Jazz fans are many things but passive is not one of them. Anyone who takes the time to delve deeply into this art form spends quite a bit of time thinking about it, learning history, forming opinions, making connections. Jazz is about discovery, whether it be a new artist or a note in a favorite solo, unheard despite repeated plays. And jazz fans are not passive because this is a genre consigned to the dustbin of history more times than can be counted in lieu of the next new thing, yet, jazz is still here, stronger than ever, even if these days it is to be found most often on the other side of a computer screen.

In our home city of New York, we recently voted early. To see hundreds upon hundreds of people lined up for hours on cold fall mornings waiting patiently — even excitedly — to cast a ballot in a presidential contest where the results, at least in NYC, are most likely not in question was an amazing sight. These were people of all ages, ethnicities, professions, cultural backgrounds, economic classes and faiths who shared one thing: activity versus passivity. In a time when isolation is the theme, whether via social distancing and quarantine or the walls thrown up by “social” media, here was true community, one that can only be achieved in person and with true purpose.

By the time this issue comes out, the election cycle will almost be over but you will still have a few days to make your voice heard. And while sometimes it can seem small and inaudible remember that you are part of a democratic big band, your trumpet joining with millions of others to create a sound so loud no amount of fingers in ears can block it. But it only works if passivity is set aside, if agency is embraced. Go vote...and then listen to your favorite or most-recently bought jazz record, happy with a job well done.
NEW RELEASE

“Williams has done brilliantly to bring his deep-rooted 1960s jazz heritage forwards through working with players of subsequent generations. He thereby combines a strong sense of the continuing tradition with an imperative to look forwards. It is a compelling combination.”

London Jazz News
willfulmusic.com
whirlwindrecordings.com
Seeing Bill Charlap performing alone on live-stream from Dizzy’s Club (Oct. 8th) to a roomful of “empty chairs at empty tables”, red candlelight aglow at each table as if offered in prayer for the absentees, dimly lit Columbus Circle skyscrapers visible in the giant picture windows back of the stage, was like watching a scene from Les Misérables. But this didn’t keep the pianist from expressing his deep and abiding love for the Great American Songbook. Wof of them: his tribute to Velma Middleton and the live-streaming (Oct. 8th-12th). A small number of in-person listeners spread themselves across the asphalt for music and poetry, happy for the community and the still-warm weather. Oct. 11th was a drummer’s affair: last year’s Lifetime Achievement Award-winner Andrew Cyrille leading a quartet of Bill Frisell (guitar), David Virelles (keyboards) and Ben Street (drums) and Gerald Cleaver presenting his Black Host with Darius Jones (alto saxophone), Brandon Seabrook (guitar), Cooper-Moore (piano) and Brandon Lopez (bass) [two Brandons in the same band? What is this, Jazz 90210?], the sets bookending the compelling verse of Tyehimba Jess. While it would seem that Cyrille should have gotten closing honors, the ethereal, wispy, spacy ECM grooves of band originals was ideal for the gloaming. Cleaver’s group too was designed for darkness, as surf-rock met Deodato-style fusion, liberally frosted with cosmic free jazz. Jones stood in the middle of it all, bleating like mad, all eyes (including in the apartments above) on him.

Memories of a live-stream:

“...I can imagine I’m playing in Japan...” quipped pianist Aaron Diehl during a Q&A session following his slow yet steadily rousing concert in the lavishly appointed (but almost empty) Rosen House Music Room at Caramoor (Oct. 16th). He was referring to the reticence of Japanese jazz audiences during shows (the thunderous applause comes only at the end) when compared to their vociferous Western counterparts, only now the gaping silence wasn’t culturally induced, it was a result of quarantine. The trio, with bassist Paul Sikivie and drummer Aaron Kimmel, all Juilliard alumni, hadn’t played together since March, so to say that their musical social skills were rusty is an understatement. What fascinated about the set, however, was the gradual syncing up that occurred, a limbering of reflexes, an increased ability to react and respond to each other in real time (and space). It started as a rhythm section in support of its leader, the mood restrained, like a chamber ensemble or the Modern Jazz Quartet (sans Milt Jackson), but about halfway throughout the set, during a cover of Cedar Walton’s “Cleo’s Time”, Leavitt brought the rhythm back in to click. Sikivie’s inventive solo brought a chuckle to Diehl’s up-until-then-somber demeanor, inspiring a rhapsodic cadenza. There was more trading and playing with the pulse on Freddie Hubbard’s “Happy Times”, delicate intensity in the laid-back but swinging “Autumn in New York” and some of the best moments of all during the last piece, Ornette Coleman’s “Blues Connotation”.

The Vision Festival is all about adaptability. It has happened in so many venues in its 25-year history that it is independent of place. Its homespun quality means that as long as Roberta and Richard Berger are taking tickets, there are pots of steaming food in the back and organizer Patricia Nicholson-Parker is announcing the artists while pleading for social justice, it is the Vision Festival. This year’s show had to go on and it did...in the parking lot of the converted office with the vibe of an L.A. mountaintop mansion. Attendance was good and, refreshingly, forgetting this as it has been months—or, more precisely, 229 days—since this reviewer saw a concert not constrained to a computer screen or competing with outdoor noise. The event was the album release concert by trumpeter Aquiles Navarro and drummer Tcheser Holmes for Heritage Of The Invisible II (International Anthem) and venue Greenpoint Art Gallery IRL—a shout-out to nearby Polish restaurant Karczma and its white borscht in a bread-bowl—a converted office with the vibe of an L.A. mountaintop mansion. Attendance was good and, refreshingly, skewered young and of color, masks glowing in the neon of the dark room. Navarro and Holmes are best known as 40 percent of Irreversible Entanglements yet the album has little to do with that group’s highly-political take on spirit jazz, instead being a series of pastiches as 40 percent of Irreversible Entanglements yet the album has little to do with that group’s highly-political take on spirit jazz, instead being a series of pastiches instead, a 40-minute piece that took elements from its tunes and wove them together, Navarro supplementing Cleaver’s group too was designed for darkness, as surf-rock met Deodato-style fusion, liberally frosted with cosmic free jazz. Jones stood in the middle of it all, bleating like mad, all eyes (including in the apartments above) on him.

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Rather his playing always leaves just enough breathing room to suggest the spaces between ideas, ideas that flow like mountain snowmelt runoff in the spring. Uniformly excellent, standout renditions from the 20-plus-song set included an introspective “In Your Own Sweet Way”, leisurely “Embraceable You”, hardly driving “How About You”, strong but sensitive “Polka Dots and Moonbeams”, imaginatively harmonized “It Could Happen To You” and two barnburners: “By Myself” and “After You’ve Gone”.

—Tom Greenland

Bill Charlap @ Dizzy’s Club

Live music indoors is LOUD. One can be forgiven for forgetting this as it has been months—or, more precisely, 229 days—since this reviewer saw a concert not constrained to a computer screen or competing with outdoor noise. The event was the album release concert by trumpeter Aquiles Navarro and drummer Tcheser Holmes for Heritage Of The Invisible II (International Anthem) and venue Greenpoint Art Gallery IRL—a shout-out to nearby Polish restaurant Karczma and its white borscht in a bread-bowl—a converted office with the vibe of an L.A. mountaintop mansion. Attendance was good and, refreshingly, skewered young and of color, masks glowing in the neon of the dark room. Navarro and Holmes are best known as 40 percent of Irreversible Entanglements yet the album has little to do with that group’s highly-political take on spirit jazz, instead being a series of pastiches rather than delightful harmonies, these songs become miniatures of emotion in Charlap’s capable hands, the unheard lyrics implicit in his eloquent interpretations. Thanks to excellent camera work and mic’ing, the concert provided the audience with an up-close-and-personal experience. Charlap adds bits of everything—stride, locked-hand chords, quicksilver runs, fluid counter-lines, tastefully dramatic codas—to his spontaneous arrangements, but there is never a sense of compulsion or crowding.

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Bill Charlap @ Dizzy’s Club
Fresh off of closing out the Walk With The Wind weekend concert series in Central Park, saxophonist Chris Potter’s Trio with bassist Joe Martin and drummer Nasheet Waits made their way to Brooklyn for the first weekly Wednesday night live-streams from Bar Bayeux (Oct. 14th). Potter got things started with a short unaccompanied tenor solo, before launching into a hard-swinging rendition of standard “My Shining Hour”, on which the strong influence of Sonny Rollins, who popularized the piano-less trio format, was clearly evident. Martin followed Potter’s bebop-and-beyond outing with a lyrical solo of his own before the leader returned trading four-bar exchanges with Waits. That segued into a motivic tenor improvisation, leading into Eastern-tinted original “Okinawa”. After taking time out to present the trio, thanking the unseen audience “for not coming, staying home and checking us out”, Potter introduced Ed Blackwell’s “Togo”. The folkish melody hearkening to West Africa, first recorded by Old And New Dreams, had soulful drumming on top of which Potter stretched out over the range of his horn, blowing muezzin-like lines punctuated by anguished altissimo cries. Calming the mood the band eased into Potter’s stirring “The Dreamer Is The Dream”, then took off to the races with a fiery version of his “Amsterdam Blues” which combined intense modal and boppish lines over propulsive rhythm. The set ended with “Body and Soul” before beboppng out with Charlie Parker’s “Donna Lee”.

A class act is how one could best describe Lafayette Harris, Jr. the kind of artist who shows up as elegantly attired for his sans-audience live-streamed gig at Brooklyn’s Soapbox Gallery (Oct. 21st) as he would for an engagement in any of the world’s toniest venues he has performed in during an illustrious career. Joined by longtime partner, bassist Lonnie Plaxico, the pianist opened up his set noting, “Let’s start off with a standard that everybody knows”, to preface his swinging delivery of “It’s Almost Like Being In Love”; he quickly established his bebop credentials, quoting Swingley’s line, “Valse Hot” on which he demonstrated estimable stamp on the piece. He continued with Sonny Rollins’, “A Walkin’ Crippled” before returning trading four-bar exchanges with Waits. That led to an up tempo “Slade”. Drummer Sean Brock dropped wonderfully disjuncted tom accents against bassist’s “Tightrope”’s rolling line as Kwabena-Wilson’s nimble flute alternated with djembe, bearing an atmosphere at once timeless and current.

Central Park, Frederick Law Olmsted’s dizzying labyrinth that confounds even we natives, was unforfeing that day (Oct. 4th) as this reviewer sought out a particular concert site. Unable to locate this stage, however, I wandered into the Befo’ Quotet’s irresistible post-Bop and R&B. A veritable flute flight soared above sizzling lead guitar and a rhythm section of poigniant subtlety and grace. Drenched in jazz, Motown, djembe funk and, at points, Harmolodics, the foursome also incorporated vocals, conjuring memories of back when. Passersby grooved to a stop, but just as the crowd got comfortable, the music playfully morphed into traditional rhythms under “That’s All”, “Get on Up” and “Mona Lisa”. Atiba Kwabena-Wilson, flutist, vocalist, poet and percussionist, has been performing in Harlem for decades. A teaching artist, he’s lectured on African culture widely, was a voice on WBAL-FM and led ensembles in haunts like the St. Nick’s Pub and Paris Blues, both of which featured the Befo’ Quotet in lengthy residencies. “This band grew out of my African cultural ensemble, Songhai Djeli, but has its own identity.” Guitarist James Rolfehre’s solo on “St. Thomas”, interspersed with biting dyad attacks, led to an uptempo “Killer Joe”. Drummer Sean Brock dropped wonderfully disjuncted tom accents against bassist “Dr.” William Dotts’ throwing line as Kwabena-Wilson’s nimble flute alternated with djembe, bearing an atmosphere at once timeless and current.

For more information, visit arts.gov/honors/jazz.

Recipients of the 2020 Doris Duke Artist Awards have been named and include drummer Andrew Cyrille and vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant, both receiving $250,000. For more information, visit ddf.org. Additionally, Salvant was named one of the 2020 MacArthur Fellows, receiving $625,000.

On Nov. 3rd, US Election Day, Deep Tones for Change, an initiative of Deep Tones for Peace, will broadcast 4 performances hourly for the entire 17 hours polls are open nationwide, totalling 68 individual performances. For more information, visit facebook.com/groups/DeepTonesForPeace2020.

The 50th Annual Pitt Jazz Seminar and Concert—Celebrating Dr. Nathan Davis and Geni Allen, featuring panel discussions, symposia and performances, will take place online Nov. 2nd-7th at youtube.com/ channel/UChzhaYWyx3dp1p9c8mskKBvHg/videos.

Our own Phil Freeman, who has run the arts and culture zine/website Burning Ambulance since 2010, has announced the founding of a related label, Burning Ambulance Music, to be inaugurated in 2021. For more information, visit burningambulance.com.

Tenor/alto saxophonist Maciej Obara was the recipient of two Fryderyk Awards, as presented by the Phonographic Academy of Poland: Jazz Artist of the Year and Jazz Album of the Year for his 2019 ECM release Three Crowns.

New England Conservatory has launched a “low-latency music-making initiative”, which allows musicians to collaborate across long distances with “virtually lagless audio-visual elements to enhance digital music making with a setup anyone can assemble at home.” For more information, visit ianhowellcounteretremo.com/soundjack-real-time-online-music.

Brooklyn Raga Massive has announced its 2020 Ragas Live Festival. The 24-hour event will live-stream for free starting Nov. 21st at 7 pm and will include over 50 artists participating from 15 cities. For more information, visit ragaslive.org.

Blue Note Records has announced the Classic Vinyl Reissue Series, a continuation of its Blue Note 80 Vinyl Reissue Series launched in conjunction with the label’s 80th anniversary in 2019. The series, which drops Dec. 4th, is available for pre-order now and will begin with pianist McCoy Tyner’s The Real McCoy and trumpeter Lee Morgan’s The Sidewinder. For more information, visit bluenote.com/classic-vinyl-reissue-series.

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THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | NOVEMBER 2020
Although Joe Farnsworth has only recorded sporadically as a leader, his list of sideman credits reads like a Who’s Who of jazz. The veteran drummer, now 52, has backed heavyweights including tenor saxophonists Benny Golson, Pharoah Sanders, Junior Cook and Eric Alexander, baritone saxophonist Cecil Payne and pianists Harold Mabern and Cedar Walton. Farnsworth, originally from Massachusetts, has spent much of his adult life in New York City and has a long association with the Upper West Side club Smoke. His new album as a leader, Time to Swing, has been released on its in-house Smoke Sessions label, Farnsworth leading a band of trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, pianist Kenny Barron and bassist Peter Washington. During a recent interview, Farnsworth discussed Time to Swing and some of the many jazz icons he has worked with over the years.

The New York City Jazz Record: Time to Swing isn’t your first album, but is your first for Smoke Sessions. How did your association with Smoke come about?

Joe Farnsworth: In 1993, I took over playing every night at a place called Augie’s, which is Smoke now. I was there playing every Friday and Saturday. It was a godsend to me. I brought in everybody: Junior Cook, John Ore, Cecil Payne, Big John Patton, Dizzy Reece. So many guys—Julian Priester, Harold Mabern. [Guitarist] Paul Stache was working there and then Paul and his friend [Frank Christopherson] took over and started Smoke. And so, when Smoke opened up in 1999, I played the very first weekend, the grand opening. And I convinced Paul to get George Coleman and Harold Mabern. I said, “When you get someone like George Coleman, then that makes the club much better. It raises everybody’s game.” And then [in 2013] Paul started his record label, Smoke Sessions. That club is family to me, it’s a home away from home.

TNYCJR: The late Harold Mabern featured you on some of his albums for Smoke Sessions.

