could Being Here With You” (Bill Schluger-Peggy Lee). Not

When Lee, who rewrote the lyrics (without credit); the rest is the R&B and Billboard Hot 100 charts. Many “Fever” (Eddie Cooley-Otis Blackwell as John
doubt that this product of the northern plains could undergird the horns with intense, time-less structures. Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly diligently

Two piano trios, two live recordings, one single anchor in bassist Gary Peacock, who turns 85 this month. These are also two vastly different records, reflecting a fascinating juxtaposition between the styles of the two pianists.

Two tracks only are found on both releases: “I’m A Woman”, her powerful R&B-tinged hit from her album of the songs of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, and the eponymous charting “Is That All There Is?” (Lieber-Stoller), also offered as an alternate take and as a remixed version by Peter Schickele. (“Is That All There Is?” was recorded in 37 takes, with the last one used as the master, spliced with bits from other takes.) Lee’s big break came in 1941 when she became Benny Goodman’s girl singer. A reinterpreted song from that era, “Don’t Smoke In Bed” (Willard Robson), is included with other songbook standards as well as a mix of work from contemporary songwriters of the day, including Neil Diamond, George Harrison and Randy Newman, all given the Lee treatment of insouciant, yet incisive delivery. A particular treat is two versions of “Me And My Shadow” (Dave Dreyer-Denny Doherty-Billy Rose) with the alternate taken from Lee’s own personal stockpile of recordings. In it she parses out her phrases with deliberate cool, giving new meaning to the term laid-back.

Ultimate Peggy Lee features the work that made her name and became her signature song, 1958’s “Fever” (Eddie Cooley-Otis Blackwell as John Davenport), a huge hit for Little Willie John in 1956 on the R&B and Billboard Hot 100 charts. Many mainstream artists were quick to cover it, including Lee, who rewrote the lyrics (without credit); the rest is history. “Sweet Happy Life” (Luiz Bonfá-Antônio Maria-Norman Gimbel) is a pleasant tune with a samba beat in the ‘something different’ category. Akin to it is a number from Lee’s well-received 1960 album Latin ala Lee!, recorded when cha-cha and mambo were all the rage. From it, the diva sings “Heart” (Richard Adler-Jerry Ross), an amusing trille that has to rank as one of the most original interpretations of a popular tune from a Broadway musical (Dames Yankees).

Two birds with one stone are delivered in “I Love Being Here With You” (Bill Schluger-Peggy Lee). Not only is the tune one of her own compositions, but also it undeniably proves the often ultra-cool Lee could swing an “ability” so also to “I’ve Got The World On A String” (Hamid Arlen-Ted Koehler). Lee’s well-known “It’s A Good Day” (Dave Barbour) is presented in a happy, up tempo, foot-tapping instrument-forward arrangement. She also wrote the songs for the 1955 animated Walt Disney feature Lady and the Tramp (with composer Sonny Burke). “He’s A Tramp”, for instance is representative of that venture. And should anyone

What is so remarkable about Jeb Bishop is that the talented trombonist, a former philosophy major, began his career as a rock guitarist, switching to electric bass in the early '90s when he was part of The Flying Luttenbachers and only later took up the trombone, becoming a member of The Vandermark 5, one of the most important small groups emerging from the Chicago jazz scene of the early 2000s. Since then, Bishop has performed in a variety of settings as a leader and a sideman. On Re-Collect, he leads his impressive pianosolo Flex Quartet through six original compositions in what is a compelling, at times even thrilling, performance. The lengthy pieces take full advantage of a highly compatible quartet in which trumpeter Russ Johnson acts as a perfect foil to Bishop’s gruff, broad swatches of sound while bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly diligently undergird the horns with intense, time-less structures.

