MISCELLANY

Just like every day really should be Mother’s Day and Earth Day and National Doughnut Day, so too should every month be Jazz Appreciation Month. Maybe John Edward Hasse, Curator of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, picked it because there are so many jazz tunes with the word in their titles or maybe since jazz, like spring, is about rebirth. Whatever his reason, it all culminates with International Jazz Day on Apr. 30th, which, well, see above...

One of the great things about appreciating jazz—for a day, month, year or lifetime—is that it is, by extension, an opportunity to appreciate American history, warts and all, and how it created an environment for this art form to blossom. And it is a chance to appreciate the larger history of music and how myriad elements from numerous cultures and traditions have been folded into jazz through song forms, instruments and, of course, players. Think of jazz as a mosaic, each new influence a new tile contributing towards a picture that is constantly changing.

Our features this month reflect that progress, whether it be Zeena Parkins (On The Cover) redefining what the harp can do; David Ostwald (Interview) using his tuba as an archeological tool; Steph Richards (Artist Feature) making her trumpet something more than a collection of tubes and valves; Calvin Keys (Encore) taking from and adding to the long history of the guitar; Aaron Bell (Lest We Forget), a significant thread in the distinguished tapestry of Ellington bassists; or Milford Graves (In Memoriam), whose influence as a drummer and philosopher is remembered by his peers and students.

On The Cover: Zeena Parkins (photo by Peter Gannushkin/DOWNTOWNMUSIC.NET)
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It’s tempting to draw a connection between ancient meanings and modern practice. In the case of LACE, an ongoing project from harpist Zeena Parkins, such connections become more tangible than any etymology ever could be. The word “lace” is derived from the Latin laqueum, meaning “a noose, a snare”, but any negative connotations of such parlance turn to a cloud of dust that Parkins draws, particle by particle, into light. LACE began with an invitation in 2008 from the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio as part of its “Music Mondays” series. “There was an impending deadline,” she recalls, “and most of my compositions at the time would have taken months to learn. But I had eight concert harps over the years and I just grabbed some graphic-looking pieces of lace and made conditions for improvisers to read each piece as a score. It worked.”

Since then, she has created an action card-based game piece, recently recorded by percussionist William Winant, a project for her band Green Dome—with Ryan Sawyer (percussion) and Ryan Ross Smith (piano and electronics)—based on transforming the lace knitting patterns from the Shetland Islands to scores and a fourth movement, entitled “Stitchomythia”, performed on an anamorphic carpet designed by Nadia Lauro. If anything, Parkins does not tie snares but unravels them in hopes they might reach the soil of the ear and grow without forsaking their precise comfort.

Such impulses have been a running thread of her ethos since 1993’s Nightmare Alley. Across the terrain of that formative album, a near-catharsis unfolds, as if the very zeitgeist from which it arose were crying in search of change. Parkins cites it as an important turning point in her career. “I felt a need to do a solo record, lay my gauntlet down and take a place of my own, not like I had a manifesto, but I was really at the beginning of a process of determination to do something that I hadn’t heard exactly the way I was doing it. My mission was to do something with the harp that was unfamiliar to me.” To be sure, it was just as unfamiliar to the audience who came to hear her play at New Langton Arts, curated by visual artist Nayland Blake in San Francisco in the summer of 1991. “I hadn’t done that many solo shows and they didn’t have an acoustic harp available, so I played with my electric harp. The gallery had rake seating fanning out from the center—and it was packed. I was in a state of shock. Inspired and excited, I just improvised. That’s when Table of the Elements approached me and asked if I would be the first artist on the label. It was a special way to start.”

Besides introducing listeners to a voice that needed hearing, Nightmare Alley revealed the harp’s multifaceted potential. Though the credits list “electric and acoustic harps” as its material resources, the album was a revelation of immaterial forces that betrayed next to nothing of their origins. “I’m very connected to the harp,” notes Parkins, “but not in a way meant to convey technical virtuosity.” Trained in the rigors of classical piano yet aware that it wasn’t the path she wanted to follow, she encountered the harp while attending Cass Technical High School in Detroit. “They took pity on us pianists for being isolated in our practice rooms, so they assigned us orchestral instruments to get us out there performing. The school had many orchestras and I was willing to give it a try. Walking into a back room without windows and seeing eight concert harps was the most unexpected situation I could ever have imagined myself in. I totally fell in love with the instrument; it made total sense to me physically. When I realized that I was really going to seriously be involved with harp, I trained privately knowing I wasn’t ever going to play it live in a classical setting.”

Out of that training emerged a musician who understood the corporeal math needed to bring forth a sound that inhabited both inner equations into a language that we on the outside could understand.

“It wasn’t long before her interest in developing that language opened a portal into the harp’s very soul, pulling from that formless void a second heartbeat in electric form. The earliest version of her electric harp was built by late cellist and Skeleton Crew bandmate Tom Cora and visual artist Julian Jackson in 1985. The following year, it was remade by lutherian Ken Parker as a freestanding instrument allowing her to play standing up. Next, sound artist and clandestine instrument builder Douglas Henderson added, among other things, new pickup placements and an ebony strip along the whammy bar side, which Parkins prays for a certain physicality, noting that it “profoundly changed the instrument, creating a fingerboard-like environment for me to develop different kinds of playing techniques.”

At the same time, there is a deeply metaphysical aspect to her work that has continued to evolve from one setting to the next. For Parkins, however, it’s less a process of determining than a spectrum: “The physical can become metaphysical because gesture and materiality are so important. It’s about presence, which is very much a part of how I am as a performer. Not just the body, but also one’s intention and absence of intention, desire, expectations, failures—all these things help.”