JF: I brought Harold to Smoke. We got a Rhodes for him. Harold played there when it was Augie’s, in fact. It wasn’t even Smoke then. And Harold was hesitant to go up there to Augie’s and play a Rhodes, but he did and he loved it. I was the first one to bring him up there.

TNYCJR: Jazz clubs certainly come and go. Many New Yorkers who know Smoke never saw it as Augie’s.

JF: Augie’s was a dump. It was kind of a college hangout. They didn’t charge a cover and they used to pass the hat. Augie’s was very vibrant, but it was a little too low-brow for some of the really big-name guys. When Paul took over and it became Smoke, he changed everything. They went from zero cover charge to $30, 40. They made it into a real club.

TNYCJR: You have played with so many jazz icons who are no longer living.

JF: When Harold Mabern died, one of the things I missed was that Harold could bring you back to 1950. I mean, he used to talk about picking cotton in Memphis as a kid—and he would make you feel like you were right there. Harold had so many stories. There are so many stories in jazz.

TNYCJR: You’ve played with Eric Alexander a great deal. He was one of the Young Lions in the late ‘80s-early ‘90s; now he is 52 and helping the young musicians out.


TNYCJR: So, you knew Eric about half a decade before his first album as a leader, Straight Up (Delmark, 1992)?

JF: Yeah, Straight Up with Harold Mabern, George Fludas. I went to William Paterson and met Harold in 1986 and Eric came there in ’87. So Eric, Harold and myself basically started that relationship in ’87. And then, once I graduated in 1990, we started hiring Harold for gigs. We would get gigs and give him all the money just to have Harold Mabern there.

TNYCJR: Eric and Harold had such a close relationship. Eric played as a sideman on Harold’s albums and Harold played as a sideman on Eric’s albums. And you were on many of those albums, whether it was Eric leading or Harold leading.

JF: Yes. Even since I met Eric in 1987, we learned together. We did sessions together every night in college for three years and we went to New York City together. We both wanted the same things. There were two main groups for us: the George Coleman Quartet was a big school for us and the other one was Cedar Walton. Those were the two camps that we loved. Me and Eric both wanted to be in those two camps and it was almost the same journey. Through Eric and Harold, I got to play with George Coleman and to this day, I still play with George a lot. I was fortunate to play with a lot of great tenor players, man: Junior Cook, Johnny Griffin, Pharoah Sanders, George Coleman, Benny Golson, Eric Alexander. George recommended me to Pharoah Sanders. I was with Pharoah Sanders for 16 years. I was with Pharoah from like 2000-2016, and that was all because of George Coleman.

TNYCJR: You played with Wynton Marsalis in the past.

JF: I had made a record with Wynton before called Live At The House of Tribes—a live record for Blue Note—and I always wanted to do another record date with him. For many, many years, I just waited and waited to make another record with Wynton. And we did this movie recently called Motherless Brooklyn so we reconnected and we did some movie release parties. I just knew now was the time. I asked Wynton and he said yes. So, I automatically went to Smoke Sessions.

TNYCJR: You use different combinations: quartet performances, trios and a solo drums feature.

JF: Wynton is a busy guy. So, I was just glad he could do it and I certainly wasn’t going to be greedy and ask him to do a whole date. I asked him just to do four tunes. The way I planned it was almost like an old record date, a vinyl date, a Side A and Side B. Side A, we go in there and play trio with Kenny Barron and Peter Washington. And then, you flip over to Side B and Wynton Marsalis joins us.

TNYCJR: How long have you known Kenny Barron?

JF: I used to sit there in awe for 25 years at Bradley’s, watching Kenny with Ray Drummond and Ben Riley. And of course, I saw Kenny in the group Sphere, I used to love that group with Charlie Rouse. Bradley’s was where I really saw Kenny Barron a lot. When Kenny did this record I asked him what he wanted to play. I wanted to play tunes that he wanted to play because he certainly has a wider variety of experiences than me. I learned that with Junior Cook a long time ago: instead of telling these people what to play, I love asking them what they want to play.

TNYCJR: You play Duke Ellington’s “Prelude to a Kiss” as a bossa nova.

JF: That’s what happens when you get Kenny Barron: you’re free to do anything. I knew we were going to play Kenny’s tune “Lemuria” and I knew we were going to play “Monk’s Dream” by Thelonious Monk.

TNYCJR: Kenny has always had a broad repertoire.

JF: Some guys just don’t know many tunes. But guys like Kenny Barron, they know tunes. Harold Mabern knew tunes. Barry Harris knows tunes. And Kenny Barron knows tunes. When I was planning the record, I thought, “I have Wynton Marsalis, I have Peter Washington, if Kenny Barron would just say yes, that would bring everything to the date: maturity, knowledge, swing, blues, history, everything.” And Kenny couldn’t have been any nicer.

TNYCJR: Ellington-Strayhorn’s “The Star-Crossed Lovers” is done as a trio with Kenny.

JF: We did “Lemuria” in one take and we did “The Star-Crossed Lovers” in one take. Kenny nailed it, man, nailed it. It was right there on his fingertips. Kenny has a hell of a presence on the piano. That’s why you get Kenny Barron. I think all the takes were one take.

TNYCJR: “One for Jimmy Cobb” is your solo feature.

JF: Yeah. It came to me: I should do something for Jimmy Cobb. I was just thinking about [late drummer] Jimmy Cobb and how soulful he was, how great he was as a human being. Just solid. So, I tried to base it on his personality more than anything.

TNYCJR: One of the most soulful things you do on Time to Swing is the spiritual “Down by the Riverside”. Wynton is really digging into his New Orleans heritage.

JF: I asked Wynton what all he wanted to play, what ballad he wanted to play, what up tune he wanted to play. For an up tune, he suggested “Hesitation”, which I hadn’t heard him play since his debut record with Ron Carter and Tony Williams. And I said to Wynton, “Let’s play something like gospel.” He wanted to do “Down by the Riverside”. I used to think it was an Irish song. “Down by the Riverside” is a tune that my best friend’s father used to sing. I didn’t realize it was a spiritual. And the way Wynton described it was (CONTINUED ON PAGE 30)
This month, drummer Jeff Williams is releasing *Road Tales*, a live album in celebration of live music at a time when there are no live performances. Williams says that he prefers to release live music to studio-recorded music, “because you have more energy and less self-consciousness than when you’re recording in a studio.”

*Road Tales*, which was recorded at the London Jazz Festival in 2018, confirms that there is something to that idea: performances by alto saxophonist John O’Gallagher, tenor saxophonist Josh Arcoleo and bassist Sam Lasserson, in addition to Williams himself, all stand out. O’Gallagher, Arcoleo and Lasserson have been playing together with Williams for many years and he says that their work on *Road Tales* “really represents what happens when you’re able to keep a band together for a few years and the material evolves over that time.”

Williams first began ‘assembling’ the *Road Tales* quartet in 2004 when he moved from New York to a second home in the UK with his wife, the novelist Lionel Shriver. “I didn’t really like London right away, but that changed as opportunities came my way,” he says. “I began teaching at the Royal Academy of Music, where I had a saxophone student [Arcoleo]… He took maybe four lessons with me and I was really impressed with him. I remember saying at the time, ‘I’m going to put you in my band’, but I really didn’t have one in the UK at that point. So he was the impetus.” Williams assembled the band over several years, with a number of other musicians he knew and played with— including ones from his old group from New York. “I had two bands, one here and one there,” Williams says, “and occasionally I was able to mix and match. John O’Gallagher, who I’d been playing with off and on since the ‘90s, was in my New York band. And then he decided to get his doctorate at Birmingham Conservatoire, so suddenly he’s in the UK, whereas the guitar player in my UK band, Phil Robson, moved to New York. So they sort of changed places.”

This kind of in-person, gig-based process was how Williams got his start in music. His early career was shaped in large part by traveling to New York, where he was able to watch and learn from live performances. “I had an unusual upbringing,” he says. “My mother separated from my father when I was nine and went to West Coast, for about three years.” It was everything he had been looking for when he first came to New York and led him into a life of teaching, performing and recording.

Now 70 years old and cooped up indoors, Williams worries that younger musicians might not get the opportunities to play live that were so instrumental in making him a musician. “It’s been a time for reflection...” Williams says. “I feel so fortunate to have had all these wonderful experiences playing music and I’m concerned for the next generations, what’s going to be left, how long it will take for people to feel safe to go hear a live performance without social distancing, so that it’s feasible financially for venues to even exist. I’m worried about how the younger musicians I play with in the UK are going to pay their rent, how they’re going to survive, if they’ll be able to play music... [but at the same time] I’m heartened to see so many musicians continuing to produce their work in spite of these challenges. We will persevere.”

**ARTIST FEATURE**

By Kyle Oleksiuk

JEFF WILLIAMS

For more information, visit williamsmusic.com

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**Recommended Listening:**

- Dave Liebman—*Lookout Farm* (ECM, 1973)
- Richard Beirach—*Methuselah* (Trio, 1975)
- Frank Kimbrough Trio—*Lonely Woman* (Mapleshade, 1988)
- Paul Bley—*Paul Bley Plays Carla Bley* (Steppin’Out, 1993)
- John O’Gallagher Trio—*Dirty Hands* (Clean Feed, 2007)
- Jeff Williams—*Road Tales* (Live at London Jazz Festival) (Whirlwind, 2018)

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**Dylan Jack Quartet**

**The Tale of the Twelve-foot Man**

“*There is a restless quality to Jack’s muse. The four tracks here range within a particular time signature or thematic motif for long, instead constantly moving in new directions. While, in other circumstances, this could make for a disjointed listening experience, the band functions as a single organism, with a fluid cohesiveness which gives the music its fundamental integrity.*

- Troy Dostert (*All About Jazz*)

DylanJackMusic.com | DylanJackQuartet.bandcamp.com
Daniel Humair is a drummer, composer and a painter originally from Geneva, Switzerland, now living in rural France. With the exception of Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins, the 82-year-old Humair has played with the most legendary musicians in jazz since the late '50s. As a sideman he has supported some of the biggest jazz acts of all time and has appeared on such classic albums as Chet Baker's 'Chet Is Back!', Art Farmer's 'What Happened?' and Lucky Thompson Trio's 'Memorial Oscar Pettiford'.

At 14, Humair fell in love with New Orleans jazz. He remembers how he first discovered jazz from a friend who had records. "As soon as I heard Louis Armstrong I said, 'that's what I want to do!" Soon after, Humair joined several amateur groups, won first prize at the Zürich Amateur Festival in 1955 and became a professional working musician. In 1958, he went to Paris to play with Don Byas, Kenny Dorham, Bud Powell, Eric Dolphy, Pettiford, Baker and Thompson. Humair's work with such illustrious legends of jazz allowed him to witness the evolution of the genre. He notes, "Bebop was the main revolution because jazz stopped being for dancing and became music for listeners." About playing with such luminaries, Humair says, "When I played with Gerry Mulligan it was different than with Joe Henderson or Stéphane Grappelli or Phil Woods or Oscar Peterson. You have to have a different attitude with each of them. I only played with people who let me be free. I always tried to understand what would be the best mix. I worked so much because I have absolutely no ego as a drummer. I adapt to the situation and if it doesn’t suit me, I don’t go. I just go where I’m gonna have fun.

And when you have fun, I do my best." While in Paris in the late '50s, Humair began a long collaboration with pianist Martial Solal and played frequently with violinist Grappelli, well known for his work with Django Reinhardt. Humair fondly recalls other career highlights with jazz giants, "Once I had the chance to play at the Philharmonic in Nice with Cannonball Adderley, Milt Jackson, Dizzy Gillespie and Oscar Peterson. I was in heaven!" During the '60s, Humair had fruitful collaborations with European musicians. He formed a trio with violinist Jean-Luc Ponty and organ player Eddy Louiss. Together, they recorded two albums at the Paris club Caméléon, which have since been reissued.

When asked if Europeans approach jazz differently than Americans, Humair says, "No. Being American, black or white doesn’t mean anything. Jazz is a totally international language. Anybody can play it if you know what it is. It’s not because you’re a good musician or an American that you’re gonna play better; that’s not good enough. You have to know the past, the folklore, that’s the main thing. If you don’t know Louis Armstrong, you cannot start at John Coltrane. You also need culture. If you’re not interested in art, architecture, design, food, theater, you’re losing a lot, you know? The best players are original, have a concept and a personality. For me, the genius of the century is Sonny Rollins. He could do anything, be creative and improvise with it. He is a situationist who plays with what he has around him. To me that’s jazz; he’s a jazz creator.

In the late '60s-early '70s Humair continued to support touring American musicians and participated in Woods' famous project 'The European Rhythm Machine.' For his work he was named "Drummer Deserving Wider Recognition" by the DownBeat International Critics Poll in 1970. Throughout the '70s, Humair was a sideman for Jim Hall, Lee Konitz, Johnny Griffin, Herbie Mann, Anthony Braxton and Hampton Hawes. He formed trios with François Jeanneau and Henri Texier and with Joachim Kühn and Jean-François Jenny-Clark and worked with Michel Portal, Richard Galliano, Jerry Bergonzi and David Liebman. His musical experiences allowed him to develop as a composer and break new ground as a drummer. Regarding the evolution of his style, Humair states, "You try to find a solution that is not too evident. You have tradition, but if you go a little bit further, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t. Creation is an accident. You have to take risks." In terms of band leadership, Humair eschews typical hierarchy and prefers a collaborative process. He doesn’t like leaders and believes there is too much emphasis on them today. "That’s part of the problem with American jazz today; you sell people. When you go to a club and see the name of a leader and not the sidemen, I think it’s abnormal because jazz is a conversation. It’s like the conversation we have now, you ask me a question and I try to answer it, but I say what I want. That’s jazz to me," he says. Live, he thrives on improvisation. "When I go onstage, I don’t wanna know what tune we’re gonna play, who’s gonna take the first chorus or the tempo. We just go onstage and play. One note from the guy in front makes you respond and play. As I said, it’s a conversation. If you have a role to play that’s preconceived, then you’re not improvising and you’re not creative."

Humair has performed at major jazz festivals in America and Europe including Newport, Monterey, Paris, Berlin, Montreux, Chicago, Barcelona, Nice and Antibes. However, he finds European and American audience reactions to jazz very different and says, "I think jazz is more respected as an art form here than it is in America. In Europe when you play somewhere, nobody speaks. In America, I was very shocked to hear more noise from the bar than from the bass player. When somebody in the audience speaks too loud, I just stop and say, ‘Why don’t you go to the next bar if you’re not interested in our work because you’re disturbing other people.’ The rules are different. It’s a culture of respect for arts in general." And Humair is vocal about his displeasure with how the difficulties obtaining working permits prohibits the recognition of European jazz musicians. "The whole American scene can come to Europe, but you [Europeans musicians] can’t come to America without a visa. It takes 15 days to get papers to come to New York. It’s totally ridiculous. That’s why I don’t come and European musicians are not known. I can tell you that there are monster players in Europe. I’m sorry that it cannot exist the way it should," he says.

While most of the jazz legends have passed on, Humair thinks much can be learned from their recordings: "All the big masters are people that went beyond technique. The chops shouldn’t be evident; the music should be in front. That’s why I like Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones or Mel Lewis. They were really playing the right thing to hear at the right place. Their style lets you know who they are."

Humair believes jazz can continue and should be as elevated and respected as classical. “I think jazz should be in the same position as classical music today as a concept of listening. I think it can keep going on in festivals. Hopefully one day people can know Coltrane as well as Mahler. That would be paradise, you know?”

In dedicating his life to modern jazz in Europe has earned him the official recognition of Chevalier and Officer of Arts and Letters by the French government. Reflecting on his long and distinguished career he laughs and says, "I’ve had good moments and very bad moments. I don’t keep bad company. I don’t drink, except wine. I don’t do drugs and I have a Swiss watch. What can I say? I’m a serious guy!"

