

FEBRUARY 2021—ISSUE 226

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO THE NYC JAZZ SCENE

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DIGITAL  
ONLY  
EDITION

# THE NEW YORK JAZZ RECORD

**RALPH  
PETERSON**  
*ONWARD &  
UPWARD*

BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH  
ISSUE

LARRY  
ROLAND

LUKE  
STEWART

HENRY  
FRANKLIN

HARRY  
BECKETT

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# THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

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*2021 was supposed to be different. We'd waited all year for 2020 to pass, to turn the calendar page on a pandemic, on a toxic presidency, on a divisive society. That New Year's optimism didn't even last a week. On Jan. 6th, a riotous, bloodthirsty mob attacked the U.S. Capitol building during the certification of the presidential election. Lives were lost and federal property was damaged but, perhaps most significantly, Newt Gingrich's notion of American exceptionalism finally was buried in the cemetery of other ridiculous political notions. Of course, former president Trump, whose supporters they were, endorsed them after exhorting them to commit said violence: "We Love You. You Are Special". This is the same man – the term used technically – who called Black Lives Matters protesters "thugs" and threatened them with the most "vicious dogs and most ominous weapons."*

*There is no question that he meant what he said and had the protesters been people of color, we would have still be counting the bodies and identifying the dead. That is the stain that Trump leaves on this country, yet the reality of racial injustice in this country both long predates him and will long outlive him. As we come to February and our Black History Month issue, the idea that racism, police brutality and two justice systems are not history but, instead, the present and future. False equivalence between protesters scared for their lives as motorists or average citizens and those whose sense of privilege and entitlement has been stoked to the point of rampage will continue. Trump, his minions and the next violent demagogue to try to take his mantle will make sure of that, no matter what year it may be. Just like every day should be Earth Day, Black History needs more than one month a year to be woven into this country's heritage so that perhaps some day to be Black in America is not to be second-class or a target or a victim of political opportunism.*

*While the Arts can only do so much, it can help to humanize the other, to create empathy and educate on the plights and successes of those different than us. With that in mind, we dedicate this issue's features and a front-loaded Album Reviews section (pgs. 12-19) to a wide array of Black artists, of various ages, backgrounds and experience, celebrating their contributions not only to jazz specifically but to the societal fabric, one whose myriad holes are in need of darning.*

On The Cover: Ralph Peterson (photo by Dave Green)

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# RALPH PETERSON

## ONWARD & UPWARD

BY RUSS MUSTO

"All of my music is an expression of the AfroAmerican experience on some level, if none other than my own," Ralph Peterson declares from his Massachusetts home on the eve of the Martin Luther King Day holiday. Born in Pleasantville, NJ on May 20th, 1962 into a musical family (both his father and grandfather were drummers), Peterson started out on the drums before the age of five, soon adding trumpet to his practice regimen, performing on both throughout high school and in the jazz program at Rutgers University.

Peterson burst onto the jazz scene in the mid '80s, one of the quintessential "Young Lions" of the period, playing drums with the Blue Note Records-founded band Out of the Blue (OTB) and the quintet of Jazz Messenger alumni Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison. But, unlike many of his contemporaries, the drummer also performed with avant gardists like David Murray and Craig Harris. The drummer notes with a touch of irony the seeming incongruity of the lines on his résumé. "Terence and Donald and David Murray at the same time! Jon Faddis and Henry Threadgill at the same time! Craig Harris and OTB at the same time! It was a blessing, but at the time it almost seemed like a burden or a trap because I could never get all the way down with either camp."

Yet it was a similar quality that made Peterson a favorite with the two, at times warring, parties. Harrison says, "The thing about Ralph that makes him very unique is that he plays trumpet on such a high level that he understands the way a horn player thinks. So when you're playing with him he's playing drums, but he's living in two universes because he understands how you're formulating your ideas because he plays a horn so well. When I'm playing with him it's like one mind because he understands the phrases that I'm doing from a horn player's perspective and the drummer's perspective, so it gives you a lot of leeway to set up ideas in different ways." Clarinetist Don Byron, who's played with Peterson in both the Murray and Harris bands and in the drummer's Fo'Tet, as well as his own group, notes, "He's an intense guy who knows a lot about music. He can play trumpet, he can play some piano. He's like in the line of someone like Jack [DeJohnette], who really knows music away from the drums very well. We just always liked playing with each other. We could just kind of naturally play into what the other person was playing."

Peterson debuted as a bandleader with 1988's *V*, a quintet date with Blanchard, Steve Wilson, Geri Allen and Phil Bowler of six of the drummer's compositions. In the '90s he continued leading the quintet, recording a sophomore release of predominantly original music, *Volition*, then branching out with two new ensembles, his Fo'tet, a quartet showcasing Byron's clarinet and Bryan Carrott's vibraphone, and the trio *Triangular*, featuring Allen. At the same time he continued recording and performing as a first-call sideman with both veterans like Betty Carter, Stanley Cowell, Walter Davis, Jr., Jon Faddis, Charles Lloyd and Bobby Watson and younger players like Uri Caine, Orrin Evans, Roy Hargrove, Michelle Rosewoman and Mark Shim.

Unfortunately Peterson's career also succumbed to the dual temptations of alcohol and cocaine prevalent on the jazz scene, rendering him unemployable at times, as his habit, he confesses, escalated from "recreation to occupation." Now approaching 25 years of sobriety, he recalls his tenure with Carter at the beginning of his stage of renewed self-awareness. "I thought my ship had sailed. I thought I was too old to have gotten that opportunity to learn from Betty. I was 34 when I got the gig and I stayed for nine months and it was the greatest nine months of music in my entire life. To have been able to learn from Betty at that level of awareness, where everything she said didn't sound like she was speaking a foreign language. Like when she was teaching me to play brushes and didn't want me to sweep. She said, 'they're brushes, ain't they? So paint!' That opened up the door and the ballad took off."

Before Carter, Peterson learned from the other foremost mentor of that time, Art Blakey. Jazz Messenger tenor saxophonist Billy Pierce remembers one of the young drummer's early encounters with Blakey. "I think Terence had something to do with bringing him to Art. I just remember him being really enthusiastic. You could tell that he really wanted to play and that he was really happy and honored to be around Art, which was kind of nice." Peterson could be seen regularly hanging out around Art at New York venues like Sweet Basil, Mikell's and the Jazz Forum learning at the feet of the master. One night Blakey checked him out performing with the Harrison-Blanchard Quintet at the Universal Jazz Coalition loft and did him the honor of sitting in on his kit. Soon afterwards whenever the chief Messenger was asked who his favorite young drummers were, Peterson was at the top of the list.

Blakey's affection was expressed not only in words, but deeds. He drafted Peterson to fill the second drum chair in his Jazz Messengers Big Band at the Boston Globe Jazz Festival in 1983 and he continued with the ensemble at the Mt. Fuji Jazz Festival in Japan and other venues right up to Blakey's death in 1990. Peterson has honored the influence of his years with Blakey with the group Ralph Peterson and the Messenger Legacy. Its debut, *Legacy Alive*, on Peterson's Onyx Music, had an allstar cast of Blakey alumni—Pierce, Watson, Brian Lynch and Geoff Keezer—on 11 Messenger classics. Last year's *Onward & Upward* was even more ambitious: 11 original compositions and arrangements by a revolving cast of 17 different players, 14 of whom played in the Messengers.

Pierce, who appears on both albums, says of Peterson's playing, "It definitely feels like Art, more than anybody that I can think of right now. He loved Art so much and the influence Art had on him, it really shows up in the way he plays and the way he leads. He has the spirit of Art without a doubt." The saxophonist continues, "He's a fabulous drummer. He can play a lot of different styles in a lot of different settings and that's a flexibility that everyone doesn't have, but he certainly has. He is a complete musician,

he's a really great composer and arranger and obviously he can teach."

Pierce witnessed Peterson's prowess as an educator during his tenure at Berklee. "By then he had made the transformation to solid citizen and a mentor to so many young people. Over the years I've really come to admire that about Ralph because he really is a mentor to a lot of young students at Berklee and that's pretty admirable because you don't really have to do that. You can go to being a professor, but you won't necessarily be touching people and giving them the kind of influence and understanding of what is necessary and the kind of dedication that it takes. It's partially through his own example, but it's also because he can kind of break it down for them in terms of words, but it's always accompanied by actions. He really has established himself as quite a figure in terms of young people at Berklee in terms of going forward in the music, which is more than admirable. It's pretty great actually."

Peterson's Gen-Next Big Band's album *Listen Up!*, featuring a cast of young Berklee students, topped the 65th Annual *DownBeat* Critics Poll. The list of players that he has mentored includes not only drummers Kush Abadey, Johnathan Blake, Justin Faulkner, E.J. Strickland and Mark Whitfield, Jr., but also trumpeter Sean Jones, saxophonist Melissa Aldana and the Curtis Brothers—pianist Zaccai and bassist Luques—both of whom record regularly with the drummer, including on his forthcoming album. Peterson says of the date, which also features conguero Reinaldo DeJesus and guest vocalist Jazzmeia Horn, "The well of inspirations on this particular project is coming from none other than the legendary Hampton Hawes. *Raise Up Off Me* [the title of Hawes' autobiography] is what I'm calling this record because I believe as a society that's kind of exactly where we're at. We need this dude [the now former president] to raise up off of us, so we can get back to getting this virus to raise up off of us, so we can get back to being productive, making music and getting together and getting healthy and getting on with our lives." ❖

For more information, visit [ralphpetersonmusic.com](http://ralphpetersonmusic.com). Peterson live-streams Feb. 8th at [youtube.com/unhmusic](http://youtube.com/unhmusic) and Feb. 25th at [jazzatlincolncenter.squarespace.com/dizzys-club](http://jazzatlincolncenter.squarespace.com/dizzys-club).

#### Recommended Listening:

- Donald Harrison/Terence Blanchard – *Nascence* (CBS/Columbia, 1986)
- Ralph Peterson Trio (featuring Geri Allen) – *Triangular* (Blue Note, 1988)
- Ralph Peterson Fo'tet – *Ornettology* (Somethin' Else-Blue Note, 1990)
- Ralph Peterson – *Subliminal Seduction* (Criss Cross, 2001)
- Ralph Peterson's Unity Project – *Outer Reaches* (Onyx Music, 2010)
- Ralph Peterson & The Messenger Legacy – *Legacy Alive, Vol. 6 At The Side Door* (Onyx Music, 2018)

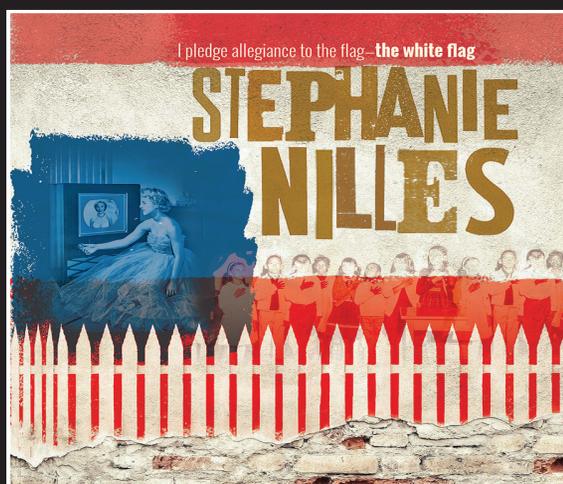


**DIEGO BARBER**

**DRAGO**

SSC 1614 - AVAILABLE 2/19/21

For his new recording, **Drago**, Barber departs from his recent focus on blending contemporary classical music and jazz to focus on electronic music, utilizing elements from both the classical and dancefloor models. A two-year long study of Logic music programming has led the fleet fingered string specialist to eschew the guitar for the most part to focus on composing pieces in a new and highly personal way.



**STEPHANIE NILLES**

**I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG - THE WHITE FLAG**

SSC 1606 - AVAILABLE 3/5/21

—“*Stephanie Nilles is possibly the most compelling jazz piano/lounge punk singer since Tom Waits started chain smoking and singing about sailors.*” *AudioSuede*

The voices of African American militants continue to ring in the vanguard's ears. One such musical example is the late, great bassist/composer Charles Mingus, whose music was vehemently charged with indignation concerning the rights of the down-trodden. His messages, both outright and nuanced, are touchstones for many musicians who choose to address these issues, including singer-songwriter/pianist Stephanie Nilles, who interprets Mingus's canon on her new recording, **I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG — THE WHITE FLAG**.



Sunnyside

[sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)

Although **Herbie Nichols** only released four records, he left a legacy of fervent devotees, including fellow pianist **Jason Moran**, who, in celebration of Nichols' 102nd birthday (Jan. 3rd), aired a rare 1962 interview of Nichols conducted by Mait Eady for the radio program *The Scope of Jazz*. Interlaced with cuts from Nichols' Blue Note albums—"Double Exposure", "Hangover Triangle", "House Party Starting", "Terpischore", adaptation of Mendelssohn's "The Spinning Song", "Wildflower", "The Third World" and George Gershwin's "Mine"—the program gave Moran's 100+ Facebook guests an opportunity to make real-time responses to the music by leaving comments in the chat menu. Having transcribed a chunk of the music himself, Moran was outspoken and articulate, remarking on Nichols' "register extremes" or praising his "melody forever and a day". During an especially inspiring passage on "Wildflower", however, even Moran seemed at a loss for words, but his response said it all: "Daaaaamn!!!!" As with any master's work, there is always something new to hear, so where one listener noticed an "Erroll Garner-ish" left hand, another praised the rhythmic "bounce", another the prevalence of hemiolas. It was a further revelation to hear Nichols' soft spoken but illuminating answers to Eady's prompts, providing context for his music. His beef with jazz critics? They should all have a music degree: "[T]here can be new worlds of criticism if the critics are more discerning." —*Tom Greenland*



Herbie Nichols

There aren't many jazz venues open for performance, especially with the resurgence of COVID-19 cases, and many are opting to play it safe with home-based concerts. But there's only so much musical mojo that can be cooked up in the privacy of one's studio, so it was inspiring to see guitarist **Mike Moreno** onstage at Bar Bayeux (Jan. 6th) with keyboardist Jon Cowherd, bassist Matt Penman and drummer Obed Calvaire. Unfortunately, safety precautions precluded a live audience, but the musicians' shared chemistry was tangible, even over a live-stream broadcast. Moreno's albums include many of his own tunes, so it wasn't surprising to hear him try out a few new, as yet untitled compositions: the sequentially melodic opener, which transitioned organically back to the head after a series of improvisations; a dreamy ballad with an arpeggiated theme; and "Becker" (written for Walter Becker of Steely Dan), a subdued piece enhanced by Moreno's lithe fretwork, showcasing his understated yet highly proficient technique and vivid imagination, especially at the song's end. Penman and Calvaire revved their collective rhythm up a notch for Dizzy Gillespie's bop standard "Woody 'n' You", taken uptempo with traded phrases and a drum solo near the finish line. The finale, Cowherd's "Crooked Creek", featured an agreeable melody written in 5/4 but sounding like a waltz, concluding with a quiet extended outro jam. It was as if the musicians, now that they had a chance to interact in real time, didn't want the gig to end. (TG)

For those with a taste for the avant garde, seasoned musician/composer **Joseph Daley's** "Colorations-Explorations" is quite the adventure. Daley has been firmly rooted in jazz, but his current effort is best described in the Minimalist tradition of Terry Riley, Steve Reich and others. The work was premiered in February 2020 live, but this iteration was recorded à la pandemic, with 23 musicians recording themselves separately in their homes. Added to the mix was visual enhancement--the insertion of many images from nature and otherwise, with the addition of quick cuts and other filmic tricks of the trade. For those whose tastes run to more traditional musical forms, the video approach enriched the experience by adding texture to the repetitive sounds and dissonant harmonic and chordal structure of the composition. What was most enlightening was the large collective that energetically and masterfully played "Colorations-Explorations". This group was Dance Clarinets, the adult woodwind ensemble of Greenwich House Music School, led by faculty member and clarinetist, JD Parran. Beside the common B-flat clarinet, there were at least ten different kinds of clarinet, with sub-variations in pitch, keyboard and bore. Hearing many of these variants played in itself was completely mesmerizing and enthralling. Add to that some creative touches by Warren Smith on vibraphone, percussion and gongs and the result, 34 minutes of sheer creativity, was truly fascinating. —*Marilyn Lester*



Warren Smith

Like many jazz instrumentalists who sing, **Paul Jost** has his vocal style informed by his years as a drummer, his delivery, scattling and phrasing intensely rhythmic. And, as that iconic commercial enthused, wait there's more! On top of superb musicality, Jost brings a huge quotient of passion to the table. He inhabits the music, deeply feeling every note and syllable he vocalizes. The man is a consummate storyteller and completely "woke". Streaming live from Brooklyn's Soapbox Gallery (Jan. 12th), Jost began his set with a monologue of poetic sensibility on recent tragic events at the Capitol building in DC, underscored by his trio; this morphed seamlessly into a parlando-like rendition of "If I Only Had a Brain" (Harold Arlen-Yip Harburg). Pianist Jim Ridl, bassist Dean Johnson and drummer Tim Horner are totally in sync with one another and Jost, so much so that through talent and empathy, they're gloriously in the pocket, their playing sharp, crisp and dynamic. Plus, Johnson is such an animated player, he's fun to watch, as on his solos during Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine" and on a surprisingly enhanced, rhythmic arrangement of John Lennon-Paul McCartney's "And I Love Her". Eclecticism ruled the day on this terrific set, with tunes and tempos from Luiz Bonfá's samba "The Gentle Rain" ("Chuva Delicada") to a swinging "Days of Wine and Roses" (Henry Mancini-Johnny Mercer) to Bob Dylan's folksy "Girl from the North Country" and much more, with Jost giving 1,000 percent every single time. (ML)

The closure of traditional performance venues due to pandemic restrictions has resulted in musicians taking matters into their own hands, establishing alternative settings in which they can reach audiences. The Underexposed live-streamed concert series hosted by bassist Desmond White in his Brooklyn basement has been doing just that. The 16th (Jan. 11th) edition of the Monday night sets had vibraphonist **Joel Ross** throwing down with his trio of bassist Ben Tiberio and drummer Craig Weinrib. The music began dramatically with an extended solo bass improvisation, which flowed into the familiar loping cadence of John Coltrane's "Equinox", Ross stretching out with deliberate melodicism. This segued into a swaggering rendition of Thelonious Monk's "Evidence", tagged with a coda dubbed "Dence", vibraphone laying down a rhythmic vamp over a martial drum beat. Impressionistic solo vibraphone prefaced the fittingly titled Ross original "Haunting", the composer's sustained notes evincing an ominous atmosphere on top of rumbling bass and drums. The mood brightened with the vibraphonist's melodically appealing "The Nurturer", a soulfully swinging outing, which was followed by his "Minor Joy", a rhythmic tour de force featuring Weinrib. Ross played the opening chorus of "Round Midnight" alone, before his partners joined in for a stirring version of the Monk standard. They then ended with a spirited blues referencing Bobby Timmons' classic "Moanin". —Russ Musto



Joel Ross

Volume 40 of *Live From Emmet's Place* had Emmet Cohen celebrating Martin Luther King Day (Jan. 18th) with a piano summit dedicated to the late **Cedar Walton**, commemorating his previous day's birthdate. The pianist-host kicked things off playing "Cedar's Blues", stretching out on the jaunty melody before giving way to Russell Hall's lyrical bass solo and rhythmic four-bar exchanges with drummer Kyle Poole. Walton cohort Joe Farnsworth came in on drums for Sam Jones' "Something In Common", Cohen hitting hard over walking bass and crisp snare accents. Julius Rodriguez took over at the piano for John Coltrane's "Naima", opening rhapsodically then grooving on the Latin-ish arrangement. Poole was back for Walton's pretty "Martha's Prize", after which pianist Mathis Picard came in for a bluesy medley of Burt Bacharach-Hal David's "This Guy's In Love With You" and Walton's "Groundwork". Cohen and Farnsworth returned for Harold Arlen-Yip Harburg's "Somewhere Over The Rainbow", dedicating it to the recently departed Junior Mance and Sammy Nestico. On a fiery mashup of "Firm Roots" and "Hindsight" Cohen began at a blazing tempo, escalating as Rodriguez and Picard and Farnsworth and Poole took turns, climaxing with all the pianists at the keyboard. Cohen dedicated "The Maestro" to Walton's widow Martha and Rodriguez played Lew Brown-Sammy Fain's "That Old Feeling". Then all were back to finish swinging hard on "The Theme". (RM)

A throbbing enthusiasm stood as a near entity unto itself as group interplay commanded the airwaves (Jan. 7th). Arts for Art's On\_Line Salon series welcomed the **Fay Victor** Chamber Trio, an ensemble carving the path of vocal artistry's role in contemporary music. Her voice is a rare instrument, matched only by her fortitude. Victor, alto saxophonist Darius Jones and cellist Marika Hughes tore through a set uniting free jazz, Aretha Franklin, spoken word, new music and postbop, swinging and grooving, sans drums and bass. And, as per usual, political action wasn't far off: "I'd like to dedicate this next piece," the vocalist stated, "to all of the Stepford Wives and Stepford Husbands," she said, introducing a work threading haunting alto, busy cello pizzicato and a modernist melody of slow leaps across the octave and beyond. Over the telling phrase, "I live in a dream state where all is perfect", Victor's larynx contortions teetered over the soprano summit before dragging haughtily across its sub-level, releasing guttural cries. Soon the three were engaging in three-part counterpoint and rapid call and response, drawing on the length of the jazz tradition. When not shaping the sound with warm arco, Hughes' pizzicato turned into walking bass, driving the group further, offering pivot points for the flights of the others. Jones' elegant vibrato, particularly in the opening segment of "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man", was utterly classic, sending Victor into highly memorable rhythm-and-ballad mode, bringing it on home. —John Pietaro



Fay Victor

With the brutality of riot aftermath still evident in the U.S. Capitol, as visions of extremists waving confederate flags on the Senate floor haunt, the climate was all too appropriate (Jan. 10th) to discuss Billie Holiday and the American reality. 92nd Street Y, partnering with WBGO, united vocalists **Cassandra Wilson**, **Dee Dee Bridgewater** and **Dianne Reeves** for the panel discussion "Exploring Billie's Influence", moderated by Christian McBride, part of the Y's series "Reaching for the Moon: An Explanation and Celebration of Billie Holiday". McBride described the panel as "all of this badness in one chat", speaking far short of hyperbole. The talk opened with the upcoming Holiday films, one documentary and one biopic; Bridgewater said it was important that both portray the subject as "a militant woman ahead of her time but a victim of her time, not the long-suffering drug-addled person." Delving deep into Holiday's style, Reeves clarified the relevance of her voice far beyond a vocal instrument, citing the visceral and experiential while Wilson dubbed it "jazz coloratura". McBride played recordings as a point of reference and once "Strange Fruit" arose, all fell into reflection. Reeves reminded us that Holiday was 24 at the time and died 20 years later, during which time she was hunted by a reactionary government. Wilson asked rhetorically about the foundations of racism: "Is it just hate or the need to control?", adding, "The plot is nefarious... 'Strange Fruit' is for everybody now." (JP)

## WHAT'S NEWS

**WBGO** is one of five jazz radio stations to partner with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation in the new initiative Jazz Media Lab, receiving grants of up to \$275,000 over three years to support "their involvement in the collective and supply them with core support and innovation capital... provide these stations with a peer network, support system and contracted resource team for exploring and advancing strategies to diversify their listening bases, invest in new media platforms, engage with venues and community organizations and establish meaningful relationships with jazz artists. In related news, the documentary *The WBGO Story...Bright Moments from Newark to the World* premieres at the NJ Film Festival, Thomas Edison Black Maria Film Festival and Garden State Film Festival. For more information, visit [wbgo.org](http://wbgo.org).

**Winter Jazzfest** will take place virtually in 2021, including panel discussions "Fertile Grounds" and "Jazz, Gender and Black Feminism: What We Can Learn", all streaming free to the public. For more information, visit [winterjazzfest.com](http://winterjazzfest.com).

To celebrate Black History Month, **Rhino Records** is releasing a limited edition colored vinyl series of classic albums throughout the month. Included will be: George Benson - *Breezin'*; Ray Charles - *The Best of Ray Charles: The Atlantic Years*; Rahsaan Roland Kirk - *The Case Of The Three Sided Dream*; and Nina Simone - *Folksy Nina + Blackbird*. For more information, visit [rhino.com](http://rhino.com).

Serbian trumpeter **Dusko Goykovich** received the Berklee Master of Global Jazz Award. For more information, visit [berklee.edu/berklee-now/news/berklee-awards-dusko-goykovich-with-master-of-global-jazz-award](http://berklee.edu/berklee-now/news/berklee-awards-dusko-goykovich-with-master-of-global-jazz-award).

Our own John Pietaro has inaugurated a bi-monthly radio show, **Jazz Just After Dark**, which will play music and feature interviews, airing at 6-8 pm on [MakerParkRadio.NYC](http://MakerParkRadio.NYC). This month's dates are Feb. 12th and 26th.

**Harlem Stage** has announced Eric Oberstein as new Managing Director and Pat Cruz as Artistic Director and Chief Executive Officer.

