JOHN LEWIS
MODERN JAZZ QUARTERMASTER

IN MEMORIAM
CÁNDIDO CAMERO

SPECIAL FEATURE
BEST OF 2020

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If there is a theme to 2020, a single word that encapsulates the year, it would be loss. Apart from the obvious and tragic loss of so many people from COVID-19, we as a country suffered other losses: a loss of innocence, thinking that disease was a problem only in what we thought of as “less-developed places”; a loss of confidence, whether it be in institutions from the health care system to the post office, or within ourselves, faced with an invisible threat; a loss of civility, unable to understand those different than ourselves; a loss of community, born of isolation and communication behind screen names and avatars; a loss of experience, simple yet absolutely vital pleasures like concerts and dinner parties and human contact; and a loss of truth, that no longer could something mean something incontrovertibly, without spin or politics or belief subverting it. It then is appropriate that much of this issue focuses on loss (pgs. 10-21): our monthly obituaries, including the long list of those lost in the past year; an In Memoriam spread to the legendary percussionist Cándido; and a special section of CD Reviews given over to those gone silent in 2020.

From all this loss must come introspection, lest no progress be made. How did we get here and who is the “we” that got “us” here? Does the future hold more loss and division or will nobler impulses possibly prevail? Just as no one could have predicted events of the past 12 months – from pandemics to police violence to protests to political theater – so too are the next 12 months not yet known to us. But we can assert some control over the outcome. There is hope. And that hope is the best part of us as a society. To reinforce that, we offer our Best Of 2020 in jazz as a small sign that the past year wasn’t all tragedy and hate and fear but also celebration, creativity and inspiration. And if that could happen alongside everything else in 2020, then the future may not be so bleak after all.
As co-founder and musical director of the Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ), pianist/composer John Lewis played a vital role in the Third Stream movement, fusing jazz and European classical music. But Lewis was a versatile musician capable of playing everything from blues to bop to Brazilian jazz.

Lewis, born in La Grange, Illinois on May 3rd, 1920, celebrating his centennial last year, was greatly influenced by the pianism of Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Earl "Fatha" Hines. But it was with the arrival of bebop in the mid ‘40s that Lewis became well known in the jazz world. Becoming a sideman for the trailblazing alto saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker during the ‘40s was great exposure and playing in the rhythm section of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie’s big band only added to his prestige.

Lewis’ affinity for classical music asserted itself on trumpeter Miles Davis’ seminal Birth of the Cool sessions of 1948-50. With that album, Davis wrote the book on cool jazz, which was known for its subtlety and restraint and sometimes incorporated classical elements. And when the MJQ started in 1952, classical became an even stronger influence on Lewis. The MJQ had one lineup change early on. Throughout most of its history, the group consisted of Lewis, vibraphonist Milt Jackson, bassist Percy Heath and drummer Connie Kay. Highly distinctive, the MJQ combined bop and cool jazz with elements of classical chamber and baroque music. And the MJQ’s huge catalogue underscores the fact that Lewis enjoyed a wide variety of music. The outfit never had a problem playing Ellington and Thelonious Monk pieces, Tin Pan Alley standards or blues grooves.

Lewis is among the latest class of musicians inducted (posthumously) into the Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame, an obvious choice as most of MJQ’s albums were recorded for Atlantic, where the group worked extensively with producer Nesuhi Ertegun. The MJQ lasted for 45 years, making them one of the longest-running groups in jazz history. And during all those years, Lewis worked on building their catalogue as well as his own.

Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, explains, “John Lewis kept his band together for such a long time. He has a stellar body of music. He experimented with all kinds of music and also published the music of Ornette Coleman, let’s not forget that. And we miss him, obviously, because of his rigor, his scholarship, his intelligence and the depth of his soul. John was a bluesman at the bottom of it all. John could play the blues. He was a bluesman.”

Tenor saxophonist/flutist Lew Tabackin, who recorded an album of duets with Lewis, Duo (Eastworld, 1981), stresses that Lewis expected jazz musicians to be treated with as much respect as classical musicians.

“John tried to elevate the appreciation and respect for jazz musicians,” the 80-year-old Tabackin explains. “The classical establishment treats musicians a certain way and one of John’s passions and purposes was to elevate the situation for jazz musicians. John, in his own way, was trying to raise the respectability of jazz performance and the MJQ was a big factor in that. John had kind of a vibe of a European gentleman with his tastes and his sophistication. Put it this way: John used to piss off a certain impresario because he demanded certain situations, a certain class of air travel. He tried to raise the bar, which trickled down, to some extent, on how other musicians are treated.”

Because of the classical elements in his playing, some jazz musicians accused Lewis of not swinging. But Tabackin, who was also featured on French guitarist Christian Escoudé’s Lewis tribute, Saint-Germain-Des-Prés: The Music of John Lewis, in 2013, vehemently disagrees. “People who criticize John and say he didn’t swing, which was ludicrous,” Tabackin says. “John had a wonderful time feeling and sense of swing, which was so apparent to me when I played with him in 1981. And his accompaniment was beautiful. But John never overdid anything. He never overplayed. When you played with John Lewis, you tried not to overplay or be overly aggressive. The analogy would be to classic Lester Young and a less-is-more mentality. It’s what you don’t play, sometimes, that creates the energy. John didn’t overplay to get the meaning across; he could do it in a few notes.”

Marsalis agrees, pointing out that Lewis, “played with the lyricism of Lester Young... Lester was also someone who was looking for melodic nuggets and then he would develop those melodies. Lester was always about being very direct with his melodies and the meaning of those melodies.” The trumpeter adds, “John was very economical, and he would get right to the point like a great writer—like an [Ernest] Hemingway... And John was also a student of Duke Ellington’s arranging. John loved classical forms, and he loved commedia dell’arte.”

According to Marsalis, “John was a great arranger for the Modern Jazz Quartet because he understood the music, from New Orleans music to what was called bebop, which is what he played as a young man in Dizzy Gillespie’s rhythm section. That later became the Modern Jazz Quartet.”

Vocalist Nancy Harrow also remembers Lewis as a master of subtlety. She joined forces with him in 1981 on the Finesse release, The John Lewis Album for Nancy Harrow, which he produced. That album, in fact, featured half of the MJQ with Kay also appearing.

Harrow, now 80, remembers, “John’s gifts as composer, arranger and player are well known. I knew him as a teacher and close friend as well as accompanist and recording partner. He was a minimalist; his economy was notable. He didn’t waste any notes. I think the effort to choose just the right notes at the right time with propulsion was what showed in his face as he played. It was compressed energy and it took great strength to keep it in check.”

Like Tabackin, Harrow strongly disputes the claim that Lewis didn’t swing.

“I think his contribution to jazz was conceptual: the power of understatement,” Harrow observes. “The MJQ personified that quality in how they dressed, how they comported themselves, but most of all in the structure of the music, which always felt like constrained power because it was so delicate and at the same time, swinging so intensely.”

Lewis was making his mark as a composer as early as 1949, when he wrote “Rouge” for The Birth of the Cool. After that, Lewis was a prolific composer for the MJQ as well as his own albums. Lewis’ affinity for European classical music was evident in many of his well-known compositions, including “Django” (written for guitarist Django Reinhardt), “Versailles”, “Fontessa”, “The Golden Striker” and “Vendome”.

Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra celebrated Lewis’ legacy on their 2013 Blue Engine date, The Music of John Lewis, which featured big band arrangements of his compositions. Marsalis had a close friendship with Lewis, whom he met in the early ’80s and often sought his musical advice.

Marsalis recalls, “I would go to his house all the time. I loved John. He taught me a lot about playing. John told me, “Stop playing all this extra stuff before you play melodies. Play the melody first and make sure you know what the melody is.” We rehearsed a lot. I would go to his house a lot and just talk and hang. I was always joking with him, clowning and playing around.”

Marsalis notes that after composing his extended suite All Rise, he was anxious to get Lewis’ feedback.

“John Lewis was so great in so many ways,” Marsalis explains. “He was a believer in music; he would listen to other people’s music. He was very serious when you talked to him about things and he was very considerate in how he would comment on things. He would listen and then, he talked with study and authority. He gave me the respect of very careful listening. I played so many pieces for him and got his opinion. I respected his opinion so much.”

Lewis was 80 when he died of prostate cancer on Mar. 29th, 2001. Looking back on Lewis’ life, Tabackin remembers him for their friendship as well as their collaboration as musicians.

“My album with John in 1981 was very important to me and we got to be friends after that,” Tabackin recalls. “We had many wonderful dinners at his place. He was fantastic to be around; he was quite a sophisticated person. John Lewis’ world was a great world and he contributed so much to the music.”

An Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony for Lewis takes place in early 2021.

Recommended Listening:

• Modern Jazz Quartet—Django (Prestige, 1953-55)
• John Lewis—Grand Encounter: 2 Degrees East / Three Degrees West (Pacific Jazz, 1956)
• John Lewis—The Wonderful World of Jazz (Atlantic, 1960)
• Modern Jazz Quartet—The Last Concert (Atlantic, 1974)
• John Lewis/Lew Tabackin—Duo (Eastworld, 1981)
• John Lewis—Evolution/Evolution II (Atlantic, 1999-2000)
Powell's brilliant original compositions are essential, infinitely listenable but also strangely tricky. Unlike Monk, Parker and Gillespie, the composer neglected to perform them much after his death. His continual compositional identity. Here he ossing's latest recording, Metamorphism, is an extension of his continually evolving compositional identity. He presents eight original compositions, each written with its own particular strategy for interplay among a stalwart ensemble of longtime collaborators. It is only with musicians with whom he has established a deeply felt musical connection that this music could actually be realized.

The second (Dec. 12th) evening of a scheduled month-long of Saturday night live performances at the Blue Note by Eddie Palmieri found the NEA Jazz Master pianist in remarkably good spirits, joking with the crowd about his upcoming Dec. 15th 84th birthday, despite the cancellation of the final two dates of his residency due to the reenacted city ban on indoor dining with "incidental" music. Palmieri, leading his Latin Jazz Sextet with trumpeter Jonathan Powell, alto saxophonist Louis Fouché, bassist Luques Curtis, timbalero-drummer Camilo Molina and conguero Little Johnny Rivero, got things started reaching back into his hit-laden songbook for '60s classic "Azucar". The horns played the well-known melody over Molina's insistent block and bell cadence, which got the pianist up from his seat to lead the audience in a clave-clapping accompaniment to Curtis' solo. He then let loose with a multifaceted solo himself, brimming with signature dissonant accents preceding a climactic closing conga solo. The set continued with a cha-cha grooved take on "Old Devil Moon", dedicated to Palmieri's late brother Charlie, a setting for impassioned statements from Powell and Fouché. A laidback reading of Cal Tjader's "Samba Do Sueno", oozing with sensuality, followed. The energy level then slowly kicked back up with a 40-minute outing on "Noble Cruise", Palmieri's homage to Monk, which allowed ample time for each of the band members to show off their considerable solo power. — Russ Musto

Celebrating its fifth anniversary as a working unit, bassist Christian McBride's New Jawn came back to the Village Vanguard, where it made its debut, for a live-streamed show (Dec. 8th). The intrepid Ornette Coleman-inspired pianoless quartet with trumpeter Josh Evans, tenor saxophonist Marcus Strickland and drummer Nasheet Waits kicked things off with McBride's aptly-titled "Walking Funny". The funky opus had horns blowing with unbridled daring over a loping bassline and omnidirectional drumming before the leader took over, soulfully improvising at length. The band then launched an incendiary reading of Larry Young's "Obsequious", a wild seessawing excursion on which Waits let fly a torrent of rhythms, earning McBride's designation as "our energy source". The music continued with Evans' plaintive lament "Ballad Of Ernie Washington", on which he conjured the melancholic sweep of "Don't Explain" and Strickland that of "Round Midnight". The saxophonist's "The Middle Man", a strident freebopping outing, had the band burning blue hot, ending with Waits soloing copiously behind the pianoless ensemble. McBride led the band improvise freely on what he called "A Prayer/ Improv For 2020", on which they reflected on the year's challenging timeline, beginning ominously with a portentous bowed bass prelude. The group soared on Wayne Shorter's "Sightseeing", then closed on a happy note with the Ornette Coleman calypso "The Good Life". (RM)

Celebrating his 60th birthday and in honor of his 30-year musical partnership with drummer Whitt Dickey, pianist Matthew Shipp presented a duo concert as part of Arts for Art’s On Line Salon series (Dec. 10th). Shipp embarked on wandering, compelling improvisations, which sang of Igor Stravinsky as much as McCoy Tyner, strained through pointillistic intrigue. The foray spun out slowly, over streams of tightly demarcated 8ths and 16th-note patterns. With such drive one can't help but align these sounds with Minimalism, but Shipp simultaneously carries a late Romantic-era pathos. While the structure was free and filled with an array of colors, it was the music's drama that maintained the attentive ear; as he's wont to do, Shipp delivered an improvisatory fantasia. Throughout, Dickey commented on four drums, two cymbals and hi-hat, offering lines as stripped-down as the Arts for Art drumpit. Never deemed a 'time' player, he moved in and around Shipp consistently, melodically, only kicking in counter-rhythms at one stress point. The music seemed to cry out for considerably more contrapuntal drumming, perhaps drastic dynamics, a musical challenge to Shipp's dual-hand propulsions. By all accounts, the pianist would have eaten that up. The singular work developed into a Monk-like strain with the pair engaging in moments of refreshing interplay, but it tended to miss the height expected (or at least hoped for by your reviewer), one sufficiently celebratory of such a special affair. — John Pietaro

In very sad local news we really hope will not become a regular occurrence, the Jazz Standard has announced its closure after over 20 years of operation, due to a loss of revenue from New York City’s forced closure of performance venues and inability to renegotiate with its landlords. For more information, visit jazzstandard.com.

The Grammy Awards have announced the latest class of its Hall Of Fame Welcomes, which includes vocalist Billie Holiday, and its 2021 Special Merit Awards Honorees, which includes vibraphonist/bandleader Lionel Hampton. For more information, visit grammy.com.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the premiere of Ken Burns’ Jazz, PBS will rebroadcast the film in its entirety on Thursdays at 9 pm, starting Jan. 7th. For more information and local listings, visit pbsjazz.org.

Jazz WaHi has announced its Jazz Composition Competition 2021. First prize is a $750 commission, plus ensemble remuneration, to compose a jazz work to be premiered at the fourth Annual Washington Heights Jazz Festival on Nov. 6th, 2021. The deadline for the competition, open to residents of the greater NYC area, is Jan. 15th, 2021. For more information and to apply, visit jazzwahi.org/jazz-fest.

Issue Project Room has announced its 2021 season artists-in-residence, who will present commissioned works during the upcoming season: JJJJJerome Ellis, Austin Sley Julian and Joanna Mattrey. For more information, visit issueprojectroom.org.

Alto saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin, selected as one of our Musicians of the Year for 2020 (see pg. 22-23), has signed a clothing endorsement with Adidas Sportswear.

Painting With John, an unscripted series written, directed by and starring John Lurie (co-founder of The Lounge Lizards), will premiere on HBOMax on Jan. 22nd and run for six episodes. For more information, visit ifish.bo/doctype.

Danny Jonokuchi and The Revisionists were named winners of the inaugural Count Basie Great American Swing Contest with its version of "One O'Clock Jump", as judged by Stefan Harris, Branford Marsalis and Christian McBride. For more information, visit countbasie.com.

Submit news to info@nycjazzrecord.com
The New York City Jazz Record: Who is Ethan Iverson now that he wasn’t 15 years ago?

Ethan Iverson: I always had a plan to keep studying. When The Bad Plus had our surprise breakout success in 2003, I didn’t feel like it was automatically the endpoint. Playing with that band was incredible, but all along I was also thinking about other ways to make a contribution.

One of the reasons I started writing about the music was to let Bad Plus fans know about this great tradition. When you’re the new flavor, it can be seductive to feel like you’ve got it all figured out, but everybody stands on the shoulders of those who preceded them.

TNYCJR: When you speak of tradition, do you see that as a monolithic term or is it always evolving?

EI: Someone once said that it’s important for an artist to be able to hold two contradictory thoughts in the mind at the same time. On the one hand, yes, tradition, but on the other hand you have to be in the moment; there’s always the present day, or even looking to build a better future. Both things are true. At the very least, it doesn’t seem to work to say, “I only deal with the tradition.” Neither does it work to say, “I am only new.” Nobody I admire says that only one of those viewpoints is correct.

TNYCJR: How does your thinking in that regard connect to Bud Powell?