In addition to all the accolades for his music, Humair is just as highly regarded for his art. When asked how drumming and painting compare, he says, “When you play music you have a way of timing and phrasing so that the space is controlled. It’s the same thing in painting, also an awareness of the front and the background. And I have the same attitude of improvisation. The big difference is that if you play a concert with musicians in front of people and make a mistake, you cannot correct it. Painting you do alone and you’re the only one responsible for your work. If you don’t like it, you don’t have to show it. I can paint in a more comfortable situation, but drums allow me to be a little more adventurous.”

With gigs cancelled due to COVID-19 and the global music scene essentially shut down, these days Humair spends more time painting than playing. He says, “I think I’m more of a professional painter today than a professional drummer because I spend much more time doing that. I’ve done over 5,000 paintings. I can paint for most of the day whereas as a musician, I only play for a few hours. Today, I prefer to watch the birds from my country house. I can afford to be selective."

For more information, visit danielhumair.com

Recommended Listening:
- Daniel Humair/Pierre Michelot/Rene Urrtreguer — Hunt! (Vega-Fresh Sound, 1960)
- Lee Konitz/Martial Solal — European Episode / Impressive Rome (Canti-CAM Jazz, 1968)
- Steve Lacy/Daniel Humair/Anthony Cox — Work (Sketch, 2002)
- Daniel Humair/Samuel Blaser/Heini Känzig — 1291 (OutNote, 2020)

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ALL OUT NOW
ENCORE

AVREEAYL RA
BY KURT GOTTSCHALK

“My first mentor wasn’t a musician.” It’s an unexpected statement coming from someone who from all indications lives and breathes music, but when asked about the lessons learned over a lifetime of playing, drummer Avreeayl Ra’s immediate response is about healing. “Henry Rucker,” he said definitively, speaking from the apartment that by all indications he’s soon to lose on Chicago’s South Side. “He taught me to believe in and manifest impossible things.”

Ra became involved with Rucker’s Psychic Research Foundation in the late ’60s, the same time he began working with trumpeter Phil Cohran, one of the great, unheralded figures of the explosion of African American artistic ingenuity. He has stayed the parallel paths of natural healing and musical improvisation to this day. “The lesson that I got from Phil was the lesson of intention,” he said. “Now I’m trying to fuse the two together, the music and the healing.” Cohran and Ra were both a part of the Sun Ra Arkestra during the band’s fertile, formative Chicago years and, unsurprisingly, the composer, philosopher and teacher also had an influence on the drummer. “He told me to play round and he gave me an image with his fingers because I was playing angular,” according to the younger Ra. “This is something I’ve been working on ever since, playing circular. That circular motion sets up a vortex that doesn’t happen when you’re playing angularly. It really affects the third eye, that circular energy.

“My main lessons were given to me by gestures,” he continued. “They weren’t explained with words. Professor Longhair told me a certain way to swing—there again, it was with a hand motion. He said ‘you give people something to think about but I want you to get this.’ He was a tap dancer too so he knew rhythm.”

Conversation with Ra easily revolves around influences, likely because he’s so open to them. “He’s a very creative person but also very committed to healing, very grounded,” according to flutist Nicole Mitchell. “He maintains this childlike curiosity in always wanting to learn more and grow more.” That curiosity keeps him open to new ideas, new experiences and to playing with new people. His openness to working with up and coming players has made him a staple among younger generations of Chicago musicians.

He definitely loves to share his enthusiasm to younger people and is very encouraging,” Mitchell said. “He’s one of our most encouraging mentors. He took me seriously. He believed in me. When you’re starting out, it’s really important to play with older musicians who can bring that experience into what you’re doing,” Mitchell recalled inviting Ra to early rehearsals in walk-up apartments. “He would never bring a drumset,” she said. “He would just pick up pots and pans and you would never know that you’re missing anything.” His contemporary, reedplayer Mwata Bowden, another frequent collaborator, also noted such offers are a thing of the past. “He never wanted to play again. He never wanted to be a part of Sun Ra again. He bought himself a five-piece drum set and said, ‘OK, I got what I need,'” Bowden explained. “His stuff was always a hodgepodge. He made his own sound. Extremely rhythmically complex but he is always there where you need him.”

Ra was born in Chicago in 1947 and named after his father, saxophonist Arthur “Swinglee” O’Neil, a mentor to John Gilmore who was friendly with Henry Threadgill, Ed Wilkerson and other musicians of Ra’s generation. With a brief stay in New Orleans in the early ’70s, Chicago has remained his home. And now it’s he who’s doing the mentoring, working regularly with Joshua Abrams, Christopher Dammann, Dave Remps and other newer names on the city’s scene. “Chicago’s a magnet and a lot of the younger players now are not necessarily from Chicago,” he said. “I embrace them. My father was a great mentor. When I started playing, people didn’t know I was my father’s son because I changed my name, but most of my friends were friends of my father’s.” The city “has a very innovative atmosphere that I don’t find in many places,” he added. “It’s a certain earthiness and it’s like a southern town, you get eye contact, people talk to you.” In recent years, however, the city hasn’t been easy on Ra. In 2016, he was jumped by a group of white men outside the jazz club The Green Mill. “This was at the beginning of all the turmoil with Trump and I really think it was related,” he said.

More recently, he’s been facing the threat of eviction. With no gigs happening under the pandemic lockdown and no other means of income, Ra fell behind in his rent enough to get a warning from the landlord. “Longtime friends in the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians set up a crowdsourcing campaign to raise funds and he was able to make up the back rent.”

But things aren’t likely to pick up soon, he said, and he’s looking to put his possessions in storage and find a single room to wait it out. “I’ve got only a couple months before I’m in the same situation, I see that coming already,” he said with a disarming laugh. “It really was touching that somebody was thinking about me. Things that you can’t control, you’ve got to see how you make sense of life.” 

For more information, visit charity.gofundme.com/ ofen/campaign/avreeayl-ra-fundraiser

Recommended Listening:
• Ernest Dawkins New Horizons Ensemble—South Side Street Songs (Silkheart, 1993) & a single a staple among younger generations.
• Fred Anderson Quartet—Live Volume IV (Asian Improv, 2010)
• Dave Remps/Joshua Abrams/Avreeayl Ra + Jim Baker—Perihelion (Aerophonic, 2015-16)
• Mwata Bowden—1 Foot In 1 Foot Out (Asian Improv, 2019)

RECOMMENDED

JAZZ À LA CREOLE

Four with the great New Orleans clarinetist Albert Nicholas. Dodds shone in such small groups and there’s a trio session under his name available, Jazz à la Creole from 1946, with Nicholas and a newcomer, pianist Don Ewell. He recorded with clarinetist Mezz Mezzrow and soprano saxophonist/clarinetist Sidney Bechet and also toured France with them. A 1947 New York City concert recording includes performances with Bechet and trombonist Jack Teagarden. In a more unusual collaboration, Dodds was engaged by dancer/choreographer Merce Cunningham for a drummer/dancer duet.

The burgeoning interest in the roots of jazz led to special opportunities for Dodds to document his life and music. There’s a 1946 Folkways recording Talking and Drum Solos and a 1953 film of Dodds demonstrating drum techniques. That same year, Barry Gara conducted the extensive interviews that would become The Baby Dodds Story (Contemporary Press), an engaging memoir. Sadly, it was published shortly after Dodds’ death in 1959.

As critics and publicists of the ’40s era created largely imaginary jazz wars between generations, Dodds was held in high regard by the great drummers of modern jazz. When Max Roach talked about the celebration of horn players at the expense of drummers, he cited Armstrong and Dodds, and some can hear Dodds’ phrases in Art Blakey’s fills. In a 1960

LEST WE FORGET

BABY DODDS
BY STUART BROOMER

Warren “Baby” Dodds was the first great New Orleans jazz drummer to record, playing in the 1920s with cornet player King Oliver, trumpeter Louis Armstrong and pianist Jelly Roll Morton. His advanced technique and fluid accents influenced drummers like Dave Tough and Gene Krupa and in the ’40s he became an important figure in the revival of traditional jazz. His autobiography and solo recordings are significant documents of early jazz history.

Born on Dec. 24th, 1894 (according to his own The Baby Dodds Story), 1897 or 1898 (numerous sources) in Waveland, Mississippi, Dodds relocated to New Orleans at 16. A serious student of the drums, he learned to read music and practiced multiple musical styles, soon playing in trumpeter Bunk Johnson’s parade band, the legendary trombonist Frankie Duson’s Eagle Band and pianist Fate Marable’s steamship band. In 1921, he left to join Oliver in California and went with him to Chicago. Early accounts of jazz celebrated drummers above everyone else, raving about stick-juggling acrobatics; in contrast, early jazz recordings usually omitted them altogether, their instruments too loud for sensitive acoustic recording. Dodds suffered on both counts: he was an intensely disciplined, musical drummer, not a vaudevillian; though he thought the drum was the key to the orchestra, when he first showed up on the classic Creole Jazz Band recordings, he was restricted to a woodblock, a washboard or a cymbal. On “Riverside Blues” by the Oliver band, his perfect timing and shifting accents are restricted to a woodblock.

When the Oliver band broke up in 1924, Dodds stayed in Chicago playing in his alto saxophonist/ clarinetist brother Johnny Dodds’ Black Bottom Stompers, among others, and recording with Armstrong’s Hot Seven on masterpieces like “Potato Head Blues”. He and Johnny also recorded as a trio with Morton, including “Wolverine Blues”. On Johnny Dodds’ recording of “After You’ve Gone”, Baby takes an electrifying drum break during a rather lugubrious Gilded Lily gramophone.

Like many musicians of his generation, Dodds turned to other work to survive the Great Depression, but the ’40s brought a new regard for jazz as an authentic art form, providing Dodds with fresh opportunities and definitely better quality recordings. Altered Life of Baby Dodds had him an opportunity to record as a bandleader and Dodds assembled his Jazz

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12
DOTTIME
BY MARILYN LESTER

Back in 2012, friends Johanan “Jo” Bickhardt and Andrew Read, both with expertise in the record business from managing and distribution to performing, had a vision: to start their own label. But one that would place the creativity of the artist first, rather than focus on business and sales, which they viewed as the negative default position of other record labels. Read, a native of Australia, was a musician and schooled in business, had settled in the Netherlands in the early ’90s. Bickhardt, a vocalist, had been working for the distributor who handled Read’s label. And so it was that Dot Time was incorporated, with offices in the Netherlands and the US, where Bickhardt resided. In the first year of its existence, the company prolifically released a number of albums, including Matt Baker’s Underground, Lucette van den Berg’s Benksilfak, Mark Zandveld’s Lanscape and Paula Atherton’s Enjoy the Ride.

Three years later, in 2015, a significant change occurred at Dot Time with the arrival of Jerry Roche, a producer and historian. In 2004 Roche established the reissue label Mighty Quinn “to save great music of the 1950s and 60s.” “I used to work at Mosaic Records,” he adds, “and Mighty Quinn, actually named after my daughter, was an outgrowth of that experience.” For Mosaic, noted for producing exclusive boxed set jazz reissues, Roche participated in research, production and packaging, including the Grammy-nominated Bix Beiderbecke set and the Joe Venuti/Eddie Lang and Louis Prima/Wingy Manone sets.

Within a few years of its birth, Mighty Quinn had already brought back recordings by Harold Land, Pepper Adams, Ray Nance, Edmond Cone and more. It so happened that Mighty Quinn was distributed by Bickhardt. “Jo recognized the quality of what I’d been producing at Mighty Quinn,” says Roche. “He thought it would be a good idea to have a Legends Series for Dot Time.” Those first Legends releases included albums by Ella Fitzgerald (Live At Chautauqua Vol. 1), Gerry Mulligan (Live At The New School) and the Joe Bushkin Quartet (Live At The Embers 1952).

Also, around this time, Bickhardt’s partnership with Read was dissolving, creating an open door for Roche to come in and assume a leadership role at Dot Time. Roche became Bickhardt’s new partner. The European office was relocated to Bremen, Germany, where administrative functions are handled. “We chose Bremen,” Roche explains, “because it’s a fun, great city for jazz and home to the Jazzhead festival and conference.” The original mission of the company remained, stated on the label’s website: “Our label will be successful only when our artists are successful. Our mission is therefore to work together with our artists to help them succeed in reaching their goals.”

In the transition of partners, reevaluation of the label and its future inevitably had to take place. Dot Time is essentially a three-person shop: the partners and their administrator in Europe. “Jo and I focused on its success, to allow Dot Time to keep a focus on the quality of their artists, avoiding the risk of over-extending. Hence, another key artist signing with Dot Time arrived in Grammy-winning jazz royalty: vocalist Catherine Russell. She was introduced to the label (CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

LATINX VOICES
BY SUZANNE LORGE

Heroes honor heroes. So writes music journalist Michael Ambrosino in the liner notes for The Art of Descarga (Smithsonian Folkways). Here he’s talking about percussionist John Santos’ furthering of the legacy of Cuban bongocero Francisco “Chito” Pozo, whose irresistible rhythms found their way into the masterworks of American jazz bandleaders like Dizzy Gillespie and Tito Puente. The new release digs deep into AfroCaribbean and AfroLatin beat traditions, centering on the music of descargas: Cuban jam sessions full of exhilarating rhythmic possibilities. In descargas, singers like Orlando Torriente sing backup (coro) and will solo at times, though the focus of the improvisation is always the motion of the groove. On The Art of Descarga, Torriente—who’s been singing with the Bay Area’s legendary Salsoul Sound for over 15 years—has a lead vocal to two tracks, sultry mambo “Bernal Heights” and spinning bomba “Lo Tuyo No Va”. Placed right at the upper edge of his range, Torriente’s spontaneous vocal lines ring with barely restrained fervor—they’re an invitation to join in the excitement. Los Angeles disc jockey Jose Rizo leads his nonet Mongoroma on Maripous Canton (Saunguá), a 12-track collection featuring the esteemed timbale player Ramon Banda on what would be his final recording. The group’s regular lead singer James Zavaleta displays striking rhythmic acuity on tunes like playful “Quindimbia” and “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic “Descarga Ramon Banda”, the ensemble’s lengthy ode to the late percussionist, only to wax disarmingly romantic…

The notion behind the Jazz Is Dead series—brainchild of hip-hop composer Adrian Younge and TDS rider’s on the Smoldering pulse of “Queira Bem”; tight repackage in Portuguese with Alvi on whirling bossa nova “Viajando Por Aí (Traveling Around)”; R&B-tinged wordless duet with Oden on “Gotta Love Again”; and intuitive phrasing against raucous synth lines on “A Venta Gente Amanhã (The People Return Tomorrow)”... Ageless.

Singer/composer Eva Cortés front an impressive roster on Todas Las Voces (TRRC), her second album with producer Doug Beavers. Besides the latter on trombone, the flamenco-suffused tunes feature bassists Christian McBride and Luques Curtis, pianist Elio Villafranca, drummer Eric Harland, saxophonist Roman Filii and percussionist Luisito Quintero. Most of the expertly crafted songs are originals, plaintive modern jazz anthem “Canción con Todos” coolly sophisticated “Hills of Silver” and smart, laid-back “Out Of Words”, co-written with Villafranca, for example. But she also includes a smooth jazz version of “The Popular Latin title “Vida” by influencial Chilcan composer Violeta Parra and an anciend rerendition of Horace Silver’s “besechee ballad, “Peace”... with words by Bobby McMerrin. And with the album’s title she offers a clue to her humanitarian motivations as a singer-songwriter; translated as All Voices, it can allude not only to her skills behind the microphone but also to her wish for the world. ♠
Gary Peacock, a legendary bassist whose résumé since the mid-'50s reads like a history of jazz and who also enjoyed a fruitful career as a bandleader, most notably for ECM, died Sep. 4th at 85.  