Bishop masterfully paces each of the pieces so that while the opening two charts take up more than 40 minutes and more than half the total time of the album, they keep the listener guessing and fully engaged. Although Bishop is identified with the more radical elements of jazz, his heart clearly sprouts from poesía, his melodies and even his solos embracing a strong jazz aesthetic while injecting sweeping strategies, which include regularly changing tempos, collective improvisation, building and releasing tension and intense interaction. These come to the fore on “Razorlip”, in which an off-balance syncopated head leads to a strong bass solo and fast and exciting dialogue between trumpet and trombone, some of which is played without backing. On “Lungfish”, gravelly trombone takes a brilliant ride through an attractively snake-like bop melody, then transforms into something modern and offbeat. Bishop’s chops are in high style throughout, focusing mostly on the midrange of the horn with meaty, powerful double-tonguing on the post-bop “Rockafela”. The playing is strong throughout, without a weak link. Bishop in

For more information, visit nattasio.com and jazzhaus-label.com

Two piano trios, two live recordings, one single anchor in bassist Gary Peacock, who turns 85 this month. These are also two vastly different records, reflecting a fascinating juxtaposition between the styles of the two pianists.

These are also two new archival recordings, though first releases—When Will The Blues Leave is a date from Switzerland in 1999 while the night in question in Karlsruhe was Jul. 7th, 1988. Michel Petrucciani’s set seems more conventional; though both mix standards and originals, the French pianist plays “There Will Never Be Another You”, “In a Sentimental Mood”, “Embraceable You” and “My Funny Valentine” while Paul Bley ends the set with the Ornette Coleman title tune then returns for a lush, swooning “I Loves You Porgy”. Bley was a romantic (and a modernist and a bluesman all in one) and there is some kinship here with Petrucciani. Both are striving for expression above structural and technical exploration and on each of these recordings both are near hyper-communicative. That the Karlsruhe concert is much more satisfying than the Swiss performance (which is quite fine itself) seems to have more to do with the accompanists than the pianists.

Peacock, drummer Paul Motian and Bley had an excellent connection with one another, though their playing doesn’t always stay on the right side of the fine line between a private conversation meant to be overheard and enjoyed by an audience and a kind of solipsistic secret language. And the musicians don’t always sound at their sharpest. Bley’s funky riffs that start “Told You So” stumble a little and the three are not always headed in the same direction, or organized around the same pulse, on “Mazaltan” and “Flame”. There’s also flashes of inspired playing within each track, stretches where the three have found common recorded ground. As Paul “I’ve Got The World On A String” (Hamid Arlen-Ted Koehler). Lee’s well-known “It’s A Good Day” (Dave Barbour) is presented in a happy, up tempo, foot-tapping instrument-forward arrangement. She also wrote the songs for the 1955 animated Walt Disney feature Lady and the Tramp (with composer Sonny Burke). “He’s A Tramp”, for instance is representative of that venture. And should anyone

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | MAY 2020 23
Guitarist Joel Harrison has always heard things differently, from 3+3+7 (Nine Winds, 1996) and Range of Motion (Koch Jazz, 1997) to last year’s stunning Still Point: Turning World (Whirlwind). Harrison has consistently marched to the beat of different drummers. His latest is a scathing indictment of our nation’s history of violent intercourse and his first big band record.

He’s gathered some of the finest players across the stylistic spectrum, including Jon Irabagon and Ned Rothenberg (reeds) alongside Ingrid Jensen (trumpet) plus the trombones of Curtis Hasselbring and Alan Berber. In all, it’s a 20-piece ensemble playing extremely creative charts reflecting the tradition from Oliver Nelson to Henry Threadgill.

The album explodes with fat funk bottom end anchored by the tuba of Ben Stapp and wah-wah guitar on the opening “March On Washington”, which unfolds like a page-turning novel. The ensemble writing avoids big band clichés like the plague and the soloists (Harrison and trumpeter Dave Smith) consistently up the ante on the excitement quotient.

“Yellow Cake” continues with Harrison recounting the George Bush/Colin Powell narrative as the tune evolves, yielding volcanic solos from Irabagon (tenor saxophone) and Hasselbring while the background landscapes keep shifting, like observing from the window of a high-speed train. Things quiet down considerably on the introduction to “My Father In Nagasaki” (Harrison’s dad was one of the first soldiers to enter the area after the bomb dropped.) Orchestral percussion and sonority plus brass set the appropriately pensive backdrop for evocative essays from Rothenberg (shakuhachi) and Ken Thomson (bass clarinet.)