EI: He’s someone that I keep on learning from. In fact, this project happened two years ago, but just this morning I was practicing and thinking about Bud Powell. He’s an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

There’s room to find inspiration from almost anything. One of my mentors is the choreographer Mark Morris. He goes out all the time to see varied shows. He is always listening to and talking about different forms of music. Despite being schooled in high, conceptual art, you might just as easily find him watching and enjoying the most banal TV show imaginable. He is inflamed by all of it creatively, from high to low. And that, I think, is a pretty good model.

TNYCJR: How did the Powell project come about?

EI: It was a commission by the Umbria Jazz Festival, marrying an American quintet with an Italian big band. I was delighted when Carlos Pagnotta and Enzo Capua at Umbria first approached me. Manuel Morbidini, who directed the big band, prepared the musicians so well before I got there that I actually cut a rehearsal. The band was ready. When it came time to look for a label, Sunnyside founder François Zalacain is a bit of an old-school bebopper and really liked the project.

TNYCJR: How does the sound you achieved at Umbria differ from what you’ve done before?

EI: Post-Bad Plus, I’ve been doing quite a bit of larger-canvas pieces. I wrote a piano concerto for the American Composers Orchestra. I curated a celebration of Thelonious Monk for his centennial at Duke University. For Mark Morris, I did Pepperland, an evening-length piece connected to The Beatles. There’s been quite a lot of formal composition in the past five years, but Bud Powell in the 21st Century is the first of these projects that’s coming out commercially for everyone to hear.

Speaking of tradition versus being in the present day, when I think of the tribute projects I admire, there’s quite a bit of original composition. Ornette Coleman, even when playing standards, always started with an original melody. So, there’s original composition in this project—the very first track is completely original—but there’s also Powell’s music, which in and of itself is very difficult.

TNYCJR: Can you unpack “difficult” for us a little?

EI: With Powell, it’s hard to get all the details exactly right, because they’re quite specific, fast and complicated. I swore to myself that we would get those details right—such that if Bud was there, even if he didn’t like the whole thing, at least he couldn’t look at me and say, “You didn’t even play my melodies right, man.”

TNYCJR: How would you describe your relationship to Powell’s music?

EI: I like knowing the text. When The Bad Plus played The Rite of Spring, I played it just like Stravinsky wrote it. If I play Tadd Dameron with [drummer Albert] “Tootie” Heath, I learn Dameron’s original voicings.

At one point I transcribed Black Sabbath’s “Iron Man” for The Bad Plus. My brain gets really excited by the details. I like to sit there and ask myself what really happened here. I can dive in, think about those details, transcribe and appreciate the subtleties.

There’s also this other side of creativity. I’m confident enough I do have a personal sound, that it sounds like me and part of that sound is wild and woolly. The fantastical or surreal comes in pretty naturally with Bud. At the end of the day, Bud Powell was an avant garde musician. Had the project been dedicated to the music of Dizzy Gillespie or Benny Golson, it might have been harder to find a way in to do something personal. But there’s a surreal glint in Bud Powell’s eye, so that’s a fit for me as well.

TNYCJR: What sorts of extra-musical inspirational forces do you find creep into your music?

EI: When I interface with literature, movies, or television, it helps me see that parameters of genre are...
Universal connections across love, loss, mysticism and motherhood are themes that permeate vocalist/composer Ayelet Rose Gottlieb’s work. Song-cycles filled with new spaces and old places host her multi-genre yet globally spiritual music. As Gottlieb explains, “I was exposed to a lot of different kinds of music from a very young age and that opened the door for me. I love working in song-cycle form and a lot of my work has to do with natural elements. When I compose I don’t feel like it’s me composing, I feel like I’m receiving something from an external source and it’s feeding into my music and that’s what I call the witchy part of me.”

Using this approach she has revealed “Who has seen the Wind?” (Pneuma, Songlines, 2017), frankly portrayed Biblical eroticism (Magim Rabim, Tzadik, 2004), showcased motherhood within a tribute to saxophonist and mentor Arnie Lawrence (I Carry Your Heart, Ride Symbol, 2016), explored grief from both Jewish and Buddhist perspectives (Shi’a, 482 Music, 2011) and provided John Zorn’s Masada: Book of Angels with a stunning quartet of women’s a cappella voices (Mycale, Masada: Book of Angels, Vols. 13 & 25, Tzadik, 2010 & 2015).

Gottlieb’s current release, 13 Lunar Meditations: Summoning The Witches, is an astounding compendium of lunar-inspired poetry set to her unique blend of transcultural conceptual jazz. Joining her are vocalist Jay Clayton, a ten-voice choeur Luna conducted by DB Boyko, guest voices that include vocalist Sofia Reh chastising “Luna” over bassist Stephane Diamantakou’s exquisite accompaniment, Turkish violinist Eylem Basaldı, guitarist Aram Bajakian and drummer Ivan Bamford. The juxtaposition of the moon to a woman’s life cycle is exquisite. Opener “Lotte and the Moon” references birth and the wonder in a child’s lunar discovery while the deliciously pop-infused “Venus and the Moon,” is set to the playful poetry of Australian Ben Davies. Menstrual and lunar cycles connect on the powerful “Dissipating Discus” and poet Gem Salsberg’s erudite “Traveler Woman” is a fantastic Clayton/Gottlieb effort. The potent trilogy “Moon Over Gaza” includes the title poem from Naomi Shihab Nye, Gottlieb’s own “Almost Summer” and “I Come from there and I Remember” from Mahmoud Darwish. Gottlieb discusses how the pieces came together, “I mention Gheed who disappeared and I mention Razan who was red cross medic and was killed. Naomi wrote from the perspective of the moon just kind of overlooking Gaza and her bleeding heart and reflecting on the general sorrows of humains. Jay is singing from the perspective of the moon, she’s singing Naomi’s poem, I’m singing my own poem and Aram…has rock and roll in his blood…so I asked him to play a solo and recite Mahmoud Darwish’s poem at the same time. Aram himself is of Armenian descent so he has in his family stories of genocide…and it was also an interesting thing because we had two Turkish musicians in the band and all of that dynamic was part of that beautiful healing group of people…Aram just killed it, he did such a great job with that.”

Early on Gottlieb became a part of Lawrence’s The International Center for Creative Music in Jerusalem. As with his New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music, it stressed that performers should be teachers and that remains a key influence on Gottlieb, “He had that embodied thing, the way that he taught swing or jazz, he would bring it into our bodies, he would make us walk it…that was my biggest school of my life of course. I mean he changed everything for me having him there made a huge difference not just for me I think for my whole generation of Israeli musicians.”

As such, Gottlieb created Orchard of Pomegranates as a platform for teaching, discussion, listening sessions and a safe-space for musical adventure and connectedness. Online, it has gained in reach and significance during these times of musical isolation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant/faculty such as Clayton, Theo Bleckmann, Fay Victor, Sofia Reh, Clarice Assad and Katie Bull foster a relaxed but intensive atmosphere of holistic learning and performance.

For Gottlieb, genres are tools not borders and she has this to say about them: “I don’t get them on a primal level. I understand them intellectually but I try to live a bit borderless and being an Israeli I feel like there’s a lot of binary when it comes to identity, to Judaism to Israel and Palestine. There’s all this binary attitude and my road is off of that. People sometimes like to understand things so they like to define them but for me I’m curious about the parts that are below and are around the definitions where the liquid gold is flowing. If I write in relation to a topic like the moon or the wind, that’s my thread and then I can take that and I can hang on that thread anything I want to…and look at it from a lot of angles and a lot of colors and textures and compositional techniques.”

Gottlieb continues to be at the forefront of a woman’s jazz revolution, which, through intercultural exchange and world music egalitarianism, is decisively breaking through musical and societal borders. She states that “…my music has to do with things that really matter to me and I’ll talk about them in ways that are art…Women’s life experiences for years have been considered mundane and uninteresting and maybe unimportant and the fact that there are more women present on the scene brings forth those supposedly mundane experiences that are actually not mundane, they’re super important and they are part of the human experience and they’re not as talked about as in the past. There isn’t that much talk about menstruation, Why would you want to talk about that? But at the same time it is such a present part of our lives and it’s the source of all of life so why wouldn’t we talk about it? Why wouldn’t we give it a moment?...the same for motherhood, it’s mundane, you cook and you clean and you wipe bums and you do all this stuff, but it is all part of the texture of life.”


Recommended Listening:
• Ayelet Rose Gottlieb—Internal-External (Genevieve, 2002)
• Ayelet Rose Gottlieb—Upto Here | From Here (ObliqSound/arogole music, 2008)
• Mycale—Book of Angels, Vol. 13 (Tzadik, 2010)
• Ayelet Rose Gottlieb & Anat Fort—Two More Dreams (s/r, 2015)
• Pneuma—Who Has Seen the Wind (Songlines, 2017)
• Ayelet Rose Gottlieb—13 Lunar Meditations: Summoning The Witches (s/r, 2018)
Doug Carn is a multi-faceted musician best known as a unique organ player, lyricist and composer. He has performed all around the world, including at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, and he was the face of the Black Jazz record label in the ’70s. His four much-sought after classic albums released by Black Jazz from 1971-74 were among the most successful for the label (he added a 5th title released in 2001 when the label was briefly under new ownership). He also worked with, among many others, Nat Adderley, Shirley Horn, Lou Donaldson, Freddie Hubbard, Stanley Turrentine and Earth, Wind & Fire, appearing on the latter’s first two albums.

In December 2020 he appeared on Volume 5 of Jazz Is Dead with Adrian Younge and Ali Shaheed Muhammad. The “Jazz Is Dead” name may be somewhat controversial, but Carn doesn’t see it as the music is dead, otherwise they wouldn’t be hiring jazz musicians to participate. He is excited about the release: “The way they made the album, I would never make an album that way. I said, well, I’ll try to go along with ‘em and listen to ‘em, you know? Because I think about, and play with, and work on what I do, you know, but they just want to go in there with their natural ability and do something spontaneous. I went along and it turned out better than I expected. I remember being young myself, and trying to tell another generation to look at the situation a little different, they didn’t want to do it. I said, well, look, I’m not gonna do the same way. These kids are clean cut, they stay out of trouble, they got an idea, so I’m gonna pay attention to them and help them if I can.”

Born in New York, Carn grew up in St. Augustine, Florida, surrounded by books and music. His mother, an accomplished pianist and organ player who accompanied services in church, was the music director for the public school system. She also did a couple of gigs with Dizzy Gillespie and was a tremendous influence on her son. The young Carn started performing as early as 8 or 9 when he put together a band for a talent show, but he made his first professional appearances at the age of 12 performing at dances, proms and club dates and held a regular gig at the Edgewood Lounge throughout high school. He was learning all the time, reading and listening.

“After the cowboy show or whatever movie, like Gammesoke and Paladin, I’d read the credits. I’d see names like Max Steiner or Norman Dello Joio. You could tell they knew what they were doing, they didn’t have but nine or ten pieces. Aaron Copland did a few westerns and I knew he wasn’t just an ordinary guy.”

After high school Carn attended Jacksonville University and Georgia State College studying oboe and composition. Copland was an Artist-in-Residence at the former. Carn credits a one-on-one conversation with the composer for helping him develop into a fluent arranger. Meanwhile, it was during these years in the mid ’60s that he heard all of the great organ players on the West Coast playing in clubs like the Bird Cage—Jack McDuff, Jimmy McGriff, Lonnie Smith, Groove Holmes, Shirley Scott, all of them; except Jimmy Smith performed at Paschal’s La Carolusel. Carn ended up working those venues and quickly established himself as an organ player with his own voice. He released The Doug Carn Trio on the Savoy label. It was also in Atlanta that he met Sarah Jean Perkins, who became Jean Carn when they married. They became musical partners. As he tells it, after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, the artists dispersed and were they among many from the Atlanta scene that moved to Los Angeles. Once there, they lived at the Landmark Hotel where their neighbors included Janis Joplin and members of the bands Mandrill, The Chambers Brothers and Earth, Wind & Fire. That is how Doug and Jean Carn came to appear on the first two Earth, Wind & Fire records. Nobody knew how far that band would go, but Carn was focused on his own path.

Preparing to realize his vision, he asked who was the best in town and was referred to drummer Michael Carvin. Carn established a powerful rapport with Carvin and bassist Henry Franklin as they worked for about a year before recording what became the classic album, Infant Eyes. Already a veteran performer and well-studied composer, Carn didn’t realize how well prepared he was for success while still a young man. He used his ingenuity to conceive of a progressive jazz record with his wife’s voice as a focal point, writing original lyrics to music by John Coltrane, Bobby Hutcherson and Horace Silver. The recording was intended to be a demo, but it was so fully conceived that Black Jazz was more than happy to issue it as a record. He continued to develop his concept, composing more of his own music and released new albums in consecutive years for the label, each release building on the success of the last one.

The label was more than happy to have him represent Black Jazz as his albums sold well and were in regular radio rotation. Also, Carn was a self-described Black militant interested in the Black cultural revolution and the label itself was conceived to cash in on that movement and that ethos, so Carn fit their plans like a glove. He was the embodiment of the traditional Black militant interest in the Black cultural revolution and the label was more than happy to have him in regular radio rotation. Also, Carn was a self-described Black militant interested in the Black cultural revolution and the label itself was conceived to cash in on that movement and that ethos, so Carn fit their plans like a glove. He was the embodiment of the traditional Black militant interest in the Black cultural revolution and the label was more than happy to have him

One can imagine the impact the national spotlight may have on a fledgling artist, but Winchester had been a colleague of both Sonny Rollins and Clifford Brown and watched his friends graduate into jazz royalty. Winchester had pursued a career as a police officer instead of a musician yet maintained a busy musical life, careful to cut the gig in time to walk his midnight-shift beat. Wilmington pianist George Lindamood wrote of Winchester regularly wearing a sport jacket over his police uniform, barely concealing the bulge of his service revolver. A certain Officer Shipp, a co-worker of Winchester’s, also spent time in area jazz clubs; his young son Matthew, who’d grow to be an icon in his own right, recently joked about Winchester’s "strange sense of humor". Likewise, Wilmington drummer John Chowning wrote of the vibraphonist’s impression of Charles Mingus. Winchester told Chowning “It was like shaking hands with ten miles of bad road.” Priceless.

After his momentous performance at Newport and the release of the New Faces at Newport album (1960), Tommy Flanagan, another regular at the following summer’s Newport Jazz Festival.
TAO FORMS
BY GEORGE GRELKA

Tao Forms is drummer Whit Dickey’s new record label, but it’s not solely his, nor, if you checked out its releases, would it seem new. In every aspect, it looks and sounds like the natural development of music making for Dickey and the circle of creative New York City jazz musicians in which he belongs.

The idea for the label came out of a meal. “Me, [pianist] Matthew Shipp and Steven Joerg [head of AUM Fidelity] met in an East Village restaurant,” in May 2019, as Dickey related over a recent phone call. They “decided this was the thing to do, we’re at our creative height.”

“Matthew really wanted to record,” Dickey explains, “and ESP-Disks’s [a principal issuer of Shipp’s music] schedule was too tight.” So Shipp’s desire turned into Tao Forms initial release, the solo piano disc The Piano Equations, recorded late in 2019 and released in May 2020. That the album was a consensus best-of-the-year release is unusual for the first release by a new label but, again, Dickey, Shipp and Joerg have been leaders on the scene for decades and consolidating a new label under Dickey’s imprint seems like an easy, natural step.

As was the second release, Expanding Light, from the trio of Dickey, alto saxophonist Rob Brown and bassist Brandon Lopez. “The trio was something I wanted to do,” Dickey explains, but goes on to point out that the focus of the label is not on him, it’s not an ego-driven, vanity project in any way. The name of the brand sort of gives it away.

“There’s no aesthetic,” Dickey says when asked what concept may be behind the music on the label, “that’s why it’s called Tao Forms. It’s just a present thing,” meaning the musicians he admires are the focus, not himself. The only criteria are that he wants the label to be all acoustic music.

The strong first two releases were followed in November by the excellent disc, New Dawn, from drummer Tani Tabbal’s trio with alto saxophonist Adam Siegel and bassist Michael Bisio (the latter is frequently found in groups with Dickey and Shipp). This month, Dickey and Shipp accompany tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman on the new release Garden of Jewels.

Although that’s only four albums so far, taken together they clearly demonstrate both Dickey’s “there’s no aesthetic” aesthetic and the equally clear and important commitment to the free side of jazz and Dickey’s own music-making experience. The lead voice on each album is the leader; in the case of Tabbal and Perelman, that means the drummer’s light, soulful, intense rhythms and Perelman’s bearish, melancholy introspection. Dickey and Shipp are active accompanists for the latter, but it’s Perelman’s disc while Dickey’s Trio disc balances the drummer’s sense of space and understatement with the bassist’s active hands and Brown’s typical open-throated energy. Like the focus on postop typical of Blue Note in the ‘60s, Tao Forms seems set to document the two or three generations of free jazz playing clustered around Shipp and his various ensemble-mates. But that doesn’t mean the label is set on that sole path.