Peacock was born May 12th, 1935 in Burley, Idaho, and grew up in Yakima, Washington. His early experience with music was as a pianist and he attended Westlake College of Music in Los Angeles. It was during his time in the army that serendipity came: his unit’s bassist quit and Peacock slid over from the piano bench to take over. While stationed overseas, Peacock made his first recordings as part of the 1957 Jazz Salon Dortmund 1957 (released as EPs on Metronome). Back on the West Coast, he began his jazz career in earnest, working with Bud Shank, Carmell Jones, the Candoli brothers, Don Ellis, Clare Fischer, Barney Kessel and Prince Lasha. That early work presaged Peacock’s entire career, one that found him working alongside musicians from every subset of jazz. Later credits in the '60s, when Peacock was based in New York, included Gil Evans, Bill Evans, Lowell Davidson, Albert Ayler, Tony Williams, Paul Bley and even a stint with Miles Davis. Speaking to Florence Wetzel for a 2007 interview for this gazette, Peacock recalled that when playing with Davis, “listening became part of my body. Sometimes Miles would be playing and he’d stop in the middle of a song and turn around and look at me. The first couple times I thought, ‘Jeez, I must have fucked up.’ After a while I realized that he was listening to everyone around him.”  

After taking some time away from music, spending time in Japan to study Eastern medicine, Peacock reconnected with Bley, recording with him in various groups throughout the first half of the '70s, and made his first albums as a leader for CBS/Sony, featuring some of Japan’s first generation of avant garde players. In 1977, Peacock recorded Tales Of Another for ECM, the first document of what would become the noted trio of himself, pianist Keith Jarrett and drummer Jack DeJohnette, active through 2014. Speaking of that trio to Wetzel, Peacock said, “If three people share a common history in a particular area of music and they all found something in that music that freed them, when they get together to play a piece everyone is 100% in that composition... So although there’s a distance in age, we share the same inspiration from so many people and compositions that we’re already in quite a magical setting.”  

Peacock continued to work with a starry array of players and release further albums for ECM (his final release was 2016’s Tangents), Postcards and Pirouet. When asked by Wetzel about his listening habits, his answer reflected his years of practicing tai chi or sitting meditation: “Precious little. Where I live is very silent... So mostly I spend a lot of time in silence.”

Recommended Listening:  
• King Oliver – The Complete 1923 Jazz Band Recordings (Off The Record-Archeophone, 1923)  
• Johnny Dodds – Great Original Performances 1923-1929 (BBC, 1923-29)  
• Louis Armstrong – The Complete Hot Five & Hot Seven Recordings (Columbia-Legacy, 1926-27)  
• Bunk Johnson – Rare and Unissued Masters, Volume Two (1943-1946) (American Music, 1943-46)  
• Baby Dodds – Talking and Drum Solos (Smithsonian Folkways-Atavistic, 1946/1954)  
• Baby Dodds Trio – Jazz à La Creole (G.H.B.-ORG Music, 1946-47)

(GARY PEACOCK  COURTESY OF PERFORMANCE MUSIC GROUP)

STANLEY CROUCH (Dec. 14th, 1945 – Sep. 16th, 2020) The controversial jazz critic, scholar, NEA Jazz Master and MacArthur Genius (known as “Stanley The Crouch”) came up as a drummer in the Loft Jazz scene of ‘70s New York, recording with David Murray and Leo Smith, wrote liner notes for albums by the likes of Murray, Bobby Bradford, Rashid Ali, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Max Roach and Wynton Marsalis as well as critical books on jazz history (including a tome on Charlie Parker) and race issues in the U.S. Crouch died Sep. 16th at 74.

REGGIE JOHNSON (Dec. 13th, 1940 – Sep. 11th, 2020) The bassist, long based in Europe, was a key figure in The New Thing in ‘60s New York, recording with Archie Shepp, Marion Brown, Giuseppe Logan, Valdo Williams, Alan Shorter and Jazz Composer’s Orchestra, plus, later, more straightahead credits with Booker Ervin, Bobby Hutcherson, Harold Land, Kenny Burrell, Sonny Stitt, Walter Bishop, Jr., Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, Johnny Coles, Frank Wess, Mingus Dynasty, Tom Harrell, Robin Kenyatta, Steve Grossman and others. Johnson died Sep. 11th at 79.

HAROLD LIEBERMAN (1931 – Sep. 16th, 2020) The trumpeter had a pair of ‘60s recordings featuring, himself overdubbed in duets or octets and was also a member of the Music Minus One Orchestra, the titular ensemble of the label, which made play-along records. Lieberman died Sep. 16th at 89.

BILL PURSELL (Jun. 9th, 1926 – Sep. 3rd, 2020) The pianist was better known for his later work in country music but had early jazz albums for Columbia and a 1960 sideman credit under Hank Garland (alongside a 17-year-old Gary Burton). Pursell died Sep. 3rd at 94 from complications of COVID-19.

HANS SALOMON (Sep. 10th, 1933 – Sep. 24th, 2020) The Austrian saxophonist was part of the 1958 Newport International Youth Band and went on to work with Friedrich Guilda, Erich Kleinschuster, Art Farmer, ORF Big Band, Aladár Pege and others. Salomon died Sep. 24th at 87.

MAYNARD SOLOMON (Jan. 15th, 1930 – Sep. 28th, 2020) The producer and co-founder of Vanguard Records with his brother was known for his classical releases and books on composers but his label did release albums in the ‘60s-70s by Buck Clayton, Bunky Green, Clark Terry, Larry Coryell, Elvin Jones, James Moody and Oregon. Solomon died Sep. 28th at 90.

IRA SULLIVAN (May 1st, 1931 – Sep. 21st, 2020) The multi-instrumentalist (trumpet, flugelhorn, alto, soprano, tenor saxophones) and stalwart in his adopted home of Chicago of the ‘50s-70s was active since the mid ’50s well past the COVID-19 pandemic creating havoc in live performance and greatly affecting creative artists across all genres, it’s the record industry that’s least uncathed. Dot Time has “great plans” for the future, which Roche acknowledges with enthusiasm. The label’s philosophy of win-win has been a constant since its inception and now, with Roche solidly in place and the business activities of the label settled, the path ahead seems paved with the ingredients for further success, a notion that Zuraitis endorses. “I feel Dot Time has become one of the most successful and accredited labels in the jazz world today,” she says.

(LABEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)
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PRESENT
Peterson’s value as a composer and arranger has been well established during over three decades of recording. Each of his three originals has a slightly different front line, with the only constant trumpeter Philip Harper. The nicest surprise is the extended feature for bassist Melissa Slocum in the Latin-flavored “Sonora”. Pianist Joanne Brackeen had a brief tenure with Blakey and while one doesn’t typically think of her as a hardbop stylist, her challenging “Tricks Of The Trade” reveals she still has chops to burn in this atypical setting. Brian Lynch’s lively “El Grito” is a tantalizing AfroCuban vehicle for his sparkling trumpet while trombonist Robin Eubanks and rising star pianist Zaccary Czar also shine. The compositions of Eubanks, Curtis, Jean Toussaint, Steve Davis and Lonnie Plaxico also merit high praise.

The premiere webcast from The Side Door in Old Lyme, CT was videotaped a few days earlier, which allowed Peterson to Zoom chat live with viewers. For a venue new to this format, the audio and mix of six camera angles were excellent while Peterson added commentary between songs. The first set had Harper, Curtis, tenor saxophonist Bill Pierce, alto saxophonist Craig Handy and bassist Essiet Essiet. Highlights included Peterson’s Monk-flavored “Forth And Back”, featuring the horns to good effect; “Tribute To Lord Willis”, a lush ballad honoring Larry Willis, showcasing Curtis’ formidable gifts; and the pianist’s lively “Un Poco Haina”, saluting Max Roach and Blakey and featuring the leader. Eubanks and trumpeter Sean Jones replaced Handy and Harper for set two. The latter’s hip “Red Black And Green Blues” packed a punch with strong solos by the leader, Jones and Essiet. Pierce’s toe-tapping “Sudan Blue” and Peterson’s heartfelt ballad “I Remember Itu” also stand out. The Side Door has made a major statement with its initial webcast.

For more information, visit perowsky.com
After a 40-year career performing with the likes of Michael Brecker, John Scofield, John Abercrombie and Dave Lieberman, among many others, drummer Adam Nussbaum's long overdue debut as a leader was a bit of a surprise. Released in 2018, The Lead Belly Project was a tribute to the legendary folk-blues singer, guitarist and songwriter Huddie William Ledbetter. For those who were turned off by the '60s and '70s hippie obsession with Lead Belly’s music, Nussbaum’s album is a two-CD set recorded in 2018. The suite-like date opens gently with “Visible”, a genre-leaping collage of moods with Aaron Parks’ sampled piano and Guerini’s EWI creating a dreamy sci-fi-ish atmosphere. Melanie Charles comes aboard, partnering with J Hoard on vocals for “I Know You See Me”, which finds Overall in a more conventional rapper role. Gandhi returns for “Sleeping On The Train”, soaring melodically over Courtney Bryan’s piano and Overall’s drums.

Arguably the most compelling piece, “Show Me A Prison”, with Hoard singing “Show me a prison / Show me a jail / Show me a prisoner / Whose face has gone pale / I’ll show you a young man / With so many reasons why / Let go of the fortune / Let go you and I / over a wash of keyboards, is tagged by Angela Davis’ voicemail that ends “Stay strong my brother”. Autobiographical tracks “Halfway House” and “Landline”, the former with Fortner, King and Crump, the latter a duet with saxophonist brother Carlos, offer further insights into the life journey of the leader, who sings with palpable honesty on “Darkness Of Mind”, backed by Fortner’s Chopin-esque piano recalling Jobim’s “How Insensitive”.

Optimism abounds on “The Best Of Life” and “Got Me A Plan” before the date ends with “Was She Happy” (for Geri Allen), a Fender Rhodes-drums duet with Vijay Iyer, Overall ardently answering the title query, “She was on a quest”.

For more information, visit brownswoodrecordings.com

I Think I’m Good
Kassa Overall (Brownswood Recordings)

BY RUSSELL MUSTO

Steeped in both modernism and tradition through his work with Geri Allen and Terri Lyne Carrington, drummer-DJ-MC Kassa Overall stands at the forefront of a socially-conscious hybrid music fusing jazz and hip-hop, one capable of appealing to fans of both Herbie Hancock and Kendrick Lamar. On this, his sophomore release as a leader, the follow-up to his pioneering 2018 self-released album Go Get Ice Cream and Listen to Jazz, Overall is joined by a cast of similarly-minded innovative players, who ably assist in bringing his uniquely personal artistic vision to light. The suite-like date opens gently with “Visible Walls”, a solemn entreaty that has Overall pleadingly intoning “I hope they let me go tonight” over Mike King’s droning synthesizers, buoyed by Brandee Younger’s harp, Jay Gandhi’s bansuri flute and Morgan Guerini’s bass clarinet. Overall’s drumbeats underpin his vocals on the darker “Please Don’t Kill Me”, on which pianist Sullivan Fortner, bassist Stephan Crump, vibraphonist Joel Ross and flugelhorn player Theo Croker join the fray.

J Hoard teams up with Overall on vocals for “Find Me”, a genre-leaping collage of moods with Aaron Parks’ sampled piano and Guerini’s EWI creating a dreamy sci-fi-ish atmosphere. Melanie Charles comes aboard, partnering with J Hoard on vocals for “I Know You See Me”, which finds Overall in a more conventional rapper role. Gandhi returns for “Sleeping On The Train”, soaring melodically over Courtney Bryan’s piano and Overall’s drums.

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For more information, visit brownswoodrecordings.com
Solo drums is a perplexity. Capable drummers generate dense polyrhythmic textures by employing all limbs at once, but the expression of melodic and harmonic ideas poses a challenge. In the hands (and feet) of the artists reviewed here, any limitations are only opportunities to turn taps into tones and sounds into songs.

Leading the charge is the remastered release of Swedish-born, Berlin-based drummer Sven-Åke Johannson’s Schlingerland/Dynamische Schwingungen, recorded in 1972 in Stockholm. The two epic tracks, “Nahhibl” (“close-up”) and “Etwas Entfernt Von Mikrofon” (“a little away from the mic”), weigh in at 18 and 21 minutes, respectively, artfully constructed to lead up one side of a musical mountain range, pausing midway at plateaus, descending the far side, only to regroup at the bottom and rise again for two more consecutive peaks. The slow gradual accelerandos and crescendos, countered by ritardandos and diminuendos, are executed with the impeccable finesse of Buddy Rich and loose swing of Louie Bellson, both endorsers of Slingerland drums. The work is measured yet rampant, as deliberate as it is spontaneous, a masterstroke of extended narrative form realized through minimal means.

Seattle-based Filipino-American Christopher Icasiano’s solo debut Provinces is another example of a highly disciplined yet exploratory approach. In addition to a basic drumkit, he uses foot-controlled synthesizer samples to make loops or drones. As on Schlingerland there are two extended pieces, but Icasiano’s music, unlike Johannson’s organically unfolding arcs, forges ahead with an incessant, robotic consistency, the pulse waiving only slightly in places to reveal that it’s a man, not a machine, making the music. The six parts of the title suite are performed without pause until a sudden break at the beginning of “IV” gives way to quietly rumbling electronics and wind sounds, then more atmospherics and a polyrhythmic finish. “Taho”, named for the Filipino snack food, shows similarly supple manipulations of the pulse and further integration of drumkit, synths and sampled sounds.

German Christian Lillinger’s The Meintl Session is the most concise, an EP of alternating solo and group tracks. The trio numbers, featuring tenor saxophonist Otis Sandsjö, interesting in their own right, provide contrast to the eight solo drum numbers. Lillinger’s approach, like Icasianos’s, is more episodic than teleological and his rhythmic mantras are relatively brief. Like Johannson he plays a bare-bones kit, favoring a tight, dry sound and using only a few extended techniques. Many of the beats seem to derive from the kick drum, snare chattering in counterpart, cymbals busy everywhere else, sometimes whooping like Chinese gongs or pressed in their overtones. Given their length, the solo tracks serve more as vignettes than adventures, yet contain enough interest to suggest rich possibilities should Lillinger undertake an album-length project.

For more information, visit cinufuegosrecords.com, argirarts.com and plaat-music.com

Drummer Jerry Granelli is a treasure yet to be fully discovered. After many years, he has become a sort of an all-around inspirational guru and his biography is so dense and varied it can hardly be summarized in a few sentences — the reader is strongly recommended to check out Colin MacKenzie’s 2002 documentary In Moment available on Youtube. It is thus very fitting for such a creative musician to revisit for the first time in many decades the music of Vince Guaraldi and Mose Allison, with whom he collaborated at the start of his career in the early ’60s and throughout the ’70s-’80s, respectively. This is no repertoire trio though, as a comparison with original versions clearly illustrates.

Granelli’s trio of pianist Jamie Saft and bassist Bradley Jones approaches the material with respect but without intimidation. The result is a fresh take at three of Guaraldi’s most successful tunes, ranging from the classic “Cast Your Fate” and bossa-nova-inspired “Star Song” to melancholely ballad “Christmas Time”. The treatment these immortal tunes receive summarizes how jazz has evolved and, in particular, the trio format. Although more of a contemporary player, Saft has totally absorbed and is able to distill the jazz piano tradition. Granelli’s palette of colors and accents, delivered with subtleties hard to appreciate fully at the first listen, is unparalleled. Jones follows the steps initiated by Scott LaFaro and Charlie Haden, the latter once partnering with Granelli in the Denny Zeitlin Trio.