Particularly moving is the highly autobiographical “Gratitude”, written while Harrison was recovering at an artists colony from a traumatic brain injury. He lays down a soulful introduction of gospel-inspired double-tops that bring the work of Curtis Mayfield to mind and the tune climbs to an exhilarating plateau for evocative essays from Rothenberg (shakuhachi) and Ken Thomson (bass clarinet.)

Pithy tunes can be a soundtrack. Johansson is the lead bassist, Torbjörn Zetterberg, and Kullhammar led a quartet at Stockholm’s Glenn Miller Recital Hall. This project was scheduled to be at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall.

For more information, visit moserobie.com. For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at The Sultan Room.

20 years ago this month, Swedish saxophonist Jonas Kullhammar led a quartet at Stockholm’s Glenn Miller Recital Hall. This project was scheduled to be at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall. This project was scheduled to be at The Sultan Room.

For more information, visit relativepitchrecords.com. This project was scheduled to be at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall.
McCoy Tyner, Charles Tolliver, Lonnie Liston Smith, McBee was many decades ago. The music he uplifted were Jackie McLean, Wayne Shorter, avant garde sessions. Among the many artists whose huge tone, solid sense of time and flexibility has made percussionists including Billy Hart.

Gumbs on keyboards and several drummers/rhythm section with the recently departed Onaje Allan George Adams and Art Webb on flute) and an expanded times includes four horns (including tenor saxophonist McBee playing speedy lines behind the passionate solo of trumpeter Tex Allen, Adams, alto saxophonist Sach’s bass clarinet and alto effectively. Johnson could be slightly more prominent in the mix, but she fully inhabits the material. You better have some chops if you’re going to tackle Antônio Carlos Jobim’s “Dindi” (listen to Maria Booker sing it on Wayne Shorter’s Super Nova—she gets so emotional she breaks down in tears.

And Johnson is up against Astrud Gilberto, Blossom Dearie and Frank Sinatra, for crying out loud.) But this is an assured take, too, with a wordless section that soars into the stratosphere before heading back into the lyric. Nice bass playing from Matt Aronoff.

Tomoko Omura wrote “Voice is Magic” though it too sounds Brazilian. A tricky piece, with stops and starts and the composer’s dancing violin onboard (as it is on six other tracks), it’s a keeper, showcasing more of Johnson’s vocalise (and that bass clarinet). Sach’s composed “Happy to Stay” expressly for this project, but it doesn’t light up. The remaining tracks were written by Johnson, one with her brother, poet Gentry Johnson. The songs aren’t bad, but there’s not a lot of swing. “Love Again” is the best of them.

For more information, visit outsiderinmusic.com. Johnson was scheduled to be at Saint Peter’s Church.

Pianist Keith Jarrett, who turns 75 this month, has spent much of his career pushing styleistic boundaries. Jarrett also spends much of Munich 2016 expressing his interest in more recognizable genres and disciplines. “Part III” reflects inspiration he has found in the renowned composers of 18th Century Europe, before transitioning confidently to folksy pastoral sketches tinged with the blues.

Jarrett has referred to himself as his harshest critic when he’s on stage. When one listens to his improvisations he comes off more as a kind of real-time editor. Possessing an uncanny natural sense of time, Jarrett has the ability to paint compositional arcs, knowing when a phrase warrants repetition or when a fluid transition is needed.

For more information, visit ECMrecords.com
David Bixler’s recent CDs—his last one was more than five years ago—convey a subtle joy and the sheer pleasure of making music. Having looked after his youngest son following a traumatic brain injury during the last decade, the alto saxophonist has reemerged with a different approach and maturity to music, as if in pursuit of a personal catharsis. There is a soothing quality and a sense of serendipity in this music, superbly executed by extremely well integrated bands. Gone is a sort of eclecticism, ranging from Latin American influences to a certain postbop mainstream, which has characterized Bixler’s earlier recordings. There is no rush, no insistence on patterns, just the careful choice of the right note and an unusual openness to what the other musicians have to say.