The 2021 GlobalFest has named **Drom's** Mehmet Dede and Serdar Ilhan as recipients of its Impact Award. For more information, visit [globalfest.org](http://globalfest.org).

**Roulette** has announced its 2021 Van Lier Fellows, which includes vocalist Charmaine Lee. She will present a commissioned work at Roulette in 2021. For more information, visit [roulette.org](http://roulette.org).

Catalytic Sound has announced **Catalytic Soundstream**, an artist-owned and curated, subscription-based streaming service that seeks to pay musicians fairly. It is accessible via the \$10 Streaming and \$30 Full membership tiers at [patreon.com/catalyticsound](http://patreon.com/catalyticsound).

Poland's **Jazztopad Festival**, in partnership with the Polish Cultural Institute New York, will present the following live-streaming concerts in February: Radek Nowicki Quartet (Feb. 13th at 2 pm) and Maniucha & Ksawery (Feb. 19th at 2 pm). For more information, visit [jazztopad.pl](http://jazztopad.pl).

**Queens Jazz OverGround** will present its Spring Jazz Festival streaming live from the waterfront in Long Island City on Tuesday evenings in February: Feb. 9th (Adam Hutcheson Quartet and Sharif Kales Quintet); Feb. 16th (Eugenia Choe Trio and Juan Felipe Mayorga Quartet); and Feb. 23rd (Hashem Assadullahi Quartet; Jennifer Wharton's Bonegasm). For more information, visit [culturelab.org/qjog](http://culturelab.org/qjog).

**Brooklyn Conservatory of Music** has announced an initiative of scholarships for students interested in its jazz studies programs: Amy Winehouse Jazz Explorers; Jazz Travelers; and Creative Music Ensemble. For more information, visit [bkcm.org](http://bkcm.org).

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PETER GANNUSHKIN/DOWNTOWNMUSIC.NET



# LARRY ROLAND

BY TYRAN GRILLO

Larry Roland is a poet of the bass and the pen with nearly four decades of professional experience across a variety of fields. After graduating from Boston University in 1973 with a BS in Education, he taught health and P.E. in the local public school system. He later earned a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Massachusetts. All the while, he was refining his poetic voice, drawing on everyday life around him to reflect on both individual and collective pasts and continues to do so in his current home of New York City. Along the way, he found kindred solace in the upright bass, alongside which he cut his teeth as part of the house band at Wally's in Boston's South End. After touring and recording with trumpeter Raphe Malik and founding the Urge 4Tet with pianist Donal Fox, he released his first album of solo bass and spoken word, *As Time Flows On*, in 2001. Next for him was the *Bassline Motion* project with dancer/choreographer Adrienne Hawkins, plus an acclaimed record with the Charles Gayle Trio, *Streets*, in 2011. Since 2012, he has been involved in *We Free StRINGS*, a free jazz ensemble intent on dismantling the ethos of Western musical paradigms. Most recently, he put out a book of poetry, *..Just Sayin'!!*, in 2019 and in 2020 was featured on the album *We Were Here* by The Jazz & Poetry Choir Collective, of which he is a former founding member.

**The New York City Jazz Record:** Can you tell me a little about those early days at Wally's?

**Larry Roland:** That was my school, man. We played bebop—no ballads—every night from 9 pm to 2 am. We had Roy Hargrove, Antonio Hart, Tommy Campbell, Billy Kilson...you name it. And there I was, somehow ending up as the bass player.

**TNYCJR:** On your solo album, *As Time Flows On*, you've got this track called "The Journey", which resonates deeply during this time of pandemic. In it, you talk about the "realization of being bound" and a "serious trek for truth". Regardless of what you're playing, does that spirit animate everything you do?

**LR:** You see, that's the bottom line. It's the spirit. In almost everything you see going on today, the spirit has been manipulated. It's missing. There's so much fear in the world that people start craving these parameters created by someone who has a title or what have you. I say no, man, I'm just writing this stuff up. When people started asking me to participate in these 'soirees' back in college, it was very interesting to me. I was able to check out the whole class thing. I would show up with my writings folded up in a brown paper bag stuck in my belt and people would say, 'Oh, you're here!' I'd read something and people would be floored, but to me, I was just talking about life. I wasn't there to be a token entertainer, but to educate. And then I'd be kicking it in my dorm—I was an athlete, you see, a ball player at Boston University—and would share something there, too. They thought it was deep. Being taken seriously off the court by guys I rubbed shoulders

with on it was important. It put a smile on my face, because academically I was struggling.

**TNYCJR:** How did you channel that energy at such a formative time into a professional life, as it were?

**LR:** People always tell me, you should be out there, man. I say, listen, I'm just satisfied being above the ground and having a few things to say. As far as getting caught up in the race, I'm not really sure on my feet like that. I didn't go to school to learn how to play bass or write. I went to very poor public schools. And that's fine with me. I try to keep it as raw as possible without really having to answer to anyone. If it resonates and touches someone, that's a blessing for me, because I'm just a conduit.

**TNYCJR:** Where and how does the music fit into all of this?

**LR:** I grew up in a household filled with Bird, Trane, Lee Morgan, Sonny Rollins, Yusef Lateef and Stravinsky. During that time, we still had a little record store on the corner where you could find all sorts of music. Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, Jack McDuff, I was inundated with all of that. Plus, my dad knew a lot of musicians. He and Roy Haynes were tight. So much so that my mom would get tired of seeing Roy's drums in the living room. "Put dem drums back in the hall!" she'd say. Around Christmastime, we would get these postcards from creative people all over the world. Every time I looked at them, I couldn't help but think, now that's freedom. Whenever people ask me about the most significant thing growing up that really helped shape my perception into who I am today, I always say it was the music. My dad knew these people: painters, musicians, intellectuals. They would meet in my house and break down stuff in ways I never experienced on the outside. They were all focused more on the qualitative than the quantitative. Some of the deepest stuff I heard was in my living room.

**TNYCJR:** In listening to your spoken word especially, I get this palpable sense that you're looking at history with clear and open eyes. Whereas the world may cut and repaste it into a different narrative, you're trying to get to the heart of it, in the same way a genealogist may draw up a family tree. How do you see yourself making a contribution?

**LR:** It all comes back to the spirit. People sometimes tell me, man, I've never seen anyone procrastinate as much as you; you should be doing this, that and the other. But I am doing it. You just don't see it. I'm always creating in my mind. I'm just not about trying to be up front with it and gain all the attention. This brother, Hasan Abdul-Karim, I play with sometimes—in his 80s and still blowing tenor—is really into astrology, so he offered to do my chart one time. He said, "I wish I had your stars. You don't even have to do anything. You're

linked to the universe. That's special. That's power. Spiritual power." So I walked with that. I try to stay what I call "naturonic". I try to move with nature. These days, I have a little mouse in my pantry. Most people would see him as a nuisance, but he's trying to live the same way we're trying to live. He's not trying to bring attention to himself. He respects my space and I respect his. The odds are against him. Maybe he's got a crevice behind the wall and maybe even a family he's bringing crumbs to. Maintaining that connection to the little things is how I've been able to move ahead and navigate the terrain. Just be as still as you can and your surroundings will speak to you.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

## The Gardenia Society



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# LUKE STEWART

BY JORDANNAH ELIZABETH

One day before the horrendously odious storming of the U.S. Capitol building by Trump supporters in Washington DC, bassist, composer, writer and activist Luke Stewart was readying himself for recording sessions in Philadelphia and New York City. His work ethic has been cited numerous times, an ability to release many records in short stretches of time across an extremely diverse repertoire of quality jazz, punk and improvised music. Because of his breadth of output, Stewart is able to explore the cyclical tides of American culture, which ebbs and flows between imminent danger and quieted socio-political seasons, which denote a deceptive existence of post-racialism. He's not a voyeur who lives solely in his inner world but interacts with the external resistance of peace and equality in America, attending protests and showing his disdain for right-wing extremism.

"It was surprisingly diverse," Stewart says of attendance of the first pro-Trump rally in Washington DC, where he marched as a counter-protester of Trump's followers and sinister cause some months ago. "But I won't be at [the protest] tomorrow because Irreversible Entanglements is recording." This knowing when to show up for his community and when to pivot his energy to create new music is what people respect in Stewart. He is a master of time management, flowing intuitively in and out of different projects without a regimented path of creating so many works. "It's the development of relationships and various initiatives, projects that might be in the works for years and they just happen to come out at a particular time. And while that's happening there's another thing brewing with other groups or my solo stuff. I've always cast my net wide."

His most recent album came out in Fall 2020, *Exposure Quintet*, a collection of his compositions in musical collaboration with Edward Wilkerson, Jr. and Ken Vandermark (reeds), Jim Baker (piano) and Avreeayl Ra (drums). *Exposure Quintet* is a set of themes and motifs determined by the mood and tone of the group's improvised pieces.

He's a member of the duo Blacks' Myths with drummer Warren G. "Trae" Crudup III, whom he also plays with in tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis' group. He's also a member of trumpeter Jaimie Branch's band and Heart of the Ghost with alto saxophonist Jarrett Gilgore and drummer Ian McColm. Most notably he is one-fifth of the effervescent Irreversible Entanglements with poet and composer Moor Mother, alto saxophonist Keir Neuringer, trumpeter Aquiles Navarro and drummer Tcheser Holmes. He's recently been awarded a residency at Brooklyn's Pioneer Works where he will compile and present his writing at the end of his time there. These are a small slice of Stewart's works in the last couple of years.

He attributes his ability to play with diverse bands to his early days in music. "In going back to my childhood, at the same time I was playing punk rock [with a group called] The Volatiles, which was a whole

experience in terms of high school, having that social cohesion around the creative process of a band and going to Detroit to spend time with my family and being into underground hip hop, that's really where the thirst for all kinds of music [and bands] really started."

As a force of nature and a productive cyclone, he errs to the side of peace more than leading the international jazz community with a demanding iron fist. He has very little entitlement while others fashion him as the builder, sustainer and protector of the DC jazz scene. While his music should always be recognized Stewart is also a writer and co-founder of the jazz-centered organization Capitalbop, which highlights DC-based jazz artists and, before COVID-19, curated live music events, creating a tightly woven source of expression and communion in Washington DC. His latest piece for Capitalbop's online publication is "The Legend of Yahya Abdul-Majid", where he ruminates on the Sun Ra Arkestra saxophonist's life and works, showing a side of Stewart that is astute and poignant.

In regards to the cycles of civil unrest that swirl around Stewart's personhood as he navigates throughout, he tries not to allow it to swallow his consciousness to where he becomes overwhelmed and unable to enact his several endeavors. Nonetheless, he's able to pull artistically from said cycles. "I find that there are a lot more loops in some of the [music] I've been working on personally. Perhaps that's a reflection of my recognizing the cycles that I've experienced and also, as a student of history, seeing the cycles and also seeing the historical developments that led us here, specifically the thought processes that lead a person or system to continuously make these attacks on oppressed communities."

All the while America's walls of systemic racism come crashing down upon itself, Stewart heads back and forth between different American cities (as much as the pandemic will allow) continuing to create much-needed music. As noted, he planted himself in Philadelphia to concentrate on a completely new body of work with Irreversible Entanglements, a band that has blown the tops of the stuffy traditionalism of jazz by taking the conversion of spoken word and free jazz, which was masterfully done by artists like Sun Ra and Gil Scott-Heron, and putting a woman in front to project her prophetic political musings to crashing, emotive, unique music. The next day, he embarked on a journey to New York City to record with frequent collaborators, Branch and Heru Shabaka-Ra.

Stewart is more than just a musician who is "on the go." He's omnipresent and fights the good fight by creating enough material to keep the jazz community dynamic. There's only so much one person can possibly do, but he seems to make the most of every moment of his creative life, the mantle of musical and civic responsibility, which, in turn, creates new life in the form of sonic experimentation and improvised exploration. ❖

For more information, visit [thelukestewart.com](http://thelukestewart.com). Stewart live-streams Feb. 19th and 16th at [artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html](http://artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html).

#### Recommended Listening:

- Irreversible Entanglements – *Eponymous* (International Anthem, 2015)
- Blacks' Myths – *Eponymous* (Atlantic Rhythms, 2018)
- Luke Stewart – *Exposure Quintet* (Astral Spirits, 2018)
- James Brandon Lewis – *An UnRuly Manifesto* (Relative Pitch, 2018)
- Archie Shepp, Raw Poetic, Damu The Fudgemunk – *Ocean Bridges* (Redefinition, 2019)
- Heroes Are Gang Leaders – *Artificial Happiness Button* (Ropeadope, 2019)



# HENRY FRANKLIN

BY ANDERS GRIFFEN

Henry Franklin has enjoyed a career as a prolific jazz bassist for over 60 years, performing with a range of artists including Freddie Hubbard, Hampton Hawes, Dexter Gordon, Gene Harris, Doug Carn, Archie Shepp, Willie Bobo, Blue Mitchell, Marcus Belgrave, Al Jarreau and Hugh Masekela, among many others. A native of Los Angeles, Franklin has lived there virtually his entire life and has always been surrounded by music. His father Sammy was a trumpet player who led a band called The California Rhythm Rascals. "There was always music. He had a couple rehearsals a week and when I got to be [a teenager] there was the radio all the time. We had a great jazz station, KLon [now KKJZ], at that time. My dad started me very early, at three or four years old, tap dancing, from there to the piano and then the clarinet and saxophone."

As a teenager, Franklin played baritone saxophone in the Los Angeles Police Department Junior Band. "That band was sponsored by the L.A.P.D. You got to meet musicians from around your age from all the different high schools and junior high schools and we would rehearse every week with the orchestra and do a couple parades a month. We played for all the public events [and did] the Rose Parade a couple times. It's a shame they don't have it anymore. It was really enlightening."

Although he was always taking lessons and playing an instrument, he was never really happy with it until he discovered the bass in high school. "I had a formal teacher from high school for a couple years and he taught me the legitimate side. I was in my early 20s when I would hang out with Al McKibbon a couple times a week and he would show me everything about the bass that he knew - he had it all covered: the Latin

side, the jazz side and he had the classical side too - he was very warm and very beautiful. David Dyson was a great bass player, he helped me quite a bit and George Morrow also."

Franklin started gigging pretty quickly, working with Roy Ayers while still in high school and then saxophonist Curtis Amy soon after. "Roy and I went to high school at the same time, [different schools] in what they called the Southern League. He started a band with a couple great players: Carl Burnett [drums] and Bill Henderson [piano]. That was from the last year in high school to about, I guess, two or three years after high school. Then Roy moved to New York with Herbie Mann, so that started his career off. Curtis was after Roy. I was about 21. That was really great because he was like the big jazz star in L.A. at the time and he was always working."

Willie Bobo heard Franklin in 1964 and bought him a ticket to New York. "For a young musician in L.A., that was their dream, you know? It's like, cats wait their turn to go. I was happy to get the call to go to New York with a big-time group and hanging out with Willie in New York City, that was amazing. I got to meet a lot of cats. We worked uptown quite a bit at Count Basie's and all the cats would come through there. Plus, you got to travel, it was a working band. So, I was elated." They worked New York and the East Coast and Franklin performed with Shepp in between, before Bobo's band made a West Coast appearance and Franklin decided to stay home. It just so happened that Masekela caught the band and practically hired Franklin on the spot. "That was so great, man. 'Cause I had put in my notice and Willie fired me too at the same time and in the audience Masekela came to me the next night, I think, and he offered me a job. We went out there almost four years, traveled around the world, made a lot of money and had a lot of fun."

Franklin performed with Masekela at the Monterey Pop Music Festival in 1967. "That was completely different for me [laughs] man, I was listening to Miles and Trane and Monk and I come to this festival, man, with millions of people and Otis Redding and Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix - I got to meet all of them - and people are going mad and everybody's getting

high and smoking weed and some people got clothes off. It's just a whole different scene." The following year Franklin had a number one single with Masekela called "Grazing in the Grass". "We moved on up, from coach to first class on everything...moving on up to better hotels and we did better gigs, more concerts, Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall, you know. I was 27, 28, on top of the world, man. It was big for a long time, then we went back to coach and back to cabs again [laughs] 'cause we never did get that second hit...to stay up there. It was a wonderful year."

Soon after Franklin joined pianist Gene Russell's trio, who became one of the founders and producers of the Black Jazz label. He also met Michael Carvin right around this time and they made their first European tour with Hawes and recorded a few albums. "Can't remember how I met Michael, but we became friends right away, started doing a few gigs around town together and then he moved into my house. Then I got a call to go with Hampton Hawes who needed a drummer so, of course, I recommended Michael. Hamp was very loose, he wanted us to express ourselves and he wanted the band to be loose. We stayed over there for three months. Playing with Hamp was very prestigious because Hamp was the man, you know? He knew all the musicians and all the musicians loved him and appreciated him."

Sometime between meeting Carvin and going to Europe with Hawes, Franklin met Carn. Franklin had recorded the first Black Jazz album with Russell, *New Direction*. Franklin and Carvin appeared on the label's third release, Carn's tour de force, *Infant Eyes*, before Franklin got to make his own. "I kept telling Gene I wanted to record my band, because we were working around L.A. quite a bit as a matter of fact. So, Gene said, 'Sure!' I got my favorite guys that I'd been working with for a year or so." Franklin released *The Skipper* in 1972 and *The Skipper at Home* in 1974. He went on to release about 23 more albums as a leader and has over 150 album credits.

In 1973, when the original The Three Sounds disbanded, Gene Harris started a new trio with Franklin and his old friend Carl Burnett. Since 2017

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

## LEST WE FORGET



# HARRY BECKETT

BY MONIQUE NGOZI NRI

By all accounts, Harry Beckett was a genial man and an extraordinary musician: a trumpeter's trumpeter with a distinct sound. Certainly, his discography's sheer size and range attest to the fact of his popularity with musicians from bassist Graham Collier, in whose bands he resided for more than 16 years, to the wonderfully named South African-rooted big band Brotherhood of Breath. He was a sought-after musician who played in many big bands including those led by Mike Westbrook, Barry Guy, Mike Gibbs, Alan Cohen and Pierre Dørge and was even on the original *Jesus Christ Superstar* recording in 1970.

Beckett was born in Bridgetown, St. Michael, Barbados on May 30th, 1935 and arrived in London when he was 19, having begun to play cornet in a Salvation Army band at home. When a new generation of jazz players sprang up, Beckett was there to mentor them, taking his place in Courtney Pine's Jazz Warriors in the late '80s. British Trumpeter Kevin G. Davy

recalls, "I feel fortunate to have heard Harry Beckett play the trumpet and, as a young aspirant trumpeter, I found him an encouraging force that many musicians looked up to on the U.K. jazz and improvised music scenes. He was widely regarded as a genius and innovator on the trumpet with his own individual voice, harmonic approach and phrasing."

One of Beckett's albums, *Joy Unlimited*, recorded in 1974 and released on Cadillac, has finally been reissued on CD and streaming platforms for the first time. If ever we were in need of the infectious sound of this music and band of the same name, it is now. Six songs, 40 minutes and 51 seconds of sublime departure from present-day realities.

Opening with the breathtaking "No Time for Hello", Beckett offers a melody that soars over the fast, funky rhythm section of bassist Darryl Runswick and drummer Nigel Morris, replete with Martin David's congas. The first solo by Beckett leans on the horn's upper registers while guitarist Ray Russell pulls the whole ensemble closer to jazz-rock and pianist Brian Miller pulls it back to the melody in the final section of the song. The track is just insistently joyous. "Glowing" and "Ring Within Rings" have a distinctly Caribbean feel, tracks to which you can actually dance around the room. While "Bracelets of Sound" showcasing Russell, has the languid pace of an afternoon on the beach. The short but beautiful ballad "Changes Are Still Happening", features Beckett and Russell in a haunting

duet, and closer "Not Just Tomorrow" are the more reflective, plaintive melodies on the CD.

John Thurlow, whose book *The Many Faces of Harry Beckett* was published in 2020, writes of the album. "Joy Unlimited was Harry's fourth solo album but the first in which he really found his own voice as a composer and a bandleader."

Beckett left the planet on Jul. 22nd, 2010, at the age of 75. In his own words, his legacy is good music. He is quoted on the original liner notes for the album by John Fordham as saying, "My happiest moments are when I'm playing and the important thing is that the guys should be playing it well, whatever it is." ❖

For more information, visit [cadillacrecords77.bandcamp.com/album/joy-unlimited](http://cadillacrecords77.bandcamp.com/album/joy-unlimited)

### Recommended Listening:

- Harry Beckett - *Flare Up* (Philips, 1970)
- Graham Collier Music (featuring Harry Beckett) - *Songs For My Father* (featuring Harry Beckett) (Fontana, 1970)
- Harry Beckett - *Joy Unlimited* (Cadillac, 1974)
- Johnny Dyani Quartet - *Angolian Cry* (SteepleChase, 1985)
- Harry Beckett - *Passion and Possession* (ITM, 1990)
- Harry Beckett - *Tribute to Charles Mingus* (West Wind, 1999)

# JAZZ IS DEAD

BY JIM MOTAVALLI

When hip-hop group A Tribe Called Quest made its second album, *The Low End Theory*, in 1991, jazz was prominent in the mix. And that expansiveness helped to create a whole new genre of alternative music. Today, the group's DJ and producer, Ali Shaheed Muhammad, is working with music producer and film scorer Adrian Younge to keep jazz alive via the new Jazz Is Dead label. Actually, says co-founder Dru Lojero, the Los Angeles-based Jazz Is Dead is more of a multi-media happening, combining the records with—COVID permitting—a record store, live shows and performance video.

The concerts, many of them by artists such as Robert Glasper and Kamasi Washington, began in 2017 and the other enterprises have grown from there. Jazz Is Dead's formula takes legacy artists—such as Gary Bartz, Doug Carn, Jean Carne, Roy Ayers and Lonnie Liston Smith—into the label's studio (fully equipped with vintage equipment) to work with hand-picked younger musicians, as well as Muhammad and Younge. The results may be slightly outside the jazz purist's comfort zone, but they're always interesting. And the records sell and the audiences turn out.

First, that provocative name. "It's meant to elicit a response," said Lojero. "It's a call to action. You either love it or hate it. We have irate people who see our sign coming in and saying, 'Jazz isn't dead!' But then they stick around and listen to the music we're making."

Two names came to mind: Fillmore East and West music impresario Bill Graham—who put jazz and rock artists on the same bill—and producer Creed Taylor, who launched both Impulse and CTI. Lojero is a student of both men's work. CTI not only packaged jazz beautifully, it also leavened the music with strings and other sweeteners. Jazz Is Dead's records do the same thing and also employ female vocal choruses. But the soloists play their own music, as they've always done.

Carn, who made a strong impression with a string of spiritually themed '70s albums on the Black Jazz label featuring the five-octave voice of his then-wife, Jean Carne (later, Carne), said he was surprised to find himself recording with hip-hop players. But he went with the flow. "They didn't want me to use my band," he said. "I never would have made a record like that [JID005], but it turned out better than I thought it would." Carn said he was appreciative of the opportunity—which he said paid well—after seeing a lot of classic jazz tracks get sampled by rappers. The recording session was complemented with live gigs in the L.A. area, also welcome. Jean Carne hasn't done much jazz since those albums with Doug but recorded an album for Jazz Is Dead that's not yet released.

The label has so far released six albums (LP and CD), one of them a compilation. And it's recording prolifically, including an album with keyboard player Smith, another spiritual jazz stalwart remembered for his work with Pharoah Sanders. Smith's album with Jazz Is Dead is scheduled to come out in 2022. "It was great working in their studio, with equipment I remember from back in the day," Smith said. "I didn't write any songs for the project, so it will be interesting to see how it comes out. I see where they're coming from."

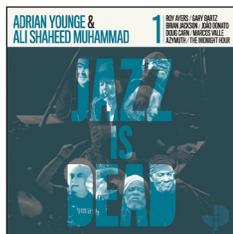
Smith's impression is that the Jazz Is Dead producers will piece the music together the same way Teo Macero did on Miles Davis albums like *Bitches Brew* and *On the Corner* (which has Smith's keyboards). "They're well organized," he said.

One of Bartz' albums with the Mizell Brothers was used by A Tribe Called Quest for a sample. More than a dozen other hip-hop artists have sampled Bartz. His Jazz Is Dead album (JID006) "epitomizes the ethos behind Jazz Is Dead," Younge said. "He's a luminary who has contributed so much to music culture, for decades. His musical ability is expanding with age and we're honored to be a part of his world."

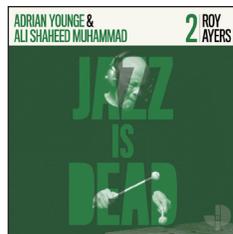
Jazz Is Dead also recorded with the Brazilian jazz trio Azymuth (JID004), notable for using electronic instruments and adding elements of funk, psychedelic rock and samba to their music in the '80s. Younge describes the album as "one of the most interesting rides I've ever been on." He said the bedrock was the group's original conception, "which we pushed even further for a new generation of record collectors." JID003 is an album with another Brazilian, samba and Sergio Mendes veteran Marcos Valle.