The approach to Allison’s material is similar, but absent the vocal element, Granelli’s trio takes more liberties, almost masking the blues format, yet keeping its spirit. “Parchman Farm” is a case in point, Saft twisting Allison’s blues into an abstract funk culminating in a solo cadenza exploring piano jazz history à la Jaki Byard. “Young Man Blues” verges on the ironic, Jones sustaining the main theme on his bow while Granelli and Saft stretch the blues as if they were playing with a rubber band. The CD also offers two close conversations between Granelli and Jones, one in march time with a gift for rhythmic complexity to match. The work is measured yet rampant, as deliberate as it is spontaneous, a masterstroke of extended narrative form realized through minimal means.

The Meinl Session

by Marco Cangiano

For more information, visit donmoye.com

For more information, visit rarenoiserecords.com
Within the vast bibliography of drumming instruction books, the art of playing brushes has been woefully underrepresented. In this writer’s long-ago experiences as a drumset student, recordings of giants like Jo Jones, Ed Thigpen, Connie Kay or Shelly Manne wielding wire brushes fell into the realm of the mystical. Most teachers, mine included, tended to adapt sticking exercises to brushes after some basic coaching, because little had been put to paper. Thigpen’s legendary book on brushes wasn’t published until 1981, closely followed by Louie Bellson’s, which included sections on Latin music. Since that time other volumes have sought to fill that gap, most noticeably Thigpen’s 1988 Follow That Swing, which led into Application and Performance Scenarios. In the latter, Owens emphasizes the need for fullness of sound for the maintenance of presence on the bandstand. While most drummers are familiar with playing brushes in trios and other low-volume gigs, it’s a fact that playing in a big band is a much greater challenge in maintaining presence.

Uniquely, Owens writes about playing brushes nearer the center of the bandstand. An entire chapter is dedicated to the use of embellishments and fills within time-keeping, citing historic recordings, which leads into Application and Performance Scenarios. In the latter, Owens emphasizes the need for fullness of sound for the maintenance of presence on the bandstand. While most drummers are familiar with playing brushes in trios and other low-volume gigs, it’s a fact that playing in a big band is a much greater challenge in maintaining presence. Owens writes of playing brushes nearer the center of the bandstand.

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Jazz is a performance thriving in reach of its audience. Emotional outpouring and paths of creativity bear a reciprocal effect, infusing live spectators with a vibrancy far beyond recordings. Filmed concert footage, let alone brief performance clips, have rarely captured the music’s core. Rarer still are the films that accurately depict the lifestyle of the musician along with the music. With Motion in Motion, filmmaker Michael Patrick Kelly counts all odds and delivers just that.

Kelly’s film picks up during the drummer’s final decade until his 2011 passing, capturing interviews, performances, sessions, subway and cab rides, jogs through Central Park and quiet moments in his Upper West Side apartment. Interview segments with associates as well as older performance footage allow for a historical vision of Motian’s time and place, bringing the viewer well into the story through carefully characterized development. Motion’s inimitable laughter was a feature as was his rapid-fire New York speech patterns. Ben Ratliff states, “Paul’s bravery was in doing things musically, not fast and loud” while Gary Peacock calls him a “Master craftsman…even in 1962 he was so far ahead.” Other compelling testimony comes from Carla Bley, Chick Corea, Steve Kuhn, Jerome Harris, Steve Swallow, Bill Frisell, Greg Osby, Joe Lovano, Marilyn Crispell, Mark Helias and others.

It was with the Bill Evans Trio that he achieved international acclaim. “I started to hear differently… like an orchestra,” Motian explained. This trio, appropriately, is given ample time among the concert footage, almost alarmingly vibrant, and Motian is also seen within ensembles of Paul Bley and Keith Jarrett. The drummer, in 1969, began touring with Arlo Guthrie and was with the singer-songwriter for the Woodstock Festival; “It was just another gig,” Motian added ironically, “but we had to get there by helicopter.” Later, he was seen only in the most advanced jazz units including the renowned Liberation Music Orchestra and Carla Bley’s ensemble for Escalator Over the Hill. Following this, Motion focused on the role of bandleader, committing to this almost entirely by 1976.

Archival footage of the ’80s Motian trios and quartets with Bill Frisell, Joe Lovano and Charlie Haden carries something three-dimensional, the music reaching beyond the screen. By the time Motian decided to cease touring (“I won’t get on a plane for a billion dollars”), his compositions developed vastly and the ensembles grew in scope. The smaller groups as well as the Electric Bepop Band are seen performing in venues such as Birdland, Blue Note and the Village Vanguard, where the leader held court for a decade. He appeared tireless, eternal, so Motian’s death was deeply trying. Frisell: “It was terrifying to find that he wasn’t there.” Motion in Motion encompasses the many aspects of this man of rich, quiet acclaim.

For more information, visit motianjazzdoc.com

Drummer Whit Dickey has proven himself through the years to be a compelling performer. Acclaimed for his role in the David S. Ware Quartet of the ’90s, he also worked in groups led by pianist/partner in the Ware Quartet Matthew Shipp and saxophonist Ivo Perelman, among others. As an occasional leader, he has performed some of his best work with Shipp, alto saxophonist Rob Brown and the late trumpeter Roy Campbell. The albums reviewed here were released in 2020 (though recorded in 2019), the first time Dickey has two recordings as a leader in a calendar year.

Expanding Light
Whit Dickey Trio (TAO Forms)
by Steven Loewy

Expanding Light is a blistering collection performed by a power trio of Dickey, Brown and bassist Brandon Lopez. Aside from his impressive drumming, Dickey is excellent in his choice of players and disciplined approach he brings to his groups. While he performs some exciting solos, as on “The Outer Edge”, his real talent is the way he cajoles and pushes. Brown demonstrates an amazing ability to spurt forth endless lengthy lines of astonishing intensity, with a searing tone, trills, altissimo shrieks, split notes and lengthy complex phrases and his longstanding, relationship with the leader shines through, as the two interact and anticipate each other’s moves. On the best and closing track, “The Opener”, Brown’s rambunctious, elastic notes ride hard above deep pounding drums and the hardboiled bass emanations. Dickey, by the way, is generous as a leader, giving his sidemen ample space throughout. The results are not to be missed.

Double CD Morph offers a different view, as Dickey leads distinct free-style groups through a series of shorter, yet also captivating, pieces. The first CD, Reckoning, consisting of eight tracks, is a duo between Dickey and Shipp. Perhaps because of the freedom the drummer gives him, the pianist offers a somewhat kaleidoscopic display of his skills, ranging from dark, even monose block chords on the title track, with its changing tempos (a Shipp trope), to the heavy, slow, forceful pronouncements on aptly-titled “Thick”, with its focus on the percussive lower register and Dickey, who never dailies, providing solid support. Shipp is in excellent form and his ability to change on a dime or offer complex, brooding and cubist lines permeates the pieces, although he also offers quiet, glorious, lyrical pronouncements, as on “Helix” and “Firmament”. The second CD, Pacific Noir, with another eight pieces, adds trumpeter Nate Wooley to the duo. The pianist is again in near-perfect form, as is Dickey, who sports sparkling, sometimes dazzling support and the occasional solo. Wooley offers variety, too, as his clipped phrases, modest structures and muted tones are devastatingly persuasive on “Take the Wild”, particularly when juxtaposed against Shipp’s quirky boppish passages, simple outlines and pounding chords and Dickey’s forward-looking thrusts. There is a bit of an avant garde ragtime swinging feel toward the end and even a strong melodic element that makes the pieces compellingly accessible, coupled with the outlandish and complex “Epiphany”, the best piece of the set, with jagged clumps of pianisms, oddball syncopation and far-reaching trumpet, the trio displays another side of the multi-talented Whit Dickey.

For more information, visit taoforms.bandcamp.com and espdisk.com

Drummer Yoshibaburoh “Sabu” Toyozumi is Japanese free jazz royalty, a lifer in a range of situations since the late ’60s, when he was in his early 20s, through to the current day and elder status, both with countrymen like Mototeru Takagi, Masayuki Takayanagi, Kaoru Abe, Toshinori Kondo, Masahiko Togashi, Tetsu Saitoh and Masahiko Satoh, and international improvisers such as Bob Reid, Peter Kowald, Wadada Leo Smith, Peter Brötzmann, Paul Rutherford, Kenny Millions, Arthur Doyle, Barre Phillips and more.

The Aiki is another entry in Lithuania’s NoBusiness’ partnership with Japan’s Chap Chap, co-produced by the former’s Danas Mikailionis and the latter’s Taked Suetomo, from whose archive of concert recordings the series derives. Toyozumi is found in duos with pianist Satoh—a couple of years older and as seminal in their country’s avant garde world—as Yamaguchi City in 1997 for two improvisations, just 45 minutes and a bit under 20, respectively. In this equal partnership, the roles of each player are pliable, Satoh at points emphasizing the piano’s foundation as a percussion instrument and Toyozumi light and airy around his kit, creating whirls of melody and texture. The titles, “Skeletal for The Quiet” and “The Quiet for The Move”, are descriptive as the first is expansive and stays at a reasonable volume while the second is much more explosive.

Drummers, perhaps more than any other instrumentalist, can shape free improvised encounters to their liking. While every player is capable of dynamics and density, those behind the kit can prod their partners into shambolic overdrive or egg them on into near-silence. Collaborators of more recent vintage for Toyozumi are alto saxophonist Rick Countryman (14 years younger), expatriate in Manila, Malaysian tenor saxophonist Yong Yandsen (33 years younger) and Filipino bassist Simon Tan (27 years younger), the four men working in various combinations since 2016. Two concert recordings from the Philippines make the disc’s first disc, a trio date, feels more like a duo, as the dueling saxophones of Countryman and Yandsen become the primary focus, while Toyozumi light and airy in his responses. The titles, “The Quiet for The Move”, are descriptive as the first is expansive and stays at a reasonable volume while the second is much more explosive.

Future of Change comes first and, although being a trio date, feels more like a duo, as the dueling saxophones of Countryman and Yandsen become a wall of sorts against which Toyozumi can volley his rolls, cracks and crashes. The three pieces are of descending length, 35:53, 24:34 and 12:46, respectively, and maintain a certain energetic focus typical of such performances. Despite disparities in their age and origin, Countryman and Yandsen come at the music similarly, even often occupying one another’s range. Toyozumi doesn’t prod so much as he corrals.

Surprisingly, the addition of Tan for ReAbstraction, rather than making the proceedings more dense, opens up the five pieces, creating a more balanced ensemble and one that takes increased chances by varying the volume and layering. That the improvisations are shorter also displays more attention to detail, knowing when to finish off rather than providing cues as to good conclusions. Also of note is a long stretch of Toyozumi playing erhu (Chinese spike fiddle), sawing away with Toyozumi light and airy around his kit, creating whirls of melody and texture. The titles, “Skeletal for The Quiet” and “The Quiet for The Move”, are descriptive as the first is expansive and stays at a reasonable volume while the second is much more explosive.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com, chapchap-music.com and fnr-records.com

ON SCREEN

Motion in Motion
Michael Patrick Kelly (Aquapio Films)
by John Pietaro

Expanding Light
Whit Dickey Trio (TAO Forms)
by Steven Loewy

For more information, visit taoforms.bandcamp.com and espdisk.com

Future of Change
Sabu Toyozumi/Countryman/Yandsen
by Andrey Henkin

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18 NOVEMBER 2020 | THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD
Drummer Roy Haynes is possibly the only jazz artist who recorded in the ‘40s who is still active. He is certainly the only musician to work with Luis Russell (1945-46), Lester Young, Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, Stan Getz, Sarah Vaughan, Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane (often subbing for Elvin Jones), Gary Burton and Chick Corea in addition to leading his own groups. It seems strange that he was underrated and overlooked for so long, overshadowed by Max Roach, Art Blakey and others, but he is finally rated on their level.

The Europeans were ahead of the Americans in giving Haynes the recognition he deserved. In 1994 he was awarded the Danish Jazzpar Prize, which, in addition to a large cash award, always resulted in a recording session with top local musicians. On this reissue CD from Storyville, Haynes performs eight numbers with Swedish tenor saxophonist Tomas Franck and two Danes, pianist Thomas Clausen and late bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, taken from three performances in Denmark in March 1994.

While Haynes begins most of the proceedings with a brief solo on “My Shining Hour” and has a few short spots during the set, he does not dominate. In fact, Franck is often the main soloist, taking several impressive forays. His individual sound is somewhere between the melodic and the aggressive. Taylor sounds here much as he did on the early Chicago Underground records, with its own strengths, this is a strong record with an up-to-the-minute sensibility and a compelling drive toward discovery.

It’s a fitting opening to this album as it sets the stage for what is to follow. Taylor’s drumming is a complex mixture of groove and structural complexity, as on “Swamp”, and when that happens (frequently) this is one of the best releases of the year. But there’s also a gesture that has become common clichés in showing how ‘modern’ the music is, like the husky head and almost subliminal codas of “Prism” and bits of “Birds, Leaves, Wind, Trees”. The music is simply not fluid here and that’s the foundation of the rest of the album. Fortunately these interruptions to the flow are few.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com

My Shining Hour Roy Haynes (Storyville) by Scott Yanow

Dafnis Prieto Sextet (Dafnisson Music) by Russ Musto

The press materials for this release describe drummer Taylor as “protean and prolific” and that’s a unique case in which the promotion is accurate and meaningful. Taylor has been popping up on numerous recordings over the past several years, as a leader, collaborator or sideman. And the situations are constantly shifting; duos with the saxophonist James Brandon Lewis; pianist Aruan Orta’ trio; the solo drum album Myths and Morals.

Protean is a fitting one-word description of this album, made with tenor saxophonist Brian Settles and pianist Neil Podgurski. The music, with each contributed material to the session and the three sensibilities push and pull at each other across the album as a whole and sometimes within the confines of a single track. Though that means there are a few places where things either don’t meld well or where the group gets lost in its own strengths, this is a strong record with an up-to-date sensibility and a compelling drive toward discovery.

The fit between the three voices and the group playing is terrific. Settles is full of energy and intelligence and the recording captures his brawny, soulful, sometimes velvety sound. Taylor sounds here much as he did on the early Chicago Underground records, with a relatively light touch that still pushes an edge of intensity, and Podgurski comes at everything from a new angle, his playing maybe the most inventive herein.

The trio can groove and structural complexity, as on “Swamp”, and when that happens (frequently) this is one of the best releases of the year. But there’s also a gesture that has become common clichés in showing how ‘modern’ the music is, like the husky head and almost subliminal, codas of “Prism” and bits of “Birds, Leaves, Wind, Trees”. The music is simply not fluid here and that’s the foundation of the rest of the album. Fortunately these interruptions to the flow are few.

For more information, visit dafnissonmusic.com

Access to the digital version is provided by the New York City Jazz Record.
Positivity was in short supply when COVID-19 forced all into isolation back in March, but Fred Hersch still managed to inject a little beauty into each afternoon. Hunkered down in his home in rural Pennsylvania, the celebrated pianist offered serious solace with nearly two months of “Tune of the Day” performances on Facebook. At some point those benefactions began to sew themselves into the fabric of our lives, so it’s only fitting that during this time of grief, we may find solace in the creation of an album for the present and postery.

Songs From Home serves as a respite from the madness of the moment. There are places where markers of his tremendous technical abilities are apparent, but the overall effort is one connected to the concept of balminess. Essentially without peer when it comes to enrapturing ears with reflective grace, Hersch uses 88 keys to engender innumerable emotions tethered to a single reality. On a plaintive rendering of Frederick Loewe-Alan Jay Lerner’s “Wound It Be Lovely” he envisions a moment when we can gather again and gain comfort in company. With an expansive yet loyal trip through Joni Mitchell’s “All I Want” his hands speak true to Blue. And in Duke Ellington’s “Solitude” he taps into the essence of the composer’s vision with an empathetic nod.