A case in point is her latest album, Glass Triangle (released in February on Relative Pitch Records), for which she joins with Mette Rasmussen (alto saxophone) and, again, Sawyer. Despite having played together only once at The Stone Series at Happylucky no.1 in Brooklyn, the trio made the studio its crucible. What ensued in the freely improvised session was reverse alchemy—not turning lead into gold but breaking down the latter into its constituent parts, each no longer precious alone yet all the more authentic for having been liberated. Thus, what begins as a fragmentary coalition gathers around the campfire of an intimately connected excursion. Sounding at times like an electric guitar, at others like a voice dying in its attempts to communicate from behind the wall of noise erected by recent politics, harp hoists a protest sign for a generation woefully uncertain of the future, as if some gargantuan lie were morphing into truth. In this space, magic is outs a restless muse that would sooner destroy its adherents than enable a miracle. Between dips into sustained beauty, one encounters the profundity of “The crystal chain letters”, a track that references Bruno Taut, whose legendary correspondences with kindred architects imagined a future in which urban planning welcomed rather than dictated human behavior. The letters were also, more importantly, a honeycomb around World War I, the traumatic effects of which begged not for utopia but for an ability to use the rubble of the past as material for mosaics of the future. This sensibility is broken and rubbed into the skin of Glass Triangle as if it were a necessary armor for the road ahead.

In light of this historical awareness, Parkins reflects on her beginnings as an artist so follows. “I was myopic then in thinking about the future, just living in the moment. Growing up with an immigrant father and a first-generation mother, I was encouraged to be practical, to be good in school, to do music on the side but focus on a career. But I just wanted to be in the world of music, to be surrounded by a community of musicians, to hear things I’d never heard before. I wanted every experience.” Under the current circumstances, one would be remiss to ignore this motivation. The need for community seems to have grown in proportion to the world’s tendency to fall down the rabbit hole of isolation. Such concerns were already on Parkins’ mind before the pandemic, when questions of safety and practicality prevented her from touring with the electric harp. The mindset of quarantine rekindled her relationship with the instrument. With the help of her partner, filmmaker Jeff Preiss, she began shooting solo performances as a means of reaching out. As she sees it: “You put a recorder up and instantly it’s more than just you in the room.”

Seeking other channels through which to foster a sense of community, including a virtual book group, has allowed connections that might not normally have crystallized to take root and flourish. “This situation we’ve been enduring is like a combination of patience and faith, but also the understanding that there need to be points of correction, a sense of urgency for transformation. It gives us a new way to look at our world with brutality and honesty, knowing that we are faced with a different kind of time.” What a sonic blessing, then, that we can wield the lanterns of her creations to show the way. As justice shines like a constellation above a horizon that only seems to recede the more we approach it, we need all the light we can get.

For more information, visit zeenaparkins.com. Parkins live-streams Apr. 8th at roulette.org.

Recommended Listening:

• Zeena Parkins – Something Out There
  (No Man’s Land, 1986-87)
• Butch Morris – Dust to Dust (New World, 1990)
• Zeena Parkins – Nightmare Alley
  (Table of the Elements, 1992)
• Phantom Orchard Orchestra – Trouble in Paradise
  (Tzadik, 2008)
• Myra Melford/Zeena Parkins/Miya Masaoka –
  MPM (Infrequent Seams, 2014)
• Zeena Parkins – Glass Triangle (Relative Pitch, 2019)
Jazz vocalists are judged on tone, technique, originality and, above all, the ability to embody and project the depth of life's experiences. Dallas-born Jazzmeia Horn, who turns 30 this month, is blessed with the first three and developing the fourth, as she showed at a live-streamed duet with pianist Keith Brown at Dizzy's Club (Mar. 4th). Seated on a stool, dressed in stark primary colors and her trademark Queen Nefertiti-style beaddress, Horn was equally playful and serious, childlike and mature. Introducing her originals she spoke of women's rights (the "infinity of femininity"), motherhood, cyber-bullying and the travails of college dating. Her delivery of the songs was a mix of mercurial vocal tones (she often sounded like several different singers simultaneously) and daring improvisations during which she would seem to paint herself into a musical corner, only to leap out suddenly with a harmonically 'correct' note or a rhythmically 'correct' accent. Besides her own "Free Your Mind", "Where We Are", "When I Say", "Let Us", "Legs and Arms" and "Searchin'", Horn covered "East of the Sun and West of the Moon", "Have You Met Miss Jones?" and "If You Can't Smile and Say Yes". Her rapport with Brown was cozy and comfortable: instead of trying to compensate for a lack of bass and drums, he gave her open spaces, trusting their collective rhythm to hold the momentum while she threaded his harmonies with intricate scat solos, adroitly adapting her melodic shapes to the changing chords.

—Tom Greenland

People often moan about the psychic distancing concomitant with COVID-19 quarantining, an effect particularly grating to aficionados of live music, but this reviewer was pleasantly surprised by the deeply immersive experience provided by the Take Off Collective's live-stream gig at Brooklyn's ShapeShifter Lab (Mar. 6th). Thanks to top-shelf technology—artful lighting schemes (monolithic black baffles mounted on a white brick wall were sequentially bathed in dark purple, metallic blue, hell-fire red and neutral light to render a cave-like ambiance) and a sensitive crew (the mix was impeccable and the cameras weren't on autopilot, as they are in many venues, but followed the onstage action)—both the sights and sounds of saxophonist Ole Mathisen, bassist Matt Garrison and drummer Marko Djordjevic (all of whom doubled on electronics in this gig) were intimate and tangible. Listening with headphones only heightened the illusion of a three-dimensional soundscape. Starting with no set game plan (though Mathisen admitted he had pre-programmed a few sounds in his computer), the trio separated, both in terms of the electric/acoustic mix and their artistic interactions. Referencing Jaco Pastorius-era Weather Report, especially in Garrison's fleet, highly expressive fretless bass work, the trio's musical explorations were notable both for changeability and cohesion. It was a set for inclusion on one of those end-of-the-year "Best of" lists.