VOXNEWS

FACING CHANGE
BY SUZANNE LORGE

Out of the misery that was 2020, inspired ways of reaching jazz audiences have emerged. When the pandemic struck last March, Soapbox Gallery—the arty, minimalist concert space in downtown Brooklyn—responded swiftly to artists’ need for high-quality live-streaming performance options. In the 10 months since, the organization has presented its share of premier jazz concerts.

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hosts about two dozen singers during her online weekend intensives, each featuring back-to-back workshops on the finer points of improvisatory singing, with prominent guest lecturers like Theo Bleckmann, Jen Shyu and Sara Serpa. Gottlieb has held three of these crash courses in improvisation so far, with the next slated for April 2021.

Award-winning singer Alexis Cole has adopted a tiered subscription model for her online teaching; through her website JazzVoice.com, singers can choose their level of involvement with the vibrant online community built around Cole’s dynamic presence. From private lessons with elite vocalists like Catherine Russell and Tierney Sutton to master classes with industry veterans like Sara Gazarek and Stephanie Nakasian, Cole’s clearinghouse for vocal education offers unprecedented access to jazz professionals across a spectrum of interests. “I’ve known Alexis for a long time,” Dickey says, “and just felt like she had a natural step.

Here are some other exceptional vocal jazz web-based instruction this January. Pianist/singer/composer Lauren Lee will teach two master classes as part of her Sing Like A Houseband online festival, one on using triads and the other on developing syllables for solosing. Through California Jazz Conservatory’s Jazzschool, New Jersey-based Virto will teach a 10-week online course on how to scat with lyrics in the manner of Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan, starting Jan. 14th. Free improv trailblazer Jay Clayton, too, will present a 10-week online class via CJFC: on Jan. 11th she’ll unveil “Singing the Jazz Standards”, a deep dive into the basics of improvising within the traditional jazz canon.

Back in 2015, Gottlieb asked Clayton to guest at The Stone on a moon-inspired song cycle she’d written. The subsequent album, 13 Lunar Meditations: Summoning the Witches (s/f), shows just how adroitly these master improvisers practice what they teach. Listen to their duet, “Lotto and the Moon”, the first track of the cycle and a lyrical, romping dialogue of closely intertwined free improv and spoken word. Later, on electrifying blues tune “Moon Over Gaza”, the singers explore contrasting registers and rhythms. Finally, on the penultimate track, “Traveler Woman”, Clayton recites the gripping text by multi-media artist Gem Salsberg) in concert with Gottlieb’s wild vocal interjections and moody backing chorus. Each track issues a different musical statement, each featuring back-to-back workshops on the finer points of improvisatory singing, with prominent guest lecturers like Theo Bleckmann, Jen Shyu and Sara Serpa.

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Meanwhile, up next is another album from Shipp and one that Dickey is particularly excited about: “A James Brandon Lewis record,” he says, “with [drummer] Chad Taylor, [bassist] William Parker, [tenor saxophonist] Steve Lacy and [pianist] Fredrik Forsberg.” Dickey is an admirer of the younger tenor player and is also glad to have the record to extend the musical and social reach of the label. He thinks of it as having “a new voice on the label.”

There’s more to expect from Dickey and Shipp too: they’ll be playing with Parker on a release later this year that will be “doing something to commemorate Circular Temple,” the classic 1992 album from the same players Shipp released on Quinton Records.

With Dickey and Shipp, the musical foundations, the drummer is thankful for Joerg’s commitment and expertise. “Steven is the anchor,” he points out. “He knows the music, he’s got the connections, knows the social media.” The music on Tao Forms speaks for itself, but Joerg does the work to make sure it’s heard.

Still, Tao Forms didn’t explode out of the head of Zeus, it just came out organically, from music-making and a meal. Its appearance on the label, the unassuming but strong presence the label has already established, all seem an extension of Dickey himself. “I’m an old guy, I’m 66,” he says, “and I’m glad to be doing this for a while. It’s been great and it keeps me young.”

For more information, visit taoforms.bandcamp.com

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | JANUARY 2021 9
IN MEMORIAM 2020

Claude Abadie
Bob Adams
William Algar
Miguel Algarín
Tony Allen
Norm Amadio
Joe Amodei
Edward Anderson
Rob Anderson
Arlen Asher
Christian Azi
Dick Biond
Lucien Barbarin
Bootsie Barnes
Al Devil
Scott Bovian
Duke Belaire
Toni Billinger
Betty Blau
Overton Berry
Harold Betters
Mimi Blacker
Al Diaz
Jean Blaton
Laredo Blaylock
Claude Bolling
Aad Bos
Lee Boswell-May
Allan Rothenberg
Bert Braun
Te Braxton
Herve Brisse
Phil Broadhurst
Stan Brown
Michael Brooks
Sandro Brignolini
Jerry Bruno
John Buider
Harold Budd
Benny Burrell
Don Burrows
James Butters
Jerry Byrd
Robby Campbell
Candido Camero
Donna Caulfield
Big Al Carson
George Cables
Terris Castillo-Chapin
Stephanie Chaplin
Daniel Chevey
Christopher Cherney
Jon Christensen
Lyn Christie
Winfried Christ
Jeff Clayton
Jimmy Cobb
Terry Cook
Terry Coe
Michael Cogswell
Mark Colby
Richie Cole
Jacques Colby
Stanley Cowell
Peter Crawford
Stanley Crouch
Victor Cea
Frank Cullen
John Cuniberti
Othella Dallas
Wolfgang Dauner
Larry Davis
Eddy Daove
Alice Day
Michel Decuirreire
Heidi Lore Deleuw
Pierre Demarie
Gloria Denard
Angelo Di Lәretto
Ming Danago
Pepa Bikanovic
Vicky Dyens
Wray Downes
Karlheinz Echel
Herb Duker
Debbi Duncan
David Ray Dinscombe
Cleveland Eaton
Peter Ecklund
Jay Edwards
Steve Ellioyn
Henry Esten
Kali Z. Fastee
Paul Faust
Macy Favor
Simon H. Fell
Pomolo Jerry
Ian Finkel
Chris Flory
Jan Forney
Marc Frank
Hugh Fraser
Robin Fiore
Robert Fuchs
Corey Fischer
Mitsuki Fujiwara
Eddie Gale
Jerry Gaine
Tom Gilleo
Billy Georgette
Sigi Gerhard

Alexandros Giaccheri
Joey Giambra
Reinhart Giebel
Ron Gill
Irvy Gillett
Milton Glaser
Andy González
Victor Graham
Frank Grasso
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Janet Grice
Jack Grzyb
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Steve Grossman
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Omar Geumbs
Eugene Hahn
Molley Hammer
Samuel Hargress, Jr.
Rich Harvey
Dot Harris
Frank Hargin
Gerry Hayes
Jeanie Lambe
Mieko Hirota
Ole Holmovitz
Zuzia Holman de Mello
David Horowitz
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Gertrude Jane Józwa
Bob Jenkins
Lillette Jenkins-Wisner
Allan Johnson
Reggie Johnson
Jyrki Jäger
Murry Kante
Nico Kalapits
Ryo Kawasaki
Pat Kell
Bill Kenney
Jak Kile
Frank Kimber
Peter King
Eddie Noble King
Ronnie Kole
Toshinori Kondo
Lee Kontz
Peter Krag
Mike Krepper
Peter Kreinen
Damir Kurkurovic
Jeanie Lambe
Keith Lamotte
Allan Landy
Julian Lage
Alaine Laire
Harald Liebermann
Benny Likkumahwa
Louis Lince
Ivan Lindell
Gosta Lindholm
Bernard lime
Giuseppe Logan
Mike Longo
Pat Longo

Christopher Lowden
Dave Mackay
Angel "Cachete" Maladonado
Johnny Manell
Basie Manley
Ray Mantilla
Ellis Marsalis
Michael Marcell
Lance Martin
Peter Markey
Seth Mathes
Ron Matthes
Gilbert Matthews
Gene Maurice
Lyle Mays
Donaldo E. McCasin
Jenne Meuwena
Jvme Meurin
Bob Mielke
Lamar McAllister
Ennio Morricone
Hanne Moser
Albert Narango
Don Nedobuck
Russ Neu"otte
Bob Neloms
Sterling Negron
Helmut Niebler
Jenice Niehaus
Bob Northern
Larry Novak
Dulce Nunes
Hugh Noonan
Bob Ojeda
Ljajić
Geri Oliver
Lou Parlo

Fernando Shárez Paz
Marc Pelleon
Jacques Pellen
Krzysztof Penderecki
Marcelo Peralta
Dulcianio Petrera
Charli Persip
Gert Pfannkuch
Ronald Pickelik
Eva Pilarová
Jukka Pirttinen
Bucky Pizzarelli
Lloyd Poisson
Joe Porcaro
Craig Preckster
Bob Protzman
Bill Privett

Synovio Reinhors
Diez Remonko
Claudio Roditi
Freddy Rodriguez
Carlos "Cico" Rojas
Toni Rosati
Wallace Roney
Dave Roper
Dick Rosenzweig
Anne Ross
Holly Ross
Harold Rubin
Ron Rubin
Ossie Rumi
Bassam Saba
Hans Salomon
Sheva Sampar
Jr.
Bernard Samuel
Dieter Sandan
Gianni Sanjüo
Jürgen Schadegger
S. Sandy Sanderson

Peter Schimke
Paul Schitter
Zoltan Sejna
Jim Selig
Pak-Hong-Tung
Mojmir Sepe
Paul Shelton
Ludvik Sejna
Gilbert Sigrist
Eugene Simone
Hal Singer
Donald Statton
Bill Smith
Vigla Smith
Dilane Solem
Maynard Solomon
Scott Steed
Dante Stephen
Lorrain Stern
Christian Steutel
Ed Stoffel
Buddy Sullivan
Ira Sullivan
Jack Surbeck
Hajime Tatsumi
Richard Tuttla
Takeshi
Bubba Thomas
Danny Ray Thompson
Florence Tillis
Keith Tippett
Leigh Thomas
Jordan Torrey
Donn Trenner
Howard Tweedle

Decoy Tyner
"Blue" Gery Traum
Georgia Urban
Leo Ursini
Louis Van Dijk
Sanne Van Dijk
Marc Van Nus
Don Van Veen
Bob Ward
Vince Werer
Susan Weinert
Rhett Weiss
Don Weller
Peter Werthheimer
Ian Whitcomb
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Andrew White
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Joan Wildman
Hal Willner
Wim Wenders
Susan Weinert
Ossie Rumi
Clayton White
Dave Zeldin
Carei Thomas
Charles Tolley
Lloyd Ahern
Vanessa Viera
Bob Pines
Gershon Kingsley
Pharoah Sanders

Ray Copeland
Barney Kessel
Gary Papp
Joey DeMaio
David Gilmour
Bob Dorough
Don Gibson
John Gilmore
Bill Garrison
Natalie Gebhardt
Eugene Wright
Stacy Wright
Jürgen Wüchner
Toby Wright
Tony Zamora
William Zuckors
Dave Zoller
Bart Zweig

Saxophonist, pianist, player of various world wind and reed instruments and percussionist Kali Z. Fastee, who first gained notice with The Sea Ensemble, a collaborative duet with husband/reedplayer Donald Rafael Garrett, and then worked as a leader, mostly for her own Flying Note label from the mid '80s onwards, died Nov. 20th at 73.

Fastee, née Zusaan Kali, was born Mar. 9th, 1947 in Newark, NJ into a musical family. As she told Clifford Allen for this gazette in 2017, “professional ‘classical’ musicians populated both sides of my lineage. This happenstance perhaps justified and propelled me to spontaneous composition, the opposite way of making music and avoiding ‘Western’ musical notation, song structures, specialization and hierarchical organization of music and musicians.”

Her first credit was with Garrett in 1973 when both were in the band of Archie Shepp that performed at Festival Ljubljana in then-Yugoslavia. The next year they distilled their work into a duo, The Sea Ensemble, which released its debut on ESP-Disk’, followed by a pair of later ‘70s albums for Red Records, on which Fastee played sheng, cello, voice, clarinet, kalimba, davul, calabash, percussion, tambura, flute and other instruments. As she told Allen, with The Sea Ensemble “our carrying and playing bamboo flutes was a passport to hearts, hospitality, smiles and kinship everywhere, especially in non-European lands and this blended with our strong drive to experience many cultures, music, vibes and terrain.” She lived overseas for over a decade in various African and European countries.

The pan-culturalism of The Sea Ensemble would go on to inform Fastee’s work as a leader, which started in 1986 with the establishment of her Flying Note imprint, the catalogue of which boasted over a dozen releases, mostly new 2016’s Intuit. She also made a single album for CIMP in 1997. Her collaborators on those sessions included Noah Howard, Kidd Jordan, Bobby Few, William Parker, Warren Smith, Rashied Ali, Louis Moholo-Moholo, Cindy Blackman, Michael T.A. Thompson and others. She could be heard performing regularly in New York City as part of Vision Festival-related programming and at Roulette, Spectrum, Greater Calvary Baptist Church and other venues. In 2018, she participated in the ESP-Disk’ 55th Anniversary Celebration at Greenwich House Music School.

She summed up her aesthetic to Allen thusly: “I’ve always had strong tastes in music and visual art. I especially enjoy sculpting sound and the artistic freedom of accomplishing projects independently. I returned to America primarily to work with the many great musicians here who compose spontaneously with heart. By tuning ourselves and refining our skills, we develop sensitivity and intuition to receive and translate energy into beautiful music unique to the present moment.”
CHRISTIAN AZZI (Dec. 1st, 1926 - Nov. 21st, 2020). The French pianist released an album in 2003 in tribute to saxophonist clarinetist Sidney Bechet, with whom he had worked some 50 years earlier during Bechet’s sojourn in Paris, appearing on albums for Vogue, Blue Note and Brunswick, to go along with recording credits under Sun Ra, Claude Luter’s Owning and Crescent City Jazz Band and expatriates such as Mezz Mezzrow and Don Byas during the same period and then, decades later with the High Society Jazz Band and Watergate Seven. Azzi died Nov. 21st at 93.

ALLAN BOTSCHINSKY (Mar. 29th, 1940 - Nov. 26th, 2020) The Danish trumpeter was a member of Denmark’s traditional jazz band Jazz Quintet ’60 in the ’60s and fusion supergroup Iron Office in the ’70s and released several albums since the ’60s on Danish Debuts, RCA Victor, Storyville and M•A•M Music, the latter including an ’80s duo with fellow Iron Officer Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, but was better known for his many credits under Erich Gudmøn, Erik Modahl, Bent Axen, Oscar Pettiford, Bjarne Rostvold, Sahib Shihab, Danish Radio Jazz Group, Bent Jaedig, Rune Gustafsson, Rolf Billberg, Dexter Gordon, Karin Krog, Peter Herbolzheimer, George Gruntz, Ernie Wilkins, Joe Haider, Barbara Dennerlein, European Jazz Ensemble and many others. Botschinsky died Nov. 26th at 80.

MICHAEL BROOKS (1935 - Nov. 20th, 2020) The music historian, archivist and producer worked under John Hammond in the ’70s, producing jazz reissues for CBS, and continued in that role as well as archivist for both CBS/Columbia and Sony Music since the mid ’80s, winning six Grammy awards for his work, which included sets dedicated to Count Basie, Eddie Condon, Lester Young, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Benny Carter, Louis Armstrong, Red Norvo, Coleman Hawkins, Teddy Wilson, Jack Teagarden, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Gene Krupa, Ella Fitzgerald, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Erroll Garner, Charlie Christian, Earl Hines, Roy Eldridge and many other legendary figures. Brooks died Nov. 20th at 85.

CÁNDIDO CAMERO (Apr. 22nd, 1921 - Nov. 7th, 2020) The legendary Cuban percussionist was instrumental in the development of the conga and bongó as complex rhythmic and melodic instruments, both in the traditional music of his homeland and then, after moving to New York in 1946, as part of the nascent AfroCuban jazz movement alongside Dizzy Gillespie, Machito and others, going on to make dozens of albums from the mid ’50s onwards for ABC-Paramount, Roulette, Tico, Solid State, Blue Note, Polydor, Salsoul, and then, decades later with the High Society Jazz Band and Watergate Seven. Camero died Nov. 7th at 99. [An In Memoriam spread dedicated to Cándido is on pp. 12-13]

OTHILLA DALLAS (Sep. 26th, 1925 - Nov. 28th, 2020) The dancer/singer’s (and half-sister to Frank Strozier) career as the former from the early ’40s onwards, both in the States and her adopted home of Basel, Switzerland, was interspersed with stints as the latter, performing with Sidney Bechet, Quincy Jones, Nat King Cole and Duke Ellington, the latter writing two tunes for her for the 1941 revue Jump for Joy then, decades later, releasing albums on Megaphone, Mobs, Brambul and Yellow Tree Music. Dallas died Nov. 28th at 95.