In The Face of Chaos presents a set of Bixler’s originals, mostly midtempo, the bouncy “nofomomofo” being the exception. The quartet could not be more empathetic. Jon Cowherd’s musical piano is quite congenial to Bixler’s writing while bassist Ike Sturm provides solidarity and taste on top of Rogério Boccato’s supple and creative percussion. Bixler is the leading voice and soars at his own pace during the solos. The opening title track mostly embodies the main theme of the CD: a relaxed atmosphere with ample space. Among the most heartfelt tunes are “Return” and “Hope”, the former closer to a ballad while the latter play a major role. “Deep Trust” develops in an almost sui generis “Cluck” abandons the snark for a committed

Veteran bassist Rufus Reid honed his sound through intense learning on his own and through classical studies at Northwestern. He has graced hundreds of recordings and his output as a leader has earned consistently strong praise. Not to be overlooked are his tremendous gifts as a composer and arranger, both of which are displayed in depth in this duo session with Sullivan Fortner, a pianist whose star is very much on the rise. In spite of the seven decade difference in age, they mesh beautifully. Reid’s originals provide plenty of inspiration for the duo, with his flawless tone always prominent while Fortner’s playing is lyrical, imaginative and never excessive, the latter a skill that takes many instrumentalists years to learn.

Subtlety is a key factor. There is an intimacy to the performances, with plenty of give and take between the principals, whether on one of the bassist’s compositions, an overlooked gem like Charles Mingus’ “Duke Ellington’s Sound Of Love” or a time-tested jazz standard like Jimmy Rowles’ “The Peacocks”. The closing song is a gorgeous solo bass rendition of Ellington’s “Sophisticated Lady”, leaving the listener sad to see the needle move to the end of the LP.

Newvelle Records’ novel approach seems to be making good money for their artists and there is a lot to like about their products. The warm sound is among those purchasing an entire season subscription of six records. In The Face of Chaos is a bit more jazzing them up, if you will. That makes for an album that is convincing irony. Ruggiero double times on brushes on “The Races”, with enigmatic lyrics conflating gambling and desire. “4th of July” is bright and sparkling, sung with swinging trio. The duos most infamous song, “Picking Boyfriend”, has one of the most intricate arrangements, beginning with vocal over bass and finger snaps, as the lyrics admonish a boyfriend for being sexually withholding and non-committal. Pianist Jeremy Manasias’ solo in the middle, heavily in the Red Garland/Wynton Kelly style, is a highlight, as are his contributions throughout this surprisingly enjoyable jazz take on a pop duo’s repertoire.

For more information, visit newvelle-records.com. Gardner was scheduled to be at Cafe Bohemia.

In 1979, Steve Martin put out Comedy is Not Pretty!. On one of the tracks, “Cruel Shoes”, he reads a short story while accompanying himself on the banjo. There’s no joke in the story, but this is Martin, so it’s hilarious—so much of what he does is about delivery, tone and timing. Comedy isn’t pretty, it’s hard. It’s particularly hard in music, but a listener often gets the impression that musicians think it’s pretty easy, especially among the avant garde players. But the reason Martin made it look easy and Peter Schickele and Lester Bowie were masters of comedic music is that they knew it was hard and worked at it until it came off as second nature. This debut album from the trio Astroturf Noise—a mandolino Sam Day Harmet, violinist Sana Nagano and bassist Zach Swanson—shows musicians who think that playing a comical, slightly free bluegrass/country/Americana mix is simple. That makes for an album that is convincing because in its fundamental laziness it concedes both to musicians and listeners who care about those styles of music and who have a sense of humor that is generous, not exclusionary.