—Marilyn Lester

Jazzmeia Horn @ Dizzy's Club

When is a bass more than a bass? When it's in the hands of Ron Carter. There isn't an inch of the upright that the miraculous Carter hasn't explored. Not only is he a virtuoso of styles and techniques, but what he elicits from his instrument is magical. It can sound like a guitar, a harp or more, yielding to his seemingly infinite creative will. For his Radio Free Birdland concert (Mar. 6th), Carter was joined by pianist Renee Rosnes, tenor saxophonist Jimmy Greene and drummer Payton Crossley. The quartet hadn't played in a year, but you'd never know it. With musical 'music memory' they fell into the pocket with total ease. The first half hour was devoted to an interwining medley of two Carter originals with Miles Davis standards "Flamenco Sketches" and "Seven Steps to Heaven" (Carter played on the latter's original recording). The themes integrated seamlessly, with a couple of bass solos in the off-charts category. A lot of the heavy lifting fell to Greene, whose overall suavity was smooth as honey, with tone to match. A commonality among the four is lightness; their notes, not without power, seem to rise almost ethereally into a synchronous whole, including Crossley, who tamped and coaxed rhythm from his kit in support. The ballad feature for Rosnes was a beautifully creative take on Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart's "My Funny Valentine". Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz' "You and The Night and the Music" closed the set with a happy-making, uplifting swing.

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—Marilyn Lester
Since first coming on to the American jazz scene, taking top prize in the 2013 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, Melissa Aldana has consistently lived up to the promise of her initial exposure, demonstrating growth as both a player and composer leading her own variously configured units. At Bar Bayeux (Mar. 3rd) the Chilean tenor saxophonist unveiled her latest ensemble, featuring guitarist Charles Altura, along with bassist Pablo Menares and drummer Johnathan Blake. For more information, visit melissalldana.com.

In honor of Women’s History Month, Musique Libre Femmes played a remote concert as part of the annual Lady Got Chops Festival (Mar. 7th). Cheryl Pyle (C flute, alto flute) gathered flutist Haruna Fukazawa, bassoonist Claire de Brunner and vocalist Jüli Silvano for a set of improvisations, starting with a klangfarben-like call-and-response chase, which morphed into a flowing piece led by a dual flute melodic line. The pairing, especially with both on standard C flutes, painted sinews of lush, impossibly close harmony, the sonorities enmeshed in a manner neither coupled nor chaste. During the third improvisation, the hauntingly moody instrument was appropriately reminiscent of “World Without Time”, for decades the opening theme of PBS’ The Open Mind. De Brunner cast rhythmic baselines and counterpoint, often of swinging broken triplets, and embarked on solo ventures indicating the band of its composer, Dizzy Gillespie. The original arrangement, which included a dissonant Monk-ish piano interlude along with a lyrical bass solo and series of crisp drum exchanges, exhibited the NEA Jazz Master’s ability to make the even the most iconic material his own. Remaining rooted in the classic jazz tradition, the set continued with an easy-moving interpretation of Billy Strayhorn’s “Isfahan”, which served as a jumping-off point for their extended improvisations. Aldana’s mastery of the melody, which served as a jumping-off point for their extended improvisations. Aldana’s mastery of the melody, which served as a jumping-off point for their extended improvisations. Aldana’s mastery of the melody, which served as a jumping-off point for their extended improvisations. Aldana’s mastery of the melody, which served as a jumping-off point for their extended improvisations. Aldana’s mastery of the melody, which served as a jumping-off point for their extended improvisations. 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David Ostwald began studying piano at 7, taking up the tuba at 11, headed, he thought, for a career in classical music. But then, in his junior year at the University of Chicago, the jazz bug bit. Ostwald was already primed, having discovered the joys of Louis Armstrong while still in high school. He formed his first jazz band at that time and after moving to New York, the Swarthmore, PA native created the Gully Low Jazz Band, which in 2000 morphed into the Louis Armstrong Eternity Band with a weekly gig at Birdland. His second album, with blues great Big Joe Turner, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1986. Ostwald has performed with the likes of Wynton Marsalis, Dick Hyman, Nicholas Payton, Clark Terry, Benny Waters, Woody Allen, Jon Hendricks, Leon Redbone and the Oxford University Orchestral Society under Sir Jack Westrup. For many years, he has also presented jazz education programs for children at Lincoln Center’s “Meet the Artist” and “Reel to Real” series and at the Louis Armstrong House in Corona, Queens. He has also written extensively about jazz music.

The New York City Jazz Record: As we know all too well, the pandemic has wiped out most gigs. But recently, you’ve been playing outdoors at Holocaust Memorial Plaza and also recorded for Radio Free Birdland’s streaming series. What was that latter experience like, playing to an essentially empty house?

David Ostwald: Over the years we all get used to playing for an empty room. So, I just pretended that there were people there! I draw inspiration from Louis Armstrong—as I always do—who, once at a concert in North Dakota where there was a huge blizzard, played to five people in a 2,000 seat hall. He said, they showed up, so we’re gonna play. So, we just had to psych ourselves into thinking that there was an audience there. I went through all my usual shtick. I asked the audience to please remain seated, even though they weren’t there, so it was fun. As for the park, it’s dependent on the weather, but it’s a really nice experience for us and for the audience, especially in these times. It’s a fun thing. So, I encourage people to check out when we’re playing there because there’s also a natural dance floor. We’ve been getting a lot of swing dancers, which we never had at Birdland.

TNYCJR: You were thwarted in having a major celebration this past year.

DO: Yes, and it was quite jarring to have to stop everything, having been used to playing for 20 years every week. March 11th, 2020 was our last regular Wednesday at Birdland and May 8th was going to be our big 20th anniversary. I’m very proud of that. We were going to really celebrate that.

TNYCJR: Prior to Birdland, you had a long run as the Gully Low Jazz Band. I’m curious about that name.

DO: I came to New York in the late ’70s, right after college. I used to hang out at the Red Blazer Too, a club that had a different band every night. That’s where I first met Vince Giordano. I’d tape all the bands, with their permission, and go home and learn the tunes. After a certain point, I realized I was doing gigs with other people’s bands but I didn’t have my own band yet. You think to yourself, well maybe I’d like to play the music my own way. So, I started putting together a group of people that I played with and one night I said to the owner, I don’t want to take anyone’s gig away, but if there’s an opening, I have a band, although I didn’t really have one yet. I wasn’t expecting him to say yes, but he did and asked, what’s the name of your band? The first thing that came to my mind was a Hot Seven tune running through my head at the time called “Gully Low Blues”. I had to appear as though I already had a name for the band so that’s how that got started.