HERMAN GREEN (1930 - Nov. 26th, 2020) The saxophonist and Memphis stalwart worked in both the jazz and blues worlds, the former including Phineas, Jr. and Calvin Newborn in the ’40s, Lionel Hampton’s Orchestra in the late ’50s-’60s, as a guest of the Memphis State University Jazz Band in the late ’60s and participation in James Williams’ Memphis Convention in the ’90s. Green died Nov. 26th at 90.

CLIFF HOFF (1927 - Nov. 2nd, 2020) The saxophonist was a member of the orchestras of Glenn Miller, the Dorsey Brothers, Dick Meldonian, Ralph Flanagan and Gerry Mulligan/Bob Brookmeyer/Phil Sunkel in the ’50s. Hoff died Nov. 2nd at 93.

PETER INGRAM (Nov. 14th, 1938 - Nov. 21st, 2020) The British drummer spent his adult life in North Carolina as a scientific researcher but had a parallel career in jazz, operating the Frog & Nightgown and Café Déjà Vu clubs in Raleigh, co-founding the educational group Preservation Jazz Company and leading Group Sax, making a handful of albums, one featuring Sir Roland Hanna. Ingram died Nov. 21st at 82.

PEDRO ITURRALDE (Jul. 3rd, 1929 - Nov. 1st, 2020) The Spanish saxophonist fused his country’s Flamenco tradition with jazz on albums since the ’60s for Hispavox, SABA, CBS and other labels, one featuring a young Paco De Lucta, and also worked with Elia Fleta, Juan Carlos Calderon and a number of Spain’s folk, rock and funk acts. Iturralde died Nov. 1st 91.

EDDIE NOBLE KING, JR. (Mar. 26th, 1937 - Nov. 16th, 2020) The trombonist and New Orleans stalwart was a member of the Olympia Brass Band and Treme Brass Band, appearing on the HBO show Treme with the latter, and was a regular performer at Preservation Hall. King, Jr. died Nov. 16th at 83.

ANDREW WHITE (Sep. 6th, 1942 - Nov. 11th, 2020) The saxophonist/bassist/keyboard/French horn player never played with John Coltrane but was an acknowledged expert on the subject, publishing The Works of John Coltrane, Vols. 1 through 14: 701 transcriptions of John Coltrane’s improvisations, to go along with dozens of albums of his own music since the ’70s on his own Andrew’s Music imprint in a career that saw him leading The “J.F.K.” Quintet for two Riverside albums in the early ’60s and having recording credits with Weather Report, McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones, Hilton Felton, Beaver Harris and Julies Hemphill. White died Nov. 11th at 78.

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HERMAN GREEN (1930 - Nov. 26th, 2020) The saxophonist and Memphis stalwart worked in both the jazz and blues worlds, the former including Phineas, Jr. and Calvin Newborn in the ’40s, Lionel Hampton’s Orchestra in the late ’50s-’60s, as a guest of the Memphis State University Jazz Band in the late ’60s and participation in James Williams’ Memphis Convention in the ’90s. Green died Nov. 26th at 90.

CLIFF HOFF (1927 - Nov. 2nd, 2020) The saxophonist was a member of the orchestras of Glenn Miller, the Dorsey Brothers, Dick Meldonian, Ralph Flanagan and Gerry Mulligan/Bob Brookmeyer/Phil Sunkel in the ’50s. Hoff died Nov. 2nd at 93.

PETER INGRAM (Nov. 14th, 1938 - Nov. 21st, 2020) The British drummer spent his adult life in North Carolina as a scientific researcher but had a parallel career in jazz, operating the Frog & Nightgown and Café Déjà Vu clubs in Raleigh, co-founding the educational group Preservation Jazz Company and leading Group Sax, making a handful of albums, one featuring Sir Roland Hanna. Ingram died Nov. 21st at 82.

PEDRO ITURRALDE (Jul. 3rd, 1929 - Nov. 1st, 2020) The Spanish saxophonist fused his country’s Flamenco tradition with jazz on albums since the ’60s for Hispavox, SABA, CBS and other labels, one featuring a young Paco De Lucta, and also worked with Elia Fleta, Juan Carlos Calderon and a number of Spain’s folk, rock and funk acts. Iturralde died Nov. 1st 91.

EDDIE NOBLE KING, JR. (Mar. 26th, 1937 - Nov. 16th, 2020) The trombonist and New Orleans stalwart was a member of the Olympia Brass Band and Treme Brass Band, appearing on the HBO show Treme with the latter, and was a regular performer at Preservation Hall. King, Jr. died Nov. 16th at 83.

ANDREW WHITE (Sep. 6th, 1942 - Nov. 11th, 2020) The saxophonist/bassist/keyboard/French horn player never played with John Coltrane but was an acknowledged expert on the subject, publishing The Works of John Coltrane, Vols. 1 through 14: 701 transcriptions of John Coltrane’s improvisations, to go along with dozens of albums of his own music since the ’70s on his own Andrew’s Music imprint in a career that saw him leading The “J.F.K.” Quintet for two Riverside albums in the early ’60s and having recording credits with Weather Report, McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones, Hilton Felton, Beaver Harris and Julies Hemphill. White died Nov. 11th at 78.
Cándido was a great man. Cándido was a great artist. I am so happy that I can say that Cándido was and will always be my friend.

— SONNY ROLLINS, SAXOPHONE

Cándido—in very busy times way back—played with me on several appearances and a few recordings. He was a wonderful partner to play with and a very genuine guy just to hang out with. He gave us his presence for a long time, and we are all grateful.

— DICK HYMAN, PIANO

Cándido was a National Endowment of the Arts Jazz Master who changed the performance history of jazz conga playing. I had the opportunity to perform with him many times in my life in a variety of settings. It was always total enjoyment to see and hear him perform with his multiple congas. He would play melodies such as “Manteca” and would always add tremendous excitement to the rhythm section as well as for the listening audience.

While he was performing with the Billy Taylor Group in the early ‘50s, Cándido and Billy incorporated Afro-Latin concepts that Dizzy Gillespie utilized with his big band in the ‘40s. He will be missed.

— JIMMY OWENS, TRUMPET

When you talk about percussion, particularly the evolution of conga playing, you’re talking about two periods—before Cándido and after Cándido. He was literally game-changing.

He was the first to develop coordinated independence applied to the congas and bongó—being able to keep a steady rhythm with one hand while soloing with the other. He was the first to develop the techniques to play more than one conga simultaneously. He was the first conga player to perform solo pieces with no accompaniment. He adapted the conga drum to the swing feel in jazz so beautifully it became a template for all other musicians to follow. He was the first to develop the techniques to play multiple percussion instruments played simultaneously, sounding like three or four players. He was the first to tune multiple congas to specific pitches so he could play melodies on them, and he was an inventor as well. In 1950 he created the first device for a player to be able to play a cowbell with one’s foot. On top of that he was a bass player and played the Cuban tres (mandolin-like guitar). Every percussionist working today, in any context, owes a debt of gratitude to him.

— BOBBY SANABRIA, DRUMS/PERCUSION

I met Cándido during a recording for an advertising campaign I was producing in 1989. On Nov. 28th, 1990, I presented the Carnegie Hall 100th Anniversary concert, under the direction of Chico O’Farrill for which we had Cándido billed as a very special guest. It took me five years to convince Cándido to be in the 2005 documentary I did, Cándido: Hands of Fire. During the last two decades, we produced several concerts as well as recordings with him. Cándido became part of our family. Our son, his grandson, to whom you name it. His humbleness was much, much bigger than his fame and he will always occupy a very huge special room in our hearts.

— IVAN ACOSTA, WRITER-FILMMAKER

What a loss. Cándido was a Grand Master, a pioneer, and an innovator. His music will live forever.

— DUDEKDA FONSECA, DRUMS/PERCUSSION

I had an association with Cándido when he recorded with me on my first and second albums, which were for Blue Note Records in 1956. Blue Note founder Alfred Lion actually recommended him for those sessions. I really appreciated his music, and his humility. He was a brilliant percussionist and a very professional musician and made a great contribution to Latin jazz and Latin music.

— KENNY BURRELL, GUITAR

Cándido was the Monk of the AfroCuban world. He was not one for hyper-virtuoso displays of self-aggrandizement. I watched him many times in the presence of other master congueros and with a couple of strokes of his fingers he always brought the house down in a way that the histrionics of those around him could not. It was not a lack of prowess. He had technique to spare. It was simply that the musicality of his playing came from a place deep within, free of competitiveness, liberated from a need to grandstand. This was displayed in every facet of his humanity. He was a gentleman with a comportment that also roared generosity, curiosity and deep love for the music.

With Cándido’s departure a guiding spirit for young musicians will be missing but for the ancesors, it will be a homecoming. I love you Cándido, now you and Baba Randy Weston can continue to make a joyful noise.

— ARTURO O’FARRILL, PIANO

Life is one rollercoaster ride full of ironies. But this one hit too close to home. A man that I always thought invincible, has transitioned. He was probably the coolest cat I’ve ever met. He was the epitome of a gentleman. He was sharper than a thornback. “El hombre que invento la Elegancia”. I’ve never seen any man pull off wearing a Leopard Dolce & Gabbana suit better than him. He used to call me the one and only. He gave me my first professional shot when I was 18. His life motto was “Stay away from bad advice, bad company and bad habits.” I used to visit him at his apartment on West End Avenue and listen to all the epic stories of him banding with Chano Pozo or playing with Sammy Davis, Jr., Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Bird, Diz, Miles, Trane, Elvin, Celia Cruz, La Lupe, Cachao, Tom Jones, et al. He was the first conguero to be listed in the World Book Encyclopedia. He even played bass on an Art Blakey song (“Oscalypso”) because apparently Oscar Pettiford couldn’t play tumbao.

He was as innovative as they come. He was the first conguero to play two and three congas. He invented the mechanism to play the cowbell with a bass drum pedal 50 years before Latin Percussion’s Gajate Pedal. He told me he got the idea of playing three congas after being inspired by hearing my father, uncle and brother, name it. His humbleness was much, much bigger than his fame and he will always occupy a very huge special room in our hearts.

— AMAURY ACOSTA, DRUMS

I met Cándido for the first time at the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition in 2000 when I was one of the participants and he was one of the judges.

On the second night me and some of the other participants went to have dinner with Giovanni Hidalgo and Milton Cardona. It was an unforgettable evening, where Cándido shared with us his book of pictures, his stories. I was amazed by his professionalism.

He was a big surprise when they organized for me to play a drum performance, and I was honored and humbled to be playing a duet with the biggest conga legend! In the audience were the most important percussionists, including Giovanni Hidalgo and Johnny Dandy Rodriguez. My biggest honor was when Cándido asked me to tune his congas.

— SAMUEL TORRES, PERCUSSION

I was shocked by the sobering news of the passing of THE venerable reigning elder of African hand drum performance, Cándido Camero. We had talked on his pandemic-stifled birthday in April about looking forward to his 100th. Not only was he an iconic personal inspiration but I was also blessed to have been able to call him a friend, elder colleague and even mentor.

Always the consummate dapper and polite gentleman, Cándido’s innovative contributions to the world of music and humanity as a musician, composer, inventor and more over the past 75 plus years are innumerable and beyond what we could even begin to scratch the surface about here. Cándido’s humility with regards to his performance innovations was such that he was always thinking, “getting to know him and doing my own reflective research I, as a student of the craft myself, had often attributed many of them to others.”

While some “Latin” music purists may have regarded his innovations as more commercial than others, it was actually adaptable in ways that were more conducive to multiple genres than some more traditional styles. Cándido took the African drum and its sound to places others had not, along the way introducing and familiarizing new ears and audiences to the instrument and its sound.

Cándido to the end, much like his great friend, fellow NEA Jazz Master Randy Weston with whom he worked regularly since their meeting in the ‘50s, always honored their parents. They credited them with being the very source of their impressive existences. I once asked Cándido to what did he attribute his longevity in life and his impact on music? He responded: “I don’t drink, smoke, curse or talk politics!” I’ve been humbled, honored and thankful to have known and played with both of these creative musical icons and am grateful for the artistic gifts they’ve shared and left for us all. Thank you Cándido. As you play on with the multitude of luminaries you’re now reunited with in the Celestial “Jazz” Philharmonic. We’re still listening!

— NEIL CLARKE, PERCUSSION
We spoke a week and a half before he died and I miss him. The first experience that I had with Cándido was when I was a little kid, thanks to my grandfather who taught me to play and showed me an album of Cándido’s from 1958 with him on the cover with one conga (Candido In Indigo, ABC Paramount). One of my favorite Cándido records is Brujerias de Candido (Tico) with Cachao and Chino López. That album’s a classic and I used to practice with that vinyl album every day. Cándido, the Thousand Finger Man, was a pioneer since he came to America in 1946. And though he may have been the original “Mr. Clean”—he never drank or smoked—he was a true showman and an all-time original. He always worked with the dynamics of the music and the dynamics of life. Even in his 90s he was still kicking ass for sure.

I remember when we met to play in The Conga Kings group. He said, “You sound like a machine gun!” I would tune his congas because you have to help the elders. That was of course my honor. I have always said, “Lord, thanks for giving me this opportunity.” Elders like Cándido are very much like a diamond, a precious ruby or emerald. He will be forever one the masters of the conga drums.

— GIOVANNI HIDALGO, PERCUSSION

In 1951 when I first got to spend time with Dizzy Gillespie, he told me that if I ever moved to NYC, I should spend some time with Cándido. “After Chano Pozo passed, Cándido kept that spirit alive,” said Dizzy. “He’s all about the music.” In 1955, when I finally moved to NYC and was lucky enough to work with Charles Mingus at the Café Bohemia, Cándido was the featured artist when we took a break. Cándido was always generous and gracious to any young musician if he saw you were respectful and eager to learn. He always found the time to lend a helping hand, a smile and a word of encouragement to anybody, as long as you remembered to say please and thank you.

We became friends for life. We played at jazz festivals, folk and world music events, including one where Cándido was the featured artist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic and performed in my “En Memoria de Chano Pozo”. It was wonderful in the role of conductor, seeing young musicians looking spellbound as Cándido seemed to effortlessly play his astounding solos, which were compositions that he created on the spot.

Playing with him for Mario Bauza’s 100th birthday at the Apollo Theater as guests with Bobby Sanabria’s big band was like being in heaven, without the drag of expiring! We played again with Bobby’s Multiverse Big Band in 2017 at “Salsa Meets Jazz”, a benefit for Puerto Rico after the hurricane. Backstage, all the guests watched in reverence as Cándido closed the show, raising his arms, like Moses parting the Red Sea. “Ladies and gentlemen,” he said. “I have something very important to tell you. I am 97 years old and have terrible arthritis. But when I play my drums, I feel like I’m 20!” There was thunderous applause. “No, no please,” said Cándido, shushing the audience with his arms until you could hear nothing in the room except for the ice machine quietly dropping a cube. He bowed his head as if in prayer and everyone remained silent. “Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank my mother and my father.” There was another pause and in the silence, you could feel everyone thinking, how could a 97-year-old man have parents able to even be alive, much less come down to Greenwich Village to hear their son? “Ladies and gentlemen,” said Cándido, “Without them……NO CÁNDIDO!!” We didn’t need to play an encore.

— DAVID AMRAM, VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS

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CÁNDIDO CAMERO
1921-2020
The New Orleans Collection: Ellis Marsalis (Newvelle) by Ken Dryden

Until Ellis Marsalis was honored as an NEA Jazz Master (together with sons Branford, Wynton, DelFayo and Jason) in 2011, fans often overlooked his many contributions as a composer and pianist, due to the patriarch’s primary focus being on jazz education and the many plaudits that Wynton and Branford received with their prolific output. But his final recording, made just weeks prior to his death in April of 2020 at 85 from COVID-19, is the perfect swan song to his career. Marsalis returns to several of his earlier compositions and finds new approaches to some old favorites, alternating between piano solos and duets with son Jason on vibraphone. The elder Marsalis played a wide range of styles during his lifetime so he isn’t easily classified, though he had a gift for constructing creative solos that never overshadowed the melodic line. Most of the solo ballads have a reflective mood, full of spaciousness and lush chords, starting with the delicate “E’s Knowledge”, which seems nostalgic without being maudlin. J. Fred Coots-Sam M. Lewis’ World War II era standard “For All We Know” is even more poignant, with Marsalis’ deliberate, almost hesitating exploration, communicating the meaning of its unheard lyric. Even more intriguing is the unusual medley that the pianist arranged: beginning with a brief snippet of Bernece Petkere’s “Lullaby of the Leaves”, Marsalis weaves his way indirection into Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart’s timeless “My Funny Valentine” before segueing into a moving setting of the spiritual “Nobody Knows The Trouble I’ve Seen”, a luxurious performance which wraps all too quickly. He rightly, dedicated to this voice taken too soon.