While Hersch acknowledges some minor deficiencies with his 50-year-old, seven-foot Steinway Model B, the communion between the two, reflecting lives lived together in service to music, is as much the story of this album as anything else. Hersch shows a true familiarity with the landscape, which adds another layer of meaning to what he creates. Whether flowing and growing through his “‘Sarabande’, blending the familial and the folk in a marriage of the momentarily-moored “West Virginia Rose” with “The Water Is Wide” or proving suave on a stride ride through Turner Layton’s timeless “After You’ve Gone”, he shows a degree of commitment and understanding that speaks volumes about the setting and current state of affairs.

For more information, visit palmetto-records.com. Hersch live-streams Nov. 6th-7th at villagevanguard.com.
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Jacob Sacks: Piano | Matt Pavolka: Bass
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The Beatles’ official breakup was 50 years ago and these releases continue the tradition, begun in 1964 by Ella Fitzgerald (“Can’t Buy Me Love”, Verve), of jazzing up their music. On Scarab, arranger Wayne Alpern and pianist Billy Test rework ten Beatles tunes while Play Sgt. Pepper features pianist Michael Wolff and a stellar rhythm section of bassist Leon Lee Dorsey and drummer Mike Clark. The only title in common is “When I’m Sixty Four” and Alpern’s arrangement and drummer Mike Clark. The opening and longest, track, “The Mooche”, is more an atmospheric meditation on the early Ellington piece than a rendition. Hemingway chants wordlessly into a lampshade over his snare, suggesting the muted, wah-wah brass of early Ellington. But Wintsch’s lugubrious solo never summons the melody. Contrasting, “In A Sentimental Mood” highlights the melody on piano while Oester plucks the melody of “Fleuriette Africaine”. “Black and Tan Fantasy” too leads with bass, but also incorporates random percussive taps and scrapes, as well as Tom Waits-like growling and groaning from Hemingway. More squeaks and scrapes, anything but mellow, infest “In A Mellow Tone”. “Angelica” retains Ellington’s original calypso rhythms and feel. Both sets include emotionally effective renditions of Strayhorn lyrics: Raul Midón limns a heartfelt “Lush Life” on Passion Flower; Hemingway delivers a fragile “A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing” on Strell.

For more information, visit waynealpern.com and leonleedorsey.com

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22 NOVEMBER 2020 | THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

JASON HARNELL
Solo Album

Passion Flower (The Music of Billy Strayhorn)
John DiMartino (Sunnyside)
Strell: The Music of Billy Strayhorn & Duke Ellington
WHO Trio (Clean Feed)

For many years subsequent to their deaths, the music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn (who would have turned 105 this month) was considered inseparable as Ellingtonia. More research has been able to distinguish the contributions of Strayhorn, giving him a more prominent place in the composition of many pieces, although Ellington’s imprint on collaborations—like the many suites they wrote—suggests he may have helped shape even the sections attributed to Strayhorn. Of these two albums of Ellingtonia, pianist John DiMartino’s Passion Flower consists entirely of Ellingtonia attributed to Strayhorn, as well as some indubitably his alone, such as “Lush Life” and “A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing”, both with lyrics also by Strayhorn. (It’s a shame his lyrics to “Satin Doll” have been lost). The WHO Trio’s sometimes avant explorations on Strell mix tunes credited to Strayhorn with early Ellington pieces written before the pair’s collaboration started.

One of the great strengths and reasons for the staying power of Ellingtonia is that both Ellington and Strayhorn had a strong melodic sense, i.e., they wrote melodic lines that were often highly memorable. Their writing was also harmonically sophisticated makes it as admired by musicians as it is by listeners. Of these two albums, one adheres close to the melodies and harmonies while the other ventures beyond the tunes’ usual parameters.

On Passion Flower, DiMartino employs a quartet of tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander, bassist Boris Kozlov and drummer Lewis Nash. Except for a “Take the ‘A’ Train” that only outright presents the melody for the last eight bars of the track, the tunes here are all presented fully, although rhythms and tempos can turn adventurous: “Daydream” done as a waltz; “Chelsea Bridge” in a bolero rhythm; “The Star-Crossed Lovers” rendered as a bossa. Alexander channels some of the glissandos and slides Johnny Hodges brought to the ballads, eschewing his usual tenor masculinity. DiMartino is admirably spare, in a Duke-ish way, in his soloing especially on the tenor-piano duet “Black Count” and moving solo finale “Lotus Blossom”.

Strell features The WHO Trio: pianist Michel Wintsch, drummer Gerry Hemingway and bassist Bänz Oester. The opening and longest, track, “The Mooche”, is more an atmospheric meditation on the early Ellington piece than a rendition. Hemingway chants wordlessly into a lampshade over his snare, suggesting the muted, wah-wah brass of early Ellington. But Wintsch’s lugubrious solo never summons the melody. Contrasting, “In A Sentimental Mood” highlights the melody on piano while Oester plucks the melody of “Fleuriette Africaine”. “Black and Tan Fantasy” too leads with bass, but also incorporates random percussive taps and scrapes, as well as Tom Waits-like growling and groaning from Hemingway. More squeaks and scrapes, anything but mellow, infest “In A Mellow Tone”. “Angelica” retains Ellington’s original calypso rhythms and feel.

Both sets include emotionally effective renditions of Strayhorn lyrics: Raul Midón limns a heartfelt “Lush Life” on Passion Flower; Hemingway delivers a fragile “A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing” on Strell.

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NEW ALBUM
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13 LUNAR MEDITATIONS: SUMMONING THE WITCHES
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Three records, with Randy Brecker as the connective tissue. Judging solely by the volume of releases featuring his golden trumpet, it’s fair to say the man is having a career renaissance. But then, he never went away.

The very first concert this reviewer ever went to featured Buddy Miles around the time of the Them Changes album. One of my classmates—all of 15 years old—jumped with Miles on stage that night and subsequently went on the road with him. The title track/big hit of that Miles record leads off Benjamin Koppel’s two-disc Ultimate Soul & Jazz Revue. Koppel is a prolific Danish saxophonist who has recorded with some of these American musicians before. This one’s an allstar lineup, with Brecker, bassist Scott Colley and drummer Bernard “Pretty” Purdie joining Koppel and countryman keyboardist Jacob Kristoffersen live in Copenhagen. Brecker must have felt right at home, because this is funky music in the Brecker Brothers wheelhouse. It’s good to see Purdie working and he really kicks the band into life. This is hardly the first time he and Randy Brecker have worked together. Purdie was on his first solo album Score in 1969, also featuring 19-year-old tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker on his first record date.

The material is mostly soul classics from Curtis Mayfield, Stevie Wonder, Sly Stone and Isaac Scott, with some Dizzy Gillespie and Burt Bacharach thrown in. Brecker sounds great on these discs, but what about the leader? Koppel is on alto and if his style has perhaps a little too much Scandinavian cool for the material, he’s still a strong mainstream player who holds his own and sounds right on the ensembles. Good writer too, as shown on “Feel the Bern”, which also includes his strongest extended solo. When Brecker was asked for recollections of this evening, he said, “I had just come straight from a week ‘special guesting’ with Billy Cobham, also in Europe, and in Copenhagen we had just quit it and I was onto the next thing. Benjamin is great and his family is like the first family of music in Denmark. Everyone plays, sings or composes.” Anyone who’s ever heard Joey DeFrancesco will want a Hammond organ on the scene and Dan Hemmer is on drums, also in Europe, but in Copenhagen we just had a rehearsal right before the concert and then ‘hit it and quit’ it and I was onto the next thing. Benjamin is great and his family is like the first family of music in Denmark. Everyone plays, sings or composes.”

Koppel’s album doesn’t go down any roads that weren’t thoroughly explored 30 years ago, but it’s tasty music and a nice artifact from the road warriors of 2019. It makes a nice contrast to the Breckers’ two-disc Live and Unreleased, recorded on tour in Germany in 1980. That was 40 years ago, but Brecker sounds the same, though the music is funkier, driven by Barry Finnerty’s boiling wah-wah guitar and keyboards from the late Mark Gray, who loved his Prophet V and Mini-Moog and shows up on both tracks with the latter on Brecker’s Benny Golson-influenced “Inside Out”. The Brecker Brothers studio records always sounded kind of cold, overly arranged and aggressive. They were way more fun live, as this music attests. The late Michael was simply astounding on stage. He rips into a solo during his own “Funky Sea” that almost outdoes Gray on the electronic effects. Michael’s “Strap Hangin’” is a highlight, super catchy and likely inspired by Albert Ayler’s “Ghosts”; dig Randy on the wah-wah trumpet and Michael’s work is reminiscent of latter-day Sonny Rollins. The tunes are pure funk, but the horns never forget they’re attached to jazz guys. They could have left the novelty number “Don’t Get Funny With My Money”, featuring Randy’s vocal, on the cutting-room floor, but there’s some good blowing on it. This kind of music isn’t heard much these days—jazz fusion has seen better days. Sure, it sounds a bit dated, but in this live period context, the overwhelming talent in the band, which was “killing every night” on this tour, Randy says, shines through. 1980 was the year Herbie Hancock released Mr. Ho’s Funky People Report put out Night People and Chick Corea issued The Best of Return to Forever. Funk was in the air and this album captures that. In closing to wild applause, someone in the band says, “I hope we didn’t make you deaf.”

The title track of Brecker’s album is “Broken Time” with an extended solo that builds in intensity. Now we’re cookin’, the trumpet getting great support from the rhythm section. Liebman takes the same approach and soon he’s his usual volcanic self. Gress could be a little higher in the mix, so tune the volume up listening to this; he’s still improving madly as the tune ends. Brecker’s “Moonshine” appeared way back on the 1993 Is the Idiom album. The two horns weave around each other on the attractive lead. Liebman’s tenor is searching, full of sharp but controlled cries. The composer follows suit with more tamped-down fury. Liebman is always fabulous on soprano and that’s what he plays on his own lovely and entrancing “Child at Play”. Great interplay between the horns on this one, Copland is lyrical and Baron is spotlighted near the end. Brecker’s “There’s a Mingus Amonk Us” is just what the title suggests, Mingus meets Monk, in a way that suggests vast appreciation for both of those geniuses. Listeners may wish they’d carried the concept further, but the head and outro make the case plainly enough. The album closes with Baron’s ballad “Pocketful of Change”, a fine showcase for Brecker’s tender side. Liebman is so breathy he sounds like Ben Webster. The other on the attractive head. Liebman’s tenor is obsessive, full of sharp but controlled cries. The composer follows suit with more tamped-down fury. Liebman is always fabulous on soprano and that’s what he plays on his own lovely and entrancing “Child at Play”. Great interplay between the horns on this one, Copland is lyrical and Baron is spotlighted near the end. Brecker’s “There’s a Mingus Amonk Us” is just what the title suggests, Mingus meets Monk, in a way that suggests vast appreciation for both of those geniuses. Listeners may wish they’d carried the concept further, but the head and outro make the case plainly enough. The album closes with Baron’s ballad “Pocketful of Change”, a fine showcase for Brecker’s tender side. Liebman is so breathy he sounds like Ben Webster. The album is music for a rainy day, played by five masters.

For more information, visit unitrecords.com, randybrecker.com and marcopoland.com

Jeff Davis’ “The Fastness” is a record of kalidoscopic dynamism, spanning his influences from the fingers of Hal Blaine to Radiohead. The result is a show-stopping 14-track set that ranges from the explosive quality—from dark and mysterious to grooving and bright. You need a high level of trust to play music this way and these five men have played together for nearly 40 years. This is Jeff Davis’ new all-star electro-acoustic quintet, featuring Tania Maloff, Jonathan Goldberger (g), Bass Lustig (b) and Eivind Opsvik (d). “A drummer and composer of sure footing but adventurous inclination.” —New York Times

Jeff Davis has quietly emerged as one of the most consistently engaging drummers of this generation. His latest project, “The Fastness” is out now.
Did you know there are some 30 different rhythmic ‘dialects’ of Puerto Rican bomba music? And as only one of the island’s regional styles to influence Latin jazz musicians—others are danzón, guaracha, jibaro and plena—while Cuba and Brazil provide many more—Latin jazz” can be as diverse and nuanced as the wide world. Which brings us to the new release by the sextet of John Santos (who turns 65 this month), Art of the Descarga. The San Francisco Bay Area percussionist’s project serves as an anthology of Latin jazz dialects. Based around his working quintet of flutist John Calloway, tenor saxophonist Malecío Magdaluyo, pianist/trumpeter Marco Diaz, bassist Saul Sierra and trap drummer David Flores (with cameos by late trumpeter Jerry González, percussionist Tito Matos, vocalist Orlando Torriente, flutist Orlando Valle and timbalero Orestes Vilató, among others), the all-original set reflects the collective spirit of men who have played together locally for many years.

Flores’ kit, augmented by a timbale drum, along with Santos’ layered-in congas, bongó, shakers, scrapers, claves, cowbells and other hand percussion, together create an undulating sea of rhythm. Calloway, Magdaluyo and Diaz are supple soloists prone to terse but creatively impactful statements. The album, buoyant throughout, makes its biggest waves in the second half, when descarga numbers that highlight spontaneous interplay between parts become more prominent. “Descargarará” (based on AfroCuban Arará) pits piano against bass; the rhumba “Madera Avenue” tenor saxophone against percussion; “Descarga con Changú” features flute, then tenor, then piano; “Descarga Jarocha”, another rhumba, features three-way horn trading and a trap-set/congas duel. Finally, “Tichín”, a descarga based on a son montuno, showcases the leader’s fine conga work and Flores’ versatile drumming. Besides the many AfroCuban, AfroPeruvian and Latin jazz dialects audible in this encyclopedic recording, listeners may even hear traces of a West Coast accent.

For more information, visit folkways.si.edu

Joe Bonner, who died six years ago this month at 66, is not a name that readily comes to mind when discussing the postbop era. Nevertheless he was a pianist with a vigorous and decisive style as well as a skilled performer. Joe Bonner Quartet (SteepleChase) by Pierre Giroux

This six-track release is composed equally of Bonner originals and standards from the Great American Songbook. Side A starts with Cole Porter’s “You And The Night And The Music”. Stepping out at a blistering pace, Rockwell shows unbounded curiosity as he probes the limits of his horn without repeating himself. Bonner picks up the number in his strong note-striking style, showing the influence of McCoy Tyner, as he covers the keyboard with pulsating energy. The first of the Bonner original tunes is “Vibeke”, Danish for “female warrior”. It is dynamic composition with propulsive rhythmic sensibility and empathetic interplay between Bonner and Rockwell, plus some John Coltrane-style riffs alluding to “A Love Supreme” towards the close of the composition.