TNYCJR: Stuck with the name though, because we started getting a lot of work. Fast forward to 2000 and the 100th anniversary of what Louis Armstrong thought was his birth date of July 4th, 1900. I’d become good friends with George Avakian, who was a great supporter of the band and who thought it would be a good idea to talk to the owner of Birdland, Gianni Valenti, about starting a gig there. Gianni was all for it, but for publicity purposes, wanted to give the band an identity. I was a little bit leery about the name change because my idea of the band has never been to imitate anything anybody does, but rather to be inspired by them. I didn’t want to be trapped into being identified with Louis Armstrong, so for a while we used both names. We started getting a following and as 2003 came along it looked like we were safe that the gig was going to be ongoing -- so the name stuck.

TNYCJR: Along the way you’ve had the distinction of having some major guests sitting in with the band.

DO: Some of them weren’t famous at the time, but then got famous, like Wyckliffe Gordon and Anat Cohen. They both still play with us from time to time. Names aren’t important. My attitude is that no matter how famous you are, everyone in the band is the same. My number one rule of bandleading is not to have any players who don’t fit in because the band’s just not going to sound good. Part of the reason we get the sound we do is because we make each other laugh. We listen to each other, we like each other, we enjoy each other and people can feel that. Solid musicians know their roles as sidemen even if they’re leaders of their own bands, like Wynton Marsalis. When I’ve played with him, I’m a sideman. It’s a dynamic we all respect.

TNYCJR: Besides the band’s sound, what do you strive to achieve in performance? If I’m sitting in the audience, listening to you, what is it that you want me to experience?

DO: Heart to heart. That’s what I want. I want you to be moved to joy or sadness or reflection or whatever it is without a filter. That’s what Louis Armstrong did for people. And it was direct from one soul to the other. What my goal is is to have the band be one soul and emotionally on the same page. And I want that to go directly to someone else’s heart, without them thinking about anything, without barriers. The variety of people who can affect if we’re doing our job properly is infinite. It’s as infinite as nature.

TNYCJR: You were attracted to the music of Armstrong around age 15. What is it that clicked, whereupon you said, Oh, my God, this is the guy for me?

COURTESY OF MARILYN LESTER
Trumpeter Steph Richards has been quietly taking the world of improvised music by storm. The classically-trained Alberta, Canada native didn’t exactly plan her career in terms of becoming a free jazz MVP, but what else would one call a person who has shared the stage with iconic saxophonist/composers like Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill and John Zorn?

Music was always a part of her life, before she knew about jazz, before she felt the pull of the trumpet. “I’ve played the piano for as long as I can remember,” Richards recalls. “We always had one in the house and I started writing from the beginning, just composing my own songs.” She came to the horn circuitously, through an early exposure to Scottish pipe and drum music, where she played the tenor drum, digging the visual choreography as much as the sonics. “And then I chose the trumpet. I loved its flexibility. It could play classical music, it could play jazz, it could play pop. That’s what attracted me to it at the age of 12 and it still does. I had a love for Scottish folk music and Joni Mitchell and then I picked up the horn and was lucky enough to have an amazing teacher who made some great recommendations of what to check out.”

Initially, she was set on classical music. “I was doing a lot of competitions, flying across the country to perform some big concerts. That was 75% of my musical diet, but in my heart, whenever I had any extra time to practice, I’d be transcribing Freddie Hubbard solos or listening to Ellington. This was the music that spoke to me.”

Richards went to the Eastman School of Music, earning her Bachelor’s studying orchestral music, but she switched gears and moved to Montréal, getting her Graduate degree. At that point, she came to the West Coast, to study with bassist Charlie Haden at Cal Arts.

“That changed everything for me. That’s where I started really improvising and writing,” says Richards. “Charlie was my teacher there and a big influence. He taught me to play the ocean and stressed that beauty comes first and I’m still trying to implement that.” Richards has studied with some of the most significant players on the planet, including trumpeter Ron Miles, while she was still in high school (the family moved to Colorado) for her senior year. At Cal Arts, she had the privilege to seek out trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith. “He wasn’t my official teacher, but we would play. I learned what it meant to play with fire—when he brings it, the room is electrified, you know?”

After graduation, Richards stayed in L.A. for six months, taking advantage for a moment, to explore commercial music at the big-time level, when she joined the touring band of rapper Kanye West. “I got the opportunity through a friend of a friend who couldn’t do it. My first gig was the MTV Video Awards show.” Following the Kanye tour, Richards moved to New York. She attended a workshop organized by pianist Fred Hersch where she met pianist Jason Moran, saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom and trumpeter Ralph Alessi, all important connections. She was attending the wedding of a friend when she met conductor Butch Morris — perhaps her most significant mentor. “He kind of took me under his wing. He would tell me about concerts I shouldn’t miss. If he was doing a conduction, he would invite people to come hear me. That’s how I met Henry Threadgill. Butch was a really important part of me connecting to New York and feeling some sort of drive. He was hard on me, but it was just that his music was life and death and he taught me that.”

Also while in New York, Richards began working with trumpeter Dave Douglas and the Festival of New Trumpet Music and she continues to be involved at the administrative level many years later. Through the festival, she connected with cornet player Taylor Ho Bynum, and through Bynum, she caught the ears of Braxton. Eventually, that led to an invitation to join the Braxton group.

“To me, Braxton’s music reflects voices of humanity in a way that is genuine—feminine, masculine, all that is in between and beyond. If the world is 50% female, music should reflect that. Working with Braxton is true joy.” Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of a European tour with the Braxton group, but Richards did manage to make a record with the maestro, which will be coming out in June on Firehouse 12.

Richards was a vital force in the Brooklyn improv scene in 2014, when she was approached by bassist Mark Dresser with an invitation to apply for a position at the University of California at San Diego. “He emailed me, but I didn’t think I could ever qualify for it, so I didn’t even apply. But he kept after me and I gave it a shot and I got the job! I reconnected with the West Coast, which I love and it’s really helped support me making the kind of music I love.”