For more information, visit motema.com

The Royal Bopsters (Motéma) by Dan Bilawsky

This hip and polished quartet is cut from the same cloth as vocalace groups of yore. But don’t mistake this for a retro act. Thanks to skillful hands and voices, that cloth has now been embroidered with the entire history of the music. The Royal Bopsters’ 2015 debut, where regal members Amy London, Holli Ross, Darmon Meader and Dylan Pnamuk panned around with icons Mark Murphy, Bob Dorough, Jon Hendricks, Sheila Jordan and Annie Ross, made that clear enough. And this follow-up set, with Pete McGuinness filling the tenor seat vacated by Meader, further demonstrates a long and wide reach.

Backed by the classy trio of pianist Steve Schmidt, bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Steve Williams and boasting a guest list that includes Dorough, Jordan, percussionist Steven Kroon and bassist Christian McBride, these swinging singers rejoice in the company they keep and the splendor of the heavenly harmony they create. Their noble bearing is clearly audible on the soigné “But Not for Me”, acknowledging a Chet Baker scat trip in its soli, and the seriously swinging “My Shining Hour”, where McGuinness makes his mark and everybody hammer home the truth. The ten tracks between those end points offer all manner of wonders. “Lucky to Be Me”, opening on the well-wrought song verse delivered by the core crew, finds Jordan in incredibly fine form. An a cappella “Day Dream” plays, appropriately enough, as an episode of woolgathering. The spicy “Quando Te Vea” has McBride holding down the fort with a solid tambour. And “Baby, You Should Know It”, featuring Dorough in one of his last appearances on record, is the embodiment of blues-based wit. While there’s a celebratory sound to this album, its arrival proves bittersweet. Holli Ross, who valiantly battled cancer, passed away in May of 2020 at 62, right after the final masters were finished. Her artistry, stamped on the entire program, leaves a rich legacy and her absence now creates a void. Party of Four is, rightly, dedicated to this voice taken too soon.

For more information, visit motema.com

Arvo Pärt or John Surman, but it’s deeply original. It’s a culmination of a creative path that flouted genre and style borders since Tippett’s landmark Centipede band of 1971, not inspired by a rebellious streak but because Tippett’s creativity cannot be contained in any single given genre and happily transcends them all. The central and longest fourth movement is the keynote and perfect synthesis of the strengths of the piece, building up from the sound of a mbira through Julie Tippett’s solo vocalization to lovely choral melodies supported by the texture of the reeds. It’s a majestic, rich recording repaying multiple listening.

For more information, visit discus-music.co.uk

The Monk Watches The Eagle
Keith Tippett (Discus) by Francesco Martinelli

Poignantly issued only months after the recent death of the great English pianist Keith Tippett in June of 2020 at 72, this is an extended, 40-minute cantata in seven movements for solo voice (Tippett’s life and music partner Julie Tippett), two saxophone quartets – Tippett’s Mujician partner Paul Dunmall (soprano), Kevin Figes (alto), Ben Waghorn (tenor) and Chris Biscoe (baritone) and the Apollo Saxophone Quartet: Tim Redpath (soprano), Rob Buckland (alto), Andy Scott (tenor) and David Roach (baritone)– and the BBC Singers choir, magnificently recorded by the BBC during its premiere at the Norfolk and Norwich festival on May 14th, 2004 in the spacious acoustics of the Norwich Cathedral.

Based on a text by Tippett herself, the work was conducted by the composer and dedicated to her father, Patrick, a music-loving Bristol policeman; Tippett herself, in an uncharacteristic gesture for jazz, does not appear as an instrumentalist. He was very happy about the recording, but did not see it released in his lifetime: it took Discus Music’s Martin Archer’s dedication with the support of Julie Tippett to make it available.

There’s neither dabbling in composition here nor superficial “classics in jazz” fusionism. The atmospheres may recall more well known music by Arvo Pärt or John Surman, but it’s deeply original.

For more information, visit discus-music.co.uk

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD
BEST OF 2020
BEST TRIBUTE ALBUMS

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD
BEST OF 2020
Near the end of this laudable documentary, trumpeter Wallace Roney visits Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, where he lays a trumpet on Miles Davis' grave. “. . . I’ll see you again,” Roney says to his late mentor. “. . . I'm doing what you taught me.” The scene would be powerful under normal circumstances, but it's all the more poignant given the tragic news that saddened the jazz community last spring. Roney was 59 when he died on Mar. 31st from complications related to COVID-19.

Filmmakers Sam Osborn and Nick Capezzera spent ample time with Roney in the preceding months. In Universe, they present an engrossing portrait of the trumpeter as he completes an ambitious project initiated a half-century ago.

In the mid ’60s, Wayne Shorter, the saxophonist in Davis’ Second Great Quintet, wrote a sprawling, complex orchestral work titled The Universe Compositions. Davis was fascinated by the music—“I asked for a tune and you gave me a fuckin’ symphony”, he’s said to have told Shorter—but it went unrecorded and was then misplaced. Shortly before Davis died in 1991, he urged Shorter to locate the music. Another 15 years passed before the Library of Congress found the compositions. At that point Shorter asked Roney, Davis’ protégé, to bring the music to the public. Roney set to work, devoting considerable time and resources to the task. The film—shot in black-and-white to match archival footage from Davis’ heyday and featuring insightful interviews with musicians, critics and those closest to Roney—tells this long-developing story with visual panache and palpable esteem for all involved.

Osborn and Capezzera set up their cameras in Roney’s New Jersey home, where his carefully assembled big band rehearsed in tight quarters; there, as in the filmmakers’ footage of recording dates and mixing sessions, the musician is at once easygoing and exacting, a genial perfectionist. Though filled with music from Davis and Roney’s careers, the film could have offered a sharper idea of what makes The Universe Compositions so tricky, or how a fully realized interpretation sounds. The directors build to a performance at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, of which we hear just a bit. The film’s primary goal, though, is to show a determined artist at work, to give us an understanding of what brought him to this moment and to chronicle the care and enthusiasm with which he approached his work. Osborn and Capezzera do this in edifying fashion, recounting Roney’s signal appearance alongside Davis at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1991, his efforts to transcend criticism that he was a Davis “clone” and his ear for everything from microphone quality to the way that The Universe Compositions should be conducted. Davis “saw me and heard me” more clearly than anyone else, Roney says, and this film demonstrates why the great trumpeter had such faith in his apprentice.
The hip reissue label WeWantSounds has brought out a special new edition of this Ennio Morricone soundtrack album; a two-LP set produced for Record Store Day that compiles the original soundtrack to this 1975 French detective movie, along with bonus material that had previously been issued on CD (though not LP) and two tracks never before released. Of course, since this is a soundtrack, the idea of unissued tracks is a little vague, not formal songs but instead cues meant to underpin and enhance specific dramatic moments in the movie. Still, for most listeners, more Morricone is always good Morricone and this example does not disappoint.

The composer, who died in July of 2020 at 91, scored hundreds of films and few will be familiar with all his work, though jazz fans might be struck by an arrow of recognition when they hear the main theme stitched through this album, an ominous bass/piano ostinato with Alessandro Alessandroni whistling the wonderful, emotionally complex theme over the top—John Zorn used this material on his masterpiece The Big Gundown. Morricone was a kaleidoscopic composer, a genius melodist, and one of the features that sets this soundtrack apart from much of his work is the level of thematic consistency; so many of the cues are based on the same ostinato, with its beating heart rhythm and the remarkable sound of Alessandroni.

Morricone was not the only soundtrack composer who could write truly innovative, original music (not just cues and adaptations of classical music), but he was one of the tiny few (with maybe Georges Delerue and Toru Takemitsu) who could write a wholly original and completely convincing pop tune, instead of a cringe-worthy pastiche only a movie producer could love. Here, those include “Dolcemente Ambigua” and the Burt Bacharach-esque “Essere Preso Del Panico”, which is a highlight of the performance, a special father-daughter moment as well as grand, rich vocal in an atmospheric and non-linear, introspective and abstract, far more in line with his more recent work as a solo performer than anything he did decades ago as part of the New York and Parisian avant garde jazz scenes.

A word that keeps getting repeated is “stranger”, which can be translated as stranger or foreign. Now, when discussing translation as it applies to the work of a linguist, precision is necessary but we are left on our own to determine what Cowell meant: was he the stranger, a philosopher among musicians, a trumpeter among academics? Is strangeness/foreignness ultimately a relative concept? This amorphous quality extends to the music as the notes, words and electric washes move in and out of the foreground. In both music and language, living things changing over time, there are no final statements.

For more information, visit steeplechase.dk

**For more information, visit savvy-contemporary.com**

Musicologists of keenly analytical skill than this reviewer could be able to say whether Charles Ives’ vision of music as something of an introduction to each band member. The quintet is as clean and tight as a regular touring act, though such a lineup is one the pianist has rarely worked with over the years. On “Banana Pudding”, a lively, uptempo bit of postbop, another work with an extended melody line, the band is downright effervescent and Cowell’s solo is gripping, a testament to his strongest work yet. The rhythm section of bassist Tom DiCarlo and drummer Vinnie Ector sits exactly where they need be, supportive, sturdy, charmingly interactive.

Cowell’s wide brassy tone recalls Woody Shaw and Freddie Hubbard and he plays with the self-assuredness of both. His muscular solos throughout are journeys into hardbop past, but one always pushing toward what’s to come. “Montage for Toledo” is a softly swinging piece in 12/8 meter, which speaks to the pianist’s journeyman years, with the alluring dark lamentations of alto hypnotically working their way through the listener. And on “Equipoise”, the significance only multiplies. Another Cowell original, this time it features daughter Sunny’s shimmering vocal on this prescient song about seeking balance. The Baltimore-based singer is also a multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and a practicing attorney. Surely, this piece is a highlight of the performance, a special father-daughter moment as well as grand, rich vocal in an already bountiful set. If this turns out to be Cowell’s final statement, he left us on a truly brilliant note.

For more information, visit steetplechase.dk
It may begin as a whisper, a rustling at the edge of perception, but it never remains static. Just as often, the sound rushes, roams and rumbles on the fringes of cognition. It swirls like half-formed memories and then pours out in emotive torrents in which even the need for a single meaning grows vague but, for the musicians involved in these two recordings released in tribute to the bassist Simon Fell, who died in June of 2020 at 61, meaning and association are crystal clear. It is impossible to encapsulate the scope of Fell’s work on two albums, no matter how inclusive. Yet, here we can gain an inkling of his contributions and influence, both direct and by association. The common factor is multi-instrumentalist Mark Wastell, who also founded Confront in 1996. With him, Fell and harpist Rhodri Davies formed IST, a boundary-blurring trio pioneering, but by no means limited to, a dynamically diverse music often relying on a nearly silent but intense energy and interplay. 24 years after it happened, we now hear the trio’s second performance ever and it is a marvel of synchronous discovery caught in a dry but resonant space. The crystalline interplay of bows opening the first track of At The Club Room is a model of Protean articulation, bloom and decay, a chamber music in wonderful flux examining while deconstructing the permeable boundaries between light and shade. In these heady days of initial exploration, the pointillism of European free improvisation was complemented by what could be called interstitial silences, but more than dynamics were in play. The raw ingredients of sound, modified via alchemy, stood at the center of the trio’s evolving aesthetic, but it could just as easily become mellow or burst into flames, as happens leading up to and including 6:00 into the second track. The crackle of interactive electricity is palpable as each mirrors and enhances the others’ forays down the myriad paths opening when an instrument is used to its fullest potential. Fell transforms a bass into chamber orchestra and percussion ensemble, ideas alternately pouring down like rain or wafting like the gentlest breeze.

The sonic intrigue so germane to IST is amplified in Pièce commémorative: Pour Simon from the large ensemble UN, a project of bassist David Chiesa in which Fell regularly participated. This commemorative piece was begun in April of 2020 as a kind of musical postcard for Fell, wishing him well during his illness. While, sadly, it was not completed before the bassist’s passing, his compositional and performative spirit imbues the 20-minute work. A long-time lover of studio manipulation of live material, Fell would doubtless have found pleasure in the track-by-track construction, but the piece’s whimsy would also certainly have appealed to his astutely prankish side. There is something joicously sinister about Wastell’s construction, but the piece’s whimsy would also doubtless have found pleasure in the track-by-track separation, if such a consideration is really appropriate at all. Where IST exploited environmental possibility in a concert setting, UN harnesses the power of multiple and transcultural environments to similar effect and with all the benefits of studio production.

Fell was a joyful maverick. He could tear it up in a jazz trio, was conversant in the languages of art music and dug beyond the foundations of improvised forms and structures with equal fluency. His love of music-making manifested in his writing and speaking, just as his influence is palpable in these tributes to his inclusive musical legacy. As the proceeds go to charity, purchasing these releases will reward twice and the musical enjoyment to be gained is beyond measure.

For more information, visit confrontrecordings.bandcamp.com

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Throughout, the low-register piano acts as a basso continuo, another idea that would have pleased the ever-inquiring and boundary-suspicious dedicatee. Like IST, each sound is just as likely to obscure as belie its origins and it is only with signifiers like the breath at 16:22 that cause and effect and hope have a chance of being separated, if such a consideration is really appropriate at all. Where IST exploited environmental possibility in a concert setting, UN harnesses the power of multiple and transcultural environments to similar effect and with all the benefits of studio production.

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The Sea is Rough
Brom & Toshinori Kondo (Bocian)
by Kurt Gottschalk

Trumpeter Toshinori Kondo led a busy life, making music that even in its more meditative moments itself felt busy, and didn’t seem to have slowed when he died in October of 2020 at 71. Ten albums were posted to Bandcamp during the last six months of his life, including five volumes of solo electric trumpet music recorded during lockdown and bearing the title “Beyond Corona”. (All are streaming in full at toshinorikondo.bandcamp.com.) The fourth was dedicated to his friend, the fashion designer Kansai Yamamoto—famous for his work for David Bowie—who died in July of 2020 at 76. The fifth includes a short note about making music despite being in pain and having difficulty breathing. While no cause of death was given by the family at the time of his death, it’s apparent that Kondo was facing difficulties.

Also during that time, the Polish label Bocian Records released a brief meeting between Kondo and the Russian sax/bass/drum trio Brom. Recorded in Moscow in March 2019, the album shows Kondo at full breath and energy, matching the younger players in 12 minutes of blast.

The Sea is Rough is available as download (streaming at bociang.bandcamp.com) and 12” 45 rpm vinyl, a format most often used for dance music. Grooves do exist here, although they are rare. In your face, electric bass and effects-laden horns give a fullness of sound reminiscent of Peter Brötzmann’s Full Blast trio—hardly a surprise, as Kondo worked regularly with Brötzmann over the years. The A side hits full on, the flip lets off a little, a bit like a dub mix on one of those old max-singles. That wouldn’t have been a bad idea, in fact. The sea may be rough, but there’s not enough of it.

For more information, visit bociang.bandcamp.com

Krzysztof Penderecki, who died in March of 2020 at 86, was best known as a classical composer and conductor, but in 1971, he collaborated with trumpeter Don Cherry on Actions for Free Jazz Orchestra, a 16-minute piece performed at the Donaueschingen Music Festival with an ensemble of Kenny Wheeler, Manfred Schoof and Tomasz Stanko (trumpets), Albert Mangelsdorff and Paul Rutherford (trombones), Gerd Dudek, Willem Breuker and Peter Brötzmann (saxophones), Gunter Hampel (flute and bass clarinet), Fred Van Hove (piano and organ), Terje Rypdal (guitar), Peter Warren and Buschi Niebergall (basses) and Han Bennink (drums), with Penderecki conducting. Not unlike John Coltrane’s Ascension or Ornette Coleman’s Free Jazz, it juxtaposed swinging ensemble passages against raucous solo and duo sections.

In 2018, Swedish saxophonist Mats Gustafsson and his Fire! Orchestra were commissioned to revisit Actions for the Sacrum Profanum festival in Kraków, near Penderecki’s Debica birthplace. Their version of the piece runs a full 40 minutes and includes Goran Kajfes, Niklas Barnó and Susana Santos Silva (trumpets), Maria Bertel (trombone), Per Åke Holmlander (tuba), Anna Högb erg (alto), Per “Texas” Johansson (tenor, clarinet and flute), Gustafsson (baritone saxophone and conduction), Christer Bothén (bass clarinet), Reine Fiske (guitar), Alex Zethson (Hammond organ), Elsa Bergman (upright bass), Torbjörn Zetterberg (electric bass) and Andreas Werliin (drums).