Side B opens with Bonner’s title track, a lovely ballad with an interesting harmonic presentation. Rockwell starts off with a repeated phrase in a minor key both thoughtful and introspective. Bonner’s solo is developed in long single-note lines and sly runs, which mature into a series of block chord choices. Lundgaard is a steady presence with pulsing browy notes while Uotila dances over his cymbals. The final track is another Bonner original entitled “Manuella”. Rockwell is a revelation. With a bold sonorous tone, he attacks the music with impressive technique and self-assurance. Bonner continues to sparkle as his playing is filled with polished concepts and a clear sense of expression. This session is a wonderful example of an enthusiastically committed group relationship.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk
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**MENTORS**
November, 2020 Release #10 pays homage to music mentors past & present, singing out Jimmy Heath’s “Heritage Hum” & “Angél Man”, Frank Foster’s “Simone”, Frank Wess “Half Moon Street”; plus 5 Shelton originals and vocal flavorings on Willie Dixon’s “I Love the Life I Live” & Richie Cole’s “DC Farewell”

**SPECIAL DAYS EACH YEAR**
Polish pianist Marcin Wasilewski, who turns 45 this month, has been leading a trio with bassist Slawomir Kurkiewicz and drummer Michał Miksiwicz for over 25 years, first as the Simple Acoustic Trio and since 2005 under his own name. Their debut album featured interpretations of one of Poland’s most important composers, Krzysztof Komeda; it was released in 1995. After that, they became the late trumpeter Tomasz Stanko’s backing band for several years, before resuming activities on their own. In the subsequent decades, they’ve worked with other horn players, including Swedish saxophonist Joakim Milder on their last studio album, 2014’s Spark Of Life, and Norwegian saxophonist Trygve Seim on Forever Young, an album led by guitarist Jacob Young, also released in 2014.

The partnership with tenor/soprano saxophonist Joe Lovano is a fruitful one. He doesn’t sound like a guest; he sounds like he’s been with the band since the beginning. He feels his way into the music with respect. His voice on the horn is mellow and pensive, somewhat in the mode of Joe Henderson’s late recordings. There’s more than a tinge of the blues in his phrases, particularly when he lets a line end with a squeal or a low bark. In the final moments of the second track, Carla Bley’s “Vaskhar”, his phrasing brings one of Coleman’s early quartet numbers, the horns interacting over percolating rhythms, D’Rivera in a Coleman-like mode. Mulligan’s “I Know, Don’t Know How” recreates the smooth swing feel propelled by brushes of Mulligan’s quartet, with clarinet and flugelhorn weaving the theme. The late trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, who also featured piano-less quartets, wrote “Foxy Trot”, a quick-tempoed, rocking track.

A native of Argentina, Urcola embraces the country’s tango music on four tracks, including Ethan Iverson’s delightful mashup of the tango “La Yumba” with Juan Tizol’s “Caravan”. His “Buenos Aires” features swirling clarinet while Astor Piazzolla’s “Liberlango” pairs muted trumpet with alto. Urcola also explores Wayne Shorter’s “Sacajawea (Theme)”, incorporating aspects of Shorter’s pianist Danilo Pérez’s horn arrangements as a template for expansion. The late trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, who also featured piano-less quartets, wrote “Yes, and...”

Minton’s excellent quartet responsible for Minton’s excellent Mouthful of Ecstasy using text from James Joyce’s writings. The appeal for a young audience holds for Minton seems apparent; they share a talent for abstract expression of very different sensations, like an ice cube tray of Jell-O cubes, each one worming away but retaining its own unique form.

For more information, visit rastascan.com

El Duelo
Diego Urcola Quartet (featuring Paquito D’Rivera) (Sunnyside) by George Kanzler

A smart combination of tangos, jazz standards and repertoire gleaned from the ensemble format mirrored on this album makes for a scintillating, constantly invigorating program of 15 tracks brimming with highlights. Trumpeter/flugelhorn player Diego Urcola, who turns 55 this month, has been a member of Paquito D’Rivera’s ensembles for decades and he enlists the alto saxophonist/clarinetist in a pared-down, piano-less quartet in the tradition of Gerry Mulligan and Ornette Coleman. The harmonic and sonic openness of the ensemble—enhanced by the free-flowing, adventurous rhythm takes of bassist Hamlish Smith and drummer Eric Doob—spur D’Rivera to some of his most ebullient, buoyant solos on both of his instruments. And the concise nature of the short but musically potent dozen-plus tracks give the listener a constant roller coaster of musical thrills.

Urcola delves specifically into the piano-less quartet tradition on three tracks. “Una Muy Bonita” is one of Coleman’s early quartet numbers, the horns interacting over percolating rhythms, D’Rivera in a Coleman-like mode. Mulligan’s “I Know, Don’t Know How” reimagines the smooth swing feel propelled by brushes of Mulligan’s quartet, with clarinet and flugelhorn weaving the theme. The late trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, who also featured piano-less quartets, wrote “Foxy Trot”, a quick-tempoed, rocking track.

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The opening smudges of detuned radio set a path quite nicely for Blasphemous Fragments, a trio session recorded in 2017 with saxophonist John Butcher and vocalist Phil Minton (who turns 80 this month) joined by percussionist Gino Robair. It’s not an entirely unusual sonic setting, but it creates an of-this-world-sensations, like an ice cube tray of Jell-O cubes, each one worming away but retaining its own unique form.

The approach to solos, track to track, is varied. “Cape Verdean Blues”, a natural for the dancing AfroLatin rhythms, hosts pairs of diminishing four-bar to two-bar trades and tandem solos from Herwig and Sipiagin, then Handy and Butman, followed by an O’Connell solo over a montuno rhythm. On the two ballads, “Peace” and “Silver’s Serenade”, Handy plays flute and Sipiagin flugelhorn. The AfroLatin jazz spirit becomes stratotpheric on three tracks featuring guest pianist Michel Camilo. His two-handed fervor and comping sets the bar high on “Song for My Father” for subsequent solos from Butman and Herwig. “The Gods of the Yoruba”, a lesser-known Silver tune, showcases Camilo in settings from horn riffs and montunos to interactions with Robby Ameen’s drumkit and Richie Flores’ congas. And “Nutville”, the uptempo closer, builds incendiary momentum through a series of horn solos uershing in Camilo piano.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com
Breath & Hammer
David Krakauer/Kathleen Tagg (Table Pounding)
by Alex Henderson

Clarinetist/native New Yorker David Krakauer has been a leader of the neo-klezmer movement, combining traditional Jewish music with jazz, funk, rock, hip-hop and other influences. On Breath & Hammer, he forms a duo with South African pianist Kathleen Tagg, who now lives in New York City. The latter also provides electronics, or as Krakauer describes them, “piano orchestra”. The end result is an acoustic/electronic sound that doesn’t pretend to be traditional klezmer but, rather, gives the genre a modern spin. During the course of the album, Krakauer and Tagg draw on everything from jazz to funk to classical.

Breath & Hammer gets off to a festive start with exuberant opener “The Geyser”, a Krakauer-Tagg original, but takes a much moodier turn on percussionist Roberto Juan Rodriguez’ “Shron” and Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh’s “November 22” as well as two pieces by John Zorn: “Eebhuelt” and “Parzial”. If Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler had been klezmer musicians, the results might have sounded something like what Krakauer and Tagg come up with on “Eebhuelt”.

Krakauer, on both clarinet and bass clarinet, and Tagg look all over the jazz spectrum for inspiration. While Krakauer’s improvisations suggest postbop on the aforementioned “November 22”, Krakauer’s funky “Rattlin’ Down the Road” and accordion player Emil Kroitor’s “Moldavian Journey”, the influence of fusion asserts itself on Tagg’s “Berimbau” and accordion player Rob Curto’s “Demon Chopper”. The former favors an unlikely combination of fusion, Brazilian jazz and klezmer while the latter manages to bridge the gap between klezmer and fusion bands like Weather Report and Spyro Gyra.

Krakauer’s risk-taking music has gone way beyond combining klezmer and different types of jazz and Tagg has no problem keeping up with him on the unpredictable Breath & Hammer.

For more information, visit krakaueritaggeduo.com. This duo live-streams Nov. 14th at brandeis.edu.

Breath & Hammer
David Krakauer/Kathleen Tagg (Table Pounding)
by Alex Henderson

British tenor saxophonist Nubya Garcia continues to emerge as a significant voice with her leader debut SOURCE. This sensuous collection is admirably played with two fellow Toronto scene-makers: pianist Gary Williamson and drummer Jerry Fuller. And the playlist, focusing almost exclusively on the bassist’s originals, is full of first-rate material.

The reason this album has become something of a cult classic is pretty easy to understand: It’s all about that lineup, the stories, and, of course, the sounds. The full membership of the quintet had never played together as a solid outfit prior to gathering in the studio. Shaw, essentially blind as a result of the degenerative disorder retinitis pigmentosa, had to learn Swainson’s compositions by rote leading up to the sessions. And Henderson, who was known to have the occasional scheduling snafu, missed the first of two days allotted to make the album. Taken together those facts might have pointed to a shambling outcome. But the end result couldn’t be further from that possibility. Everybody was in the zone, as the music bears out.

Opening with the title track, which vacillates between different feels while dealing with latitude on multiple levels, the band gives off sparks that light the way for all that follows. “Port of Spain”, sloshed second, flows with a samba-esque stride. “Southern Exposure” and “On the Lam” traverse solidly swinging courses in style. “Don’t Hurt Yourself” speaks to Henderson’s interpretive brilliance with a ballad. And “Labyrinth” lives up to its name with sinuous movements. Then it all comes to an energetic close with Henderson’s blues-based “Homestretch”.

The world will never know what could’ve been if this band had room to grow beyond one single point in time. But that moment and the recording music it produced – now highlighted and preserved for a wider audience – is, thankfully, here to treasure.

For more information, visit cellartlive.com

SOURCE
Nubya Garcia (Concord)
by Jordannah Elizabeth

British tenor saxophonist Nubya Garcia continues to emerge as a significant voice with her leader debut SOURCE. This sensuous collection is admirably played by Joe Armon-Jones (piano), Daniel Casimir (bass) and Sam Jones (drums), produced by Garcia and Kwes, the latter working with notable artists like Solange and Bobby Womack. This combination of musicians and producers is sonically compatible and gels well on an intuitive level as well as technically. Garcia is an imaginative storyteller, SOURCE a reflection of her swirling inner world of familial history, highs and lows of attaining well-earned prestige and personal struggles of grief while experiencing the world through an Afrodisiopic lineage and lens.

Opening “Pace” begins with deep bass ornamentation and ethereal piano and drums, over which Garcia plays fluidly and confidently. Her notes are strong, steady and clear, giving her sonic command throughout the album as she lays out her story. The title track features a fusion of reggae and vocal accommodation layered with an echoey hall reverber, making it a prime example of a primordial reality, continuing to showcase the album’s otherworldly sound and expands on its international appeal. The album ends with “Boundless Beings”, featuring guest vocalist Akenya. She and Garcia double the melody, offering a postmodern romantic ballad.

This album has its own distinct sound, Garcia merging undertones of Guinean folk songs along with carnival culture of London and the Caribbean. While there are moments of sadness and stealthy overtures of a world and perspective only she can understand, this album has a connective force that draws the listener in. Her rich and eclectic background, ear for natural melody, and emotional arrangements make SOURCE a resoundingly pleasurable album.
Joe Fiedler’s Big Sackbut has a touch of humor before one even hears a note, given that sackbut was the trombone’s original name when it was first conceived centuries ago to double the voices of a choir. Although Fiedler is not the first jazz composer and arranger to write for multiple trombones, the unusual makeup of his quartet includes fellow trombonists Luis Bonilla and Ryan Keberle, the rhythm duties capably handled by tuba player Jon Sass (who steps in for original member Marcus Rojas), giving the band a rather unique sound. These 2019 concert performances from Graz, Austria — marking Fiedler’s residency at that city’s University of Music and Performing Arts — feature his superb arrangements, though there is freedom for exploration within them.

The lack of a piano, guitar or other chordal instrument is never missed, due to the virtuoso skills of each player as they wind their way through each challenging chart, without a net, Sass providing a solid rhythmic foundation. Opener “Peekskill” begins with an unaccompanied tuba solo, then Fiedler and Co. taking a wild musical journey with blistering solos and superb ensemble work. Charles Mingus’ “Devil Woman” takes on a new dimension with Keberle’s whimsical, conversational, muted introduction and the multiophonics in his growling solo. The quartet is infused with the composer’s playfulness as they make it their own with a spirited interpretation. Bonilla’s boisterous introduction to Fiedler’s “I’m In” suggests “A Night In Tunisia” as its inspiration, though it quickly alters its character with juggled, often rapid-fire horn lines, Sass darting out of his steady rhythm to join in the interplay. The leader’s “Ways” is another strong feature for him. Roswell Rudd was among the most acclaimed modern trombonists and several of his compositions are explored: “Bethesda Fountain” is a raucous affair; Sass serving as the bridge between Keberle and Bonilla’s featured solos; bluesy “Yankee No-How” is full of twists; and “Su Blah Buh Sibi” combines a menacing theme with brilliant interplay and lively solos with a comic tinge. This delightful recording reveals new facets with each listen.

For more information, visit capricorecords.com

Joe Fiedler

How To Turn The Moon

Angelica Sanchez/Marilyn Crispell (Pyrolastic)
by Mark Keresman

It is still relatively rare that pianists team up for a duo session — Mary Lou Williams and Cecil Taylor have teamed-up in tandem, so have Tommy Flanagan and Hank Jones and, more recently Vijay Iyer and Craig Taborn. Add to that list Angelica Sanchez and Marilyn Crispell. Aside from a formidable pile of platters under her own leadership (both with ensembles and solo), Crispell was a long-time member of the Anthony Braxton Quartet. Sanchez has been a mainstay on the NYC cutting-edge jazz scene since 1995, playing with Tim Berne, Mark Dresser and Tony Malaby. Both have very free styles, each with their own approach to expression, but all firmly part of the jazz tradition.

With a program of originals mostly composed by Sanchez and three co-written tracks, the pair weave a melody introspective tapestry that harks back to occasions with shaking,bracing moments. Crispell especially has a somewhat percussive, volatile approach, yet she and Sanchez play off each other’s ideas with melodiousness and understated warmth.

“Bossa For Baby” is a midtempo, gradually surging drive, both pianists engaging in energetic runs, each with a spiky approach tempered by a measured, questing quality. The overall effect seems off-kilter yet has an energizing upshot. Sanchez-Crispell’s “Space Junk” sounds as if it could fit nicely into a movie about space exploration and the hazards it entails; seemingly random yet carefully generated creaks and rattles paint an eerie aural scenario.

“Celba Portal” is a mini-epic, flowery, ornate and loaded with subtle tension, spiky notes and railing cascades adding drama and dread in a roundabout manner, building a carefully ominous and palpable tension while sidestepping melodrama until an oddly sweet resolution. “Fires In Space” features suitably surprising, urgent, authoritative chords and tense melodic lines — capricious collision— maintaining and exchanging a conscious flow of ideas in a thoughtful yet authoritative manner.

Two Cigarettes In The Dark

Keith Oxman (Capri)
by Pierre Giroux

Two Cigarettes In The Dark is tenor saxophonist Keith Oxman’s 11th release for Capri and places him in the forefront of tenor saxophonists, Houston Person. At the time of this 2018 session, Person was 84 and was still playing with an air of easefulness on the six tracks on which he appears. The track list is a mixture of standards, originals and a couple of tunes from hop masters Hank Mobley (“Bossa For Baby”, from 1967’s Far Away Lands) and Johnny Griffin (“Sweet Sucker”, from Bennie Green’s 1961 album Glidin’ Along), all of which allow Oxman and Person lots of interior room in the song structures for improvisation.

Following that old adage about “never getting a second chance to make a first impression”, the two tenors come charging out of the gate with the Frank Loesser classic “I’ve Never Been In Love Before”. Both showcase their defining interpretive skills and emotive talents: Oxman’s wide-ranging sonorities that can sound anything but organic. Drummer Hamid Drake approaches his collection of instruments like an orchestra while reedplayer Ken Vandermark often revels in coaxing riveting sounds from his saxophones and clarinets. Italian flutist Gianni Trovalusci, even during melodic flights, blends so well with the others that his instrument recalls analog electrical sounds. Throughout the first selection, side-long “Open Border, Part 1”, the ensemble operates fully as a collective, with few moments of any singular voice coming to the front.