Speaking of the music she loves, Richards just released her third album as a leader, the volcanic Supersense (Northern Spy), with Moran, electric bassist Stomu Takeishi and drummer Kenny Wollesen. She had this to say about the new album, which is designed to work with a scent card provided to the musicians at the session. “I’m always playing with compositional structure to find a way to empower and lift up all the players as best as I can with my music. So this record combines traditional notation with graphic notation and scent, you know, how your body processes that information.”

And what kind of response has the new album gotten? “There’s a lot of curiosity. I was worried the critics might say it stinks. But the reviews so far have been very positive. My whole hope for this project was to bring people closer to the music.”

On a personal level, Richards and husband Andrew Munsey had a baby girl, Anza, during the pandemic. “I don’t know how much [being a mother] will change my music, because COVID happened…I do feel a deeper connection to this idea of humanity. I think my heart has softened, so we’ll see what comes.”

For more information, visit stephrichards.com. Richards live-streams Thursdays in April at facebook.com/stephiesounds.

**Recommended Listening:**
- Asphalt Orchestra — *Eponymous* (Cantaloupe Music, 2009)
- Steph Richards — *Fullmoon* (Relative Pitch, 2014)
- Steph Richards — *Take The Noon Lights* (Birdwatcher, 2015)
- Steph Richards — *Supersense* (Northern Spy, 2016)
- James Carney — *Pure Heart* (Sunnyside, 2016)
- Vinny Golia/ Steph Richards/ Bert Turetzky — *Trio Music* (pMENTUM, 2017)
Guitarist Calvin Keys hit his stride as a teenager in the late '50s and has enjoyed a career filled with decades of performance. He has worked with Ray Charles, Ahmad Jamal, Earl "Fatwa" Hines, Sonny Fortune, Pharoah Sanders, Blue Mitchell, Bobby Hutcherson and just about all of the great organ players, including Jack McDuff, Richard "Groove" Holmes, Jimmy McGriff and Jimmy Smith. In the early '70s he recorded with Gene Russell and Doug Carn for the Black Jazz label while leading his own, now classic, sessions Shaws' Need and Proceed with Caution. Both titles have been reissued perennially; the former received a new treatment in January 2021 (by Real Gone Music) and the latter will be reissued later this year.

Keys was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1945 and started playing the guitar around the age of 13 or 14, though he wasn’t really supposed to be playing it. “My uncle Ivory introduced me to the guitar. He told me that I could have his guitar if I was saving my money and he would have the new blues tunes and I used to listen to him every Saturday night: Bobby Blue Bland, Muddy Waters and all the cats during that time.” He also sought out any guitarists he could find in the area. There was Papa Luther Guitar Woodruff and The Night Riders and Clon Von Fitz in Council Bluffs, Iowa who showed him some things. His neighbor Richard Gardner played and his wife was the sister of Wayne Bennett who played with Bland.

“Wayne used to come to Omaha when he wasn’t out on the road with Bobby. We’d sit at the barbershop and I’d pick up a few more chords. There were four or five different guitar players in Omaha during that time and if you didn’t know none of them blues tunes you weren’t in the game: Freddie King’s ‘Hideaway’ or Bill Doggett’s ‘Honky Tonk’, ‘Catemouth Brown’, he had that popular guitar blues, Jimmy Reed and all of them cats. Any guitar player comes through town and we heard about it, we’d go down there and worry him to death trying to figure out and learn stuff. So, that’s where it started, socializing with the guitar players who were just walking in and out.”

By the age of 16 or 17 he started playing with Doctor Spider and his Rock’n’roll Webs at local clubs like The First and Last Chance, The Off Beat and up the road in Sioux City, Iowa at trumpeter Kenner’s Poor Boys Club 54. At the same time, he started working with another group called Andre and the Ramrods, playing the blues and covering tunes they heard on the radio. They were working for a couple years when Little Walkin’ Willie came through town and heard the young Keys. He needed a guitar player to cover about a month of work and invited Keys on the road, but his mother said no, since he was still in school. He had enough credits to graduate, so he said, “Mom, you know, you always told me to be up front with you … Well, I’m gonna go [with] Little Walkin’ Willie if I have to sneak out while you’re asleep.” She said, ‘Well, I don’t want you to be a musician, young man, but if you’re going to be one, try to be the best.’

They went on the road to the Riviera Ballroom in St. Louis, Gleason’s in Cleveland and DWI Dave’s Walnut Inn, in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Keys had the time of his life and couldn’t believe it when the month was suddenly over. He was on the train back to Omaha. He’d got a taste of life on the road in crowded clubs and would never be the same. So as soon as he got home, he moved down to Kansas City where his father lived and where there was more live music. He got a job with Lionel Hampton and started working with saxophonist Preston Love. Love’s ensemble was a nine-piece dance band and while traveling the region, Keys started learning to perform standards.

Next, Keys got a call to join Frank Edwards’ organ trio along with drummer James Gadsden. “So, we started playing that circuit: O.G.’s Lounge in Kansas City, Allen’s Showcase Lounge in Omaha and then to Leroy Smith’s The Voters Club, the oldest club in Denver. We leave there and go to Booker T. Washington Hotel down on Ellis Street between Fillmore and Webster in San Francisco. Charles Sullivan owned the Fillmore Auditorium and a bunch of other clubs and businesses around here; he was a very prominent, successful Black man. Then over here to Oakland to the Tivoli Inn. He had two clubs, The Showboat and The Sportman, and we’d work in either one of those lounges and go back to West Oakland to Esther’s Orbit Room. Now we worked eight weeks in each club and was getting 150 dollars a week. So we were out here in the Bay Area for two, three months, man. So that was the gig. That was the chitlin’ circuit that we knew. Frank was an outstanding organ player, man. So, Jimmy McGriff, Jimmy Smith, all of them knew him, ‘cause he could play.”

In 1967 and 1968, Keys was back at O.G.’s in Kansas City with his own trio, during which time Pat Metheny’s father used to take him to see Keys play. But California was calling to him and he was ready to move on from the organ. “I moved to L.A. in March of 1969. I had saved up my money, I had a nice little bank roll. I bought me a brand new guitar, a new wardrobe and a brand new 1969 Deuce and a Quarter Buick 225, so when I hit L.A. I was rollin’ [laughs]. Then I played all over.”