Lojero and Jazz Is Dead are in touch with what modern audiences want, as are the label's producers. "Adrian and Ali are consummate students," Lojero said. "We all love jazz music. Our original idea was to put together master concerts with a young core band and bring in four or five legacy artists to perform, kind of a mini touring festival. It's now on a streaming platform because of COVID, but we keep expanding our vision." ❖

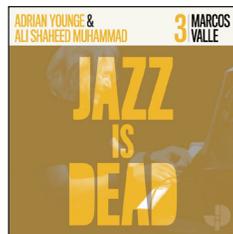
For more information, visit [jazzisdead.co](http://jazzisdead.co)



1 Roy Ayers, Gary Bartz, et al



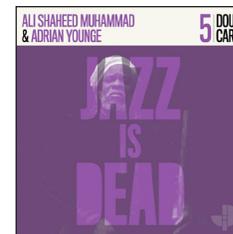
2 Roy Ayers



3 Marcos Valle



4 Azymuth



5 Doug Carn

## VOXNEWS

# HOPEFUL THINGS

BY SUZANNE LORGE

Pianist David Budway and his wife Brianne Higgins, owners of Maureen's Jazz Cellar in Nyack, NY, had been planning to fill the itinerary with vocalists for all of January. In normal times, the five-year-old venue hosts an eclectic mix of music and entertainment: nowhere else will you find jazz headliners on the same venue listing as Dead Heads and drag queens. But last month Budway wanted to honor the memory of his sister Maureen, a jazz vocalist and educator who passed away in January 2015, by booking the likes of **Sheila Jordan**, **Jay Clayton**, **Janis Siegel** and **Paul Jost**. New shutdown orders in New York State scuttled these shows, however. Also on hold, for similar reasons, are Budway's plans for a series of live albums recorded at the club. The first of these—singer **Tania Grubbs' Live at Maureen's Jazz Cellar (s/r)**—did launch, however, albeit mid-pandemic. These 12 tracks, recorded on Memorial Day weekend 2019, recall those healthy, halcyon days with tunes that celebrate nature (Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower Is A Lovable Thing"), winged creatures (Jimmy Rowles-Norma Winstone's "The Peacocks", Leonard Cohen's "Bird On A Wire") and the feelings they inspire (Joni Mitchell's "Love", Horace Silver's "Peace"). Grubbs'

velveteen vocals on these cleverly curated, artfully executed songs warm the heart and her original music—a bright samba arrangement of poet Emily Dickinson's "Hope Is A Thing With Feathers"—inspires all the sentiment the title promises.

Budway and Higgins, though whipped around by shifting regulations for live venues, have consistently offered music at Maureen's in some way or other over the many months of the public health crisis. Jordan and her regular duo partner, bassist Cameron Brown, plan to keep their Jan. 30 date. This concert will be available via live-stream (and archived) on the club's website and Facebook page—without charge, courtesy of the club. Grubbs and her husband, bassist Jeff Grubbs, play in a similarly spare duo format each Sunday and these performances, too, are viewable via the club website and Facebook page, as well as on Grubbs' own page. In February, Grubbs says, they'll be concertizing inside their Pittsburgh home, but by March the weather should be warm enough to broadcast again from their porch before a socially distanced audience on the front lawn.

Grammy-winning Manhattan Transfer veteran Siegel just released *Mazel (s/r)*, a dozen Yiddish songs in jazz settings, arranged by pianist John DiMartino and sung in duet with cantor Daniel Kramer. This happy album, sponsored by the North Shore Jewish Center, transmits all of the inherent loveliness of traditional Jewish music without sacrificing any of Siegel's sophisticated swing. The guest artists, too,

impress for their jazz chops: vocalists **Amy London**, **Emily Bindiger**, **Kevin Osborne** and **Aubrey Johnson**.

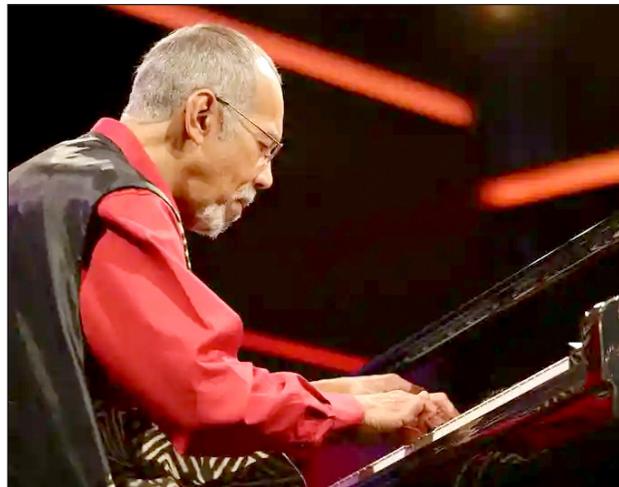
Johnson also guested on *This Is Our Environment (Next Level)*, the debut album of saxophonist Joseph Herbst's forward-looking sextet. Herbst uses musical narrative, open vocals and spoken word to draw attention to human fallibility regarding the demise of the natural world. It's a distressing theme, to be sure, but the music is not: the album concludes with an exuberant brass send-off—an incentive to do better, perhaps.

This year, we will miss singer **Freddy Cole (1931-2020)**, whose annual Dizzy's Club Valentine's Day show set the standard. Two of Cole's albums with DiMartino received Grammy nominations for Best Jazz Album—*Freddy Cole Sings Mr. B* in 2010 and *My Mood Is You* in 2018, both for HighNote. The latter was Cole's last release—worth a revisit just to hear "I'll Always Leave The Door A Little Open", a bit of hope nestled in nostalgia. And to hear DiMartino contemporaneously this Valentine's Day, visit Jazz on 38, a live-stream from the Four Seasons featuring vocalist **Lizzie Thomas**.

Before we forget: Two 2020 releases deserve more than a passing nod. **Brianna Thomas** continues to amaze with powerful delivery and soulful understanding of classic tunes (plus two originals) on *Everybody Knows (Breathline)*, her sophomore album. And singer/shamisen player **Emi Makabe** makes a solid landing with her debut *Anniversary (Greenleaf)*, a satisfying melding of Japanese folk, American pop and modern jazz. ❖

# STANLEY COWELL

BY ANDREY HENKIN



Pianist Stanley Cowell, longtime musical partner of Charles Tolliver, with whom he founded Strata-East Records, had over two dozen albums as a leader since 1969 including, most recently, *Live At Keystone Korner Baltimore* (SteepleChase), myriad sideman credits and a professorship at Mason Gross School of the Arts of Rutgers University, died Dec. 17th at 79.

Cowell was born May 5th, 1941 in Toledo, OH. He became interested in piano through exposure to Art Tatum, who was a family friend. After attending Oberlin College Conservatory and University of Michigan and working with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Cowell moved to New York and began his recording career in 1966, appearing on albums by Marion Brown, Max Roach, Gary Bartz, Jack DeJohnette and, most significantly Tolliver's *The Ringer* (Polydor, 1969), as well as waxing his own leader debut *Blues For The Viet Cong* for the same label three days later.

In 1971, Tolliver and Cowell released the eponymous debut of Music Inc. for their new Strata-East label. Cowell described it to our own Anders Griffen in a 2015 interview as, "It was not a cooperative, it was a condominium concept. Charles and I owned the structure, the distribution set up by us over a period with our own recordings and then we began to expand by incorporating other producers and they would assign their product to us to distribute. We reversed the monetary arrangement that companies had; the lion's share went to the producers." Cowell would lead two albums for Strata-East, 1973's *Musa - Ancestral Streams* and 1976's *Regeneration*, as well as recording over a dozen times as a sideman.

The '70s also saw Cowell dates for Freedom, ECM, Trio and Galaxy as well as credits under Les McCann, Bobby Hutcherson, Oliver Nelson, The Heath Brothers, Sonny Rollins, Sonny Fortune, Clifford Jordan, John Gordon, Roy Haynes, Richard Davis, Barry Wallenstein and Arthur Blythe. The '80s and beyond had work with Art Pepper, George Russell, Dick Griffin, Larry Coryell and releases as a leader for Concord, DIW and SteepleChase, for whom Cowell first recorded in 1989 (*Sienna*), going on to make over a dozen albums.

One of Cowell's major statements was done in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth (commemorating the ending of slavery in the U.S.) in 2016, a solo piano reduction of a concert band work based on the Emancipation Proclamation, released on Vision Fugitive as *Juneteenth (Piano Solo)*. And, relating to another type of slavery, Professor Cowell was active in educating his students of the perils of the music industry. As he told Griffen, "I actually spent several classes on contract reading, trying to get them up on how not to be ripped off by contracts...and historically, what has happened to many musicians in all genres of music who basically died very poor."



**CLAUDE BOLLING** (Apr. 10th, 1930 - Dec. 29th, 2020) The French pianist and recipient of his country's Officer of the Legion of Honor and Commander in the Order of Arts and Letters backed Mezz Mezzrow, Lionel Hampton, Albert Nicholas and other Americans in early '50s Paris and made his own albums from the mid '40s onwards for numerous labels (his most famous album, a 1975 collaboration with Jean-Pierre Rampal, *Suite For Flute And Jazz Piano* came on Columbia Masterworks); MPF, EMI-Pathé, CAM, CBS, Disques Adès, CBS, Milan, Naxos and Frémeaux & Associés, many of which were soundtracks for the over 100 films for which he composed the scores. Bolling died Dec. 29th at 90.



**JEFF CLAYTON** (Feb. 16th, 1954 - Dec. 17th, 2020) The reed and wind player was part of a notable jazz family (bassist brother John and pianist nephew Gerald) and worked with Patrice Rushen, Norman Connors, Creative Arts Ensemble, Henry Butler, Ray Brown, Gene Harris, Ruth Brown, John Pizzarelli, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Kurt Elling, Diana Krall and Kenny Burrell, plus myriad pop artists, and released albums with his brother on Concord, Capri, Lake Street, Qwest, Fable, Verve, MCG, Telarc, ArtistShare, Capitol and Blue Note. Clayton died Dec. 17th at 66.



**VICTOR CUICA** (Apr. 19th, 1949 - Dec. 26th, 2020) The Venezuelan saxophonist/flutist (and actor) worked with Chucho Sanoja and Óscar d'León, led his own groups from the late '70s onwards, releasing albums on Columbia, Kandra, Obese-Pacanins and CrioJazz, and guested live with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band and Lionel Hampton. Cuica died Dec. 26th at 71.



**DEBBIE DUNCAN** (1951 - Dec. 18th, 2020) The vocalist/Minneapolis stalwart recorded with Jimmy McGriff, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire Jazz Ensemble, Oleta Adams, The Girls, and Aaron Keith Stewart along with albums as a leader since the mid '90s on Igmod, Danti and FS Music. Duncan died Dec. 18th at 69.



**EUGEN HAHN** (1941 - Dec. 22nd, 2020) The German electric bassist was in Klaus Lenz Modern Soul Big Band in the '70s and contributed photographs to releases by Klaus Ignatzek and Peter Kowald but made his biggest mark in jazz running the Jazzkeller Frankfurt for three decades.. Hahn died Dec. 22nd at 79.



**FRANK KIMBROUGH** (Nov. 2nd, 1956 - Dec. 30th, 2020) The pianist gained fame as a member of the Jazz Composers Collective (JCC) in the early '90s; had over a dozen leader releases since the late '80s on Mapleshade, Igmod, OmniTone, Soul Note, Palmetto, ScienSonic, Newvelle, Pirouet and, most recently, Sunnyside (the six-CD set *Monk's Dreams: The Complete Compositions Of Thelonious Sphere Monk*); a 25-year tenure in the Maria Schneider Orchestra (appearing on seven albums, including 2020's *Data Lords* on ArtistShare); work with the JCC's Herbie Nichols Project and fellow JCCers such as Ted Nash, Ben Allison, Ron Horton and Michael Blake; a long partnership with Joe Locke; sideman credits with Igor Butman, Rich Perry, Kendra Shank, Maryanne De Prophetis, Katie Bull, Noah Preminger, Patrick Cornelius, John Menegon, Jay Anderson and others; and a teaching position at Juilliard since 2008. Kimbrough died Dec. 30th at 64.



**JULIAN LEE** (Nov. 11th, 1923 - Dec. 3rd, 2020) The New Zealander pianist worked both in Australia with Don Burrows, Johnny Nicol, Don Harper, Billy Fields and others and Los Angeles arranging for George Shearing, The Three Sounds, Harry Edison, Bud Shank, Chet Baker and more, also releasing a handful of albums as a leader or co-leader. Lee died Dec. 3rd at 97.



**GÖSTA LINDERHOLM** (Jun. 22nd, 1941 - Dec. 29th, 2020) The Swedish vocalist/clarinetist was part of his country's Dixieland and trad jazz scenes, both as part of the Jazz Doctors in the '50s-60s and the Sveriges Jazzband in the '70s and as leader, releasing albums on Metronome, Scranta and Blå Ton since the mid '70s. Linderholm died Dec. 29th at 79.



**RON MATHEWSON** (Feb. 19th, 1944 - Dec. 3rd, 2020) The Scottish bassist was active from the late '60s into the early Aughts, working both with countrymen like Alex Welsh, Ray Russell, Tubby Hayes, Ronnie Scott, John Stevens, Stan Sulzmann, Charlie Watts and Mick Pyne and visiting Americans such as Bud Freeman, Wild Bill Davison, Earl Hines, Charles Tolliver, Philly Joe Jones, Phil Woods and Ray Nance, collaborating with Ray Warleigh, John Taylor, Gordon Beck and Daniel Humair, part of groups like the Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland Big Band, Spontaneous Music Ensemble, Chitinous Ensemble, Nucleus, Gyroscope, Paz, Rollercoaster and, in 2020, had several of his archival tapes from the '60s-80s with Allan Holdsworth, Alan Cohen and others released on the Jazz In Britain label. Mathewson died Dec. 3rd at 76 of complications from COVID-19.



**DIANE MOSER** (Jul. 29th, 1957 - Dec. 17th, 2020) The pianist/composer led a regular working big band since the late '90s and released recordings with groups of varying sizes for New Arts, Twin Rivers, CIMP, Planet Arts and Minus Zero, with collaborators including Mark Dresser, Hafez Modirzadeh, Ken Filiano and others. Moser died Dec. 17th at 63.



**EUGENE WRIGHT** (May 29th, 1923 - Dec. 30th, 2020) The bassist was the last survivor of the classic Dave Brubeck Quartet, playing with the pianist from 1958-67 and appearing on *Jazz Impressions Of Eurasia*, *Time Out*, *Brubeck A La Mode*, *Countdown: Time In Outer Space*, *At Carnegie Hall*, *Jazz Impressions Of Japan*, *Time Changes*, *Bravo! Brubeck!* and several other LPs, to go along with dozens of other credits in the bands of Leo Parker, Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt, Arnett Cobb, Kenny Drew, Buddy DeFranco, Gerald Wiggins, Cal Tjader, Buddy Collette, Red Norvo, Paul Desmond and Monty Alexander, plus early leader work while still in Chicago with a band featuring a young Sun Ra as Musical Director and a 1962 date for Philips recorded in New Zealand, finishing up his career as head of the jazz department at the University of Cincinnati and leading the International Society of Bassists. Wright died Dec. 30th at 97.



**ED XIQUES** (Oct. 9th, 1939 - Dec. 4th, 2020) The saxophonist/flutist recorded with Steve Marcus, Melvin Sparks, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Bill Watrous, Frank Foster, McCoy Tyner, Rich Shemaria, Diane Moser, Joseph C. Phillips, Bill Warfield, Westchester Jazz Orchestra and others. Xiques died Dec. 4th at 81. ❖

(INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

**TNYCJR:** You could say there's a difference between those who move for the mere sake of it because they don't know how to be still and those who have to be still and let the world blossom around them. You can't be attentive to the spirit, or any spirit, if you're always on the go, because you're either too busy talking down to everyone or shutting them out. We need time for cultivation.

**LR:** I'm doing a piece right now on technology and I keep coming back to this image of Toto pulling back the curtain in *The Wizard of Oz*. That's exactly what I see going on. The mask is coming down and there's desperation out there. We have to be careful with our minds, because the proverbial THEY understand the power of hypnotism based on repetition. Sometimes I hear the classics on the radio and am reminded of how the jazz greats did so much with so little. I'm blessed to have grown up in that time. Not just around jazz, but Black music in general. Gospel, R&B and don't get me started on James Brown, now he packed the party. As soon as he came on, it was hands up. And if you didn't have anybody, you just danced with the wall. But you were still telling a story.

**TNYCJR:** How did this upcoming live-stream concert come about?

**LR:** One Breath Rising asked me and I said yes, simple as that. Since then, I've been going through the pieces in my mind, letting them grow. The fact that it takes place on Valentine's Day reminds me of a performance I did for the Provincetown Playhouse at the invitation of Regina Ress, who teaches storytelling at NYU. In that piece, I said I was "looking for an analog love in a digital world". That notion got me thinking about sound. We're living in a world of ones and zeros, kicked off with an electrical connection, but I'm used to striking something, producing vibration.

In that performance, for which I both spoke and played, I told the story of my bass, which was built in Germany in the 1840s. It was found in a bombed-out building in Berlin and no one knows how it got here. I had a chance to try it out at the luthier's shop when I was getting my plywood model fixed. That night, I couldn't sleep, all I could hear was that sound. I was in love. I ended up trading my bass for the German one and it's still my go-to instrument. I told a more detailed version of that story to an audience once and at the end these two old couples approached me and introduced themselves as German concentration camp survivors. They felt such an affinity for my bass, down to the serial number imprinted on the scroll. As I was giving them a closer look, one of the wives was patting and rubbing the bass like it was a real individual, which it is. I got really emotional. They saw a lot of people in that story and told me to keep playing. That's when I realized the gift ran both ways. You pull in things that so many others take for granted, and you magnify them. This is who we are.

**TNYCJR:** Speaking of sound, I can't help but feel like you're reciting poetry when you're playing bass and playing bass when you're reciting poetry.

**LR:** I'll walk with that, too. I live an improvisational lifestyle. Whatever I don't do today, I'll do the next time.

**TNYCJR:** Finally, I'd like to go back to the beginning of your relationship with the bass.

**LR:** I didn't pick the bass up until I was 30. When I did, I already knew how I wanted it to sound and where I would go with it. Back then, I was getting poetry gigs in Boston when I ran into a bassist by the name of John Jamyll Jones. We were having a Black History Month program and I wanted him to accompany me while

I read. The performance was even shown on PBS under the name *Say Brother*. After that I joined his band, Worlds, reciting poetry and playing a little percussion. They had two bassists, one of whom pursued other paths in life and sold me his bass. At first, I just had it in the living room, but then I would put on John Coltrane's *Ascension* and start playing along with it. I felt like part of the band. Jamyll showed me the rudiments: how to hold the instrument and plant my feet properly. Then I got some books on fingering and such. I practiced every night. I just wanted to play. I never met my teachers: Jimmy Garrison, Ron Carter, Paul Chambers and Palle Danielsson. Then, a guy from Berklee who'd heard me play called me about joining him at Wally's. He needed someone fast, so I took the risk and developed from there. Aside from studying a bit with Cecil McBee, I was largely self-taught. It was always about the music. It saved my life. I was a listener before I was a player and I'm still listening. ❖

For more information, visit [ogijaz.com](http://ogijaz.com). Roland live-streams Feb. 14 at [onebreathrising.org](http://onebreathrising.org).

**Recommended Listening:**

- World's Experience Orchestra – *The Beginning Of A New Birth/As Time Flows On* (World Productions – Now Again, Now Again, 1975/77)
- Raphe Malik 5tet – *21st Century Texts* (FMP, 1991)
- Dennis Warren's Full Metal Revolutionary Jazz Ensemble – *Watch Out!* (Accurate, 1996)
- Larry Roland – *As Time Flows On* (Boston Composers Group, 2001)
- Charles Gayle – *Streets* (Northern Spy, 2011)
- Steve Cohn/Daniel Carter/Larry Roland/Marvin Bugalu Smith – *Voyager* (Tube Room, 2018)

(ENCORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Franklin and Burnett have been working in a new trio with pianist Robert Turner, revisiting the foot-tapping positive vibes they felt while working with Harris. This trio recently released a recording of one of their most recent performances from February 2020, *Live at the Gardenia Club* by 3 More Sounds.

Otherwise, 2020 has been quieter than usual, of course. He's done a couple record dates and some live-streaming concerts. This new year kicks off with more recording, including an exciting sextet that Franklin has lined up with Nolan Shaheed (trumpet), Teodross Avery (tenor), Ryan Porter (trombone), Theo Saunders (piano) and Willie Jones III (drums). He's worked with them all before separately in various situations. When asked if he had plans to perform with that band he said no. "Those guys are so busy individually I thought if I could get them together once...Willie's very busy, he lives in New York. Teodross is very busy in L.A. and wherever he's at he's got his own thing happening. Ryan Porter plays with Kamasi [Washington] and when they get started they're going to be on the road all the time. Nolan's pretty busy with his studio. I don't think we're gonna get together again. On an ideal day I'd love to perform with that group, but no plans." ❖

For more information, visit [sprecords.com](http://sprecords.com)

**Recommended Listening:**

- Hugh Masekela – *The Promise of a Future* (UNI, 1968)
- Henry Franklin – *The Skipper* (Black Jazz, 1971)
- Henry Franklin – *Tribal Dance* (Catalyst, 1977)
- Dennis Gonzalez New Dallas Quartet – *Stefan* (Silkheart, 1986)
- Azar Lawrence – *Prayer For My Ancestors* (Furthermore, 2008)
- 3 More Sounds (Henry Franklin/Robert Turner/Carl Burnett) – *Live at The Gardenia Club* (Skipper Prod., 2017)

## Kites and Strings

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*We've Had Enough!*

Fay Victor SoundNoiseFUNK (ESP-Disk')

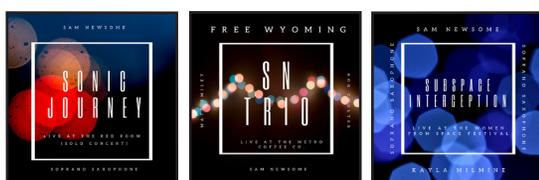
by John Pietaro

Fay Victor requires no introduction within New York's improvisational music sector, her fluid, powerful voice a clarion call to the possibilities of musical emotion. Victor bested the damned virus by releasing *We've Had Enough!* prior to the end of a hellish 2020. She reunited her quartet SoundNoiseFUNK—soprano saxophonist Sam Newsome, electric guitarist Joe Morris and drummer Reggie Nicholson—toward a definitive statement, though one they could hardly have imagined when recording at Firehouse 12 in New Haven months before lockdown. Said statement reaches well beyond the travails of COVID-19; the title speaks to the state of injustice the planet has struggled through, particularly on these shores, though the issues, upon even precursory inspection, are frighteningly long-term.

In her liner notes, written in real time between October 2019 and July 2020, Victor defines the recording as "a protest record", concluding the brief but telling diary with "No justice, no peace. Never." "What's Gone Wrong?", a work credited specifically to Victor, which runs just shy of ten minutes, explores the depth of the question, "What's gone wrong with the world?" Heard initially as a modified madrigal, the phrase is carried through ongoing variations with the instrumentalists commenting, flanking and opposing the vocal melody. Repetition, sure, but treated in a manner that belies the term: Victor appears to cry over whole sections while shouting through others, the clearer repetitive figures of Morris almost tormenting when not complementing. It's a tour de force in which Newsome soars in delectable, often Coltrane-like flights.

14-minute "I.M. Peach", on the other hand, is built on fragments of words, syllables or perhaps neologisms expressed in frantic streams. No critic would dare call this "scat" without a wink toward its dual meaning when paired with Trumpist newspeak. Backed by droning electronics, the piece must be particularly fascinating live. And outstanding in any forum is "Wereld Worn", another Victor composition. On this selection the quartet is equally at center, churning, throbbing, with Newsome, Morris and Nicholson playing independent and gripping counterpoint lines on par with Victor's frontispiece. She pours empathy through a guttural lyric, but the work's last 60 or so seconds approximates the sound of the proletariat woman's 'silent scream' Brecht wrote of long ago. Like so much of Victor's work, it's damned chilling.

For more information, visit [espdisk.com](http://espdisk.com). This project live-streams Feb. 11th at [roulette.org](http://roulette.org).



*Sonic Journey: Live at the Red Room (Solo Concert)*

*Free Wyoming (Live at the Metro Coffee Co.)*

*Subspace Interception*

*(Live at the Women from Space Festival)*

Sam Newsome (s/r)

by John Sharpe

Since 1995, saxophonist Sam Newsome has been one of a small cohort focusing exclusively on the soprano. He is a determinedly adventurous sonic explorer, who spices

his liberated discourse with extended techniques such as flutter tonguing and circular breathing and preparations, including inserting tubing between mouthpiece and body, or placing noisemakers in the bell. Newsome's achievement is to make these approaches musically relevant and satisfying, as manifest in these three digital releases of concert recordings.