The material is simplistic, some kind of downtown theme or rocking rhythm made ‘tunny’ and ‘avant garde’ with dissonant counter melodies and harmonies and some seasoning with things like a stutter effect. The combination of the ordinary musical thinking and the cutely and manipulative attitude starts off irritating and then, through the first two tracks, “Orange Blossom Bullet Train” and “Black Berry”, grows nauseating. The press materials name-drop the likes of Bill Monroe, James Chance and The Lounge Lizards, leaving one with the idea the musicians never actually listened to those artists.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel: closer “Cluck” abandons the snark for a committed improvisation that is atmospheric, su generis and satisfying. A shame it has to go with the rest of the album.

For more information, visit 577records.com. This project was scheduled to be at Pete’s Candy Store.
Among the leading figures of the Swing Era, clarinetist Woody Herman, who was born 107 years ago this month, stands out as iconic. He fronted bands well beyond the ‘40s; premiered a work by Igor Stravinsky written for him; and enjoyed a wildly popular multimedia career, thereby carving out a vital space in the history of big band music. Rethinking the concept governing his ensemble, Herman was quick to move from “The Band That Plays the Blues” to a new direction. Much was happening in this period of transition, but unfortunately the next Herman session went back to the basic lineup—and a Herman tendency toward an affected African-American style ranges from merely irritating to outright offensive. Herman was conscious enough of racial struggles to hire respected black artists in outright offensive. Herman was conscious enough of racial struggles to hire respected black artists in

The vast majority of this collection is comprised of ballads, the first half of which are dominated by Herman alternating vocal duties with Frances Hefti’s trumpet and arrangements; and guests like percussionist Candido. Yet, for all of the talent, the historic content, but it is fascinating to hear the band

For more information, visit mosaicrecords.com

The Complete Woody Herman
Decca, Mars and MGM Sessions (1943-1954)

Widespread, there was a raft of recordings lost to time (the remaining selections too often leave one wondering what could have been). While Herman’s music has been well beyond the ‘40s; premiered a work by Igor Stravinsky written for him; and enjoyed a wildly popular multimedia career, thereby carving out a vital space in the history of big band music. Rethinking the concept governing his ensemble, Herman was quick to move from “The Band That Plays the Blues” to a series of Thundering Herds in 1943, with stars including Ben Webster, Stan Getz, Flip Phillips as well as progressives Chubby Jackson, Billy Bauer, Urbie Green, Kai Winding, Red Mitchell and, particularly, Jimmy Giuffre. And of course, an array of soloists who remain legendary (see: Red Norvo, Ray Nance, Pete Candoli, Juan Tizol, Shorty Rogers, as well as the aforementioned). While Herman’s music has been widespread, there was a raft of recordings lost to time and long-sought-after by fans. \textit{The Complete Woody Herman} satisfies this need, offering listeners the air-checks, live dates, rehearsals, alternate takes and records cut for singular radio broadcasts along with other sessions. Furthermore, this seven-CD boxed set includes a detailed booklet of historical facts including personnel, recording dates and sites. However, the absence of important pieces like 1945’s “Apple Honey”, “Laura” and the celebrated “Four Brothers” (1947) reveals that the Complete in the title falls glaringly short.

That said, there are gems here and for Herman completists and jazz historians pairing this set with earlier collections may finalize your search. Highlights include Norvo’s extended vibraphone choruses on “The Man I Love” and “Red Top”; blistering trumpet from Candoli; Herman’s own clarinet solo flights; drummers Cliff Leeman, Dave Tough, Sonny Igoe; Don Lamond, Louie Bellson, Panama Francis and Chuck Flores; the young Neal Hefti’s trumpet and arrangements; and guests like percussionist Candido. Yet, for all of the talent, the vast majority of this collection is comprised of ballads, the first half of which are dominated by Herman alternating vocal duties with Frances Wayne. Neither were celebrated for their vocal chops and Herman’s tendency toward an affected African-American style ranges from merely irritating to outright offensive. Herman was conscious enough of racial struggles to hire respected black artists in featured spots, so why the ‘jive’ vernacular? One can imagine the private discussions of these band members, the disapproving, disappointed glares and stifled protest.