“Strayhorn was also a genius. I think most of his songs are comparable to art songs of the Romantic period, like the songs written by Schubert, Brahms and Hugo Wolf. They are beautiful, but so are Strayhorn’s. If you take them and analyze them you find the same elements in 19th Century art songs as you do in Strayhorn’s ‘Lush Life’. That’s why Ellington didn’t like the word ‘jazz’; it puts things apart in categories and Strayhorn was like Ellington, who described his music as ‘beyond category’.

“Duke was pretty close to my dad, personally,” says Bell-Stevens, “and when my grandfather died Duke told my dad that as long as he, Duke, was alive he’d always have a dad.” She also remembers that Bell’s closest musician friends were trumpeters Clark Terry and Joe Newman and saxophonist Frank Wess and that their families socialized together.

From 1970-90 Bell was head of the jazz program at Essex County College in Newark, NJ. He brought in visiting artists to give concerts and sometimes teach semesters and inaugurated a Performing Jazz Institute in 1985. He semi-retired in 1990.

In 1976 he finished his doctorate at Columbia Teacher’s College, his dissertation a “Bicentennial History of Black Americans from Africa and slavery, focusing on the musical contributions to American history”.

“Duke was in the Ellington Orchestra for two years and worked on and off on projects with Ellington and his collaborator Billy Strayhorn for another four years, returning to play with the band on the Duke’s tribute album to Strayhorn, who died in 1967, ‘…And His Mother Called Him Bill’ (RCA, 1967). It was a fertile period for Ellington and Bell appears on seven albums from the band during 1960-63. He is also the bassist on two of Ellington’s more celebrated small-band dates of the period, Duke Ellington Meets Coleman Hawkins and Duke Ellington & John Coltrane, both recorded in 1962 for Impulse.

Besides being the bassist in the band, Bell also had the opportunity to write out parts for Ellington and Strayhorn’s scores. “It was really educational,” he said, recalling an incident when he went to Ellington to point out what he thought was a mistake. “In school they tell you not to cross your parts and being a kid I thought I knew more than I did, so I went to Ellington and said, ‘I think you made a mistake here, sir.’ He said, ‘That’s alright, just copy it as it is.’ And when you heard the orchestra play it, you knew he was right. But Ellington never wrote a book about his technique, so people are still trying to figure it all out. Whatever it was, I learned it through experience, through writing for his band.

“He studied in school, not music, art, but I think he picked up a lot of traditional composing ideas from Strayhorn. But I could always tell the two apart. The swing thing, the smooth, almost classical, but Duke had that rough cut to it, he did very original things.

This is the last page of the article. Please see the next page for the continuation.”

 (**Continued on Page 25**)
OUT OF YOUR HEAD

BY JOHN SHARPE

Starting a label as a self-help mechanism has become a well-trodden route, particularly in the wilds of avant garde jazz. But not all such ventures take off like Out Of Your Head Records (OOYH). Uncertain of being able to find a suitable outlet, bassist Adam Hopkins launched the imprint in 2018 to release his leadership debut Crickets, by the sextet of the same name with Anna Webber, Ed Rosenberg, Josh Sinton, Devin Gray and Jonathan Goldberger. It marries tight arrangements, spontaneous outbursts and indie rock attitude and was deservedly successful.

Hopkins explains what happened next: “Immediately after I did it I had friends reaching out saying, that Out Of Your Head thing was really cool, I have something, can I send it to you and put it out? I never expected to be putting out this much music per year but all these people were sending me this amazing music so we’re doing as much as we can.” Talking to Hopkins, his enthusiasm for the music comes across loud and clear and it’s been a key factor in the growth of the brand. So much so that since then he has issued 14 albums with more planned.

Aside from the punningly effective name, which derives from an improvised music series that Hopkins ran, first in Baltimore and later in Brooklyn, the visual element forms a distinctive aspect of OOYH. Hopkins works closely with artist and longtime friend TJ Huff, who contributes specific artwork for each release, as well as other artist friends who design the logo, branding and merchandise. When Hopkins moved from Brooklyn to Richmond, VA, coincidentally on the same day Crickets came out, he invited Richmond-based drummer Scott Clark (who dropped a solo set on OOYH early in 2021) to join him. Consequently they curate the label, both listening to prospective releases and agreeing what to put out.

For example, Hopkins was immediately drawn to guitarist TJ Huff’s one-man band airing from Michæl Attias on which he plays saxophone and piano simultaneously, The MacQuartet’s The Complete Night, featuring the fabulous two trumpet frontline of Herb Robertson and Dave Balton, and bassist Nick Dunston’s leadership unveiling Atlantic Extraction, which turned heads thanks to its genre-spanning realization of this crisply plotted charts. Dunston is entirely complimentary: “It’s kind of a perfect label in many respects. They treat the artists right because they themselves are ridiculous musicians, they’re genuinely into all of the music they put out, so they give complete artistic control to their artists. And the artwork is dope!”

Bassist Michael Formanek, who was Hopkins’ teacher at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, also figures in the label’s mix of peers and elders. Dyads, a delightful duet with his saxophonist son Peter, came out in January. Formanek explains his choice: “Adam was really into it and excited about it. For me, record companies that I work with, the enthusiasm and the interest of the people that are putting out the music, that means a lot to me. Another reason that I chose to do this with Adam is that he saw Peter grow up. Peter participated in the OOYH Series a few times. So for me putting it out on Adam’s label, brings the whole thing full circle in a really good way.”

Formanek has an enlightening perspective on OOYH’s development: “There are very few people I know who have that kind of personality that allows them to get things going in a certain way that people are just attracted to whatever charisma that they generate. Adam really had that and it was really important for the scene down there in Baltimore at the time. It’s just his way of doing things and he just transposed what he had been doing with these different series to a record label.”