Newsome is also something of a solo specialist, with *Sonic Journey* being at least his eighth such outing to date. Newsome exploits to the full the complete command over pacing afforded by his exposed position, making the title an apt descriptor of the dramatic arc along which he transports his listeners. With its plusive attacks in rhythmic formation interspersed with carefully controlled multiphonic blasts, the opening "Monster Talk" gives an acute sense of the attention to detail and design on show throughout. Newsome deploys three repertoire classics during the 50-minute set. The familiar contours of "Giant Steps", portrayed in deeply personal style, appear after the twists and turns of a flowing blues-inflected line. Steve Lacy claimed that Monk is particularly suited to the soprano and Newsome would seem to agree. He revisits "Misterioso" and "Monk's Dream", where he largely maintains the cadence and pitch, but colors with outbreaks of expertly marshaled overtones, evocative of the exquisite dissonance the composer so favored. On "Amazon Nuances" Newsome combines a percussive tapping with a pulsing declamatory yelp. Even deprived of the visual elements that enliven such exhibitions, it provides a captivating narrative. To demonstrate that unconventional needn't be forbidding, the show ends with an undulating didgeridoo-like throb before transforming to a funky slap-tongue dance, which elicits deserved enthusiasm from the attendant crowd.

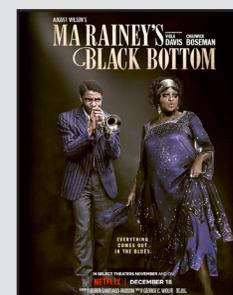
Some of the same sonorities resurface on *Free Wyoming* on which Newsome teams up in a first meeting with Colorado-based bassist Matt Smiley and drummer Ron Coulter, who teaches at Casper College where the concert was recorded. They prove sympathetic collaborators as they share Newsome's ethos of playing music that is "free to" rather than "free from" during four purposeful group fabrications touching on an array of influences. Perhaps that point is best affirmed by "Black Hills", which leans closest to the norms, with soprano surging over a loose-limbed groove from walking bass and ticking ride. Newsome gradually stretches the parameters, moving with Coulter into squalling freeform as the bass pounds, before the piece culminates in another nod to the canon with "Blue Monk". Elsewhere the predominant mode is unfettered textural exchange following an unpredictable trajectory. Scrapes, drones and rattles sometimes belie an obvious instrumental source, perfectly illustrated in the opening of the lengthy "Big Horn" where overblown upper partials are winningly joined by either arco bass harmonics or bowed cymbals, or both! On "Owl Creek" Newsome extemporizes a folk-tinged air, shadowed by tolling bass and tinkling percussion, creating a bucolic scene before things take a decisive left turn with swift abrasions, effervescent pops and slobbered gurgles.

More experimental still, but equally simpatico, is *Subspace Interception*, on which Newsome partners with fellow soprano enthusiast Kayla Milmine at Toronto's 2020 Women From Space Festival (she co-organizes the event and also leads the Toronto Improvisers Orchestra). In just under 30 minutes the pair probe the limits of what's possible on their axes, communicating in an expressive language of squawks, knocks and blurts. Two long improvs allow thorough investigation of the plethora of combinations available. At one point mechanical noises evoke a distant subway train, juxtaposed against distorted hoots. But then a third voice of choked whistles enters defying easy attribution. Yet some of the most gripping moments arrive courtesy of more conventional dialogue, in episodes of intertwined middle-register dash animated by lapping overtones. On "Subspace Geometry" Newsome flirts

with lyricism as his hanging chimes furnish a clinking backdrop while Milmine answers in a slightly more acerbic mood. Shifting in and out of consonance, they generate some delicious oscillating tones as they draw slightly apart. Each on occasion contributes reiterated phrases that add anchoring structural ingredients to the interplay, one such coming in the passage of minimalist counterpoint, which ends the title track on a high. They finish on a humorous note, with the brief concluding "Subspace Malfunction" suggesting a grumpy shouting match between two squeaky teddy bears.

For more information, visit [samnewsome2.bandcamp.com](http://samnewsome2.bandcamp.com). Newsome live-streams Feb. 11th with Fay Victor at [roulette.org](http://roulette.org).

## ON SCREEN



*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Netflix)

by Kurt Gottschalk

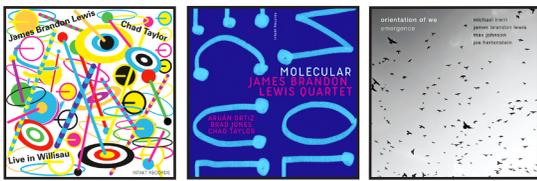
*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* is the kind of movie that's worth walking into blind. But for the curious cinephile compelled to know what they're getting into, it's important to note that it is not particularly a movie about Ma Rainey. She's in there, but she's not the subject. The blues legend's name functions as an adjective in the title and the movie revolves around her, but it's not about her and Viola Davis—who turns in a fantastic performance as the titular character—is not the performer given the most screen time in the feature.

*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* isn't a biopic. Rather, it's a movie about the musicians who made Rainey's record "Black Bottom" and about the afternoon that record was made. It's a movie about playing music and talking jive. It's a movie about Black culture and about hitting bottom and, sometimes, pulling yourself up again. It's a movie about egos and age and character and conflict.

*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* is a mood piece, an adaptation of the play of the same name that's thick with cinematic atmosphere. Director George C. Wolfe—who brought *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* and *Bring in 'da Noise/Bring in 'da Funk* to the stage—does a stellar job of putting August Wilson's 1982 stage play on the screen. Without extending the scene beyond the street outside the downtown Chicago recording studio, Wolfe keeps the story alive. The feeling of the walls closing in comes from the hot afternoon and the mounting character tensions, not from the fact that the narrative never leaves the studio.

The film will be remembered as Chadwick Boseman's final role and that's fine because it's a movie that deserves to be remembered and talked about, whatever gets it there. Boseman—who succumbed to cancer in August 2020 at the age of 43—is remarkable as the upstart trumpeter who's too cocksure to ingratiate himself to anyone. His arrogance anchors the story and Boseman, who went so far as to learn trumpet fingerings for the part, elicits equal parts sympathy and fury. *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* is a powerful movie that, by not saying much, says an awful lot.

For more information, visit [netflix.com](http://netflix.com)



*Live in Willisau*  
James Brandon Lewis/Chad Taylor (Intakt)  
*Molecular*  
James Brandon Lewis Quartet (Intakt)  
*Emergence*  
*Orientation of We* (OFF)  
by George Grella

The first of the three albums under review here brings the return of the duo that produced the fine 2018 release *Radiant Imprints*. Saxophonist James Brandon Lewis and drummer Chad Taylor are also two of the busiest musicians in contemporary jazz, recording regularly as leaders, members of other ensembles and sidemen. There's no accident to that; the two bring strong, distinctive voices to everything they do and a stylistic range that has become a de facto requirement for 21st Century jazz musicians. And no surprise, *Live in Willisau* is an excellent album, deeper than the first from the pair and one of the top releases of 2020.

The title is a direct and deliberate response and homage to the classic Dewey Redman/Ed Blackwell duo album *Red and Black*, also recorded live (in 1980) at the Willisau Jazz Festival. Lewis has a touch of Redman's keen edge but is otherwise his own man and he and Taylor are very much doing their own thing, other than playing a tidy, spirited version of "William" from *Red and Black*. The two work up a punchy New Orleans strut on that one, but with their own seasoning, which means a generous amount of hip-hop inflections and go-go beats. They also play a pithy, buttery take of Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday", with Taylor on mbira, but the rest of the material is all their own, including the opening "Twenty Four", a rewrite of John Coltrane material. The encore, a fantasy on "Somewhere Over The Rainbow", saves the original melody for the end and stands alone as an invention from Lewis and Taylor.

Lewis consistently thrives in a live context, something the two studio albums set into relief. Taylor is behind the drum kit again for *Molecular* alongside pianist Aruán Ortiz and bassist Brad Jones, but even so there is a mellower quality to the album. In subtle ways, Lewis seems to chafe against the proceedings. It's not a bad thing and he himself may not be aware of it and it happens even on the uptempo "Helix", where he seems to be reaching for something outside of the tune. What makes his playing so refreshing and involving is that where dozens of other saxophonists would launch into the type of smeared altissimo passages that have been a signifier of freedom for decades, Lewis looks for opportunities via articulation and finer rhythmic sub-divisions. He's not searching for emotional fire or catharsis, but some other aesthetic that might be right next door. That makes his playing exciting and satisfying and never pedestrian. Plus, he's always direct; the hip-hop phrasing he moves in and out of is natural, tough-minded and expressive. The album has something of a sleeper quality, the first listen leaves a good impression, but follow-ups deepen the experience and tracks like the title cut are soulful, passionate and inventive. A real winner.

*Orientation of We* is a collaborative quartet comprised of Lewis, trumpeter Michael Irwin, bassist Max Johnson and drummer Joe Hertenstein. The manner of their playing on *Emergence* is related to the Ornette Coleman Quartet, though this group is oriented around riffs and clear-cut harmonic procedures. Irwin is an immediate connection, stabbing out concise lead lines and antiphonal responses with more than a little of Don Cherry's grainy tone. Lewis is not the leader, but the inherent strength of his playing, the muscular passion and searching tone—not for the first time one thinks of Tina Brooks when hearing

him—rises above the rest of this ensemble. That's no small feat, especially with the rock-solid rhythm section. The recording session was back in 2017 and all these musicians have gone on to other things in this age when no one can afford to keep a working band together. That's no small shame, as this one off is full of intelligent, sympathetic interplay and gripping forward motion.

For more information, visit [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch) and [still-off.bandcamp.com](http://still-off.bandcamp.com). Lewis live-streams Feb. 18th at [artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html](http://artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html).



*Spirit Groove* (featuring David Murray)  
Kahil El'Zabar (Spiritmuse)  
*Pathways & Passages*  
*Cosmic Vibrations* (feat. Dwight Trible) (Spiritmuse)  
by Jim Motavalli

These are two albums with a commitment to the spiritual jazz fostered by Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, Leon Thomas, Andy Bey and their fellow travelers back in the late '60s. Especially Bey and Thomas, because these are both vocal albums.

Drummer Kahil El'Zabar's *Spirit Groove* benefits mightily from David Murray's tenor saxophone. The tunes are essentially long vamps and when the players come together, as on compact "Trane in Mind" and "In the Spirit", it's transcendent. When things meander, as on lengthy "One World Family", it's less so. El'Zabar also sings with some soulfulness, but the lyrics sound improvised. A key track is "Katon", which downplays the vocalizing to achieve an incantatory movement driven by African thumb piano and shimmering piano from Justin Dillard. Murray enters stealthily and is soon emitting squeaks, squeals, squawks and whatever else works. "Songs of Myself" is similarly good. "Necktar" has a catchy melody and more strong Murray, but also El'Zabar chanting "open up the door" over and over. The longest track, the 20-minute "In My House", has some moments but overstays its welcome.

*Pathways & Passages* also looks back at some great music, but doesn't work quite as well. Vocalist Dwight Trible, who loves funereal tempos, sounds like Bey meeting Arthur Prysock. The results are somewhat lugubrious. Standards "Some Other Time" and "Blue Skies", for instance, unfold slowly. Trible is an expressive singer, however, and this Los Angeles-based music may grow on listeners—loose sounds like these, with lots of enthusiastic percussion, were a staple at community center concerts in the '70s. Again, thumb piano—a period favorite—is front and center, as are the congas. "Ol'bab" is the best track and really builds a rolling groove. Trible here channels his inner Thomas, but is somewhat down in the mix. There's nice tenor work by Pablo Calogero, again off-center in the mix, and on "Passages", otherwise another percussion workout; he adds a light dance step to the second half of the tune. "Motherless Child" is a decent vehicle for Trible's more expressive singing. Is that really Derf Reklaw playing that oh-so-'70s flute on "Movin' On"? No, it's Fred Walker with his name reversed. As Derf, he was the flute and sax player in the 1982 crime drama *Penitentiary II*. Truth in advertising department: The liner notes credit "Some Other Time" to the Cosmic Vibrations, but it was written for 1944's *On the Town* by Leonard Bernstein, with lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. And the group didn't write "Motherless Child" either—it's an old spiritual.

For more information, visit [spiritmuserecords.bandcamp.com](http://spiritmuserecords.bandcamp.com)

ON SCREEN



*Soul* (Pixar)  
by Andrey Henkin

For its 23rd film, Pixar has put into the lead role a Black man after, in order (and including sequels), a white toy, bug, monster, fish, white superhero, car, rat, robot, white old man, white girl, dinosaur, Mexican boy and elf. *Soul* (directed by Pete Docter and written by Docter, Mike Jones and Kemp Powers) is a day-plus in the life of 30-something pianist Joe Gardner (voiced by Jamie Foxx, played by Jonathan Batiste), whom we see in his unfulfilling job as a middle school band teacher, finally getting his break to be in a high-profile jazz group, falling down an open manhole, arriving in some non-denominational pre/post-life and spending the rest of the movie trying to cheat death and return to Earth by counseling 22, an ancient recalcitrant soul (Tina Fey), about the wonders of existence on Earth, finally making it back in time for opening night of the rest of his life.

As such, *Soul* is the anti-*Whiplash*, both it and the 2014 Damien Chazelle film featuring teachers putting important life lessons to needy students in the context of jazz. And if the message and audience is wildly different—and no one will confuse Gardner's wide-eyed wonder with Terence Fletcher's violent bullying—the use of jazz as a vehicle feels similarly tacked-on. Both movies could have been made about young football players and coaches or graduate students in chemistry and their advisers—or Gardner and Andrew Neiman could have been classical musicians—showing the power and responsibility of the educator on the educatee and how the roles can be reversed. Adding to this is that the music in the world in which Gardner spends much of the movie is scored by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross, a mild video game-like soundscape rather than, say, Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts*. And while there are cultural tropes to be found, such as Gardner's dead musician father and strong single mother or the barbershop as community center, attention was also paid to making these less caricature-like. For those who remember Crayola's "flesh" crayon, the other Black characters in *Soul* have a wide range of skin tones, hair types and speech patterns.

Those observations aside, *Soul* is as pleasant and charming as an Erroll Garner LP. The producers made the effort to have the jazz portions of the film feel authentic: note the fluttering gullet of saxophonist Dorothea Williams (Angela Bassett/Tia Fuller) and angle of attack of Gardner's fingers on the keyboard or the way that Williams auditions Gardner without telling him what song he will be playing, small details jazz fans will appreciate. A particularly nice character is the adolescent Connie, a budding trombonist mentored by Gardner. *Soul* is also a paean to New York City, with The Half-Note club obviously patterned after the Village Vanguard; 22 (occupying Gardner's body) navigating the subway; and cameos by the hapless Knicks and Pizza Rat. Similar to 2009's *Up*, the only other Pixar film this reviewer has seen, *Soul* takes on important questions of existence in a slightly sappy but, ultimately, moving fashion.

For more information, visit [disneyplus.com](http://disneyplus.com)

GLOBE UNITY



**Dialectic Soul**  
Asher Gamedze (On The Corner)  
**To Know Without Knowing**  
Mulatu Astatke & The Black Jesus Experience (Agogo)  
**We Are Sent Here By History**  
Shabaka & The Ancestors (Impulse)  
by Tom Greenland

In observing Black History Month in the wake of significant socio-political unrest, it helps to remember that the unquenchable spirit and undeniable genius of African American artists who created jazz exemplifies their struggle and triumph in the face of adversity, a struggle still heard in the music.

Drummer Asher Gamedze hails from Cape Town. His debut *Dialectic Soul* is with trumpeter Robin Fassie-Kock, tenor saxophonist Buddy Wells and bassist Thembinkosi Mavimbela, plus guest vocalist Nono Nkoane. "Dialectic" here refers to the African struggle for identity and power in the face of colonialism and its aftermath, heard in the music's perpetual motion, even at its gentlest moments, as animated bass and drums buffet slow-moving themes. Opener "State of Emergence Suite", almost 19 minutes long, is notable for organic transitions between diverse moods and textures. "Siyabulela", featuring Nkoane, is a calming, intimate hymn; "Interregnum" a free-swinging accompaniment to (English) spoken word; "Eternality" boasts fine bop-tinged horn solos. "The Speculative Fourth" closes the set with a light, catchy tune buoyed by a Cape Town beat.

*To Know Without Knowing* is the second collaboration by Ethiopian vibraphonist and father of Ethio-jazz Mulatu Astatke and Melbourne-based nonet Black Jesus Experience. It too mixes politics and spirituality. In "Living On Stolen Land", for example, vocalist Vida Sunshyne bemoans the Maori people's estrangement from their lands, followed by MC "Monk" Monkhouse's rap on the foresaking of ancient sacred ways, all underpinned by riff-based Ethiopian melodies, chromatically enhanced modal harmonies and club-friendly rhythms. On the title track, Monkhouse speaks of greed for oil and gold—our egos "eating up everything"—while the band stretches out over a syncopated six-beat groove, milking it to the last drop of sweat. Genres—boogaloo ("Blue Light"), funk ("Lijay"), disco/house ("Mascaram Setaba"), go-go ("A Chance to Give")—are reworked, Ethio-style, to insure that even the bitterest political truths are ingested with a spoonful of sugar.

Shabaka Hutchings & The Ancestors joins the Barbadian-British tenor saxophonist, a central figure in London's jazz scene, with musicians from the Johannesburg (and Soweto) scenes: vocalist Siyabonga Mthembu, alto saxophonist Mthunzi Mvubu, bassist Ariel Zamonsky, drummer Tumi Mogorosi and percussionist Gontse Makhene. *We Are Sent Here By History* is the band's second outing, built around the sound of twining horns, evocative singing (part Teddy Pendergrass, part Luciano Pavarotti) and charismatic pulse-keeping. It's a little hard to describe how well this all works—hints of mid-period Coltrane, jam bands and something else altogether—but tracks like "Behold, the Deceiver", "The Coming of the Strange Ones" and "'Til the Freedom Comes Home" achieve an uncanny alchemy of simplicity and complexity, seriousness and play.

For more information, visit [onthecornerrecords.bandcamp.com](http://onthecornerrecords.bandcamp.com), [agogo-records.com](http://agogo-records.com) and [impulserecords.com](http://impulserecords.com)



**HH**  
Lionel Loueke (Edition)  
**Three**  
Gilfema (Sounderscore)  
by Tom Greenland

Guitarist/vocalist Lionel Loueke's work is a study in contrasts. On two new releases, a solo tribute to his mentor Herbie Hancock, and a reunion of his trio with bassist Massimo Biolcati and drummer Ferenc Nemeth, collectively known as Gilfema, he displays the contradictory aspects of his art: cerebral exploration alongside body-based grooves; a soft, intimate fingerstyle attack filtered through hard, metallic signal processors; danceable beats in spite of not-so-danceable time signatures; spontaneous jams remodeled via studio overdubs and effects; and the revamping of local styles to suit a cosmopolitan sensibility.

Having toured with Hancock since 2005 and appeared on three of his albums, Loueke is well acquainted with the maestro's repertoire and modi operandi. *HH* gives him a chance to revisit Hancock's songs (plus two originals) alone, all but two tracks performed on seven-string acoustic guitar, augmented by overdubs and loops. Using his right thumb for basslines, slapping backbeats with his palm and plucking melodies and chords on the high strings with his fingers—a technique very similar to Tuck Andress—Loueke achieves a balanced, orchestral effect on the guitar, transparent yet full. His scat-like vocals, laced with audible breathing and African-style lingual clicks, are part and parcel of this effect. His voice, limber in the manner of Bobby McFerrin or George Benson, sometimes follows, sometimes leads the guitar, an equal partner in the proceedings. A big asset of the album, and of Loueke's playing in general, is his ability to stay relaxed, no matter how intricate the musical environs, ensuring that the music always feels good. His covers of "Hang Up Your Hang Ups", "Cantaloupe Island" (taken slowly) and "Rockit" (one of the album's highlights) are patently funky while "Driftin'", "Butterfly", reggaefied "Watermelon Man", "Come Running to Me" and "Voyage Maiden" (an original) are equally rhythmic, but add more elements of open-endedness and surprise. "Tell Me a Bedtime Story", "Dolphin Dance", "Speak Like a Child" and "Homage to HH" (a second original) are slower in tempo, but perhaps broader in imagination. The scratchy, brittle tones of "One Finger Snap" close the album on a colder, sharper note.

*Gilfema* is truly cosmopolitan: Biolcati is Swedish-Italian, Nemeth is Hungarian and Loueke, born in Benin, lived in Ivory Coast and Paris, France before moving to Boston, where he started his musical relationship with the others at Berklee College of Music, continuing it in Los Angeles when they attended the Thelonious Monk Institute. *Three* is actually the trio's fourth album (if you count 2015's *Gaia*, an egalitarian effort 'led' by Loueke), but the first under their own name since 2008's *Gilfema + 2*. The group shares an affinity for Afropop—including Afrobeat, soukous and highlife—and other international dance musics, infusing these with the chromaticism and odd-meters of contemporary jazz practice. So a highlife tune like "Tèkè" is played in 3/4, Afrobeat "Happiness" and soukous "Brio" are played in 5/4 and "13th Floor to Heaven", which shows the influence of Malian kora music, is played in 13/4. But anybody dancing to this CD probably won't notice because the trio is able to deliver these pieces with an effortless, deep-in-the-pocket feel, a tribute to Biolcati and Nemeth's tight hook-up. Loueke's background playing in African

dance bands is evident on the soukous, where his sunny sound and bouncy rhythms recall master players like Diblo Dibala and Rigo Star, even as his chromatic note choices reflect a more progressive/experimental ethos. His cover of Jimi Hendrix' "Little Wing" (in 9/8) recalls another African guitarist, Ali Farka Touré, in its bluesy ambiance. Like Hendrix, Loueke seems to view the guitar as a sandbox of possibilities, leading him to experiment (successfully) with a variety of unorthodox extended techniques. Other notable influences on the group's style are calypso ("Fleuve Congo"), New Orleans funk ("Algorhythm and Blues") and samba ("Left Undone").

For more information, visit [editionrecords.com](http://editionrecords.com) and [sounderscore.com](http://sounderscore.com)



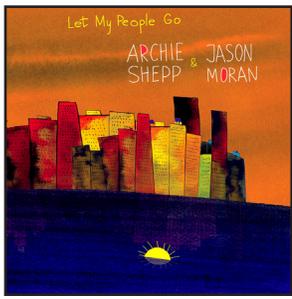
**At Angelica 2000 Bologna**  
Cecil Taylor (i dischi di angelica)  
**Birdland, Neuburg 2011**  
Cecil Taylor/Tony Oxley (Fundacja Słuchaj!)  
by Phil Freeman

Cecil Taylor's discography is nowhere near as large as it should be, given the uniqueness of his compositional and improvisational language and the many projects he undertook in his lifetime. Multiple Taylor bands were apparently never recorded at all; you saw them live or you missed out. However, in the nearly three years since his death in April 2018, several recordings have emerged which do add something to his legacy.

*At Angelica 2000 Bologna* is a two-CD set documenting a solo performance at the titular music festival. The first disc contains a single hour-long piece, "Dance of All Seasons", broken into three movements of between 12 and 27 minutes. The performance is ferocious; Taylor is operating in a florid, Romantic mode, shifting at lightning speed between rumbles from deep in the left-hand side of the keyboard to action-packed passages recalling the soundtracks to silent films to upper-register outbursts, the notes spilling everywhere like diamond shards. In its beauty and its power, it's comparable to similar heavy-duty solo Taylor discs like *Air Above Mountains* or *The Willisau Concert*. But the second disc is arguably even more interesting to the hardcore fan, as it features nearly 50 minutes of Taylor answering questions from the audience. Anyone who ever interviewed him will agree that he rarely answered questions directly, using them instead as springboards for disquisitions on whatever topic was fascinating him at the time. But here, he's sharing his creative and musical philosophy in a generous and open manner, genuinely pleased to be in front of an intelligent and interested audience. Both discs of this set are must-hear, for different reasons.

*Birdland, Neuburg 2011* is a duo of Taylor and longtime musical partner Tony Oxley. It's so precisely and closely mic'd one can hear the piano bench creaking during the quieter segments, but at the same time the most obstreperous passages remain beautiful, never becoming overwhelming. These two played together, off and on, from Taylor's Berlin residency in 1988 until his final public performances at the Whitney Museum in 2016. Their shared language is in full flower here; the drummer's trademark high-tuned toms rattle like coffee cans tapped with a pencil as Taylor plays in an uncommonly beautiful manner, dipping deep into his well of classical technique. On headphones, piano on the left and drums on the right, it's gloriously immersive.

For more information, visit [aaa-angelica.com](http://aaa-angelica.com) and [fsrecords.net](http://fsrecords.net)



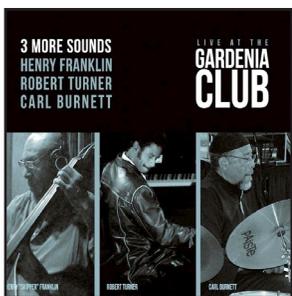
**Let My People Go**  
Archie Shepp/Jason Moran (Archieball)  
by Tyran Grillo

Living as we now do in a world that feels orphaned from its ancestral histories, there's no more appropriate space to cry out for resurrection than the womb-like expanse of traditional Negro spiritual "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child". Saxophonist Archie Shepp turns this melody inside out as salvific blood drips along the keys of Jason Moran's piano.