Rather than extend the solo portions, though, they’ve slowed the whole thing down to a dubby, psychedelic crawl, with guitar, bass and organ giving it a dark, forbidding atmosphere. The horns hoot, sputter and moan at each other like apes at midnight, but there are a few real solos as well: one of the trumpeters early on, then Gustafsson later. This is a fascinating, unexpected performance very different from previous Fire! Orchestra discs, more in line with groups like Globe Unity Orchestra or bassist Alan Silva’s large-scale projects. Although it’s likely a one-off, it does point to a potentially fascinating new direction going forward, should Gustafsson choose to take that path.

For more information, visit runegrammofon.com

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Few jazz musicians had as long a career as Lee Konitz and even fewer were consistently creative for so many decades. The alto saxophonist, who passed away in April of 2020 at 92, already had his cool tone and basic style together as early as 1947 when he made his recording debut with Claude Thornhill. In his final public performance on his 92nd birthday, which can be seen on YouTube, Konitz had not only retained his distinctive sound but was still pushing himself. He had lost neither his musical curiosity nor his chance-taking and very open style.

An individualist from the start, Konitz was part of the Lennie Tristano school of adventurous cool jazz yet eventually broke away to follow his own path: an unlikely but successful stint with Stan Kenton’s Lewise and projects ranging from solo LP and duet albums to relaxed free jazz albums, Konitz was both a traditionalist (in his own way) and an innovator.

In 1992, he was given the prestigious JAZZPAR award by the Danish Jazz Center and recorded a reissue of two albums released in 1992: a quintet recording debut with Claude Thornhill. In his final performance on his 92nd birthday, Konitz showed that, while retaining his basic approach to chordal improvising, he was still full of surprises.

For more information, visit storyvillerecords.com

Manu Dibango died in March of 2020 at 86 but his legacy as the most internationally acclaimed African jazz saxophonist will endure. Best known for his 1972 hit “Soul Makossa”—Michael Jackson appropriated it for the outro vamp of “Wanna Be Startin’ Somethin’”—Dibango had a unique way of blending hooks with genres as diverse as makossa (from his hometown of Douala in French Cameroon), Nigerian Afrobeat, Congolese rumba, Ghanaian highlife, South African mbaqanga, Jamaican reggae, even Nuyorican salsa (he played with the Fania All-Stars). This cultural/rhythmic eclecticism is evident on Négropolitaines, a reissue of two albums released in 1989 and 1995, which retains all but three of the original songs, now resequenced. The tracks are richly layered without clutter, most having two guitar parts, three or more drum/percussion parts, keyboard and/or organ and a horn section (Dibango dubbing in extra saxophones), the second session adds a four-piece string section and features pioneer Afrobeat drummer Tony Allen, who himself died in April of 2020 at 79.

Dibango’s infectious amalgam suits the nightclubs and parties it was intended for, yet the complexity of the interlocking parts and the intelligence inherent in his solos merit closer attention. The arrangements are mercurial, making abrupt textural shifts sustaining interest in what would otherwise be heavily repetitive music. Wah-wah guitar, gospel organ and string section on “Panafican Jam”, the title track, “Aleo Party” and “Longe Lene” recall Norman Whitfield’s arrangements for The Temptations or Curtis Mayfield’s for Superfly while “Mpuny Mwa Moni” and “Oh Koh!” fall into the soukous/rumba tradition, but with hints of reggae. Similarly, “Parfum des îles” mashes up soukous, tango, funk and Grover Washington-style R&B. While Dibango’s solos conform to the emotional architecture of pop music, his work on the title track, “Oh Koh!” (showing his skronkiest side) and “Mudied Asu” (a duet with acoustic guitar) reveal a more experimental sensibility.

For more information, visit frémeaux.com

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PER “TEXAS” JOHANSSON
tenorsaxophone, contrabass clarinet, percussion

MACIEJ OBARA
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METTE RASMUSSEN
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ERIK NØDDAL
saxophones, clarinet, percussion

THOMAS JOHANSSON
trompet, percussion

GORAN KAJFES
trumpet, percussion

PETTER ELDH
doublebass, percussion

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The date opens with Puerto Rican trumpeter Piro Rodríguez, who died in 2020. His passing marks a terrible loss, but it serves as a reminder of the talent and legacy he left behind. Rodríguez was a key member of the Latin jazz scene, and his contributions will be remembered for years to come.

Martinez' pretty "Mia" underscores the pianist's skill as a composer and soloist on this mellow outing. Vibraphone is out front as a distinctive conclusion to a stellar career spanning seven-plus decades.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com

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Jimmy Heath's final album was completed shortly before he died in January of 2020 at 93. Heath surrounded his graceful saxophone sound and cool tone with a coterie of sympathetic players such as pianist Kenny Barron, guitarist Russell Malone and drummer Lewis Nash along with guest trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and singers Cécile McLorin Salvant and Gregory Porter. They explore a setlist mostly of ballads, written by Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie and Kenny Dorham, as well as several Heath originals on this accomplished, creative and engaging release.

The session starts with Heath's "Ballad From Upper Neighbors Suite". After introducing the theme, Heath launches into a long solo both feathery and ruminative in tone and content. Barron, bassist David Wong and Nash provide supportive but unobtrusive accompaniment with distinctive melodic figures. On Holiday-Mal Waldron’s "Left Alone" Salvador brings her crystalline voice to a flawless interpretation of the lyrics. Heath’s interjections are a calming force of poise and agility.

"La Mesha" is a Dorham original showcasing the bristling trumpet of Marsalis, as he and Heath take turns interpreting the tune’s mellow harmonic stylistics and Barron takes a brief solo filled with graceful disclosure. Gordon Parks was a photographer, film director (the original Shaft in 1971) and composer including “Don’t Misunderstand”, interpreted here by Porter in his deep baritone, delivering the lyrics with smoky grace and feeling while Heath fills the space with bluesy grooves, which together spells heartache.

One of Gillespie’s singular compositions, “Con Alma”, is given a new look by Heath and Co. via an understated Latin vibe, Monte Croft’s vibraphone providing quiet energy along with Malone’s delicate touch.

The closer is another Holiday composition, “Don’t Explain”, written as she sought to deal with the infidelity of her first husband, interpreted by Heath as a lament, sadness emanating from his saxophone. Barron’s solo is delivered in a cool measured style, transposing through shade and shape. With this release, Jimmy Heath has left us the perfect goodbye.

For more information, visit vertelabelgroup.com
CONGRATS TO GONZALO RUBALCABA, AYMÉE NUVIOLA, AND ALL WHO WORKED ON "VIENTO Y TIEMPO: LIVE AT BLUE NOTE TOKYO" ON BEING SELECTED AS A BEST LATIN RELEASE OF 2020 BY THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD.

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CHARLIE PARKER – The Mercury & Clef 10-Inch LP Collection (Verve)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – Not Two... but Twenty (Not Two)

JAZZ BOOKS

THE ART OF JAZZ
Alyn Shipton (Penguin/Random House)

BETTER DAYS WILL COME AGAIN: THE LIFE OF ARTHUR BRIGGS, JAZZ GENIUS OF HARLEM, PARIS AND A NAZI PRISON CAMP
Travis Atchia (Chicago Review Press)

JAZZ IMAGES BY FRANCIS WOLFF
Elemental Music

PLAY THE WAY YOU FEEL – THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO JAZZ STORIES ON FILM
Kevin Whitehead (Oxford University Press)

LARGE ENSEMBLE RELEASES

AARVARK JAZZ ORCHESTRA – Faces of Souls (Leo)

FIRE ORCHESTRA – Actions (Rune Grammofon)

JACOB GARCHIK – Clear Line (Yesterere)

GARD NICSSL SUPERSONIC ORCHESTRA – If You Listen Carefully The Music Is Yours (Odm)

MARIA SCHNEIDER ORCHESTRA – Data Lords (ArtistShare)

SOLERO LEICHT

CHRIS CORASNO – Metalhome (Catalytic Sound)

SIRGUD HOLE – Lujo (Light) (Light / Darkness) (s/r)

HERMIONE JOHNSON – Tremble (Relative Pitch)

LUCA T. MAI – Heavenly Guide (Trost)

MATTHEW SHIPP – The Piano Equation (Tao Forms)

LATIN RELEASES

ROBBY AMEEN – Dileuvio (Origin)

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PAPO VÁZQUEZ MIGHTY PIRATES

LIVE ADAM I (Chapter 10: Breaking Cover (Picaro)

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YON SUN CHOI/JACOB SACKS – I Should Care (Yesa)

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JAMES BRANDON LEWIS/CHAD TAYLOR – Live in Williow (Intakt)

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BARRE PHILLIPS – Thirty years in between (Les Disques Victo)

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Jaimie Branch/Dave Rempis/Ingebrigt Håker Flaten/ Tollef Østvang (Aerophonc)
Tour Beats Vol. 1

Antelope (International Anthem)

Zurich Concert

Dave Gisler Trio (with Jaimie Branch) (Intakt)

by Phil Freeman

Trumpeter Jaimie Branch was around for quite a while before breaking out with 2017’s Fly or Die; her earliest recorded credits came from nearly 15 years before that in her longtime home of Chicago. Now that she’s reached a level of prominence within the global jazz avant garde, though, her appearances merit front-cover billing and on two of these three albums, she delivers the kind of star turn people (fairly or not) expect these days.

Triplet/Dubbel, a fully improvised 40-minute performance recorded in Antwerp, Belgium, features two Americans—Branch and alto/tenor saxophonist Dave Rempis—and two Norwegians, bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten and drummer Tollef Østvang. Though Branch and Rempis have known each other and played together since 2005, this is their first recorded appearance. The piece, “Night Into Day (Into Night),” is a slowly shifting journey, which allows both horns to unfurl their banners fully, without ever dovelling into total blare; there’s a moment about ten minutes in when Rempis’ honking, R&B-style alto solo is augmented by Branch’s sudden appearance beside him, offering New Breed-meets-Wayne Shorter mood; equally catchy “Saudade”, which flaunts the easy exchange between he and Thomas; and similarly interactive “Part 4. Guarded Heart”. The leader shines brightest on aforementioned “Warriors”; “Ferguson - An American Tradition”, where he integrates subtle tonal colors into his bebop-laden lines; “Mary Turner - An American Tradition”, Ornette Coleman-inspired tone dancing over an AfroCuban groove; “Guarded Heart”, channeling full-throttle, mid- (John) Coltrane-style blowing; and the closing title track, an exciting yodeling effect created by juxtaposing the high and low ranges of his horn.

Admirable for its continuous flow from beginning to end, Omega offers listeners an immersive, alpha wave-inducing experience. For more information, visit bluenote.com. Wilkins live-streams Jan. 20th at barbayeux.com.

For more information, visit aerophonicrecords.com, itltlanthem.bandcamp.com and intaktrec.ch. Branch live-streams Jan. 5th at artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html and Jan. 22nd at kerrypointconcerthouse.com/edgefest.

Immanuel Wilkins (Blue Note)
by Tom Greenland

Alto saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins, who moved from Philadelphia five years ago to earn his Bachelor’s Degree at Juilliard, has already carved a respectable niche for himself as a sideman on the local scene. For Omega, his debut as a leader, he enlisted his four-year working quartet of pianist Micah Thomas, bassist Daryl Johns and drummer Kewku Sumbry. The upshot is a remarkably seasoned work for an inaugural effort.

Wilkins’ playing reveals a strong grounding in bebop vocabulary, but he is also clearly concerned with the nuances of timbre, producing a broad, warm tone. Thomas is an ecletic stylist who works with abstract concepts, playing around the beat as much as he plays along with it, an agile accompanist and foil for Wilkins. Johns plays a mostly supportive role—both he and Sumbry are mixed down, underlining their presence somewhat—but has some bright moments in “The Dreamer” and “Part 1. The Key” while Sumbry shines on “Part 2. Saudade” and “Part 3. Eulogy”.

Some of Wilkins’ best writing is heard on whimsical opener “Warriors”, which finds him in a robust Michael Brecker-meets-Wayne Shorter mood; equally catchy “Saudade”, which flaunts the easy exchange between he and Thomas; and similarly interactive “Part 4. Guarded Heart”. The leader shines brightest on aforementioned “Warriors”; “Ferguson - An American Tradition”, where he integrates subtle tonal colors into his bebop-laden lines; “Mary Turner - An American Tradition”, Ornette Coleman-inspired tone dancing over an AfroCuban groove; “Guarded Heart”, channeling full-throttle, mid-(John) Coltrane-style blowing; and the closing title track, an exciting yodeling effect created by juxtaposing the high and low ranges of his horn.

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“The Ripple” refers to the widespread influence Lester Young had on modern jazz. To prove the point, Jeff Rupert and George Garzone do not showcase any of Young’s compositions or even tunes recorded by him but instead assembled a repertoire of tunes written and/or executed by musicians influenced by him. The list is long and includes modern giants such as Stan Getz, Wayne Shorter and Joe Henderson.

While the Lee Konitz/Warne Marsh quintet may come across as a natural reference, given the contrapuntal dialogue between the two saxophones, it is Young’s sound and style filtered through Stan Getz’ experience that dominates the proceedings. This is more evident in Rupert’s supple phrasing and sound (his “Go-Go” being a clear example), whereas Garzone is more of his own man and occasionally pushes the envelope, as in Hoagy Carmichael’s “Stardust”. The group is rounded out by the very congenial trio of Richard Drexler (piano), Jeremy Allen (bass) and Marty Morrell (drums). Although the brunt of the solos are carried by the co-leaders, Drexler has his fair share of solos delivered with impeccable taste. Allen and Morrell could not provide a more relaxed and hard-swinging anchor. The former’s solo in Ben Kynard-Lionel Hampton’s “Red Top” is not to be missed. Rupert’s three inspired originals, aforementioned “Go-Go”, “Hoboken” and “Beauty Becomes Her”, capture particularly well the Young/Getz legacy and atmosphere. The other tunes are all well-known standards, but Rupert and Garzone’s interpretations are as fresh as they were playing them for the very first time. Among the highlights are lovely versions of the ballads “The Shadow of Your Smile” (Johnny Mandel-Paul Francis Webster) and “Detour Ahead” (Herb Ellis-Taylor (Trio Version)) electronic static and grinding sounds of the Merzbow/malfunctioning dial-up modem type seem almost to bury trumpet in washes of distortion and piercing test tones.

The final track, “Interior”, is the shortest and the most conventionally beautiful. It’s a duet for violin and keyboards, Swift holding incredibly long high notes until they begin to shiver in the air like feedback. Meanwhile, Stabinsky plays gentle electric piano-like figures, taking the album out on an almost romantic note.

For more information, visit peterevasmusic.bandcamp.com. Evans live-streams Jan. 28th at roulette.org.

**The Ripple**

**Jeff Rupert/George Garzone (Rupe Media)**

by Marco Cangiano

**The Ripple**

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For more information, visit facebook.com/jeffrupert sax. Garzone live-streams Jan. 27th at harbayears.com.

**Horizons**

Peter Evans Ensemble (More Is More) by Phil Freeman

Trumpeter Peter Evans has been working with violinist Mason Swift, synth player Ron Stabinsky and percussionist Levy Lorenzo, who also contributes electronic sounds, since 2018. This album encompasses seven compositions they’ve been workshopping and performing, all of which break any stylistic boundaries within which one may care to confine them: not exactly jazz, but too much fun to be “modern composition” or “new music” and at times they almost rock.

The title track makes an ominous opener, with low sustained horn growls and violin introducing it as Lorenzo plays a comb pattern that’s like some sort of ritual being called to order. When he moves to what sounds like a floor tom and Evans and Swift begin improvising simultaneously, the energy level jumps even higher. On “Caves of the Mind”, there’s a thrilling moment where piccolo trumpet rises thrilling over Tony Oxley-ish toms, after which the whole thing erupts. Synth zaps bring to mind Pere Ubu while violin is dark and Balkan and the percussion goes from tense to explosive. There’s another surprise at the end, when Evans manages to make the trumpet sound like a whining horse. “Passing Through” begins with a unison melody, trumpet mirrored by violin and echoed by fuzzy synth; the effect is as if the two organic instruments were too closely mic’d and are now distorting slightly. On “Homo Ludens” (for Cecil Taylor (Trio Version)), electronic static and grinding sounds of the Merzbow/malfunctioning dial-up modem type seem almost to bury trumpet in washes of distortion and piercing test tones.