Compelling evidence of Hopkins’ knack for making things happen and building community comes from Untamed, the digital-only DIY side of OOYH, which focuses on high-quality performances that may not have the pristine sound of a traditional studio session. During the pandemic he asked friends and colleagues for unreleased live or home recordings for which he could provide artwork, then distribute. Because costs are minimal, all proceeds go direct to the musicians, along with a donation from OOYH, providing valuable income when there are no live dates. So far the series numbers six, including entries from Dunston, Formanek, Tim Berne (whose Screwwgun imprint was a big inspiration to Hopkins) and Webber’s quartet, which includes Hopkins and is responsible for the stunning Rectangles.

For physical releases OOYH covers production costs upfront then, once recouped through sales, split any further takings with the artist. Thus far Hopkins has found the economics sustainable. “Some of the albums lose money, which is fine. When you are putting out avant garde free jazz you don’t necessarily

(Continued on page 25)
Chick Corea, keyboard player, NEA Jazz Master, 25-time Grammy Award winner, most recently this year with Best Jazz Instrumental Album ( Trilogy 2) and Best Improvised Jazz Solo (“All Blues”), multiple DownBeat Jazz Artist of the Year, member of the Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers Hall of Fame, BBC Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and among the most significant jazz players of the past seven decades, died Feb. 9th, 2021 at 79, shortly after being diagnosed with cancer. 

Corea, né Armando, was born in Chelsea, Mass. on Jun. 12th, 1941 and introduced to music via his Dixieland trumpeter father. He began piano lessons as a young child and was already gigging as a highschooler. He came to New York for university but got his real education on the bandstand through early work with Mongo Santamaria, Blue Mitchell, Dave Pike, Hubert Laws, Montego Joe, Herbie Mann, Cal Tjader, Stan Getz, Pete La Roca and Donald Byrd. 

His leader debut came in 1966, Tones For Joan’s Bones on the Mann-produced Vortex label. 1968 was the year however, that began his stratospheric rise. In March, he recorded the seminal trio date now He Sings, Now He Solos (Solid State) with bassist Miroslav Vitous and drummer Roy Haynes. Then, that fall, he recorded on Miles Davis’ Filles De Kilimanjaro sessions, beginning an affiliation that would last through 1972. 

Corea was one of the large group of musicians who came out of the trumpeter’s electric period to found their own fusion bands. Alongside John McLaughlin/ Billy Cobham’s Mahavishnu Orchestra and Wayne Shorter/Joe Zawinul’s Weather Report was Corea’s Return to Forever (RTF), which debuted on ECM in 1972 and stayed active, albeit with personnel changes, through 1978 (reuniting briefly in the new millennium). Previous to RTF, Corea had established himself on ECM with a pair of solo albums, dates with A.R.C. with bassist Dave Holland and drummer Barry Altschul and the cooperative Circle band of Anthony Braxton, Corea, Holland, Holland and Altschul. Another milestone came at the end of 1972 with Crystal Silence (ECM), a duet with vibraphonist Gary Burton, a relationship the men continued well into the new millennium. 

The following decades saw dozens of releases with almost as many bands for Polydor, Stretch, GRP and Concord, whether the Friends group of 1978 with reedplayer Joe Farrell (who had been on Tones For Joan’s Bones), bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Steve Gadd; duets with fellow pianists Friedrich Gulda or Herbie Hancock; the Elektrik, Akoustic and Origin bands; collaborations with Bobby McFerrin and Trilogy and with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brian Blade, all accompanied by constant touring. In addition, numerous Corea compositions have entered the jazz canon and been recorded by myriad artists.

CHRISTIAN BROECKING (Jun. 5th, 1957 - Feb. 2nd, 2021) The German musicologist and critic wrote liner notes for releases on Intakt, hatART and Jazzwerkstatt, founded Jazz Radio Berlin and the culture-related publishing house Broecking Verlag, was a jazz juror for the annual German Record Critics’ Prize and a noted lecturer. Broecking died Feb. 2nd at 63.

CLAUDE CARRIÈRE (Mar. 14th, 1939 - Feb. 20th, 2021) The French producer, journalist, radio show host and noted Duke Ellington expert was involved in archival releases by Ellington, Charlie Christian, Oscar Peterson, Hank Jones and others for Media 7, Dreyfus Jazz, Nocturne and Cristal and wrote liner notes since the ’70s for compilations released on RCA Victor, Black and Blue, Pathé, Savoy, Vogue, BMG France, Saga and others. Carrière died Feb. 20th at 82.

DENNY CHRISTIANSON (Sep. 12th, 1942 - Feb. 10th, 2021) The Canada-based trumpeter, bandleader and arranger had several albums since the ’80s on Justin Time, mostly with his big band, and sideman work with Gabor Szabo, Roland Bautista, Jean Robitaille, Michel Donato and others. Christianson died Feb. 10th at 78.

PAULY COHEN (Oct. 3rd, 1932 - Feb. 8th, 2021) The trumpeter was active from the early ’40s-late ’80s with Claude Thornhill, Artie Shaw, Woody Herman, Benny Carter, Count Basie, Roy Eldridge, Clark Terry, Oliver Nelson, Machito, Quincy Jones and others. Cohen died Feb. 8th at 96 of complications from COVID-19.

MILFORD GRAVES (Aug. 20th, 1941 - Feb. 12th, 2021) The drummer, whose earliest recorded appearances in the mid 60s—with Montego Joe and Giuseppe Logan—reflected his roots as a Latin percussionist and future as a free-improv drummer, was part of the seminal New York Art Quartet, recorded notable duets with Sonny Morgan, Don Pullen, Andrew Cyrille and David Murray, had an important 1977 collaboration with members of Japan’s avant garde scene (Meditations Among Us), sideman credits with Miriam Makeba, Paul Bley, Lowell Davidson, Jazz Composer’s Orchestra, Albert Ayler, Sonny Sharrock and others and his own albums for IPS, Tzadik and TUM. Graves died Feb. 12th at 79. [An In Memoriam spread for Graves is on pgs. 12-13]

JOHNNY PACHECO (Mar. 25th, 1935 - Feb. 15th, 2021) The Dominican saxophonist/flutist had dozens of albums since the mid ‘60s both as a leader and in collaboration with Pete Rodriguez, Celina Cruz, Jose Fajardo and others, mostly on Fania Records, which he co-founded in 1963 with Jerry Masucci, for which he also produced hundreds of records by the likes of Larry Harlow, Bobby Valentín, Joe Bataan, Willie Colon, Ismael Miranda, Fania All-Stars and many more. Pacheco died Feb. 15th at 85.