Thus, the duo establishes the rhythm of a hymn trapped somewhere between Earth's crust and the magma churning beneath. If we don't already feel the words coursing through our ears from the first note, we find them unraveled in Shepp's own singing voice, of which hints of reed hang in the air like a signature fragrance, as also in Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" and another traditional spiritual, "Go Down Moses". In both Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn's "Isfahan" and Moran's "He Cares", the listener is greeted by truth while John Coltrane's "Wise One" unfurls a territory limited only by our imagination to map it. Here, voices of the past hit the open air of the future, only to find they need oxygen masks just to inhale. Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight" reminds us that only in the darkest hours can our thoughts churn in an ocean free of pollution—water for its own sake, primed for the vessels of our attempts to make sense of it all.

In light of all this preaching of ebony, ivory and everything in between, it would be unwise to think of the album as a catharsis, for a catharsis implies that we have transcended the bonds that necessitate thoughts of escape. No. We must gaze upon the fetters and chains until they burn after-images into our brains, so that we may never forget what the world would have us deny: many had to die for us to stand here, poised on the cusp of a tide that could just as easily turn in our favor as against it. Though still a long way from home, we strive to see that candlelight in the window telling us: Just one more leg of this journey and the doors of relief will spread their wings to receive you. At least here, we have a feather to hold to our hearts as we press on.

For more information, visit [archieball.com](http://archieball.com)



**Live at The Gardenia Club**  
3 More Sounds (Skipper Prod.)  
by Pierre Giroux

The Three Sounds—pianist Gene Harris, bassist Andy Simpkins and drummer Bill Dowdy—recorded prolifically for Blue Note between 1956-74. Harris was a multifaceted and enthusiastic performer. 3 More Sounds is a high-energy trio with pianist Robert Turner, bassist Henry Franklin and drummer Carl Burnett (who turns 80 this month) and in many ways The Three Sounds personified (Franklin and Burnett were hired by Harris after The Three Sounds disbanded in 1973).

In this February 2020 live recording from the

Gardenia Club in East Hollywood California, before an attentive and enthusiastic audience, the trio runs through a set of well known popular and jazz standards that jump off the disc. Starting with the Burton Lane composition "On A Clear Day" the trio swings out, led by Turner. He covers the keys with abandon, has formidable technique and uses block chords, cadences and embellishments with a sure-footed spirit of inquiry. Ahmad Jamal's "Night Mist Blues" is next up with a knock-out groove as Turner digs a trench through the blues theme. Franklin has a terrific solo turn showing he has a soulful instinct and imposing fluency. For the Charles Lloyd song "Sombrero Sam" and the John Lennon-Paul McCartney classic "Eleanor Rigby", flutist Louis Van Taylor adds fluid coloration to the proceedings. The former has a Latin vibe with flowing rhythmic undercurrents and Van Taylor shows he is an assertive partner in the mix. The latter is a full-blown tour de force running just over 11 minutes. The number is anchored in the rhythm of its pop roots, with Franklin taking an early resourceful turn, before Van Taylor joins the fray. He offers a rough and ready solo in keeping with the character of the arrangement. From start to finish the number is filled with precocious swagger. The Erroll Garner opus "Misty" is a perfect fit for the pianistic talents of Turner, who delivers a lovely lyrical take on the theme by providing evocative harmonic gradations as he ruminates over the keyboard. He fills the arrangement with his big two-handed sound and nimble technique.

The set closes in appropriate fashion with a stellar rendition of the Miles Davis standard "Milestones", with each band member getting a chance to strut his stuff. Burnett opens the frame with an extensive and bustling workout, Turner then states the theme using his fluid technique to show his command of the material and Franklin takes the number to a close with his clean big tone and nimble playing.

For more information, visit [sprecords.com](http://sprecords.com)



**Nothing But Love: The Music of Frank Lowe**  
Various Artists (Mahakala Music)  
by Steven Loewy

Tenor saxophonist Frank Lowe was a force from the '70s through the end of the century (and a bit beyond) before his untimely demise and the way his sound and style evolved left an important mark on the world of avant garde jazz. Make no mistake: Lowe could be as intense and wild as they come, but he also exhibited a love of the jazz tradition and some of his best work came when he worked in small groups with fellow giants such as trombonist Joseph Bowie, cornet player Butch Morris and violinist Billy Bang. Lowe was an exciting performer and while John Coltrane exercised a considerable influence on his playing, over time he shifted, never giving up his ability to thrash and burn, but focusing more on melody and longer syncopated lines. His music was full of surprises.

*Nothing But Love: The Music of Frank Lowe* brings together a group of musicians who had each recorded or otherwise played with Lowe and were influenced by his music, although they had never before performed together. The seven pieces written by Lowe are tightly performed and, in the best tradition of successful tributes, the album does not have the feel of a retrospective but instead properly uses Lowe's tunes and soloing as an inspiration without losing the

essence of his sound.

There is good playing throughout, with Chad Fowler (soprano and tenor saxophone) and Christopher Parker (piano) continual standouts. On the opener, "Decision in Paradise", soprano aggressively hovers above the intense group playing, propelled hard by Anders Griffen's muscular drumming, with help from wild piano and bassist Bernard Santacruz. Similar patterns emerge elsewhere, often with surprising twists. The opening bass and drums duo on "Addiction Ain't Fiction" segues to a lilting, though sometimes aggressive, saxophone solo, which leads to a hard-hitting contribution by Parker, then joined by expansive saxophone, with tricky rhythms advanced by Griffen. There is also a shorter alternate track that gives some insight into the improvisational process of the group, as the arrangement and solos follow a different tack.

"In Trane's Name" is true to its namesake and Fowler, no less than Lowe, mines it for delicious chunks of fluid, powerful blowing, backed by the energetic rhythm section, making for a compelling interpretation and often exhilarating experience. The alternate take adds Bobby Lavell on tenor saxophone, with similar exciting results, as the horns ride the melody in unison.

Lowe often used expanded small riffs as building blocks and on "Fuschia Norval", the group takes the simple melody and expands it through a lengthy, scintillating saxophone solo, which progressively moves outside. Talented vocalist Kelly Hurt, a cousin of Lowe, is featured on the pop-infused title track, with Fowler's explosive sound giving the piece some needed weight. Hopefully, this recording will not be the last from this very gifted group.

For more information, visit [mahakalamusic.com](http://mahakalamusic.com)

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**Slipknots Through A Looking Glass**  
Eric Revis (Pyroclastic)  
by Eric Wendell

On *Slipknots Through A Looking Glass*, bassist Eric Revis offers up a collection of songs beautifully displaying his penchant for finding groove in avant garde settings. Essayed by pianist Kris Davis, tenor saxophonist Bill McHenry, alto saxophonist Darius Jones and drummer Chad Taylor (drummer Justin Faulkner on two selections), Revis' compositional aesthetic finds the emotional counterpoints in the human condition.

Beginning with "Baby Renfro", an insistent bass groove mixed with prepared piano shows a heightened sense of determination. The song shows the group at its funkier, knee-deep in a firm structure for the group to play off. The pulpy noir of "Earl & The Three-Fifths Compromise" is an early highlight as Revis holds down a solid foundation while McHenry and Jones weave in and out of each other's melodic characters.

The through-line of the record is the three separate parts of the title track. "Part 1" haunts your ears with two bass tracks played in stereo while a squealing saxophone is faintly heard in the distance, creating an evocative feel. This is quickly interrupted by "Shutter", the "rocker" on the album; purposeful with Revis' eighth note feel setting the stage.

While Revis' groove, McHenry's snarl and Jones' bite are praiseworthy, it's Davis that makes the sound of the group what it is. This is evident on "ProByte", with a sparse solo piano introduction that is forlorn and melancholic. Reflective without being reductive, the song slowly builds to higher and higher peaks. "House of Leaves" is the group at its most abstract, a sparseness running on the tightest of ropes. Davis is especially adept at keeping the dialogue moving forward, guiding the group to its ultimate denouement. The album ends with the final part of the title track, multi-tracked basses climbing and crawling over one another in a subtle battle royale.

Much like the title may suggest, Revis' music reflects a musical image that can easily be undone. And that is its very strength; the idea that at any moment all these disparate tones can easily go off the rails.

For more information, visit [pyroclasticrecords.com](http://pyroclasticrecords.com)



**Dance Chaos Music**  
XNN (Eschatology)  
Eponymous

**Ekstere + Daniel Carter (Noncept)**

**Pandemic Duets**

**Daniel Carter/Stephen Gauci (Gaucimusic)**

by John Pietaro

The name Daniel Carter is mythic among New York's free jazz core, a tireless stalwart since the late '60s. Less aware critics have described him as a "leader" among his flock, but rarely if ever has Carter given himself such a designation, even while at the helm. What makes this artist so unique, beyond his mastery of woodwinds and moving performances on trumpet, piano and more, is a burning enthusiasm to seek out new voices and experiences. To Carter, the act of creating music with

others is sacred, whether with a respected elder of renown or a promising youth with that special spark. He is persistently on the lookout for the latter and, with such tenacity, always in good company.

XNN, a quartet with saxophonist Ben Cohen, pianist Eli Wallace and drummer Dan Kurfirst, is one of those gatherings that would be advised to remain together as a working unit, so vibrant is its communicative ensemble power. From the opening notes of section 1 (*Dance Chaos Magic* is one improvisation with several brief tacits), the band demonstrates the strengths adherent in music so purely improvised. Carter's instruments—soprano, alto and tenor saxophones, clarinet, flute and trumpet—paint lines at once celebratory and lamentative, gently casting melodies that fit within Cohen's tenor counterpoint. Founder of record label Eschatology, which released this recording, Brooklyn transplant Cohen is part of a thriving underground that includes house concert series Outskirts and the band Johnny Fuck-Face's Music for Children (gotta love that). Wallace is co-director of Outskirts and has also made music with the likes of Billy Mintz and Ingrid Laubrock while Kurfirst has performed globally, his rhythmic focus reaching just as wide. Together, they do create music to be remembered. The album doesn't so much explore a soundscape as carry the listener onto one. In the work's latter part, the horns embrace one another passionately as piano moves through levels of preparedness (from strings fully muted to only partially so) and Kurfirst cultivates the storm with care, playing a kind of metallic pedal point at the center of his drumkit.

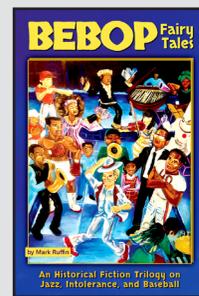
*Ekstere + Daniel Carter* is a combo of both veterans and newcomers: drummer/percussionist Todd Capp; multi-instrumentalist Kurt Ralske, here restricting himself to only soprano saxophone; bassist Che Chen, best known as co-founder of 75 Dollar Bill and a multi-instrumentalist of vast palette; and Talice Lee, a rapidly rising violinist. *Ekstere* is Esperanto for "outside", where the music naturally lies, but this destination is reached within the softest dynamic range, almost breathlessly so. Carter's alto rides on waves of lush (but never complacent) long tones by violin and voice (both by Lee) melding with soprano saxophone and groaning bowed bass, while Capp seems to breathe over his percussives, sweeping across metals and skins elegantly. The effect, if it can be described, is a union of '80s ECM, Pauline Oliveros, Paul Winter's Canyon Consort and strains of Erik Satie. If 'new age' music sounded like this, it would have left a lasting impact on us all. But at no point does this music lean into mere drone as the sparse, languid motion of each instrument is continuous. Alto in "Vespers", lighter still, embraces the airflow as it pairs with the slight textures of violin. Midway through, trumpet appears, unmuted but still at near whisper. Rarely has so much music existed in such a range, but this quartet paints a vast canvas of intimate dynamics.

In contrast, Carter's collections of wind duos with fellow reeds player Stephen Gauci, *Pandemic Duets*, demonstrate a clear restlessness if not agitation so present as to be essential components. As closely as these emotions accompany our collective experience of coronavirus, so is the effect heard on these linear improvisations. Each of the nine relatively brief works evoke different aspects of pandemic and lockdown and as such, are approached disparately, of varying tempo, intensity and instrumentation. Whether heard in pairs of saxophones, flutes, clarinets or various mixes (Carter also incorporates trumpet), the intricate parts carving the whole easily draw in the listener. Of special note is selection three, a flute duo in which the sonorities are brilliantly close, casting microtonal shimmers about nervous voices, with the longer tones somehow reminiscent of the haunting PBS *Open Mind* theme, "World Without Time" (interestingly enough this was by the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra). While some works here are classic "new thing" jazz, i.e. selection 1

and others expand this into carefully constructed call-and-response (4), there is the moving flute and clarinet pairing that defies both tonality and stereotype. As is the case with most Carter collaborations, there is a powerful awareness of every surrounding and this makes for great strength in the duet. By selection 7, alto streams an elegy against tenor pulsations, still, the instrumentalists are never at odds with the other's walk. If anything, the divergent paths they encounter are assets of thriving.

For more information, visit [eschatologyrecords.bandcamp.com](http://eschatologyrecords.bandcamp.com), [toddcapp.bandcamp.com](http://toddcapp.bandcamp.com) and [gaucimusic.bandcamp.com](http://gaucimusic.bandcamp.com). Carter live-streams Feb. 16th at [artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html](http://artsforart.org/onlinesalon.html).

## IN PRINT



**Bebop Fairy Tales: An Historical Fiction Trilogy on Jazz, Intolerance and Baseball**  
Mark Ruffin (Amazon Books)

by Marilyn Lester

40 years in radio (author Mark Ruffin is the afternoon drivetime DJ for SiriusXM's Real Jazz channel), 30 years of writing experience, a passion for baseball and plenty of inspiration are the anchors of *Bebop Fairy Tales: An Historical Fiction Trilogy on Jazz, Intolerance and Baseball*.

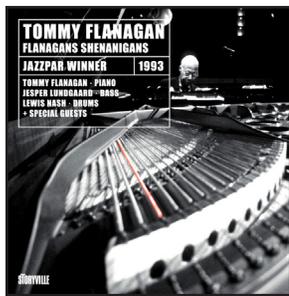
Readers will be entertained, informed and often amused by Ruffin's direct, no-frills style of writing. He's an able storyteller with an ear for dialogue and the ability to pack color into an economy of words, all the while hitting hard on themes of intolerance and injustice. Timely and sometimes raw, Ruffin never gives up on positivity: perseverance wins the day.

Via a tried-and-true literary device, the three tales in 220 pages place real people—and authentic facts about them—into creatively imagined circumstances, within the framework of the bebop era. And what better way to address injustice, racial and otherwise, than through jazz, a musical form long associated with the concept of freedom and equality?

Each story is cleverly named after a classic jazz tune, inspired by its composer. In "The Saturday Night Fish Fry" (Louis Jordan) jazz saxophonist Gene Ammons and Broadway director/choreographer Bob Fosse meet in New Orleans in the late '40s and, over two days of raucous exploits, some hard truths are revealed. "Round Midnight With The Ku Klux Klan" (Thelonious Monk), set in 1957 in Mississippi, follows the bullied and effeminate protagonist who meets the pianist in New York with life-changing importance. "The Sidewinder" (Lee Morgan), set in Philadelphia from 1964-80, parses the relationship between a Black boy and a Jewish boy from opposite sides of town. It's a history-packed story that's also a valentine to the City of Brotherly Love.

In an interview about his book, Ruffin declared, "intolerance is stupid". *Bebop Fairy Tales: An Historical Fiction Trilogy on Jazz, Intolerance and Baseball* makes that case and much more quite definitively.

For more information, visit [markruffin.com](http://markruffin.com)



**Flanagan's Shenanigans**  
Tommy Flanagan (Storyville)  
by Jim Motavalli

Nicely recorded work from the late Detroit-born bebop pianist Tommy Flanagan is always welcome. His career spanned more than 50 years (including gigs with Charlie Parker as a teenager). *Flanagan's Shenanigans*, originally issued in 1994, is a useful 70-minute memento of an ambitious gig Flanagan played in Denmark in 1993, celebrating his win of the Jazzpar Prize, which was an annual Danish jazz prize founded by trumpeter Arvid Meyer and existed from 1990-2004, the winner getting 200,000 Danish Kroner. (The liner notes say the album was recorded in 1996, but this is apparently a typo.)

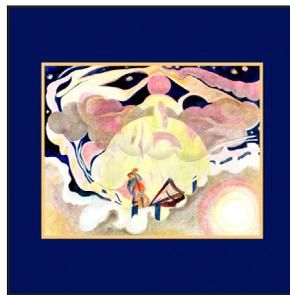
The pianist is featured in front of a large and enthusiastic audience playing as a trio with the Danish bassist Jesper Lundgaard and drummer Lewis Nash; in a quartet adding Jesper Thilo on tenor saxophone; and with the Windtet: Henrik Bolberg Pedersen (trumpet), Vincent Nilsson and Steen Hanson (baritone horn), Jan zum Vohrde (alto saxophone, flute), Uffe Markussen (tenor and soprano saxophone, bass clarinet) and Flemming Madsen (baritone saxophone, bass clarinet). Flanagan, who died eight years later, sounds great on all of it.

The trio material is quite fine. Thad Jones' "Let's" is a tricky, uptempo number, which retains the pianist's trademark lightness of touch. Flanagan and Nash play like they're glued together and Lundgaard's fleet solo demonstrates he should be better known outside Scandinavia. Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke's "But Beautiful" is, as it was for Johnny Hartman, lyrical and wistful. Ditto Tom McIntosh's "The Balanced Scales", another ballad.

The pleasantly jerky midtempo title piece, dedicated to Flanagan, is by late Memphis pianist James Williams. It's bright and busy and everyone shines, including Lundgaard who gets another solo. Dizzy Gillespie was on Flanagan's mind, because he died earlier that year. The trio's tribute is an extended 12-minute version of "Tin Tin Deo" that's gleefully shape-shifting and percussive.

Thilo comes out of Coleman Hawkins and is quite relaxed and assured in his showcase, Quincy Jones' "For Lena and Lennie". The three large band pieces, all of them Flanagan's own, are deftly arranged by Ole Kock Hansen. The laid-back "Beyond the Bluebird" has some strong ensemble writing. "Eclypso", which John Coltrane recorded, combines calypso and Latin influences in its engaging head. Some of the horn work is slightly off-mic, but the trumpet comes through loud and clear.

For more information, visit [storyvillerecords.com](http://storyvillerecords.com)



**Force Majeure**  
Dezron Douglas/Brandee Younger  
(International Anthem)  
by Tyran Grillo

As COVID-19 continues to occupy the foreground of our collective mind, even as its primacy is under threat by the tumult of political schadenfreude, bassist Dezron Douglas and harpist Brandee Younger give us just what we need in this curated selection from their weekly collaborations, live-streamed throughout the pandemic as sonic scripture in a time of foolish doctrines.

The duo dives into the swirling waters of Alice Coltrane's "Gospel Trane", throughout which schools of hopeful fish swim in synergy. This is the language of the here and now, wrung dry of all animosity and rehydrated with love, flipping the dynamic of social distancing to reveal a creative intimacy—fierce and inextinguishable—beneath it all.

Subsequent repertoire spans the gamut from Marvin Gaye, The Jackson 5 and Pharoah Sanders to Kate Bush, Sting and The Carpenters. With so much to chew on, we are reminded of how much beauty we've lost access to over the past year, not only in terms of sound but also in terms of national sentiment, dialogue, and, above all, listening.

In tracks like John Coltrane's "Equinox" there is an abiding sense of duality, slipping one hand out of our zeitgeist toward the past and another toward the future. Thus, each instrument brings its own histories to the table, hashing out the lingering oppressions of colonial and plantation mentalities until only indistinguishable molecules are left to dissipate in the air.

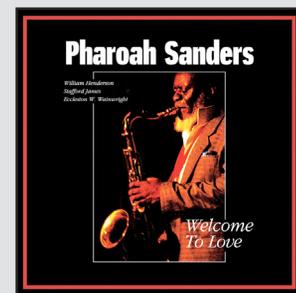
Sanders-Leon Thomas' "The Creator Has A Master Plan" is the heart of this quest, which by the end has only heart left to give. That same blessed hope is outwardly expressed in Joe Raposo's "Sing". If God is

in the details, then here we are served one heaping plateful after another of them. While like-minded joy overflows its cup in Clifton Davis' "Never Can Say Goodbye" and "Toilet Paper Romance" (an original with which they ended every show), it bends a knee in the shadow of inward turns like Bush's "This Woman's Work" by validating the safety of dreams.

It's all there in the title, which in everyday usage means an irresistible compulsion yet which in legalese connotes unforeseeable circumstances preventing the fulfillment of a contract. If the latter doesn't describe the moral loophole of 2020, what does?

For more information, visit [intlanthem.com](http://intlanthem.com)

## DROP THE NEEDLE



**Welcome To Love**  
Pharoah Sanders (Timeless-Tidal Waves Music)  
by George Kanzler

Saxophonist Pharoah Sanders is firmly associated with the "spiritual, ecstatic" jazz of late John Coltrane and Alice Coltrane, as a prominent member of the jazz avant garde in the '60s, when he was still in his 20s. But there is another side to Sanders, one highlighted on this two-LP audiophile reissue of a CD he made with a quartet in 1990 for the Dutch label Timeless. Sanders had been adding classic and contemporary pop songs/standards to his repertoire for a decade when he recorded this music with his working quartet of William Henderson (piano, with Sanders from 1981-98), Stafford James (bassist for Sanders in 1989-90) and Eccleston W. Wainwright (drums). This all-ballad album is an homage to Coltrane's 1962 *Ballads* album on Impulse!

The parallels to Coltrane are evident. Sanders' approach to ballads mirrors that of his former boss, from affectionate limning of the melodies, often with just piano accompaniment at first, to warm, restrained improvisations sans the fire and intensity found in Coltrane and Sanders recordings together. Then there's the repertoire: three of the songs here—Gene DePaul-Don Raye's "You Don't Know What Love Is", Frank Loesser-Jimmy McHugh's "Say It Isn't So" and Jimmy Van Heusen-Phil Silvers' "Nancy (With the Laughing Face)"—are also on *Ballads*.

If you only listened to the first three sides of these two discs, you'd be right to think it is little more than a sincere, dedicated tribute to Coltrane's ballad playing. However, the final side of the second disc is distinctly Sanders, mainly the first two tracks. J.J. Johnson's "Lament" is given an almost somnolent treatment, opening with solo piano followed by arco bass before Sanders, on resonant soprano, brings on the melody to take it out. The Sanders original "Bird Song" is a six-plus minute a cappella tour de force for its composer on tenor, applying the techniques of his avant garde skills, including over-blowing, overtones and circular breathing, all in the service of creating a masterful improvisation. The side ends with a take on John Blackburn-Karl Suessdorf's "Moonlight in Vermont" that suggests Sanders was well acquainted with Stan Getz' version.

For more information, visit [tidalwavesmusic.com](http://tidalwavesmusic.com)

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**WBGO STORY**  
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NEWARK TO THE WORLD  
CHRIS DANIEL Co-Producer/Executive Consultant DOROTHY ANN KIRK  
Photographs BILL MAY Sound track DON BRADEN

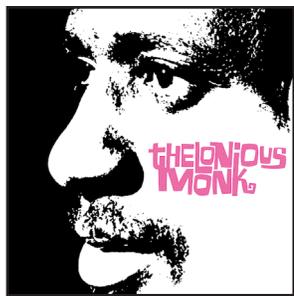
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*Palais des Beaux Arts 1963*  
**Thelonious Monk (Tidal Waves Music)**  
by Duck Baker

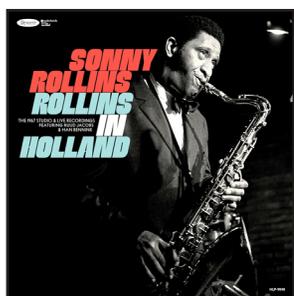
This excellent release went somewhat unnoticed, owing in part to the attention given to the nearly contemporaneous appearance of *Palo Alto* last year, but Monk fans will find this previously unissued date extremely rewarding in its own right, provided they can find it at all; it came out as a limited-release LP and may already be hard to track down.

The concert was recorded in Brussels during a European tour that Monk nearly didn't make (he complained that his hand hurt and had to be enticed out of bed on the day of departure). It was among the last recordings of what we could call the first edition of the "classic" Monk quartet with tenor saxophonist Charlie Rouse, bassist John Ore and drummer Frankie Dunlop. *Palo Alto*, though few reviewers mentioned the fact, seems to be the very last recording of the last classic lineup. In both cases the group was very comfortable with the material they played night after night, but still inspired by it and finding new ways to expand on it.

Dunlop is the big difference maker between the first and later classic lineups. A unique stylist who combined the driving swing of the big band era and the unpredictable accents of bebop, Dunlop is considered by many the perfect drummer for Monk. Not that Ben Riley wasn't an entirely worthy successor; the latter's more subtle touch added crucial shading to some of the group's greatest recordings (*Live At The It Club*, e.g.), but Dunlop did have something special and we really hear it at Palais des Beaux Arts. He even gets an unaccompanied solo track.

The sound quality is excellent and that makes it a perfect companion to the superb 2018 Gearbox release *Monk*, which was recorded in Copenhagen four days earlier. Even the fact that "Bye Ya" and "Monk's Dream" were played at both concerts is a plus, since the performances are so utterly different.