Trovalusci shines on Side 2 (“Open Border, Part 2”), bouncing and sputtering off of Drake’s softly dictated pulsations, vocalizing through his head joint both with and in opposition to his standardly-played sounds. Vandermark blows with fervor and at least a degree of abandon, carrying the gritty urbano into this European session. Electronics then take the lead with a wall of sound as cymbals sound and simmer, but Trovalusci moves to center again, filling the soundscape live and in response as his instrumental voice is manipulated by Cecarelli. The result is fascinating and, frankly, could have gone on longer. This piece closes with a pensive, calming repetitive melody shared by electronics, saxophone and flute in varying degrees of rhythmic uncertainty, creating a cascading effect.

While the title indicates a positive meeting of international artists, the turbulence within appears to carry stronger symbolic meaning referencing the political strife around our government’s austere vision of border security. Most striking, particularly towards the close of side two, is the image of national boundaries as imagined by the global creative community as opposed to the bearers of arms.

For more information, visit audiographicrecords.com

Open Border

Luigi Cecarelli/Hamid Drake/Gianni Trovalusci/ Ken Vandermark (Audiographic)
by John Pietaro

This LP is a fascinating union of pairs of musicians, two based in Rome and two in Chicago, at the 2018 Forth Open Music Festival. Two improvisations, though having little in common, are of almost the exact length (17:51 and 17:52) and of seemingly equal parts electronic and acoustic. The latter is a bit of a stretch, but each member of this quartet led by electronics artist Luigi Cecarelli indulge in sonorities that can sound anything but organic. Drummer Hamid Drake approaches his collection of instruments like an orchestra while reedplayer Ken Vandermark often revels in coaxing riveting sounds from his saxophones and clarinets. Italian flutist Gianni Trovalusci, even during melodic flights, blends so well with the others that his instrument recalls analog electrical sounds. Throughout the first selection, side-long “Open Border, Part 1”, the ensemble operates fully as a collective, with few moments of any singular voice coming to the front. Trovalusci shines on Side 2 (“Open Border, Part 2”), bouncing and sputtering off of Drake’s softly dictated pulsations, vocalizing through his head joint both with and in opposition to his standardly-played sounds. Vandermark blows with fervor and at least a degree of abandon, carrying the gritty urbano into this European session. Electronics then take the lead with a wall of sound as cymbals sound and simmer, but Trovalusci moves to center again, filling the soundscape live and in response as his instrumental voice is manipulated by Cecarelli. The result is fascinating and, frankly, could have gone on longer. This piece closes with a pensive, calming repetitive melody shared by electronics, saxophone and flute in varying degrees of rhythmic uncertainty, creating a cascading effect.

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Joe Fiedler's Big Sackbut (Multophonics Music) by Ken Dryden
It's often been said that the true test of an improviser is the way they treat a ballad and when Hollyday examines Saul Chaplin's 'Zaret-Sammy Cahn's "Dedicated To You"', he passes the test with flying colors. It even compares (favorably) to the gold-standard established on John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman, a claim not made lightly.

For more information, visit christopherhollyday.com

Dialogue
Christopher Hollyday & Telepathy (Jazzbeat Prod.)
by Robert Bush

If the name Christopher Hollyday sounds vaguely familiar, it should, provided you have enough years behind you as a jazz fan. Hollyday made a big splash in the Boston area in the mid-'80s when he was being mentioned in the same breath as Wynton Marsalis, Marcus Roberts and Roy Hargrove. After a few initial releases on his own label (Jazzbeat), Hollyday scored a major label record deal with RCA/Novus, releasing his eponymously titled debut in 1989. How much of a big deal was the still teenaged alto saxophonist back then? Well, big enough for the label to invite Wallace Roney, Cedar Walton, David Williams and Billy Higgins as his bandmates. He went on to make four albums for RCA/Novus before abruptly vanishing from the mainstream jazz scene in 1992. After completing studies at the Berklee College of Music, Hollyday moved to San Diego in 1996, teaching high school music for the next 26 years. He returned to the music scene with a cast of West Coast heavyweights in 2018 for the record Telepathy. This session reunites the Telepathy band of Gilbert Castellanos (trumpet), Joshua White (piano), Rob Thorsen (bass) and Tyler Kreutel (drums) with predictably pyrotechnic results.

The album opens with Hollyday's title track, which morphs from a fanfare into a blistering bebop escape. The leader courses through the changes with a fat, sassy tone and joyful smears. Castellanos follows with clarity and ideas galore before handing the baton to White and Kreutel for brief commentary. White and the leader begin Josef Myrow-Mack Gordon's "You Make Me Feel So Young" as a simpatico duet before Kreutel's exuberant brushes launch into compelling swing time. The melody gets parsed among the principals before Castellanos delivers a remarkable distillation of Dizzy Gillespie and Freddie Hubbard. Thorsen slips in a big, woody exposition for good measure.

The disc as a whole embraces the '60s Blue Note style—trying to get the light source in the proper position. At Blue Note sessions Art Blakey was the thunder and Frank was the lightning.

Indeed the photograph of drummer Blakey that graces the back of the dust jacket, his head cocked back, a cigarette dangling from his mouth as he strikes his ride cymbal, iconically depicts one facet of Wolff's style.

Other photos within the book reflect another aspect: the capturing of intimate moments captured during recording sessions, like that of drummer Philly Joe Jones leaning over the piano holding a sheet of music as he looks into the eyes of pianist Elmo Hope, pencil in hand.

Some of the book's most striking images are photos from album cover shoots, such as that of the Ornette Coleman Trio in a snowy Stockholm park (At The "Golden Circle" Stockholm, 1965) or Herbie Hancock standing in the middle of a New York street (Inventions And Dimensions, 1963). The latter's appraisal that "Wolff's images of musicians at work are so relaxed and intimate that they capture the spirit not just of the moment, but the era" says it all.

For more information, visit elementalmusic.com/jazz-images-by-francis-wolff
Tenor saxophonist Peter Hess and trombonist Brian Drye have both been active members of New York’s creative music scene for over 20 years. Hess has said, “Over the decades I’ve been involved with so many different artists and made so many recordings, but so few of them uniquely mine.” For Hess, and surely for Drye as well, Present Company is a leap into this breach. They are all alone together in the frontline, backed by a volatile rhythm section of bassist Adam Hopkins and drummer Tomas Fujiwara.

A two-horn quartet with no chording instrument is a naked format. There is nowhere to hide. Improvisers sink or swim depending on whether they have the goods. Hess and Drye swim. In their solos, ideas tumble over one another in their urgency to get expressed. Drye’s maneuvers usually flow into droll melodies. Hess’ inspirations come in quick slashes and long caring runs. When they improvise together they sound relentless yet not quite manic. The creative atmosphere is impulsive, but in a context of tonal harmony. Most tunes are like “Sanford Theme” and “Ring Tone”, outbreaks of energy that provide soloists with running starts.

The joy that these two take in raising hell together is obvious and exhilarating. But there are some solemn moments. “The Net Menders” unfolds as patiently as a church lady tambourine swing. They are all alone together in the frontline, backed by a volatile rhythm section of bassist Adam Hopkins and drummer Tomas Fujiwara.

For Hess Present Company is an impressive DIY project. He wrote all seven tunes, recorded it in his home studio and put it out on his own label, Diskonife (a partnership with vibraphonist Matt Moran). Home studios keep getting better. The sound of this album is intimate, strong and clear. To cite only one example, Hopkins’ bass thrives. For more information, visit diskonife.com

Another one of your associations was with My Heroes (Tribute to The Heath Brothers). You tune “The Good Shepherd” also has a spiritual mood.

For more information, visit steelpickle.com. Lossing live-streams Nov. 23rd at russialosing.com.

(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

“Naughty” has the lyricism of McCoy Tyner and the rhythm team convey echoes of Bud Powell and some of the crystalline overtones. majestic sound. A true ensemble album, Lossing and it’s almost easy to see that in a resumé that includes journeys with Paul Motian, Loren Stillman, Samuel Blaser and Lena Bloch. Youthful meetings with composer John Cage had a major impact on Lossing and it’s almost easy to see that in “Mood Suite.” “Almost” is key, as the influence of Cage is more evident sound-wise than compositionally. Like Cage, Lossing lets the sounds express themselves and doesn’t overly complicate the proceedings with too many notes. His trio seems to be like-minded: ever-steady, ever-reliable Mark Helias (bass) and the crisp, electrically charged tenor on the swing number “Angel Man”, sings the notes seeming to dangle off Lossing’s fingertips. The album concludes with “Postlude”, its sparse sounds as if it might have been a group improvisation: Lossing probes in a very deliberate manner yet maintains a potent expressive flow; McPherson storms (almost literally); and Helias thobs with great resolve. The end result feels both chaotic and strangely resigned. Lossing treads water a bit too much here and there (“Sarcastique”, for one instance) but mostly the trio plays with great unity, economy and empathy.

For more information, visit joefarnsworthdrums.com. Farnsworth live-streams with George Coleman Nov. 6th-7th, Veronica Swift Nov. 13th-14th and Ron Carter Nov. 27th-28th, all at smokejazz.com.

Recommended Listening:
- Cecil Payne — Cerupa (Delmark, 1993)
- One For All — Upward and Onward (Roulette, 1989)
- Wynton Marsalis — Live At The House Of Blues (Blue Note, 2002)
- Mike LeDonne — Night Song (Savant, 2005)
- Joe Farnsworth Quartet — My Heroes (Blue Note, 2014)
- Joe Farnsworth — Time To Swing (Smoke Sessions, 2019)
Mobley first recorded as a leader for Blue Note in 1955 and, although he would lead some dates for Savoy, Prestige and Roulette later in the decade, he became a Blue Note regular. For that label as a sideman, he uplifted sessions led by Silver, Kenny Dorham, Julius Watkins, J.J. Johnson, Lee Morgan, Jimmy Smith, Johnny Griffin (with John Coltrane), Curtis Fuller, Sonny Clark, Dizzy Reece, Donald Byrd, Freddie Hubbard, Kenny Drew, Herbie Hancock, Freddie Roach and Grant Green. As a leader, Mobley made 25 Blue Note albums, coincidentally the same number as Lee Morgan. Mobley’s last 12 Blue Note records (The Feelin’s Good, No Room For Squares, The Turnaround, Dippin’, A Caddy For Daddy, A Slice Of The Top, Straight No Filter, Third Season, Far Away Lands, Hi Voltage, Reach Out, The Flip and Thinking Of Home) are reissued in full on this set, including a few tracks that earlier had made their debut in expanded CDs and just one previously unissued performance, the alternate take of “Me ’N You”. Six of the albums feature Mobley in a quintet with a trumpeter. The others add a trombone and/or guitarist, two include an alto saxophonist and Slice Of The Top is an octet with arrangements by Mobley and Duke Pearson. While Mobley’s life had its ups and downs due to a drug problem and he was frustrated that five of these albums were not released for years due to Alfred Lion selling Blue Note in 1966, the music is quite consistent and his playing is excellent throughout. Mobley was always a hardbop stylist with a sound and style that was flexible enough to display the inspiration of both Rollins and (in later years) Joe Henderson. Counting alternate takes, he wrote 59 of the 75 selections on these sessions and while none became standards, they inspire strong solos, ranging from boogaloos clearly designed to try to duplicate the success of Morgan’s “The Sidewinder” (“A Caddy From Daddy” is very similar) to hardbop romps and modal explorations. Mobley never crossed the line into free jazz although he displays its influence now and then when he distorts his sound a little. In general his approach is unchanged from the late ’50s but he was flexible enough to react to his sidemen’s more adventurous ideas.

The sidemen form an allstar cast with trumpeter Morgan and pianist McCoy Tyner sometimes stealing the show during their forceful and creative solos. Other key players include trumpeters Woody Shaw (in particularly inspired form), Blue Mitchell, Byrd and Hubbard; pianists Harold Mabern, Cedar Walton, Barry Harris and Hancock; and drummer Billy Higgins although virtually every musician is a major asset. The only weak tracks are on the Reach Out album when the sextet (which includes guitarist George Benson) gets commercial on “Up Over And Out” and “Goin’ Out Of My Head”. However the exuberant “Good Pickin’s” makes up for those temporary lapses.

After his final Blue Note album, 1970’s Thinking Of Home, Mobley would only make two more appearances on records: the fine 1972 Cobblestone album Breakthrough (co-led by Walton) and a guest solo on “Autumn Leaves” for a Tete Montoliu album from 1980. Mobley’s final 16 years are depressing to think about, but he left behind plenty of glorious music that still sounds timeless more than a half-century later.

For more information, visit mosaicrecords.com

BOXED SET

The Complete Blue Note Sessions 1963-1970
Hank Mobley (Mosaic)
by Scott Yanow

This limited-edition boxed set is an eight-CD package that has all of the sessions led by tenor saxophonist Hank Mobley (1930-86) during the second half of his career. He took up the tenor when he was 16 and was largely self-taught. Within just a few years he was playing with classic hardbop greats. Mobley made his recording debut with drummer Max Roach in 1953, worked and recorded with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie the following year and was an original member of the Jazz Messengers with whom he made his first Blue Note recordings. He was with the Messengers for two stints, served briefly as a member of pianist Horace Silver’s quintet and was part of Miles Davis’ band during 1961-62 although the trumpeter consistently made it clear that he wished he had Sonny Rollins instead. Otherwise Mobley occasionally led his own short-term groups for New York engagements but is primarily known today for his many recordings.

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SEBASTIAN GILLE
PABLO HELD
JORIS TEEPE
BILLY HART

STREAM
This is the third of four albums made for Contemporary between 1957 and 1970 by the trio of guitarist Barney Kessel, drummer Shelly Manne and bassist Ray Brown under the moniker The Full Winners, due to their success in various jazz magazine reader surveys (they would reconvene in 1975 for another Contemporary date). For this formula for their sessions was established: mostly standards—in this case by the likes of Benny Goodman, Cole Porter, Kurt Weill-Bertolt Brecht and Billy Strayhorn—offset by some originals by the principals.

Tenor saxophonist Bud Freeman was born in Chicago in 1906 and died there in 1991 but he spent part of the ‘70s in the U.K. Before that came this date, one of a pair he made in London for Fontana in 1966. Joining him for standards and his “7 Charing Cross Road” (site of a jazz record shop) and “Larkhill” (near Stonehenge) is Roy Williams (trombone), Johnny Barnes (baritone), Fred Hurt (piano), Jim Douglas (guitar), Ron Mathewson (bass) and Lennie Harris (drums) or Dick Katz (piano), Spike Heatley (bass) and Tony Crombie (drums).

Poor Johnny Dyani (bass), Okay Tennis (drumset and Montegu Pheley (trumpet). They must have been freezing taking this picture in Sweden so far away from the warmer climes of their native South Africa and Turkey. This is volume one of a concert at Stockholm’s Theater Nine (an earlier show from its Museum of Modern Art was released in 1988 on Cadillac). Of the pieces played that night, Dyani wrote five, Feza one, plus two improvisations and “Idyngwana” by Victor Ndlazilwane. Feza would die just over three years later at 30.

Stone Alliance was active from 1975-1980 with bassist Perla Batalla and percussionist Don Alias at its core. It made four albums for Perla’s PM, its discography expanded by live sets from 1977 released in 2004 and then, in 2010, this German show. Perla, Alias, period members Bob Mintzer (reeds, winds, percussion) and Kenny Kirkland (keyboards, percussion) and guest keyboard player Jan Hammer (Perla’s mate from Elvis Jones’ early ‘70s bands) play tunes by Alias, Perla, Hamm, former member Steve Grossman and Orlando Lopez.

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