The final track, “Interior”, is the shortest and the most conventionally beautiful. It’s a duet for violin and keyboards, Swift holding incredibly long high notes until they begin to shiver in the air like feedback. Meanwhile, Stabinsky plays gentle electric piano-like figures, taking the album out on an almost romantic note.

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**What Comes Next?**

Peter Bernstein (Smoke Sessions) by Jim Motavalli

Guitarist Peter Bernstein didn’t lead a date until 1994, when he was 27, but since then he’s been extremely prolific, with over two dozen releases. This new album exudes a relaxed, peaceful feel, belying the fact it was recorded in June 2020 under pandemic restrictions. Six tunes are Bernstein’s, complemented by one each from Carl Fischer/Frankie Laine, Dizzy Gillespie and— a real find—Sonny Rollins. The latter’s “Newark News”, a calypso in the style of “St. Thomas”, was never recorded by the master himself. Bernstein’s band is pianist Sullivan Fortner, bassist Peter Washington, a frequent collaborator, and drummer Joe Farnsworth. The album follows a simple format: tasty head, solos by Bernstein, Fortner, who makes major lyrical contributions, and (often) Washington’s more surreal side. Shorter’s “Lester Left Town” is a statement to its composer and influence—how long before a similar CD is put together about Shorter’s legacy? The CD is aptly concluded by an impromptu duet between the saxophones, meandering through Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz’ “‘Alone Together’. The ripple will linger for quite a while in the listeners’ ears.

For more information, visit facebook.com/jeffrupert sax. Garzone live-streams Jan. 27th at harbayears.com.

**On Screen**

Billie (Verve/Um) by Russ Musto

A compelling biopic, **Billie** chronicles the enigmatic life of Billie Holiday in stark detail. Combining Holiday’s words (culled from her few existing radio and TV interviews) with recollections of those who knew her, recorded by would-be biographer Linda Lipsack Kuehl (whose life and purported suicide is also touched upon in the film), along with video excerpts and photos of performances, writer-director James Erskine has woven together an engaging narrative that is both insightful and diverting cinema.

Holiday is first seen mid-career, gowned and smiling coyly, singing “Now or Never” with the Count Basie band before we hear the voice of actress Sylvia Syms asserting, “I saw the whole world in that face; all of the beauty and all of the misery. Billie Holiday sang only truth. She knew nothing else.” Segueing to “God Bless The Child” we hear Holiday herself declaring, “The things I sing have to be something that I have to have something to do with me and my life and my friends’ lives. They have meaning.” And there is the thematic thread that ties together her story.

A cousin tells of Holiday’s early days in Baltimore, which included her prostituting herself to survive before arriving in New York as a teenager and finding out she could make money singing. John Hammond notes her vocalizing “as an improvising horn player” like Louis Armstrong, with whom she’s seen singing “The Blues Are Brewin”. The movie delves deeply into Holiday’s real-life blues, detailing abusive relationships with men and persecution for drug use, worsening with the growing notoriety that came with her recording of “Strange Fruit”, the chilling Civil Rights anthem that prompted Charles Mingus to note “she was fighting for equality before Martin Luther King” and Papa Jo Jones and Art Blakey to expound on her struggles touring the Jim Crow South.

Much of the footage depicting Holiday has been colorized, a source of some criticism, but it can be said that in doing so the film takes her out of the shadowy past, placing her brightly in the present, making the emotion and humanity of her tragic death at 44, handcuffed to a hospital bed, all the more relevant to modern issues of racism, addiction and incarceration.

Holiday-related live-streams take place Jan. 10th and 24th at 92y.org/billieholiday.aspx.
The phenomenon of the one-man-band recording in jazz can be traced back to at least the Swing Era, when Sidney Bechet recorded on reeds and all the rhythm section instruments on an experiment with overdubbing for “Sheik of Araby”. But the practice is rare in jazz, more common in rock. This Chris Potter album may change that. It transcends the gimmick to produce a rich, original tapestry of sounds that articulate intricacies like a baroque chamber suite. Beside writing all the music and playing all the reeds—saxophones, flutes, clarinets—Potter, who turns 50 this month, also, through overdubbing, plays all the rhythm instruments, from piano and keyboards to guitars, electric bass, drums and percussion, plus manipulating sound samples. The results are not only surprisingly listenable, but also one of Potter’s most accessible albums.

Although Potter solos most often on tenor, eschewing ‘out’ phrasing for hard-driving grooves, he also solos on all his other reeds, most notably a lovely clarinet on the ballad “Rest Your Head” and emphatic bass clarinet statements on at least four of the ten tracks. Anchoring most of the pieces with bass guitar, Potter varies tempo and meter, but most creatively invents different ensemble sounds, from the low-end reeds on the walking tempo “Like A Memory” to the piano-keyboard-organ weaving with flutes and saxophones on the power ballad “Oh So Many Stars”. On “Drop Your Anchor Down” he puts a hand-drum shuffle under a bass clarinet lead, adding keyboard behind a lyrical guitar solo. The most impressive arrangement is “Beneath the Waves”, beginning with spacey electric bass clarinet lead, adding keyboard behind a lyrical guitar solo. The most impressive arrangement is “Beneath the Waves”, beginning with spacey electric bass clarinet lead, adding keyboard behind a lyrical guitar solo. The most impressive arrangement is “Beneath the Waves”, beginning with spacey electric bass clarinet lead, adding keyboard behind a lyrical guitar solo.

For more information, visit editionrecords.com
The last several years have witnessed an explosion of activity from Brazilian saxophonist Ivo Perelman, who turns 60 this month. His winning musicianship, relentless efforts to expand the reach of the tenor and numerous recordings, often with his sometimes alter-ego, pianist Matthew Shipp, have catapulted him to the front ranks of the world’s free improvisers. What makes this more impressive is that Perelman seems to enjoy an uncanny ability to reinvent himself and, over the decades, has varied his style and approach remarkably, exploring and testing strategies and shifting and evolving from a fire-breather immersed in the extremes of the ’50s to a subtle, sophisticated performer who combines a uniquely personal approach to his horn while absorbing and redirecting his formidable energy.

The recordings reviewed here are the latest in his continually growing discography, offering a glimpse at some new directions. Ultimately, the question must be asked: is Perelman a revolutionary, striking new chords that energize and even electrify an existing tradition, or is his approach one that conserves and expands?

The album Amalgam features jazz guitarist Hank Roberts on cello and Mark Feldman on violin, which has not recorded together in decades, Perelman sounding so natural, the trio easily becomes a cello, blending in to the strings are just as effective when pursuing dense, slow tempos, as on the second track, or when they show off their shimmering beauty with sliding glissandos on the third. You could even say the heavens open, as there are stints of pizzicato, of squeaky high pitches and much, much more. The results are simply exquisite, making this a clear choice as one of the best recordings of 2020.

For more information, visit mahakalamusic.com, taoforms.bandcamp.com and forecords.net

Ivo Perelman

Matthew Shipp (Mahakala Music)

Garden of Jewels

Garden of Jewels

Amalgam

Ivo Perelman

Deep Resonance

Deep Resonance

Ivo Perelman

Arca
d

Tao Forms

Tao Forms

Deep Resonance

Ivo Perelman

Arcado String Trio (Fundacja Stuchaj!)

by Steven Loewy

Many autobiographies are rife with boasts and score-settling. James Spaulding could have easily written such a book. His accomplishments are impressive and in more than five decades in jazz, the alto saxophonist/flutist has stared down numerous racists and scoundrels. His music, he writes, has given him a “unique understanding of the sufferings of my people.” Yet Spaulding’s memoir is a beneficial self-portrait of a resilient artist resolved to help younger musicians dodge the pitfalls of a hard-knock profession.

Well known for his versatile talents—he was part of both the Sun Ra Arkestra and played “straightahead bebop” alongside Freddie Hubbard and other stars—the 83-year-old was immersed in music from the start. His father, a jazz guitarist, bought five-year-old Spaulding a bugle. He formed a band at 11 and soon was playing alto and flute at teenage dances. After stints in the Army and music school, he secured a place in Sun Ra’s band. “Sunny,” he recalls, gave ample latitude: “Our conception was to not repeat the same idea twice.” Spaulding played on several Sun Ra albums, but “received very little in salary” —a common theme in this candid book.

He was with the David Murray Octet for more than a decade, worked often as a sideman and recorded as a leader several times. In Japan with Murray, autograph-hungry fans made him “feel more at home and appreciated than I have ever felt here in America.” Spaulding writes vividly about the stateside racism that forced him to “enter the white clubs through the back door.” Once, when leading a band, he “felt we would get more work if the leader was white” and so he gave top billing to a white trombonist. Some fellow Black musicians were understandably upset. The painful episode helped push him to “the verge of a nervous breakdown.”

Like many, Spaulding often worked for paltry pay and was deprived of his deserved royalties. Thus the closing section includes a detailed primer on contracts, copyright and “artists’ unions.” “I have worked as a professional musician in the land of my birth under some tough, uncomfortable and undesirable conditions,” he writes. This generous book exemplifies the grit required to make it in a demanding field.
Revisits the Goodman Years
Teddy Wilson Trio (Storyville)

by Ken Dryden

There was nothing flashy about pianist Teddy Wilson during his long career, a gifted swinger with a wide-ranging repertoire and strong technique that was recognizable within seconds. Wilson joined Benny Goodman’s trio, then gained even greater exposure in the clarinetist’s famous quartet with the addition of Lionel Hampton. The pianist left to lead his own big band and small groups in the ‘40s but continued to work with Goodman off and on for the rest of his life. This 1980 trio session in Copenhagen paired him with Danish bassist Jesper Lundgaard and expatriate American drummer Ed Thigpen, exploring various standards and obscure chestnuts he had played with Goodman, all impeccably swinging with his characteristic flourishes. Critics may have taken his skills for granted but pianists who followed him praised his subtle incorporation of stride into his left hand and use of tenths, in addition to the brilliance of his improvisations and inventive insertions of song quotes.

While Lundgaard was only in his mid 20s at the time of the recording, he provides superb support and solos with skill belying his tender years. Thigpen was a veteran, working with both the Oscar Peterson Trio and Tommy Flanagan. He is more subdued on this date, spending much of his time using brushes to keep the focus on the leader, though he is no slouch in the spotlight, especially with his snappy feature in Art Hickman’s “Rose Room”. It would be easy for such a seasoned pianist to fall back on time-tested arrangements, but he finds new approaches to these familiar works, with his breezy approaches to these familiar works, with his breezy and artistry could only be magnified, even as listeners incorporated guests to craft varying trios, its impact wasnt long, however, before an offer from impresario George Wein saw Brubeck teaming up with Gerry Mulligan (who died 25 years ago this month) for a tour of Mexico and a quartet rounded out by bassist Jack Six and drummer Alan Dawson would go on to make several records over the next five years. Compadres, the first bands from that tour and it is nice to see it back in circulation, for several reasons. It gave Brubeck the chance to keep a small group together on more of a part-time basis and continue working things out along familiar lines but with a different set of partners. For his part Mulligan was in a very different situation, having not kept anything steady going since the breakup of his marvelous Concert Jazz Band in 1964. The previous quartet had recorded two LP’s of music that very special live material in Mexico in 1967, one of which featured Mexican traditional and pop material, but originals by Brubeck and Mulligan dominate Compadres. These range from “Jumping Bean”, a Mulligan opus with plenty of hot sauce that became a staple for this band, to Brubeck’s delicate ballad “Tender Woman”, to which he did not return, oddly. Another worthy Brubeck contribution is “Indian Song”, based on a simple folk tune and featuring a long solo by Dawson, as great in his way as Morello was in his (Booker Ervin and Jaki Byard fans know). The two Mexican pop standards, “Adios, Mariquita Linda” and “Amapola”, are also standout. On the latter Brubeck and Mulligan demonstrate that these “Trio style” icons could really crank up the heat when needed while Dawson drives things brilliantly. One feels that Mulligan and Brubeck were rediscovering basic pleasures of jazz on Compadres, things that their fans will want to rediscover, as well.
Anthony Braxton is an artist of duration, each recent year bringing another epic to light, whether it’s a full-length opera like *Trillium J* (3 CDs), the * Sextet (Parker) 1993 (11) or the GTM (Syntax) 2017 choir recordings (12). He’s equally at home with density: consider the JazzFest Berlin six-hour, 60-musician *Sonique Genoma* or *Composition 376* in the Echo Echo Mirror House Music series with its 15 musicians playing Braxton recordings from mp3 players as well as their own instruments.

For all that, there’s never been anything quite like *Duo (Improv) 2017* with Eugene Chadbourne (who turns 67 this month). Each plays seven instruments here: Braxton covers soprano, soprano, alto, baritone, bass and contrabass saxophones as well as contrabass clarinet; Chadbourne plays a Gibson Marauder electric guitar, Gibson acoustic, bajo sexto (a 12-string member of the guitar family in the bass register), Deering 5-string banjo, Deering fretless 5-string banjo, Regal of the guitar family in the bass register), Deering 5-string banjo, Deering fretless 5-string banjo, Regal 5-string banjo and prepared guitar.

Between November 27th-30th, 2017, the two recorded two duets a day, working to the famous Braxton hourglass. They never exceed the hour but get close to it, wrapping up *Duo Improv 6* at the 59′46″ mark. The eight-CD box set is sold out at this point but remains available as a download, including an additional, shorter improvisation.

What distinguishes this is the purely improvised content and the intensity of the relationship, just two musicians inventing that much content. The music’s special quality comes out of the players’ differences and similarities. There are, of course, the contrasting backgrounds and references of the musicians: Braxton’s roots are AfroAmerican Chicago while Chadbourne’s are in the Carolinas. When Chadbourne sojourned in Canada in the ’70s, he was based in Alberta, Canada’s answer to Texas. While Braxton has occasionally paid tribute to Jini Hendrix, Captain Bitherto or Merle Haggard and even played with Wolf Eyes, his references belong largely to the worlds of jazz and classical music. Chadbourne, for his part, has adapted a Bach *Sonata and Partita* for five-string banjo, but his references are to Country & Western and Rockabilly, albeit delivered with a radical wit and musicality.

But there’s a wonderful empathy here, growing out of irony, anarchist aesthetics, elasticity and sheer virtuosic inventiveness, all made possible by the range and flexibility of each, one with reflexes forged in bop, the other in bluegrass. It’s easier to find analogues in literature than in music, whether it’s in classic American travelogues like Francis Parkman’s *The Oregon Trail* or Mark Twain’s *Life on the Mississippi*. Maybe it’s more like the ’70s and Chadbourne’s portrait of Braxton in the extended liner essay reveals the warmth and humor that they share: “I put on a reel to reel copy of my first volume of solo guitar music and clung on to every comment. I liked the way the shrill, my resin-coated palm made on the back of a page was gentle even ‘too much!’ for Braxton: ‘Now you are really freaking me out! You may have gone too far!’”

That warmth should be apparent to all here, as well as the invention, whether it’s at a blistering tempo with harmonics, or a contemplative확률 of saxophone air and banjo tapping near the conclusion of *Improv 3*. What may prove most striking is the sheer lyric beauty that the two can achieve on *Improv 5*, with interludes devoted to sonic exploration.

Though one will listen in whatever way one does, this isn’t a marathon, but rather a celebration of depth. Each of the extended improvisations takes its own exploratory path, a creative wandering through varied landscapes and shifting moods, from kinetic joy to somber reflection.

For more information, visit newbraxtonhouse.bandcamp.com

Song for Chico
Alvin Fielder/Damon Smith Duo
(Balance Point Acoustics)
by Robert Bush

Jazz is an artform that includes an obscene number of artists who can legitimately be described as “criminaly underrated” and when it comes to drummers, perhaps no one exemplifies that ideal more than the late Alvin Fielder, who died two years ago this month. He came to Chicago from Mississippi in the early ’60s and ended up as a charter member of the AACM, appearing most notably on Roscoe Mitchell’s volcanic Delmark debut *Sound* in 1966. He had a parallel career as a pharmacist and he was drawn back to his hometown to help mind the family business even while creating lasting relationships with folks like Kidd Jordan, Charles Brackeen and Joel Futterman. He also began playing with contrabass firebrand Damon Smith back in 2010 in bands led by Frode Gjerstad and Joe McPhee.

Song for Chico is just Fielder and Smith on a program balancing three free improvisations against three loosely structured tunes: the title piece (dedicated to Chico Hamilton), “Roots” (dedicated to Johnny Dyani) and “Variations on a theme by Cecil Taylor”.

There’s an exquisite sense of push and pull. Fielder acts as the master traditionalist, coming out of the Max Roach/Ed Blackwell continuum, while Smith operates from a considerably more modern perspective (he was a student of Lisle Ellis.) The tension between those two poles makes for consistently exciting music — and they obviously have a wealth of shared experience upon which to draw.