For more information, visit [tidalwavesmusic.com](http://tidalwavesmusic.com)



*Rollins in Holland*  
**Sonny Rollins (Resonance)**  
by Stuart Broomer

*Rollins in Holland*, available as a three-LP or two-CD set, documents performances in May 1967 when Sonny Rollins played a series of gigs with the Dutch rhythm section of bassist Ruud Jacobs and drummer Han Bennink. It's a remarkable release for a few reasons. In the late '60s, Rollins wasn't making trips to recording studios: *East Broadway Run Down* was recorded a year before and *Next Album* would only come in 1972. If Rollins wasn't making official statements, however, he was still practicing his spontaneous art at a consummate level. Rollins has had few creative peers in jazz and his gifts as an improviser included an unmatched melodic

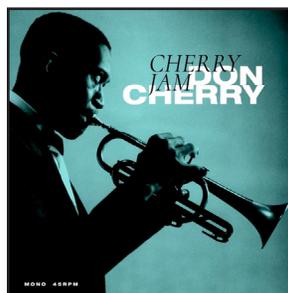
flow, a continuously inventive line peppered with myriad shifts and accents and propelled by a force that made him as much rhythm section as soloist.

The material, presented in reverse chronological order, opens with a radio studio set of short performances of modern jazz and Broadway standards, which could have made up one side of a standard LP of the day. Rollins is a towering presence and the tunes assume forms at once personal and perfect. Jacobs and Bennink, who together represented the poles of Dutch jazz—Jacobs a modernist traditionalist, Bennink the quintessential anarchist avant-gardist—were also the country's finest rhythm team, regular accompanists to touring mainstream masters like Johnny Griffin, Dexter Gordon and Clark Terry. For Jacobs and Bennink alike, Rollins, straddling the divide, was a special inspiration.

Televized evening takes from that last night begin to stretch, the live audience and unrestrained lengths amplifying Rollins' fluid creativity and encouraging Bennink's rambunctiously precise explosions. The last two LPs then chronicle the group's first club performance two nights before at Academie voor Beeldende Kunst Arnhem. Tunes that appear in refined form on the later dates—Rollins standbys like "Four" and "Sonny Moon for Two"—stretch into improvised odysseys, intense or playful by turn, with Rollins sometimes interpolating other tunes or just changing tack completely, all in relation to the moment's dialogue.

*Rollins in Holland* is at once heroic and joyous music-making that links hardbop and free jazz. It's both testimony to Rollins' singular genius and a harbinger of upcoming developments in Dutch music as well: Bennink and saxophonist Willem Breuker's *New Acoustic Swing Duo*, the first masterpiece of New Dutch Swing, was made just six months later. The sound isn't particularly good. High frequencies are thin on the live material and even the studio recordings suffer a certain excess of echo, but if sound quality impacts your listening to great jazz, you'll miss half of it and the sound here is infinitely better than Charlie Parker's *Bird at St. Nick's*.

For more information, visit [resonancerecords.org](http://resonancerecords.org)



*Cherry Jam*  
**Don Cherry (Gearbox)**  
by Pierre Crépon

Unfortunately, garbage is the word for a large part of the product sold using Don Cherry's name lately. The formula is simple: download a radio session that has circulated for years, slap terrible typography on a random Google Images search result and order a vinyl run. With this product that literally anyone could put together, shell entities named Alternative Fox, Lepo Glasbo, Hi Hat and 'unaware' resellers have to be thanked for making the market for proper archival releases even more impracticable than it already was.

Therefore, a cover housing actually uncirculated Cherry music and featuring licensing credits is a welcome sight. *Cherry Jam*, a 12" record played at 45 RPM, contains a short 1965 session from the archives of Denmark's national public radio. Those 20 minutes of music are divided between three Cherry originals and a standard. The trumpeter is the guest of a local quartet made up of pianist Atli Bjørn, tenor saxophonist Mogens Bollerup, bassist Benny Nielsen and drummer Simon Koppel. The era could suggest avant garde

playing, but the music is in a traditional bop format.

For reasons unknown, this release gives October 1965 as the recording date although Danmarks Radio archives place the session on Feb. 2nd, 1965. The few months in between mattered much in Cherry's career. In Europe, following a quartet tour with Albert Ayler's greatest formation, he would assemble in Paris the band with whom he made his first major mark as leader, playing the fast-paced suites made up of myriad themes segueing into each other heard on his classic *Complete Communion*.

Until then, working with Ornette Coleman or Sonny Rollins, Cherry had rarely recorded his own compositions. Hearing them outside of the suite context is in retrospect where *Cherry Jam's* main interest lies, as the musicians play competently but without reaching fascinating heights. *Cherry Jam* may ultimately be valuable more for what it is not than what it is, showing how the form of Cherry's music needed the radical evolution it would soon undergo truly to take flight. Cherry's '60s work deserves the most complete and qualitative documentation possible, just what Gearbox Records has helped accomplish.

For more information, visit [doncherrymusic.bandcamp.com](http://doncherrymusic.bandcamp.com)



*The Lost Berlin Tapes*  
**Ella Fitzgerald (Verve)**  
by Kurt Gottschalk

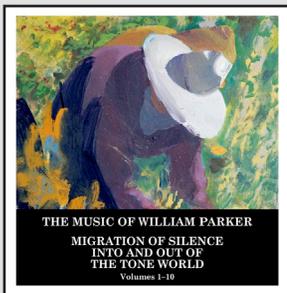
The thing with newly uncovered Ella Fitzgerald live recordings is that while there are unlikely to be revelations, a listen or two is sure to turn up a gem and a few more runs through will lead to the realization that every track is a gem. While the singer's performance career is quite well captured and catalogued at this point, the truth of the matter is that she wasn't an artist to give anything less than her all (even after learning between sets that her sister had died, as happened in 1966 at the Jazz à Juan festival on the French Riviera, where she was appearing with the Duke Ellington Orchestra). Her concerts were infused with joy and it's hard to imagine anyone not feeling it come through.

*The Lost Berlin Tapes* was recorded two years after her much acclaimed and Grammy Hall of Fame-inducted *Ella in Berlin: Mack the Knife*, but its release clearly trades off of that beloved title. Guitarist Jim Hall didn't make the trip this time and Stan Levey replaces Gus Johnson on drums. Pianist Paul Smith, then, becomes the star player in what was likely one of Fitzgerald's least distinguished bands, rounded out by bassist Wilfred Middlebrooks. Smith had been working with the singer for four years at the time of the Berlin return engagement and would continue to work with her for another 20 years. He's a solid player and occasionally shines—he slices time convincingly on "Takin' a Chance on Love"—but the date is clearly Fitzgerald's. The audience was there for her and the band is not about to get in the way.

Other gems include rockin' takes on "Here Comes Charlie" and "The Jersey Bounce" and a lovely "My Kind of Boy". There are hits, of course—"Cheek to Cheek", "I Won't Dance", "Summertime" and, of course, "Mack the Knife". *The Lost Berlin Tapes* isn't an essential Fitzgerald title, but there won't be a moment you're sorry that you're listening.

For more information, visit [vervemusicgroup.com](http://vervemusicgroup.com)

## BOXED SET



*The Music of William Parker / Migration of Silence Into and Out of the Tone World (Vol. 1-10)*  
 William Parker (Centering/AUM Fidelity)  
 by George Grella

A 10-CD boxed set in today's marketplace nearly always means some kind of retrospective compilation of an artist's substantive career. But in the case of bassist, composer and bandleader William Parker, *Migration of Silence Into and Out of the Tone World* is just a document of his ongoing music-making, a window into a prolific career as one of the centers of orbit in modern jazz. In terms of size, this is not Parker's first project of its kind; the 2013 *Wood Flute Songs* was an eight-CD collection of live recordings of various ensembles. That early set, in relative comparison, may be an on-the-fly look at a working musician while this one is very much a demonstration of Parker's current multiple paths and endeavors and, while not a summing up, is a substantial statement toward a definition of just who Parker is today.

The original release date was delayed, so now *Migrations* appears coincidentally with Duke University Press' publication of *Universal Tonality: The Life and Music of William Parker* by Cisco Bradley. Like the music, the book is a monograph, a statement on and analysis of the artist that is based on his biography but sees his work as a process. The emphasis in both music and writing is one of philosophy over praxis. This set is packed with music and also concepts, the latter primarily exploring Parker's relationship to text and musical composition. After taking in all the music, one initial response is that it seems, unexpectedly, incomplete. One reason for this is an instinctive response to holding a box (any box), a neat, geometric container defining the limits of what's inside against what couldn't fit in. The container carves an abstract, internal world out of external reality much more profoundly than does a CD case or an LP jacket. And the subtitle states "Volumes 1-10", with the implication that there will be more to come.

The other reason is musical: taken as a whole the 10 discs create an accumulation of music that feels unbalanced. Overall, this release is an important statement, not a monument but something better and more vital, merely the work that one of the most important figures in modern jazz is in the middle of—Parker produced 10 CDs because that's what he does as a musician and the quality of the music is mostly very high, with a great amount of success and satisfaction inside. But not everything works or is of the same quality and Parker's concepts captured within can be ungainly and even self-defeating. And *Migrations* cannot answer the question it itself could not anticipate—recorded through the first half of 2019, the music offers no clue to what Parker can and might be doing on the far side of the isolation during the coronavirus pandemic.

Over the last several years, Parker has been working more and more with singers and vocal material and there's a vocalist who is a lead voice—if not the most important one—on seven of the volumes. One album, *Afternoon Poem*, is Lisa Sokolov a cappella on all but one track and Parker wrote all the lyrics.

That last element is the one consistent and stubborn flaw throughout the collection, as Parker's lyrics are not nearly on the same level as his formidable musicianship. Some of them make for excellent vocal music, some look good on the page but are not set well into music and some are banal and dull.

Where once Parker's *Raining on the Moon* group, with Leena Conquest singing, stood out as a separate, though wonderful, branch of his music, *Migrations* cements his direction over the last few years, which has been to place the written lyric as a primary concern over purely musical expression. *Migrations* is a new order of magnitude, obviously in terms of sheer mass but also in the way, as a whole, the albums place the words in a more intimate and integral place in Parker's art. The political slogans and urban pastoralism of previous albums are here, but so is the sense that the poetry is not about Parker trying to make a statement; rather, it turns out, the poetry has been central to Parker's creativity since his formative years. What *Universal Tonality* shows is not only that Parker has been writing out words for decades, but that his aesthetic, social and political being really got its start with his teenage exposure to the Black Arts movement in general and the writing of Amiri Baraka (with whom he has collaborated), Nikki Giovanni and Gil Scott-Heron in particular.

Still, the problem remains that Parker's music is full of life, buoyancy and surprise while his poetry often limits the expressive possibilities of his music. The best of the vocal albums and the very best album in the set is *Harlem Speaks*, which on its own would easily be one of the top jazz albums of the last several years. Its success shows what can happen when everything comes together. One reason the album is so marvelous is that the great Fay Victor is the vocalist (with Parker and drummer Hamid Drake) and she's a very different singer than the others in these volumes. Or perhaps the better contrast is that Parker tends to favor pure-toned sopranos and music that has a shape and color closer to folk music than to jazz while Victor is definitely, robustly, a jazz singer, turning phrases around and giving them rhythmic punch and variety. The opening track, "Dancing at the Savoy", is just her and Drake working in dynamic tandem and it has the greatest energy of any other single track in the whole box. The other strength of the album is that it strips down the music to the great pair of Parker and Drake, the finest jazz rhythm section of this generation, and the combination of swing and rhythm-and-blues flavored soulful pulse remains one of the great sensual pleasures in jazz.

*Harlem Speaks* also features, by far, the best lyrics in the set. Again, some credit goes to Victor, who could turn an E.U.L.A. into something hip, but content-wise these words are about evocative memories and sensations, metaphors, impressions, the stuff of songs. On the other discs, the musical construction is singer with accompaniment (*Harlem Speaks* sounds like the work of a band) and this exposes the substance of the songs. Volume 6, *Mexico*, has the most fascinating sound in the set, the music arranged for an ensemble that includes oud, harmonica (Ariel Bart, who has a substantial presence throughout the set) and various horns, all backing Jean Carla Rodea. The music is a great example of Parker's work, with a warm, danceable pulse framing an instrumental interplay that is balanced between freedom and mutually supporting polyphony. The music often feels profound, but lyrics like "We are not criminals / We are not drug dealers / We are human beings / More than you see" are so ordinary in style and sentiment that they shatter the spell the music strives to weave.

On "I Will Die For You", from *Afternoon Poem*, Sokolov sings "I am from Israel / You are from

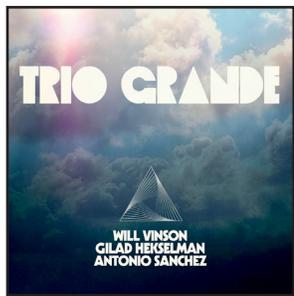
Palestine / I will die for you / Will you die for me?" One admires the commitment she puts into this (all the singers have nothing but their sincerest hearts in all the music) but this is pretty tough to take musically and since this is an anodyne right-thinking statement, one is put into the position of being churlish for not enjoying it as music. Parker's intent is admirable, but one feels manipulated. Not that Parker is anything but guileless, the agenda is just for him to express this idea through a singer, but good sentiment alone doesn't guarantee good music and often words have superior effect when they are merely read or spoken, not sung. One odd result of Parker's texts is that the vocal music is quite listenable because he's so good at shaping melodies and phrases in his composing, he raises the level of the words more than they deserve.

This material, and much of the set, is obviously squarely in the tradition of political/protest jazz. Political music is notoriously difficult to pull off as music and jazz that works as such is indelible in the heart—*We Insist!*, *Attica Blues*, "Fables of Faubus", "Black and Blue", "Strange Fruit"—but when it fails it feels like the words wield an iron bar that smashes apart the music rather than the object of protest. Music is mostly not about anything specific, it's a sensation from and for the soul and when words make it about something they need the same artifice of color and shape and metaphor that is the domain of music. At this point in his career, Parker's poetry lags behind his playing and composing. Hearing samples of James Baldwin speaking on *The Majesty of Jah* drives home the potential power in Parker's music when met by the right words. This is another high point, an excellent stand-alone album. There is a necessary fire in Baldwin's words (Parker has an inherent gentleness that is deeply admirable) that is a better companion to the relaxed, focused lope of the music. One of the masterpieces in Parker's discography is *I Plan to Stay a Believer: The Inside Music of Curtis Mayfield* and *Jah* is a companion to the earlier album, hot words and warm, positive soul making not just an unbeatable message, but the kind of music that inspires social and political movements.

This set is a substantial composer's statement. Volume 2, *Child of Sound*, is a solo piano album, with Eri Yamamoto playing Parker's music. Without Parker's presence, one hears in greater relief what a fine composer he is; there are many lovely, soulful song-like tracks, like "The Golden Light" and a version of the title track from the *Mexico* album. There's a generous 14 tracks, but there are times one wishes Yamamoto was given more space to spin out some deeper improvisations; these are simple head-solos-head arrangements. A disc of music dedicated to Italian filmmakers like Fellini and Antonioni, with Andrea Wolper singing, is sincere but also disconnected from the spirit and meaning of the films themselves, as if Parker is working from sensations of memories rather than memories themselves.

The final two discs put deeper emphasis on Parker as organizer of music and musicians, but aesthetically sit apart from the other recordings. *The Fastest Train* has Parker playing flutes, along with two other flutists, in an extended series of colorful improvisations shaped into a narrative suite. It's a demonstration of Parker's "universal tonality" concept, which according to Bradley is a belief that improvisation is a place where all musicians, regardless of heritage, can meet. *Manzanar* is music for string quartet with added players—half is fascinating, the other half sounds like it needs a bit more rehearsal. But these are errors of commission, of a fine musician exploring his tone world, and as a whole this is a new a welcome continent in Parker's discography.

For more information, visit [aumfidelity.com](http://aumfidelity.com)



**Trio Grande**  
**Will Vinson/Gilad Hekselman/Antonio Sánchez**  
**(Whirlwind)**  
 by Tom Conrad

Jazz has become music without borders. No one thinks it remarkable that three of the most creative jazz musicians in New York started out in Mexico (Antonio Sánchez), the UK (Will Vinson) and Israel (Gilad Hekselman). Sánchez, the biggest name, is Pat Metheny's drummer. He should have won an Oscar for his brilliant soundtrack to the 2014 film *Birdman*, but his score was ruled ineligible on a technicality. Vinson is one of the most intriguing alto saxophonists to enter jazz in the new millennium. Hekselman is a primary representative of the ongoing "Israeli Invasion" currently expanding the jazz art form.

Their new project, *Trio Grande*, arrives with high expectations and meets them, although not in ways you expect. Most of what happens here is surprisingly loud, edgy and untamed. These virtuosos are interested in kicking your ass. It starts with Sánchez and his wicked grooves and onslaughts of energy. If there is a breakout on this album it is Hekselman. An outlaw guitar gunslinger lurks in his sophisticated soul. Sometimes he and Sánchez recall John McLaughlin and Billy Cobham. On the latter's "Gocta" they unleash sublime maniacal fury worthy of the first Mahavishnu Orchestra. "Scoville", Hekselman's tribute to John Scofield, makes art from distortion. Yet largely because of Hekselman, the emotional range of this music is wide enough to include rapt, pristine melodicism like "Will You Let It".

Solo firepower continuously asserts itself. For example, Vinson's escalating levels of complexity on Sánchez' "Firenze" are stunning. But *Trio Grande* is greater than the sum of its exceptional individual parts. These guys are committed to a single ensemble purpose. On Vinson's infectious ritual "Oberkampf", the solos of Hekselman and Vinson are vivid treble elaborations within one overarching story. If you just let "Oberkampf" wash over you, you may not notice when Hekselman's piercing cries become Vinson's calls. They are the same passion.

This album came out in November 2020, a bright moment at the end of a dark year.

For more information, visit [whirlwindrecordings.com](http://whirlwindrecordings.com). Hekselman live-streams Feb. 4th at [jazzgallery.org/tjgonline](http://jazzgallery.org/tjgonline).



**That's It!**  
**Rosanno Sportiello (Arbors)**  
 by Scott Yanow

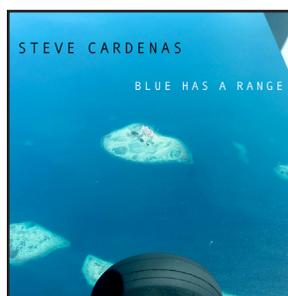
The past decade has really been the golden age of jazz piano. While most of the early innovators have long since passed, there are numerous brilliant interpreters currently active, probably more than at any time in jazz history, playing creatively in every style.

If he had been around in the '40s, Rossano Sportiello would not only have been a poll winner but also a household name. A superb stride and swing pianist who is versatile enough to fit into more modern settings, Sportiello has his own sound within the jazz tradition. For proof, one listen to his recent solo recital, *That's It!*, should suffice although few listeners will want to hear these performances just once.

On superior obscurities, originals and vintage standards, Sportiello is heard in top form. He starts out with a melodic revival of "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and his lyrical original "She Is There" and then gets cooking. He strides his way through "Stars Fell On Alabama", gets hot on his "Song For Emily", brings back "Guilty" (a Richard Whiting gem that is rarely performed) and then stomps on "Fine And Dandy".

The momentum never slows down even when the tempo does. While Sportiello hints in spots at Teddy Wilson, Fats Waller, Art Tatum and other '30s greats, he never sounds like a duplicate of any of his predecessors. And of his originals, one could imagine the title track becoming a standard someday along with "Nonno Bob's Delight"; the latter starts out as a waltz before becoming a hard-swinging with bass lines reminiscent of Dave McKenna. *That's It!* is simply one of the finest solo piano albums in recent memory.

For more information, visit [arborsrecords.com](http://arborsrecords.com). Sportiello live-streams Sundays at [facebook.com/RossanoSportiello](http://facebook.com/RossanoSportiello).



**Blue Has A Range**  
**Steve Cardenas (Sunnyside)**  
 by Robert Bush

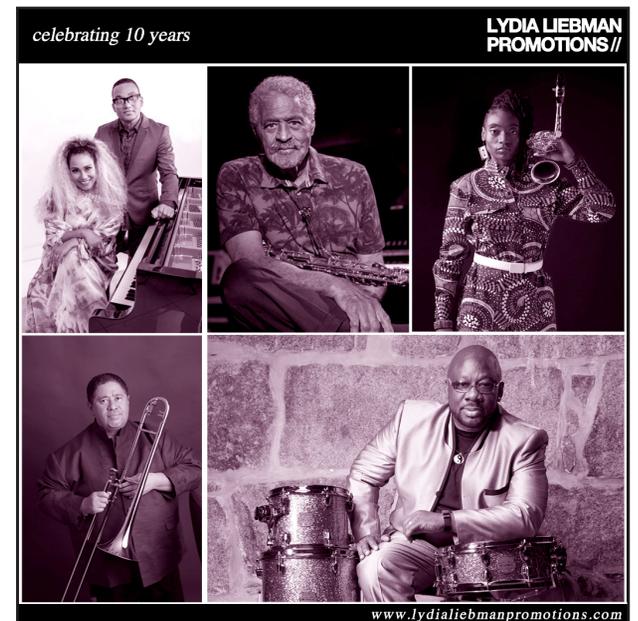
It's all about the tone. These days, everyone's got chops and the ability to navigate difficult meters, but unless a player has command over their personal timbre, all that technical prowess doesn't amount to much. Steve Cardenas has that tone. It's a warm and fluid legato and shares qualities of giants like John Abercrombie or Emily Remler while remaining clearly identifiable. On *Blue Has A Range*, (his sixth date as a leader) Cardenas helms a tight ensemble of Jon Cowherd (piano), Ben Allison (bass) and Brian Blade (drums).

The first thing that grabs the listener on opener "Lost And Found" is Blade's pristine ride cymbal ping, then the leader's honey-like tone and the obvious simpatico between Cowherd and Cardenas. Allison is a little buried in the mix, but the overall quartet sonics are quite satisfying. "Blue Language" goes for a sharper, staccato effect, with plentiful chord substitutions from the guitarist, which manage to avoid clashing with Cowherd. They've got a great relationship and seem to be able to finish each other's phrases with ease. An early favorite is "Language Of Love", a pensive, airy ballad that lingers sweetly in the ear. Cardenas digs in for an emotional solo blending bluesy asides with modal repetition before the handoff to Cowherd, who responds in kind.

"Highline" is a midtempo swinger in the tradition of Blue Note era Wayne Shorter. After clearing the decks with the melodic statement in unison, the principals turn to Blade, whose architecturally solid expository pays big dividends. It's easy to see why he is such an in-demand drummer: very few people can solo like that and still return to a slow simmer. He's a master of the fine details, a rimshot here, a cymbal swell there, all in the service of the song at hand.

Allison finally comes to the forefront on "Siquijor", taking a decidedly Charlie Haden-esque approach where the spaces between the notes are as important as the notes themselves. The band takes it 'out' for a minute in the appropriately titled "Signpost Up Ahead" with nervous energy, but the title track is pure melodic bliss. Lots of interplay and memorable melodies bring another guitar/piano tandem to mind—Pat Metheny and the recently departed Lyle Mays—not a bad comparison and not one made lightly.

For more information, visit [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com). Cardenas live-streams Feb. 10th at [facebook.com/barbayeux](http://facebook.com/barbayeux).



RECOMMENDED NEW RELEASES

- Gabriel Alegria Afro-Peruvian Sextet—*Social Distancing* (Saponegro)
- Lina Allemano Four—*Vegetables* (Lumo)
- Binker and Moses—*Escape The Flames* (Gearbox)
- Emmet Cohen—*Future Stride* (Mack Avenue)
- Chris Corsano—*Mezzaluna* (Catalytic Sound)
- Jeremiah Cymerman/Charlie Looker—*A Horizon Made of Canvas* (Astral Spirits)
- Carsten Dahl Trinity—*Mirrors Within* (Storyville)
- Hal Galper Quintet—*Live at the Berlin Philharmonic 1977* (Origin)
- Muriel Grossman—*Quiet Earth* (RR Gems)
- Francisco Mela—*MPT Trio Volume 1* (577 Records)

Laurence Donohue-Greene, Managing Editor

- Tim Berne/Matt Mitchell Duo—*Spiders* (Out Of Your Head)
- Cortez—*Legal Tender* (Clean Feed)
- Carsten Dahl Trinity—*Mirrors Within* (Storyville)
- The Flake—*Plays Clinkers* (Amalgam)
- Hal Galper Quintet—*Live at the Berlin Philharmonic 1977* (Origin)
- Elisabeth Harnik/Paal Nilssen-Love—*Tangram* (Catalytic Sound)
- Ellis Marsalis—*Ellis* (Newvelle)
- Francisco Mela—*MPT Trio Volume 1* (577 Records)
- Roscoe Mitchell/Mazzol & Arhythmic Perfection—*Four Sure* (Bocian)
- Archie Shepp/Jason Moran—*Let My People Go* (Archieball)

Andrey Henkin, Editorial Director



*Portrait of the Artist: The Music of Gregg Hill*  
Ben Rosenblum Trio (Cold Plunge)

*Kites and Strings*

Ben Rosenblum Nebula Project (One Trick Dog)  
by Dan Bilawsky

In some respects these two albums couldn't be more different. One is a live trio date where Ben Rosenblum leads exclusively from the piano and performs somebody else's music. The other is a studio set from an expandable sextet, with Rosenblum often pulling double duty on accordion and piano while focusing on his own compositions.