“One-Two-Three-Four Jump”, composed by Phillips, is another Norvo feature for vibraphone, an instrument he had transitioned to from xylophone in 1943. Phillips is strong here, too, though the tune borrows much from both “Undecided” and “Apple Honey”. The oft-maligned recording of “Ebony Concerto” happens to be a standout, if only for its historic content, but it is fascinating to hear the band work through a modern classical piece like this. And the four selections credited to “Billy Eckstine and Woody Herman and his Orchestra” are impressive with Eckstine, as always, exquisite. On “Here Come the Blues” he’s in top form with the ensemble including Wilbur Schwartz on alto saxophone and Giuffre and Babe Russin among the tenors. Most interesting is the presence of French horn (John Graas) and tuba (Gene Englund). Arrangers Pete Rugolo and Rogers were heavily influenced by the advances of bebop and the expansive post-War sounds. These sides were cut in January 1951; two years earlier, Rugolo produced the first sessions of Miles Davis’ Birth of the Cool, which boasted expansive arrangements by Gil Evans and Gerry Mulligan, graduates of the Claude Thornhill Orchestra. And of course, Eckstine’s own band had earlier included Charlie Parker and welcomed in the new direction. Much was happening in this period of transition, but unfortunately the next Herman session went back to the basic lineup—and a Herman vocal. Though his ‘50s Herds included strong section players and soloists, as well as the promise of advanced orchestration by Giuffre and Ralph Burns, the remaining selections too often leave one wondering what could have been.

For more information, visit mosaicrecords.com
MAY 3rd, 1991
ECKINGER

ON THIS DAY
by Andrey Henkin

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

5. ‘50 s His Master’s Voice French 7” EP catalogue prefix  
7. Jazz singers often have to be as well as  
12. Raabah Roland Kirk’s “____ Slavery”  
13. Denny Zeitlin and Eddie Henderson are part of this org.  
15. ’50 jazz label ____-Jay  
16. Airport code for viewing Swiss Jazz Club  
18. They help with booking (abbr.)  
19. Manufacturer of guitar effect pedals  
20. Pianist Yamamoto of The Three Sounds, Soji Hirasaka and others  
22. This has two uses on the bandstand  
23. Late British trumpeter Colbeck  
24. 1980 Mike Dillon Royal Potato Family album useful for interment  
25. Romantic pianist Bacic, Jr.  
27. Free Jazz Verve catalogue prefix  
29. Steinaudiwinner  
32. This Monkee had a 1967 big band album arranged by Shorty Rogers  
33. The Scottish improv group of Cameron Thomson-Duncan, Tom Stephenson and Greg Ions  
34. Jazz Masters - 100 ____ De Jazz compilation series

DOWN

1. Like the Jones Brothers  
2. Late jazz poet Steve  
3. Australian univ. with noted jazz program  
4. Vocal suffix  
5. Trumpeter Jack Sheldon was sidekick on his TV show  
6. Compo  
7. Fredrik Liungkvist/Mattias Ståhl/Patrick Thomann band for Tommy  
8. Steve Turre and James Canez are longtime band members of this show (abbr.)  
9. Tom T. Hall country sound “Harper Valley ____”  
10. This tome describes jazz as “broadly characterized by”  
11. ’50’s Decca Scandinavian 7” EP catalogue prefix  
12. A musician’s instrument?  
13. Like this on his then-adopted home of Switzerland; bassist Islas Eckinger  
14. To make more two albums with Walden  
15. ‘50’s His Master’s Voice French 7” EP catalogue prefix  
16. Like the Jones Brothers  
17. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
18. Like the Jones Brothers  
19. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
20. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
21. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
22. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
23. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
24. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
25. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
26. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
27. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
28. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
29. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
30. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
31. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
32. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
33. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)  
34. English Heritage Ensemble (Silkheart)

By Andrey Henkin
visit nijazzjazz.com for answers