Smith has a huge, woody sound and concentrates much of his explorations on the lower end of the sonic spectrum. His arco is rich and his pizzicato is dark and grainy. Fielder is a marvel, his work with brushes alone is worth the price of admission. There were times when the work of Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones came to mind: think “The Drum Thing” from *Crucifix*.

Smith opens “Roots” with convulsive ponticello bowing toggling against resonant pulls on the E string, setting up a vamp of considerable gravity while Fielder counters with pliant soft mallets and hissing hi-hats for one of the disc’s most illuminative moments.

For more information, visit balancepointacoustics.com

These two concert recordings — 11 years apart — document bassist Charles Mingus’ last band to feature multi-reed wind player Eric Dolphy (1964) and his last working band (1975). At the 1964 concert, four of the six tracks run well over 20 minutes, one of them over 30 minutes. The 1975 tracks are shorter, with one half-hour-plus exception. Beside Dolphy, the 1964 band featured two other horns, trumpeter Don Byard and the eccentric saxophonist Wolpe, Coles and tenor saxophonist Clifford Jordan, plus pianist Jaki Byard and, like the 1975 band, was anchored by Mingus, who died 42 years ago this month, and drummer Danie Richmond. That 1975 band featured drummer Jack Walrath, tenor saxophonist George Adams and pianist Don Pullen. Those latter two co-led a quartet after their time with Mingus.

Mingus was always experimenting with and expanding on form in his pieces and the 1964 band was among his most expansive: Accelerando and decelerando, abrupt dynamic shifts, solos riding over rhythms only to fall into a cappella passages: All these are strategies on the 26-minute “Hope So Eric”, each soloist featured in those varied contexts, plus Mingus and Richmond dialoguing before Dolphy’s alto roars out over the final chords. The equally long “Meditations on Integration” displays another favorite Mingus ploy, beginning as a ballad, with Dolphy’s flute up front, then rolling into fast, swirling ensemble lines before solos running the gamut from ballad to hard-driving tempo, culminating in a feverish Dolphy bass clarinet solo before a return to ballad tempo with flute and arco bass leading the ensemble.

“Fables of Faubus” is the only composition played at both concerts and the contrast is striking. In 1964, Mingus and Richmond were justly renowned for their caustic anti-racist message carried by the burlesquing horn themes. Each musician cycles through the panoply of solo strategies heard on “Hope So Eric”, but Byard nails the ironies of the piece in conjuring up the ugly in “Yanky Doodle Dandy” and inspiration of “Lift Every Voice and Sing”. The 1975 band includes the mocking lyrics (“Name me someone who’s ridiculous! Governor Faubus”) and braying trumpet, but the solos are all over a constant, swing tempo.

The 1964 concert also included “Parkeriana”, Mingus’ pastiche of Charlie Parker tunes introducing solo forays, a piano solo referencing Fats Waller and Art Tatum and a “Sophisticated Lady” featuring pizzicato bass. In 1975, Walrath added variety to the trumpet chair with mutes, using them especially effectively on Sy Johnson’s meaty ballad “For Harry Carney”, also notable for precise, pointillist piano. Except for a kaleidoscopic “Sue’s Changes” running the dynamics and temps gamut, the 1975 tunes adhere to more or less steady rhythms and tempos.

“Duke Ellington’s Sound of Love” is lovely, a classic Ellington blues, effectively on Sy Johnson’s meaty ballad “For Harry Carney”, also notable for precise, pointillist piano. Except for a kaleidoscopic “Sue’s Changes” running the dynamics and temps gamut, the 1975 tunes adhere to more or less steady rhythms and tempos.

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At the end of a softly dramatic 20-minute improv by reedplayers Mats Gustafsson and Mikolaj Trzaska, tuba player Per-Åke Holmländer and bass guitarist Rafal Mazur and opening the second disc of the Not Two... but Twenty, an off-mic voice (Gustafsson?) exclaims with a laugh “We never play like that!” There’s a tinge of delight in his voice that encapsulates the buzz of a jazz festival. Much of the thrill comes with the discovery of unfamiliar players and opportunity to be among the first to hear new, sometimes one-off, groupings, exciting, in part, because it’s so ephemeral. The bands might carry on, but the festival gig is an exclusive. Occasionally, and fortunately, FOMO-counteracting compilations allow the rest of the huddled masses yearning to breathe free jazz a chance to experience those moments.

Not Two... but Twenty compiles performances from the 20th anniversary celebration of Not Two Records—held in 2018 in the small village of Wleń, Poland—onto five CDs housed in a handsomely crafted wooden box and the excitement of the festival is palpable. There’s plenty of the happenstance of spontaneous grouping and creation, but there’s also moments of the ingenuity sometimes demanded by circumstance. The remoteness of the old castle where the festival was held, for example, made obtaining a piano difficult, so we get the unusual opportunity to hear Agustí Fernández on an electric keyboard. It doesn’t slow him down and it’s fun to hear the choices he makes with the instrument’s limited dynamics. The set is bookended by a pair of short sets of audio vérité providing a nice “you were there” feel, even if you likely weren’t and even if the whole of the presentation is neither complete nor chronological. A beautiful 18-minute invocation by violinist Maya Homburger and bassist Barry Guy opens the first disc with works by György Kurtág, H.I.F. Biber and Guy’s own “Tales of Enchantment”. (Homburger returns later for a brief and beautiful solo set of Bach and another piece by Guy in the presence of a happily barking dog). The other bookend is a surprise coda for the weekend, an impromptu group improvisation led by label founder Marek Winiarski, who was handed a set of cue cards without warning or time to prepare. It’s less than 10 minutes of musicians rising to the occasion of a good-natured if shaky proposition.

There’s a full and wonderful disc featuring bassist Jöelle Léandre, building from a duo with Guy to a trio with Guy and drummer Zlatko Kaučič, then adding trombonist Steve Swell for a particularly satisfying foursome. Another quartet with Kaučič, Swell and reedplayer Ken Vandermark follows, then a sublime solo and resolving in a bass and reeds duet with Trzaska. A half-hour with saxophone master Peter Brötzmann and drummer Paal Nilssen-Love show the pair’s ease and familiarity within a shared spirit of exploration. The music moves easily between attack and restraint with varying moods and shifting reference points. (British scribe John Sharpe hears “Summertime” in the last of the three pieces, according to his lengthy liner notes; I didn’t catch that, but I did discern Brötzmann quoting Max Roach’s seminal “Driva Man” to resolve the piece.) Another exciting duo is delivered by saxophonists Gustafsson and Vandermark, morphing into a horn quartet with the addition of Swell and Holmländer. The collection is sequenced so nicely and the players so committed to the moment that it doesn’t come off as a respite from the rhythm section. It’s just an extension of the duet that flows in feeling into Fernández outfit with Mazur, Guy and Kaučič. It just feels right.

The festival was a fitting and much deserved celebration for one of Europe’s finer jazz labels and this collection is a fine favor for the rest of us. Winiarski has issued over 300 titles in his two decades of operation, with artists from Europe, America and Japan on the roster. The label was also responsible for the eight-disc Léandre retrospective A Woman’s Work from 2016 and, prior to that, four Vandermark boxes and a five-disc set by Guy. Thinking small wouldn’t seem to be Winiarski’s strong suit and we can only hope for more extravagances in the future. The set is advertised as a limited edition, but is still readily available at a relatively modest price. The one thing Not Two... but Twenty doesn’t offer is a view inside the castle, but some secrets must be saved, one supposes, for those who were actually in attendance.

For more information, nottwo.com
Does this influence your selection of the right people. It wasn’t a surprise, exactly, but sometimes you put things together in your mind and it doesn’t always come out that way in reality. But they showed up, they kicked ass and it was great.

TYNCRJ: What’s next for you?

EI: I expect to play quite a bit more solo piano eventually; that’s been coming along. A current commission is six formal sonatas for six virtuosos, which is going great. More formal composition is certainly in my future. The Billy Hart Quartet continues and we’re live-streaming at Dizzy’s Club to celebrate his 80th birthday. There’s also a wonderful singer named Marcy Harrelli who had a New Year’s Eve gig with last year doing music of Burt Bacharach and it was a huge success. Fortunately, there’s plenty to do. I’m blessed with a pretty sizable list of geniuses who are somehow willing to work with me.

TYNCRJ: What would you most like to see happen in jazz that hasn’t happened already—or, for that matter, hasn’t happened for a long time and should be revived?

EI: Composition is important. Instrumental virtuosity is important. The blues is really important. AfroCuban rhythm is important. Romantic harmony is important. Telling a story is important. When we hear the great jazz records of the ‘40s, ‘50s and ‘60s, it’s all in a pretty perfect balance. After John Coltrane passed away, we’ve had 50 years of great music, but it’s seldom been the whole package. I believe in inclusivity. There are so many elements of music and if you can get a passing grade in many of them, you can keep moving it forward. When I talk about Burt Bacharach in the same breath as Bud Powell, I don’t see them that differently in the sense that both are the very highest level composers within their respective genres.

For more information, visit ethaniverson.com. Iverson livestreams Jan. 29th at smallslive.com.

Recommended Listening:
- Ethan Iverson Trio—Deconstruction Zone (Standards) / Construction Zone (Originals) (Fresh Sound-New Talent, 1998)
- Billy Hart—Quartet (HighNote, 2005)
- Ethan Iverson/Albert “Tootie” Heath/Ben Street—Live at Smalls (smallslive.com, 2009)
- The Bad Plus—The Rite of Spring (Masterworks, 2013)
- Ethan Iverson—The Partly Of The Turf (Criss Cross, 2016)
- Mark Turner/Ethan Iverson—Temporary Kings (ECM, 2017)

(ENCORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Scott’s and as recently as 2019, they sold out concerts throughout Europe.

“Most bands don’t really play like their records sound, especially from the postbop era, but I sound like my records sound, not only that, I’ve got the same people…with Jean and Michael and Henry Franklin together, we’re the foundation of that sound. That’s some powerful stuff!”

Carn is compiling his songbook and while continuing to compose, he’s looking forward to life beyond the pandemic. “I’m not the kind of person that’s going to retire. I’ve got new music coming out and I’m playing better than ever.”

For more information, visit jazzisdead.com/doug-carn

Recommended Listening:
- Doug Carn—Adam’s Apple (Black Jazz, 1974)
- Cindy Blackman—Another Lifetime (Four Quarters Entertainment, 2005)
- Wallace Roney—Home (HighNote, 2010)
- Ali Shaheed Muhammad & Adriane Youngue / Doug Carn—Jazz Is Dead 5 (Jazz Is Dead, 2019)

(LEST WE FORGET CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

aspirin of the bartender, who readily complied. Noticing a pistol within the drawer, Winchester told the bartender of his prior law enforcement work and offered to show him a trick from the job. Winchester emptied the revolver of its cartridges, replacing several. He didn’t expect the chamber to load, but the model operated differently than his service weapon and, holding the gun to his temple, fired.

The end came as quickly as had his moment of celebrity and Lem Winchester stands eternal on jazz’ walk of shadows.

Recommended Listening:
- Patrolman Lem Winchester—New Faces at Newport (Metro Jazz-Verve, 1958)
- Lem Winchester and Ramsey Lewis Trio—Perform A Tribute to Clifford Brown (Argo, 1958)
- Lem Winchester and Benny Golson—Winchester Special (New Jazz, 1959)
- Lem Winchester—Another Opus (Prestige, 1960)
- Jack McDuff (with Jimmy Forrest)—Tough ‘Duff (Prestige, 1960)
- Lem Winchester Sextet (featuring Oliver Nelson)—Lem’s Beat (Prestige New Jazz, 1960)

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Altosaxophonist Lee Konitz was only 26 when he played the set at Boston’s Storyville club that would become this 10” LP but had already established himself under Claude Thornhill, Stan Kenton, Miles Davis and Bennie Tristano, plus his own dates as a leader. Four tunes, including one of the earliest appearances of his theme song “Subconscious Loo”, are with a band of pianist Ronnie Ball, bassist Percy Heath and drummer Al Levi, the former pair occasional sidemen in the “50s but the latter reuniting with Konitz in the mid ’70s.

The influence of pianist Thelonious Monk was international, even in cities in which he never performed, such as Argentina, capital Buenos Aires, where a club was named for him in 2002 and, decades earlier, this tribute was made by pianist Enrique Villegas and his trio with bassist Jorge López Ruiz and drummer Eduardo Casasal, all stalwarts of the South American country’s jazz scene. Only half of the date is in homage though, a medley of “Bemsha Swing”, “Round Midnight” and “Blue Monk”, Side B standards and Sonny Rollins’ “St. Thomas”. Sam Jones was one of a small but significant group of bassists who doubled on cello, joining peers like Charles Mingus and Ray Brown. Jones was an early inspiration for such heroes as Ron Carter. For this date, one of nine he made for Real, Steelechase and Muse in the ’70s, bass duties go to David Williams in a quintet completed by alto saxophonist Charles McPherson, pianist Barry Harris and drummer Billy Higgins on a set of standards, a tune by Higgins and two Jones tunes, including the apt “In Walked Raymond”, which appeared on Jones’ 1961 Riverside LP The Chant.

Tenor saxophonist Bill Barron’s repertory is hardly what you’d expect from a with a compelling leader discourse from the ’60s-80s, fruitful partnership with trumpeter Ted Curson from the ’60s and work with Charles Mingus, Cecil Taylor, Philly Joe Jones and others, especially compared with his pianist younger brother Kenny, who appears on this, the elder Barron’s last album (he died 8 months later at 62). The younger Barron’s last album is for the Latin label Miguem, as a late-period ensemble saxophonist Bill Barron’s

While known for his longstanding partnership with Dave Liebman, a facet of pianist Richie Beirach going back almost as far as is solo performance. He began recording in this format back in the mid ’70s and has released well over a dozen solo albums since the 1975 ECM date Hubris. For the 199th volume of Concord’s Mayhew Recital Hall series, Beirach plays a 10-song program of almost exclusively originals, most appearing on his other albums, closing the concert with the solo original, the title track from his 1979 ECM trio set Elm.

### CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

1. Bassist from a city in Vermont?
2. Bassist from a city in Connecticut?
3. 1968-69 Duke Pearson Blue Note album ______ Care Who Knows It
4. With Out, Adam Kolker tune that needs to make up its mind
5. Late ’30s British clarinetist Jack
6. Vocalist Fort, singer to pianist Anat
7. Vocalist from a city in Nebraska?
8. Vocalist from a city in Indiana?
9. Vocalist from a city in Texas?
10. 1968-69 Duke Pearson Blue Note album ______ Care Who Knows It
11. By Andrey Henkin
12. Litl David Bilson 1969-89
13. Through, the 2007 Joe Fiedler Clean Feed album
14. South African pianist Nomusa to his friends
15. Australian trumpeter Malat
16. You’ll need this airport code to see the Rivers Cities Jazz Band
17. Label releasing tapes by Grid, Subtle Degrees and Battle Trance
18. Cuz, needed when visiting Melissa Aldana’s birthplace
19. Vocalist, playback made by Pat Metheny
20. Bebop band with George Czarone, Antonio Sanchez and others
21. Abeat Records Quartet
22. Innerhythmic Records catalogue prefix
23. Anthony Braxton, Centric Foundation
24. At the heart of drummer Pietro?
25. Noble trumpeter Ernie
26. Jazz critic from the ’70s
27. Jean-Polish with a single LP on Future
28. Given name of AACM reedplayer Wallace McMillan

**DOWN**

1. Swing Era big band leader Henry
2. Bassist from a city in Texas?
3. Bassist from a city in Indiana?
4. “It’s a Mystery”
5. Like a many a touring oboist.
6. RareNoise Records catalogue prefix
7. 1975 Alice Coltrane Wintner Bros. album, Dusty
8. He was somewhat responsible for the Atomic Basie album cover
9. Instr. of 13 Across
10. Italian pianist Enrico
11. Label co-founded by John John and Mike Westbrook in 1973
12. Bassist from a city in Nebraska?
13. Like a many a touring oboist.
14. The Art Ensemble of Chicago, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, his own album of 1994
15. Garcia Regina Carter, Ginger Baker, Klithen Battle and Cesaria Evora
16. As a late-period member of World Saxophone Quartet, or on his own album for DIW, Atlantic, Columbia, Warner Bros., Half Note and Enigma. M4I
17. 32. Dave Brubeck was charged with being this during World War II
18. Brazilian trumpeter Virtuoso
19. While this is a bit of a keepsake tag, in Carter’s case the overused term is an accurate one. He has demonstrated that he can play practically anything at an astonishing level since his 194, whether as part of The Tough Young Band, as a late-period member of World Saxophone Quartet, or on his own album for DIW, Atlantic, Columbia, Warner Bros., Half Note and Enigma. M4I