The contrast is written clearly through context, but the commonalities—a balance between historical precedent and personal voicings, the use of the same nuanced rhythm core to bring out the best in different situations, an artful coloring of compositions and interpretations with a multihued complexion—also prove obvious. Complementary in every way, these two albums offer a more complete picture of this rising star than either would be able to provide on its own.

Rosenblum is right at home in the trio format, having opted for that setting on his first two albums. And it serves him well on *Portrait of the Artist: The Music of Gregg Hill*, where he explores the music of the titular Michigan-based composer.

Premiering a fair number of Hill's pieces on record and given free rein to mold them to his liking with the help of bassist Marty Jaffe and drummer Ben Zweig, Rosenblum finds a way to honor the music and its inspirations while remaining true to his own vision. Mysticism and hints of Bill Evans factor into the title track; the language and muscularity of McCoy Tyner loom large on "Modal Yodel"; and an Ellingtonian grace floats on by during the gorgeous daydreams in "New Sunday". Not to be left out, Thelonious Monk also receives his due with some quotes during bop-based closer "Thank You Notes". All at once, Rosenblum minds Hill's writing, mines the masters and maximizes his own potential.

*Kites and Strings*, the debut from Rosenblum's Nebula Project, is something else entirely. It's a work bent on offering luminous beauty and striking juxtapositions through the use of a colorful palette and the embrace of broad influences.

There's a bright nod to Cedar Walton with opener "Cedar Place"; an intriguing blend of the leader's accordion and guest Jake Chapman's vibraphone during the odd-metered title track; an acknowledgement of classicism's reach on "Motif from Brahms (op. 98)"; and Klezmer-carnival slant in the zany "Fight or Flight". Three covers make it into the mix—Leonard Bernstein's "Somewhere", Neil Young's "Philadelphia" and the chorale-like Bulgarian traditional "Izpoved"—but it's the original music that shines brightest. With a gift for shaping seemingly odd phrases into the inevitable, the smarts to utilize the full textural possibilities offered through his bandmates (i.e. trumpeter Wayne Tucker, reedplayer Jasper Dutz and guitarist Rafael Rosa), a simpatico relationship with Jaffe and Zweig underscoring these performances and his own accordion and piano at the fore, Rosenblum's personality truly resounds throughout this brilliant production.

For more information, visit [gregghilljazz.com](http://gregghilljazz.com) and [onetrickdogrecords.com](http://onetrickdogrecords.com). Rosenblum live-streams Feb. 12th at [timucua.com/event/live-at-timucua-ben-rosenblum-trio-in-person-830-pm](http://timucua.com/event/live-at-timucua-ben-rosenblum-trio-in-person-830-pm) and Feb. 14th at [artsgarage.org/event/ben-rosenblum-trio-a-jazz-valentines-celebration](http://artsgarage.org/event/ben-rosenblum-trio-a-jazz-valentines-celebration).

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Fred Staton

Photo by Richard Corman



**Cell Walk**

Sara Schoenbeck/Wayne Horvitz (Songlines)  
by Mark Keresman

The duo is the most intimate of musical settings—two players, probing, responding, thrusting and parrying, the give and take. One never quite knows where things may end up and that's part of the appeal.

This pair has previous familiarity and made their notes count. Sara Schoenbeck (bassoon) has played with Butch Morris, Yusef Lateef, Joe Morris and Anthony Braxton while Wayne Horvitz (piano and electronics), once one-fifth of John Zorn's incredible Naked City, has since been a composer and improviser in a variety of contexts. *Cell Walk* was recorded at two locales: July 2019 in Vancouver and January 2020 in Brooklyn.

"Twinning" is a somber ballad, bassoon conveying incredible wistfulness and longing against sparse, dark piano chords. As conducive to a saturnine mood as this is, it's soon eclipsed by "No Blood Relations", with subtle Bach-like chords and elegantly pleading bassoon, phrased with echoes of Anglo-American folk motifs. "Ironbound" carries echoes of early 20th Century European classical music, especially Mahler via the bassoon and Debussy and Poulenc via the piano.

Despite the snappy title, "American Bandstand" is a pensive near-dirge, its melodic line dripping with

angst. The most outstanding track is "The Fifth Day". Horvitz' notes are steady but spare, like a mild spring rain on a metal awning, and Schoenbeck virtually croons in a manner not unlike early '60s John Coltrane, poetic, passionate, but also with a sense of economy and restraint. "Tin Palace" finds Schoenbeck really going to town, driving the twisty tune the way a postbop saxophonist would while Horvitz provides torrents of sober, determined swing.

If you like soulful reed instruments, wittily self-effacing piano and sonic atmosphere you could cut with a knife, this is the ticket.

For more information, visit [songlines.com](http://songlines.com). Horvitz live-streams Feb. 18th at [pdxjazz.com](http://pdxjazz.com).



**Human Rites Trio**  
Jason Kao Hwang (True Sound)  
by Robert Bush

Violinist/violist Jason Kao Hwang's trio with Ken Filiano (bass) and Andrew Drury (drums) is one of the most finely honed small groups in the improvised music scene, and, after 15 years together, this album reflects how much progress they have made.

The disc opens with the multi-part "Words Asleep Spoken Awake", a jumpy, disjointed theme where both

strings concentrate on the bow while crackling drums pull in a contrary motion. Things get out pretty quickly, but settle into an agitated groove when Filiano shifts into pizzicato while Drury continues to stretch with explosive commentary. The band veers off into a manic swing feel on "Part II", Hwang executing maximum tension on an early solo, followed by a truly monstrous arco exposition from Filiano. Drury concludes by defying all expectations of a typical drum solo: blowing air through a plumbing fixture to create a sound that could have come from a herd of angry elephants.

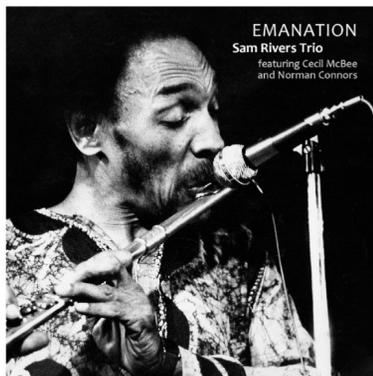
Hwang explores strictly plucked textures on the viola for "Conscious Concave Concrete", initiating a series of dark vamps, which also combine various Korean folk elements. Filiano is one of the finest bassists operating on planet Earth and when he lays down a loping groove on "2 AM", the gravity sets Hwang into one of his most emotionally satisfying moments of the session. Filiano responds in kind, rock solid with never a hint of a false move and eventually handing off to Drury for a supremely balanced composition. A band doesn't coalesce like this without considerable chemistry developed through serious history. They deliver their magnum opus on ominously titled "Battle For The Indelible Truth", a 12-minute explosive dialogue between violin and percussion.

It all comes together on the closing "Defiance", the telepathic interplay, the storytelling, the rotating narratives and the sterling musicianship. Recorded over two days in August of 2019, the album is dedicated to the nurses, doctors and frontline workers who saved so many lives during the pandemic of 2020, as well as the 430,000 lives (and counting) we have lost.

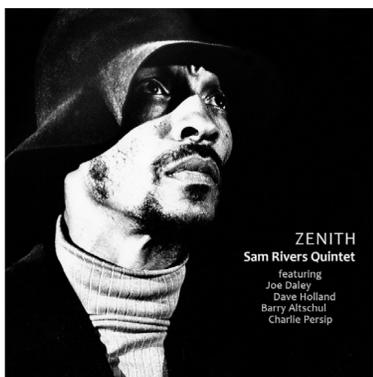
For more information, visit [jasonkaohwang.com](http://jasonkaohwang.com). Hwang live-streams Feb. 19th at [kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest](http://kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest).

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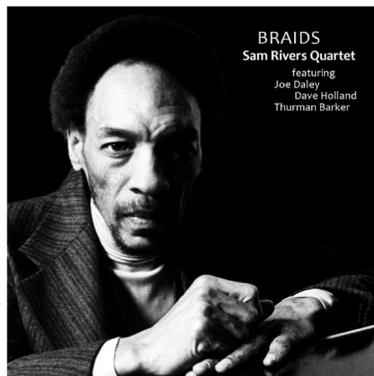
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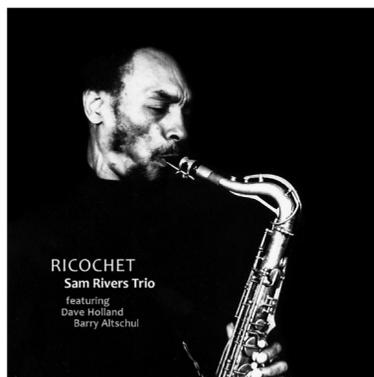
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Barry Altschul, Charlie Persip



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with Dave Holland and Barry  
Altschul



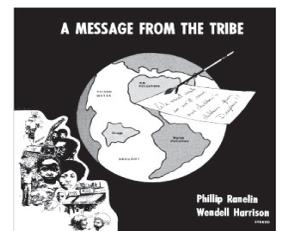
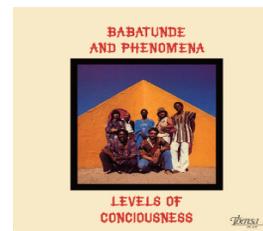
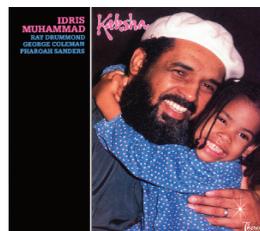
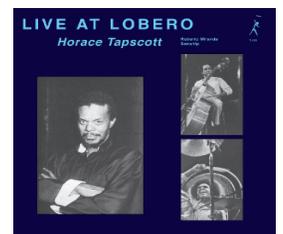
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**Flyways: Murmuration | Respiration**  
Mara Rosenbloom (Fresh Sound-New Talent)  
by John Pietaro

Mara Rosenbloom's trajectory within New York's improvisational music community has steeply and consistently pointed skyward. The pianist's refined instrumental and compositional vision, masterful ear and derring-do has placed her in the upper echelon of accompanists, collaborators and, increasingly, into the role of ensemble leader. After considerable work with William Hooker, Vinny Golia, William Parker, Sam Newsome and her own ensembles, Flyways is built on a change best described as atmospheric.

On *Murmuration*, recorded in 2019, Rosenbloom is the heart of a threesome with vocalist Anaïs Maviel (here also playing surdo) and bassist Rashaan Carter. As always, the pianist's hands carve waves of sound, albeit suited to the timbers in her midst.

On the lengthy foray of "I Know What I Dreamed Of" with a lyric drawn from the work of the late poet Adrienne Rich, the ensemble shines in a manner befitting the poet as well as the muses. Renowned for her feminism, LGBTQ and anti-war activism (she received the National Book Award simultaneous to Audre Lorde and Alice Walker), Rich stood as a model for lesbians and all people of conscience; see her *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Institution and Experience* (1976) for an important view within.

With *Murmuration*, Maviel's extended range and arsenal of improvisation create suits of armor and journalistic probes, reaching skyward as Rosenbloom and Carter drop thickets of harmonies across both wordage and soundscape. The pianist, who never allows a moment to pass where a thoughtful musical passage is left undone, unspoken, revels in bass and surdo fills, which toss motifs over the edge, prompting her only to create further and beyond. This ensemble should be heard at Weill Recital Hall for full effect, its blending of postmodern classical music and organic improvisation carrying that much weight.

Beyond this, other works on *Murmuration* are brief but telling. The opening themes as well as later pieces inspired by bird calls (some heard on the tracks), another Rich work ("Dream of a Common Language") and, of course, the trio's reimagining of "These Foolish Things", long associated with Lennie Tristano and here dedicated to the beloved, late Connie Crothers. This closer is an intimate modernist statement, played solo by Rosenbloom for her late mentor and a perfect vehicle to close the recording, leaving the listener not only wanting more, but warmly, wanting Crothers.

On *Respiration* the pianist is in a more traditional setting with the assured invention of her trio of bassist Sean Conly and drummer Chad Taylor. The album opens with a brief improvisation on a theme by Amina Claudine Myers before morphing into a Rosenbloom original, "The Choo", which calls on memories of later '60s R&B-fueled jazz. Here Conly's forward-moving improvisations aspirate the melodic structure and solo sections (the magic between pianist and bassist does bring on thoughts of the first great Bill Evans Trio; 'nuff said).

But listen carefully, too, to the reconstructions of Juan Tizol's noted "Caravan", a major aspect of the Duke Ellington catalog for decades. *Respiration's* fourth selection bridges the immortal theme to a Crothers-esque fantasia, which is utterly riveting, nearly ten minutes long and nary a moment wasted: modal happenings, atonal escapades and rhythmic revampings of Tizol bring the ear both back and

forward simultaneously.

By the ninth and closing cut, "Caravan Reprise - Keep Marching", Rosenbloom and company seem to have driven the past out of the work, building and empowering it for the fight-back of these days. More than anything else, this piece carries the banner of a Carla Bley arrangement, bursting with the essential elements even as it lures the ear into unheralded, previously unimagined territory. And it's no happenstance that Bley has always and, as recently as 2020, featured themes of social justice in her catalog. How much longer before Rosenbloom stands at the helm of the world's stage? Anything beyond immediately post-COVID would be criminal.

For more information, visit [freshsoundrecords.com](http://freshsoundrecords.com). Rosenbloom live-streams Feb. 19th at [kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest](http://kerrytownconcerthouse.com/edgefest).



**Heart**  
Endangered Quartet (Panoramic)  
by Kurt Gottschalk

The growing seriousness of Roy Nathanson never ceases to surprise. From the Groucho-with-an-alto demeanor in the early days of The Jazz Passengers to his emergence as a poet and storyteller, Nathanson seems to have gradually lowered the comedic mask to reveal the more human face of love and happiness.

Endangered Quartet isn't Nathanson's band, but he and trombone-at-arms Curtis Fowlkes are the best-known figures. Their professional partnership goes back some 40 years and the complementary sensibility they've nurtured is always a pleasure. The drummerless collective also includes violinist Jesse Mills and bassist Tim Kiah, both of whom, along with Fowlkes, provide occasional vocals on this, the band's debut release, which comes shovel-ready for such exultant exclamations as "sonic Snuggie" and "nothin' says lovin' like something from the oven."

The band's strategy is well suggested by arrangements of pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach, Ornette Coleman and John Lennon-Paul McCartney, all structured formalists—even Coleman, whose two parts of "The Circle With a Hole in the Middle" serve as 90-second markers, almost like film cues, on the album. The Beatles' "Blackbird" basks in familiarity while dropping all of the lyrics but "blackbird fly". But the opening track, a fairly jazzy take on Bach's Chorale BWV 244/44, is the one that really sets the pace. Baroque arrangements for New Orleans street band isn't what *Heart* is actually about, but it often feels that way.

Nine more pieces are contributed by the band members in varying configurations (including the short "Sweet Intentions", credited collectively to the group), sometimes with added credit given to producer Hugo Dwyer, who produced many of The Jazz Passengers releases as well as some of Nathanson's other projects. He gives the band an appropriately close and warm sound. The album closes with a take on the folk ballad "Goodnight, Irene" (credited here to Huddie Ledbetter), perhaps the most contented suicide song ever written. They play it sweet and slow, a lullaby for troubled times, giving it plenty of heart.

For more information, visit [newfocusrecordings.bandcamp.com](http://newfocusrecordings.bandcamp.com). Roy Nathanson live-streams excerpts from his latest book *Conversations and Other Songs* Feb. 20th at [madhat-press.com](http://madhat-press.com).



**Live at The Baked Potato**  
Soft Machine (Moonjune)  
by Marc Medwin

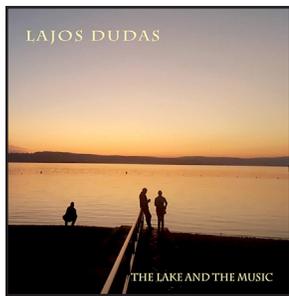
The bells toll, deeply ominous but somehow transparent, as if trading in foreboding for the succeeding celebratory atmosphere. Leading the way is drummer John Marshall's no-holds-barred tap-and-roll crescendo, just before that now-iconic funky-fresh groove arrives, slammed into gear by Marshall and Roy Babbington's bass, both locked in for the duration of "Hazard Profile"'s first part as the Soft Machine album *Bundles* comes to life. More than four decades later, in the distinguished company of soprano saxophonist/flutist Theo Travis and guitarist John Etheridge, Marshall and Babbington reprise that role on this excellent live album, which was recorded two years ago this month by the current Softs lineup in Los Angeles. It's only one of many moments that bridge the often-un-bridgeable gap between nostalgia and the vigor of spontaneous music making.

In 2018, when the band kicked off its 50th anniversary tour, they brought "Profile" in after a Marshall drum solo. That's also the case here and it's a joy to hear the driving force behind so many key sessions having a chance to indulge his gifts for color and impeccable timing complexity. Yet, when Babbington and Etheridge hit that riff hard and Travis floats that soprano saxophone melody over it all, the band's unique sense of swing, tight but relaxed, comes into sharp focus. It's present in a very different way on the gorgeous "Tale of Taliesin", carrying the composition along its circuitously repetitive and modal path. Again, Marshall's constantly morphing snare patterns bring spirit and gentle drive to guide the tune toward its climactic second phase.

To point out solo contributions would be to underappreciate this group synergy, but there are many. Babbington's deliciously understated opening to "The Man Who Waved At Trains" should be a model of the dignity and virtuosic delicacy with which all bassists should learn to approach the instrument, but his expertly judicious use of effect, as on his growly low-register contributions to "Hidden Details", is also well worth study, as is Etheridge's perfect use of octave doublings during those crafty webs of scale and motive he spins with the effortlessness of the master at play. Yet, it's his heartbreakingly understated introduction to "Heart Off Guard", a crystalline world of subtly contained dynamic contrast, which is one of this album's finest moments. Another is the intro to "Out-Bloody-Rageous". To consider Travis only for his excellent windwork is to deny his contributions to the world of looping. The fragmentations, proportions and octave displacements achieved on that Fender-Rhodes-derived loop nest is a marvel to behold, as is yet another tight band entrance ushering in the tone proper.

The mix of old and new tunes is predictable; the unity and vitality with which both are rendered is not. The recording and playing are equal in immediacy and it's all captured in front of an audience whose appreciation knows no bounds, as their reaction to "Hazard Profile" makes abundantly clear. *Live at The Baked Potato* is as fine a representation of this band on stage as you're likely to get without hearing them in person and their spiritedly wise optimism is a sound for sore ears.

For more information, visit [moonjune.com](http://moonjune.com)



**The Lake and the Music**  
Lajos Dudas (JazzSick)  
by Elliott Simon

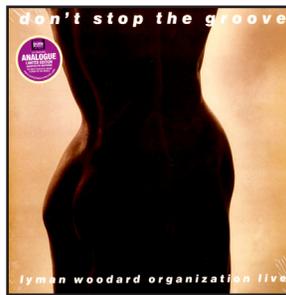
The sundry environs of Germany's Lake Constance have inspired clarinetist Lajos Dudas, who turns 80 this month, on *The Lake and the Music*. Dudas uses classical, folk and jazz approaches in the context of a broad range of jazz styles and his *50 Years with Jazz Clarinet* (JazzSick Records, 2011) is a delightful career retrospective. Here, Dudas teams with long-time bandmate guitarist Philipp van Endert and drummer Kurt Billker while tapping three bassists, two percussionists and a pair of guests for a pleasurable program of mainstream jazz classics.

Dudas shares a close bond with van Endert and their interplay is at the session's core. Their connection is obvious on the rocking opener, Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart's "The Lady is a Tramp", and a lovely send-up of Horace Silver's "Filthy McNasty", which gets its chill from bassist Martin Gjakonovski and Gerd Dudek's flute. Dudas also pairs with Dudek's soprano saxophone for a jaunty version of Gerald Marks-Seymour Simons' "All of Me" supported by outstanding bassist Vitold Rek and percussionist Janos Szudy. Rek and Szudy are elegant together and gorgeously color Sonny Rollins' "St. Thomas" and Tommy Vig closer "But I...?"

Dudas spends a lot of time in the upper clarinet registers and his control is still amazingly focused throughout but with guest vibraphonist Karl Berger he dips down to the lower register on George Gershwin's "A Foggy Day". The highlights are a beautiful portrayal of the deep sadness in Rezső Seress' "Gloomy Sunday" and a straightahead swinging take on Attila Zoller's "A Thousand Dreams". On the former, van Endert and guest percussionist Jochen Büttner artfully set the mood for Dudas' best emotive playing as he tearfully voices the tune's despair while bassist Leonard E. Jones and van Endert pep up the latter to support wonderfully fleet clarinet lines.

While not as adventurous as his prior works, Dudas remains a rare musical treasure who has mastered his instrument in a way transcending genre.

For more information, visit [jazzsick.com](http://jazzsick.com)



**Don't Stop The Groove**  
Lyman Woodard Organization  
(Corridor-Pure Pleasure)  
by Kyle Oleksiuk

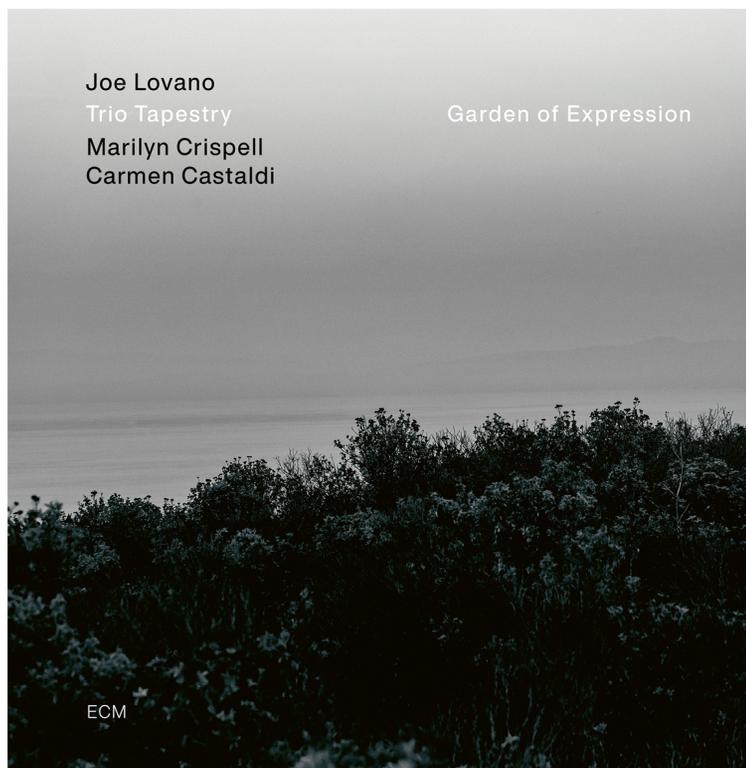
*Don't Stop The Groove* by the Lyman Woodard Organization reissues a LP of a Jan. 26th, 1979 show at Cobb's Corner nightclub in Detroit. It was the last

performance of an era in Detroit jazz: one day later, the owner of the club, Henry Normile, was shot and killed in his apartment and, as the album's liner notes put it, "the heart of the Detroit jazz scene was ripped apart." *Don't Stop The Groove* is a snapshot of and testament to just how alive that heart had been just a day before.

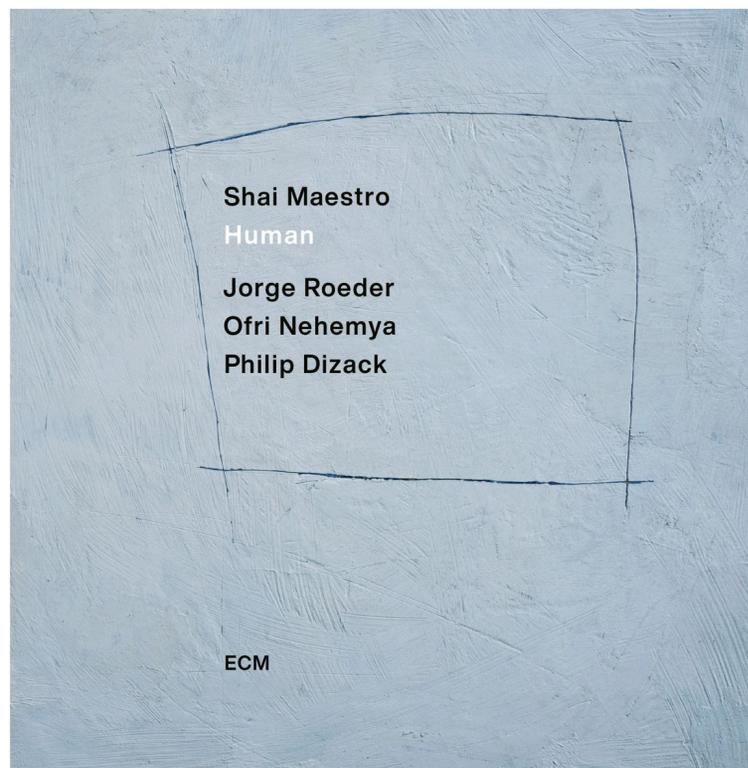
Woodard, who died 12 years ago this month, and the other musicians of the Organization—Marcus Belgrave and Ron Jackson (trumpets), Kerry Campbell (soprano saxophone), Allan Barnes (tenor saxophone), Robert Lowe (guitar, vocals), Lorenzo Brown (percussion, vocals), Leonard King (drums) and Leroy Emmanuel (vocals)—play with unflagging manic energy for the album's 32-minute runtime. Woodard's simple, shimmering organ sound is a joy, as are Brown's machine gun conga drums and Lowe's understated but electric electric guitar. The horn section, which includes trumpet heavyweight Belgrave, lets out yes-Lord peals of notes in perfect time that add exclamation points to the end of each bar. Every player has a perfectly proportioned sense of their relationship to the groove—they fit it like a hand in a glove (or...).

*Don't Stop The Groove* is a perfect party album. Though 40+ years old, it has aged like wine into an instant classic of R&B-soul-disco-jazz. Only once does it descend from fantastic to pretty good: on the first track, when the band spends a few minutes chanting "don't stop the groove, cause it put 'cha in the mood, don't stop". The audience in the nightclub clearly enjoyed it, but on the recording, without the atmosphere of infectious fun everyone at Cobb's Corner was audibly enjoying on that winter's night in Detroit, the chanting quickly gets tiresome. Besides that, though, the advertising is true: the groove don't stop.

For more information, visit [purepleasurerecords.com](http://purepleasurerecords.com)



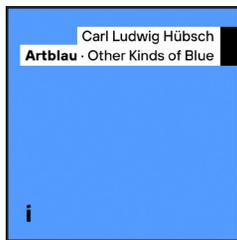
**Joe Lovano**  
Trio Tapestry  
Garden of Expression



**Shai Maestro**  
Quartet  
Human

Available on 1/29

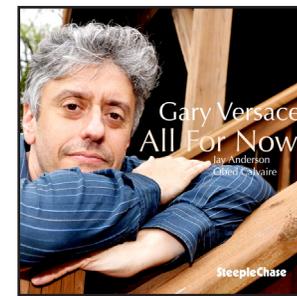
ECM



**The Longrun Development of the Universe #5 for Misha**  
**Carl Ludwig Hübsch/Matthias Schubert/  
 Wolter Wierbos (Jazzwerkstatt)**  
**Artblau: Other Kinds of Blue**  
**Carl Ludwig Hübsch (Impakt)**  
 by Anna Steegmann



**Bluu Afroo**  
**Pierre Dørge & New Jungle Orchestra**  
**(featuring Stephen Riley)**  
**(SteepleChase)**  
 by Robert Iannapolo



**All For Now**  
**Gary Versace (SteepleChase)**  
 by Thomas Conrad

The trio of the *The Longrun Development of the Universe* has worked together for 20 years. Tuba player Carl Ludwig Hübsch, who turns 55 this month, dedicated this recording to Misha Mengelberg who died in 2017. The CD contains three compositions by the Dutch jazz pianist and composer, with all other tracks by Hübsch. The musicians are well-known improvisers and instrumentalists: Matthias Schubert (tenor saxophone) played with Günter Hampel and Albert Mangelsdorff; Wolter Wierbos (trombone) is a longtime member of the ICP Orchestra and Gerry Hemingway Quintet; and Hübsch has been a sideman with Arthur Blythe, Tomasz Stańko and Lester Bowie.

Tuba, tenor saxophone and trombone is an unusual grouping for a full-length recording. The listener can detect influences of the Dutch improvisational school, New Music and modern jazz. The nine often-lengthy tracks appear mostly freely improvised; there are no melodies and individual solos come and go. The opening Mengelberg composition "De Sprong, O Romantiek Der Hazen" is slow, sparse and the most gripping of all tracks. Each instrument shines in its own right and instrumental sections alternate with Hübsch's haunting vocals. Very free and associative, "BrozziRolloKachel" presents the tuba in unusually high registers, a bold musical interplay, a bit disjointed like colliding traffic.

You have to be a true aficionado of experimental and improvisational music and open to surprises and sound combinations not heard before to appreciate this recording. Some of the tracks feel unwieldy, almost inaccessible, and could be more enjoyable in an intimate club setting where listeners can witness the musicians performing their magic on their instruments.

*Artblau* is more welcoming. Hübsch's inspiration was trumpeter Miles Davis' legendary 1959 recording *Kind of Blue*. He aimed not for rehashing but instead a new take on the music. With him is a nine-member ensemble of Cologne-based musicians (the North Rhine-Westphalia city is Hübsch's homebase): Angelika Sheridan (flutes), Salim Javaid (soprano saxophone), Leonhard Huhn (alto), Matthias Muche (trombone), Philip Zoubek (piano), Akiko Ahrendt (violin), Elisabeth Coudoux (cello), Constantin Herzog (bass) and Etienne Nillesen (extended snare drum), plus Pauline Buss (viola on track 12). Hübsch wanted to expose style-forming elements of *Kind of Blue* and present them in a different, abstract and contemporary manner using decomposition, restructuring and reaction. Traditional jazz is the background, new music and improvisation foregrounded.

The CD also includes compositions by Hübsch and ensemble members interspersed with the Davis tracks. The very brief opener "Go Catches" (Hübsch) is slow, beautiful and deeply felt. Easy-going "Two Freds are Free" (Huhn) features a bass and melody group and ends with traces of Cannonball Adderley's saxophone. Other tracks like "Freifeld" (Hübsch), conceived as a reduced and rearranged version of "Freddie Freeloader", are more challenging and somewhat disjointed.

For more information, visit [jazzwerkstatt.eu](http://jazzwerkstatt.eu) and [impakt-koeln.bandcamp.com](http://impakt-koeln.bandcamp.com)

In 2021, Danish guitarist Pierre Dørge celebrates not only his 75th birthday (Feb. 28th) but also the 40th year of his New Jungle Orchestra (NJO). Both are quite considerable achievements, but the latter is a bit more amazing: maintaining a group, which, despite its evolution over time, has stayed true to its initial vision of a ten-piece ensemble playing vibrant music from both the historical and free side of the jazz spectrum, as well as bringing in various African and other world traditions, blended into a seamless whole.

The band started with Dørge, keyboardist Irene Becker and saxophonist Morten Carlsen (who left the group some 35 years later) as the core. The initial membership seemed loose but included some of Denmark and the world's finest: saxophonists John Tchicai (a mentor and whose 1968 MPS album *Afrodisiaca* was Dørge's recording debut), Jesper Zeuthen and Simon Spang-Hanssen, drummers Marilyn Mazur and Hamid Drake, Johnny (bass) and Thomas Dyani (percussion), trumpeter Harry Beckett and bassist Hugo Rasmussen.

By the late '80s the personnel began to stabilize. Of the current members, trombonist Kenneth Agerholm came aboard in 1985, saxophonist Jakob Mygind during the early 90s and reed player Anders Banke in 2000. The crack rhythm team of bassist Thommy Andersson, drummer Martin Andersen and Ghanian percussionist Ayi Solomon has also been in place since the early aughts. This is a well-seasoned ensemble.

*Bluu Afroo* is the 23rd NJO album. The program is by Dørge with the exception of two by Becker ("Sister" and "Dancing In The Jungle"). "Mingus' Birthday Party" begins with a blast and enters into a driving rhythm with lively solos by trumpeter Tobias Wiklund (a new member) and Agerholm. But curiously, the track changes midstream with a lovely unaccompanied solo by Becker before it concludes with a gauzy interlude and a final orchestral blast.

Ellington is a major influence on Dørge's music and "Mama Asili" is a fine demonstration. It's a feature for a guest soloist, American tenor saxophonist Stephen Riley, a fellow SteepleChase artist (producer Nils Winther likes to mix and match the members of his roster). Riley's breathy solo is in homage to the great tenor players of Ellingtonia, Ben Webster and Paul Gonsalves. And it's nice to see Dørge resurrect "Rocking At Planet Pluto", a bopping theme reminiscent of Ellington's "Rockin' In Rhythm". The track was previously recorded as "Sunday In Zurich" on the 1990 Olfen album *Live In Chicago* but the new title seems more appropriate. Solomon's subtle percussive underpinning brings the African element to the fore on "Elefante Imposante", pushing the piece along throughout, allowing Dørge's (as well as the orchestra) modal explorations free rein.

*Bluu Afroo* bounces around from track to track, each different from the next and all pithy ranging from 3:43 to 7:07, and never flags, basically the modus operandi for most NJO albums and performances. And for a 40-year-old band to remain this productive, that's saying something.

For more information, visit [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk)

Gary Versace is a special national resource. Just consider: he may be the most in-demand sideman in jazz. Everyone from cinch Grammy winners (Maria Schneider) to edgy adventurers (Matt Moran) chooses Versace because his presence improves any band. In his discography as a sideman (now around 80 titles), he is mostly called upon to play Hammond B3, Fender Rhodes, accordion and even melodica. In his spare time, Versace leads a world-class acoustic piano trio.

*All For Now* is his piano trio debut on SteepleChase after four earlier albums and first for the label since 2006. Versace writes captivating songs like "Backs and All", which begins as a softly circling pool of bright chimings. From this simple opening he extends long strands of melody and countermelody and creates a rich design. When he cuts loose, as on "Two Peas", he displays chops of extreme ambidextrous pianistic athleticism.

He is also an innovative interpreter. George and Ira Gershwin's "The Man I Love" is the funkiest on record. It is normally a brooding, even dreamy song. Somebody forgot to tell Versace. He gives it a heavy bass vamp and a gut-level groove. His piano solo is a joyous celebration, bouncing over all those backbeats. Irene Higginbotham-Ervin Drake-Dan Fisher's "Good Morning Heartache" is different because Versace's chord voicings intensify the song's original poignant intention and his new melodies elaborate on the sadness. Track eight is a wild free ride that is not obviously Bud Powell's "Celia" until the end.

There are two kinds of piano trios: those that use the bassist and drummer as accompanists and those that use them as partners. Versace's trio is unmistakably the latter. It is fitting that this great sideman knows how to use sidemen. Bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Obed Calvaire are beautifully essential. On Versace's ballad "Ours", Versace and Anderson play the melody in unison and then alternate solo choruses. Anderson's variations deepen Versace's ideas. Versace clears space for Calvaire to insert a crisp, elegant spontaneous cymbal composition into the middle of "Celia".

For more information, visit [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk)

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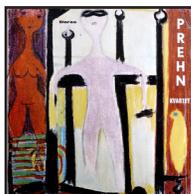
ON THIS DAY

by Andrey Henkin



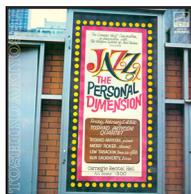
**Jazz Concert**  
Mezz Mezzrow (Vogue)  
February 5th, 1952

Clarinetist/tenor saxophonist Mezz Mezzrow is notorious in jazz for his marijuana operation in '30s Harlem (Mezz became slang for the drug) and his 1946 autobiography *Really the Blues*, wherein his self-perception as Negro was laid out in its use of Black vernacular. All this overshadowed his playing, first in his native Chicago and then New York. His last 20 years (he died in 1972 just shy of 73) were spent in Paris, where Salle Pleyel was the site of this concert with Mowgli Jospin, Guy Lafitte, Lee Collins, Claude Bolling and Zutty Singleton.



**Prehn Quartet**  
Tom Prehn (V 58)  
February 5th, 1967

This extremely rare early-ish example of Danish avant garde jazz was given a higher profile when it was reissued in 2001 as part of Atavistic's Unheard Music Series. It was the only release on V 58 and last document of pianist Tom Prehn's quartet with tenor saxophonist Fritz Krogh and bassist Poul Ehlers, Preben Vang taking over on drums for Finn Slumstrup, none besides Ehlers going on to do any further jazz recording. Tunes by the leader, Krogh and Ehlers, plus Middle Ages liturgical piece "L'homme armé", recall period ESP-Disk' LPs.



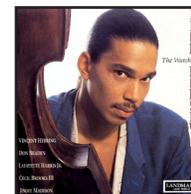
**The Personal Dimension**  
Toshiko Akiyoshi (Victor)  
February 5th, 1971

The cover captures a moment in time: a hand-drawn poster for a concert at Carnegie Hall by pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi, seats \$3, presented with the Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies, four years after it was settled permanently in Newark. The leader, splitting time between her native Japan and the US, is joined by husband Lew Tabackin (tenor saxophone/flute) and, strangely as neither is on the poster, bassist Lyn Christie and drummer Bill Goodwin, for two Akiyoshi tunes, one by noted koto composer Michio Miyagi and "Lover Man".



**Some order, long understood**  
Wayne Horvitz (Black Saint)  
February 5th, 1982

According to keyboard player Wayne Horvitz years after the fact, this LP, a document of a concert at One Henry Street, is an edited version of what actually transpired, almost all written material excised from the title piece and "Psalm" because they were too long for the sides of an LP. With that caveat, this is Horvitz' first release on a 'major' label and features him on piano (both acoustic and amplified), organ, synthesizer and electronics, joined in a one-time, convened-for-the-gig trio with the late Butch Morris (cornet) and William Parker (bass).



**The Watcher**  
Leon Lee Dorsey (Landmark)  
February 5th, 1994

From the '80s onwards, bassist Leon Lee Dorsey's trajectory pointed only upwards. Following sessions with Lionel Hampton, Arthur Prysock, John Gordon and Oliver Lake was a European tour with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Five years later was this leader debut with Vincent Herring (alto and soprano saxophones), Don Braden (tenor), Lafayette Harris, Jr. (piano) and Cecil Brooks III (drums, Jimmy Madison subbing on one track) for seven originals and four covers, a peak moment for the now-respected educator at Berklee.

BIRTHDAYS

February 1

†James P. Johnson 1894-1955  
†Tricky Sam Nanton 1904-46  
Sadao Watanabe b.1933  
Tyrone Brown b.1940  
Bugge Wesseltoft b.1964  
Joshua Redman b.1969

February 2

†Sonny Stitt 1924-82  
†Mimi Perrin 1926-2010  
†Stan Getz 1927-91  
James Blood Ulmer b.1942  
Louis Scavias b.1953

February 3

†Lil Hardin Armstrong 1898-1971  
†Snooky Young 1919-2011  
†Chico Alvarez 1920-92  
John Handy b.1933  
Leroy Williams b.1937  
Bob Stewart b.1945  
Greg Tardy b.1966  
Rob Garcia b.1969

February 4

†Harold "Duke" DeJean 1909-2002  
†Jutta Hipp 1925-2003  
†Wally Cirillo 1927-77  
†Tony Fruscella 1927-69  
Newman Taylor Baker b.1943  
†John Stubblefield 1945-2005  
Vincent Chancey b.1950

February 5

†Gene Schroeder 1915-75  
Rick Laird b.1941  
Bill Mays b.1944  
Art Lande b.1947  
Shai Maestro b.1987

February 6

†Ernie Royal 1921-83  
†Sammy Nestico 1924-2021  
†Tom McIntosh 1927-2017  
†Nelson Boyd 1928-1985  
Oleg Kiryev b.1964  
Larry Grenadier b.1966  
Michael Griener b.1968  
Scott Amendola b.1969

February 7

†Eubie Blake 1887-1983  
†Ray Crawford 1924-97  
†Ray Alexander 1925-2002  
†King Curtis 1934-71  
T.K. Blue b.1953

February 8

†Lonnie Johnson 1889-1970  
†Buddy Morrow 1919-2010  
†Pony Poindexter 1926-88  
†Eddie Locke 1930-2009  
Renee Manning b.1955

February 9

†Walter Page 1900-57  
†Peanuts Holland 1910-79  
†Joe Dodge 1922-2004  
†Joe Maneri 1927-2009  
Steve Wilson b.1961  
Daniela Schachter b.1972  
Behn Gillece b.1982

February 10

†Chick Webb 1909-39  
†Sir Roland Hanna 1932-2002  
†Walter Perkins 1932-2004  
†Rahn Burton 1934-2013  
Rufus Reid b.1944  
†"Butch" Morris 1947-2013  
Michael Weiss b.1958  
Paolo Fresu b.1961

February 11

†Matt Dennis 1914-2002  
†Martin Drew 1944-2010  
Raoul Björkenheim b.1956  
†Didier Lockwood 1956-2018  
Ethan Iverson b.1972  
Jaleel Shaw b.1978

February 12

†Paul Bascomb 1912-86  
†Tex Beneke 1914-2000  
†Hans Koller 1921-2003  
†Art Mardigan 1923-77  
†Mel Powell 1923-98  
Juini Booth b.1948  
Bill Laswell b.1955  
Ron Horton b.1960  
Szilárd Mezei b.1974

February 13

†Wingy Manone 1900-82  
†Les Hite 1903-62  
†Wardell Gray 1921-55  
†Ron Jefferson 1926-2003  
Keith Nichols b.1945

February 14

†Perry Bradford 1893-1970  
†Jack Lesberg 1920-2005  
Elliot Lawrence b.1925  
Phillip Greenlief b.1959  
Jason Palmer b.1979

February 15

†Harold Arlen 1905-86  
†Walter Fuller 1910-2003  
†Nathan Davis 1937-2018  
Kirk Lightsey b.1937  
Henry Threadgill b.1944  
†Edward Vesala 1945-99  
Herlin Riley b.1957  
Dena DeRose b.1966

February 16

†Bill Doggett 1916-96  
†Charlie Fowlkes 1916-80  
Howard Riley b.1943  
†Jeff Clayton 1954-2020

February 17

†Wallace Bishop 1906-86  
†Charlie Spivak 1906-82  
†Harry Dial 1907-1987  
†Alec Wilder 1907-80  
†Buddy DeFranco 1923-2014  
†Buddy Jones 1924-2000  
Fred Frith b.1949  
Nicole Mitchell b.1967

February 18

†Hazy Osterwald 1922-2012  
†Frank Butler 1928-84  
†Billy Butler 1928-91  
Jeanfrancois Prins b.1967  
Gordon Grdina b.1977

February 19

†Johnny Dunn 1897-1937  
Fred Van Hove b.1937  
†Ron Mathewson 1944-2020  
Blaise Siwula b.1950  
David Murray b.1955

February 20

†Fred Robinson 1901-84  
†Oscar Aleman 1909-80  
†Frank Isola 1925-2004  
†Bobby Jasper 1926-63  
†Nancy Wilson 1937-2018  
†Lew Soloff 1944-2015  
Anthony Davis b.1951  
Leroy Jones b.1958  
Darek Oles b.1963  
Iain Ballamy b.1964  
Craig Taborn b.1970

February 21

†Tadd Dameron 1917-65  
†Eddie Higgins 1932-2009  
†Nina Simone 1933-2003  
†Graham Collier 1937-2011  
Akira Sakata b.1945  
Herb Robertson b.1951  
Warren Vaché b.1951  
Matt Darriau b.1960  
Christian Howes b.1972

February 22

†James Reese Europe 1881-1919  
†Rex Stewart 1907-67  
†Claude "Fiddler" Williams 1908-2004  
†Buddy Tate 1914-2001  
†Joe Wilder 1922-2014  
Dave Bailey b.1926  
George Haslam b.1939  
Marc Charig b.1944  
Harvey Mason b.1947  
Joe La Barbera b.1948

February 23

†Hall Overton 1920-72  
†Johnny Carisi 1922-92  
†Richard Boone 1930-99  
†Les Condon 1930-2008  
Wayne Escoffery b.1975

February 24

†Eddie Chamblee 1920-99  
†Ralph Pena 1927-69  
†Andrzej Kurylewicz 1932-2007  
†Michel Legrand 1932-2019  
†David "Fathead" Newman 1933-2009  
†Steve Berrios 1945-2013  
Vladimir Chekasin b.1947  
Bob Magnusson b.1947  
Maggie Nicols b.1948

February 25

†Tiny Parham 1900-43  
†Ray Perry 1915-50  
†Fred Katz 1919-2013  
†Rene Thomas 1927-75  
†Sandy Brown 1929-75  
†Tommy Newsom b.1929-2007  
†Ake Persson 1932-75  
Brian Drye b.1975

February 26

†Dave Pell 1925-2017  
†Chris Anderson 1926-2008  
†Hagood Hardy 1937-97  
Trevor Watts b.1939  
Yosuke Yamashita b.1942  
Guy Klucevsek b.1948  
Hilliard Greene b.1958

February 27

†Leo Watson 1898-1950  
†Mildred Bailey 1907-51  
†Abe Most 1920-2002  
†Dexter Gordon 1923-90  
†Chuck Wayne 1923-97  
Rob Brown b.1962  
Joey Calderazzo b.1965

February 28

†Louis Metcalf 1905-81  
†Svend Asmussen 1916-2017  
†Bill Douglass 1923-94  
†Donald Garrett 1932-89  
†Willie Bobo 1934-83  
Charles Gayle b.1939  
Pierre Dorge b.1946  
Mikko Innanen b.1978

February 29

†Jimmy Dorsey 1904-56  
†Paul Rutherford 1940-2007  
†Richie Cole 1948-2020

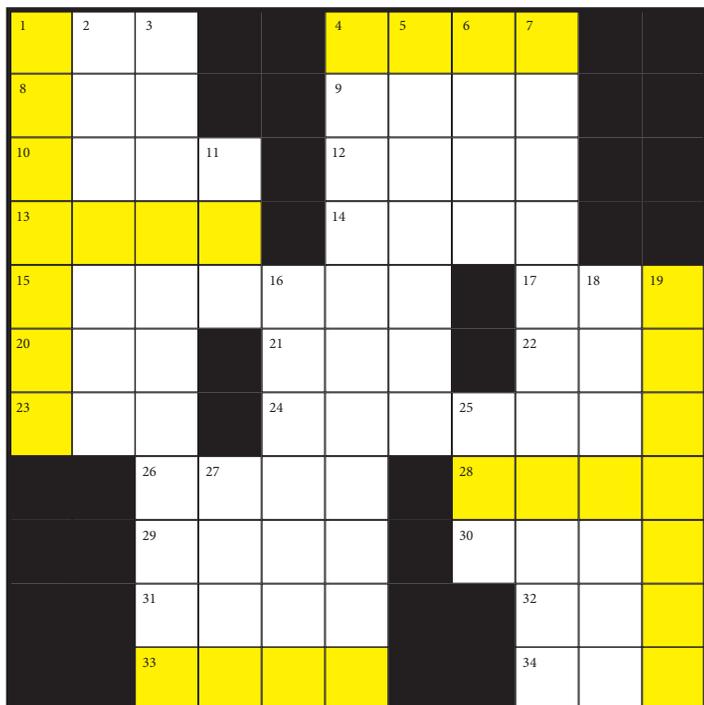


**VINCENT CHANCEY**  
February 4th, 1950

Despite playing the French horn, an instrument still somewhat obscure in the annals of jazz, Vincent Chancey has been a key contributor to numerous ensembles since the '70s. Among his myriad credits are membership in the Sun Ra Arkestra, Carla Bley Big Band, Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, Liberation Music Orchestra, Composer's Workshop Ensemble and Muhal Richard Abrams Orchestra. These go along with sideman credits under Ahmed Abdullah, John Lindberg, David Murray, Herb Robertson, Julius Hemphill, Butch Morris, Peter Kowald, Bill Horvitz, Leroy Jenkins, Marty Ehrlich and many others as well as four albums as a leader, most recently the 1987 archival release *The Spell*. (AH)

CROSSWORD

ACROSS



- At the heart of Horace?
- Panthera Producicus*
- Elis Regina nickname
- Bonguero Iglesias who played with Cachao in the '50s
- Miles Davis album of Palle Mikkelborg compositions
- Time Zone of the Telluride Jazz Festival (abbr.)
- Corvus Basicus*
- This oil/ gas company sponsored the first Australian Jazz Summit
- Italian trumpeter Sergio
- Pye Nixa catalogue prefix
- 1954 Bennie Moten His Master's Voice compilation *Kay \_\_\_ Jazz*
- Oscar Hammerstein and Greg Ward are these
- Julia Ward Howe, composer of often-covered-in-jazz "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was head of this Feminist org.
- With One, rapper whose songs have sampled Stanley Turrentine, Clifford Brown, Jimmy McGriff and others
- Jazzkaar country
- 1961-62 Grant Green Blue Note album *Born \_\_\_ Blue*
- Halichoerus Guitarcus*

- Audio device quality test prog.
- 1978 David Hardiman's San Francisco All-Star Big Band Theresa album \_\_\_ *Be All Right*
- Delaware Water Gap's Deer Head and Tokyo's Pit
- With Forms, Whit Dickey label
- Esox Vibraphonicus*
- This diplomatic org. has hosted concerts by Dado Moroni, Enrico Pieranunzi and others

DOWN

- Pavo Basicus*
- Like many a free jazz trumpeter
- '50s pianist/vocalist Simpson's hallucinogenic voyage?
- Illness afflicting Kermit Driscoll
- Seminal Max Roach album without Abbey Lincoln?
- Pianist Horace and drummer Christian
- The standard "Tea For Two" originated here
- Scott Hall was in this org.
- Recording engineer Justin
- Mongo Santamaria wrote a tune for this Basque-derived ballgame
- Petrochelidon Basicus*
- Type of malleted drum
- Sun Ra's favorite type of verse?