ULI RENNERT (1960 - Feb. 5th, 2021) The Austrian pianist had released since the ’80s on Bellaphon, Extrataple, SOS-Music, PAN TAU-X, Natango and other labels, sideman work with Wolfgang Schalk, Uli Soyka and Lakis Tzimkas and longtime membership in the Jazz Big Band Graz. Rennert died Feb. 5th at 60.
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Milford Graves had the courage to be himself. In any walk of life, not an easy thing for many people to do—to be themselves, doing what they think and feel good about, whether liked, disliked or misunderstood by others.

As with other outstanding artists, within the realm of jazz and improvised music, his musical signature was unique—instinctively recognizable! And with his display with an imaginative, personalized trap drum set, along with assorted percussion and ship’s bell while playing, he contributed musical ideas, giving and taking to those who created music with him in the creative moment.

He was also an extraordinary person, gifted in many ways, notably with practices and information pertaining to good health. He shared them with many people who sought his advice: same.

Milford was a family man, my friend, a business partner, a peer and a musical colleague of my generation. Over the years, we played many performances in duets and other varying formations together...too many to mention here! He totally had his own sense of humor. I will remember and treasure all the fun and performances we had during those times.

As with so many other great musicians, and the many other things he was known for, he will be missed a lot by me and many others. He was truly a unique and giving human being.

—ANDREW CYRILLE, DRUMS

Milford Graves was not only a unique and innovative drummer, but exists as a great soul in the modern world. He had a rare ancient wisdom that continued to explore and practice the total way of life.

We have been interacting with each other since 1976, playing together and talking with each other in Japan and U.S. What I have learned from him is immeasurable and I want to keep watching his eternal soul, which will not perish even though he has died.

—TOSHI TSUCHITORI, DRUMS

Milford Graves had an important influence on my life before I had ever met him. I was introduced to the late John Stevens by Alfreda Bengue in 1966. In the ensuing conversation, I got my first taste of John's own brand of intensity. The conversation was enhanced by his presence, which he pronounced that I knew Milford's work, especially the solo record for ESP I got the "job". More accurately I was invited to play at the, now legendary, Little Theatre Club and soon after to join the Spontaneous Music Ensemble.

Years later when I played on the same festival as Milford in Tampere, Finland I was able to introduce myself and thank him for his music, his powerful presence and the role it had played in my life to that date. When John Zorn gave me weeks at The Stone between 2009 and 2014 I summoned up the nerve to ask Milford to play duo with me. The first set between 2009 and 2014 I summoned up the nerve to ask Milford to play duo with me. The first set 28 or 29 when it finally was finished; I became the interpreter of the body as a way for protection.

It wasn't until recently—through Jake Meginsky's Full Mantis—that I understood the full measure of the man. I did not know him to be the fighter and interpreter of the body as a way for protection. I knew him as one who told me that the drums, however configured, is a living and breathing organism. I can't overemphasize the importance of this ageless interpretation. It enables one to clinic and interpret the body as a way for protection.

—BILL LASWELL, BASS

I have known Milford for many, many years but it wasn’t until recently—through Jake Meginsky's film Full Mantis—that I understood the full measure of the man. I did not know him to be the fighter and interpreter of the body as a way for protection. I knew him as one who told me that the drums, however configured, is a living and breathing organism. I can’t overemphasize the importance of this ageless interpretation. It enables one to clinic and interpret the body as a way for protection.

—WILLIAM HOOKER, DRUMS

I first met Milford through the documentary, Speaking In Tongues, about the life and art of Albert Ayler. It took eight years to make, from when I was 21 to 28 or 29 when it finally was finished; I became a man during that process and am very thankful for sharing some intimate musical moments with him. I found a great connection with him and way he was teaching me. He was always teaching. We did a lot of duet concerts over the years. So much dynamics between the two of us it sounded like a whole orchestra at times.

—DAVID MURRAY, REEDS

I was honored to present the many-faceted work of Professor Graves and to share the space of ideas and music and conversation with him and our community, in what turned out to be his final months. As the curator of “A Mind-Body Deal”, with our friends at the Institute of Contemporary Art, I was given a life-changing opportunity to spend days and days in Milford’s presence, at his home, entering into his world as one of his students. The experience has forever changed me.

As heartbroken as I may be now that Professor Graves has passed, I know the legacy that this exhibition introduced more people to his work and connected him to so many of his appreciative admirers. The outpouring of love shown for Milford from family and past students, as well as lifelong fans and even strangers, was overwhelming. He was deeply loved and I am privileged to have provided a channel for these deeply felt feelings and to have been witness to them.

—EVAN PARKER, SAXOPHONE

The primary objective of the totality of the Celestial-Mystic-Spiritual-Scientific musician is to initiate an intradynamical thrusting force on the various particles that comprise Earth's conscious cosmic mysteries that interact with the human biological system. Understanding the unique rhythmic thrust and fracted sorrow patterns of Milford Graves' tribal matrix is like trying to synchronize raindrops. Time is lapsed, accelerated and finally erased. Time is that which ends.

—MARK CHRISTMAN, ARS NOVA WORKSHOP

I am so grateful to have been able to spend time early on studying drums and percussion with Prof. Milford Graves at his home in Queens NY. I am grateful for his lifetime of practice in drumming, research in medicine, visual and martial arts and performance that he strived so hard to fulfill and expand each day.

It is a beautiful, profound and inspiring legacy that Milford has left to the world. A great connector and communicator, Milford understood, learned and created in many ways. We need to be healthy, our vibratory energy, studying this and connecting our heartbeats with drumming and improvisation through medicine and music.

Such beautiful drumming and singing and what an amazing aesthetic! This has always been in my ears and in my heart and I am filled with gratitude and joy to hear this every day at the drums.

Thank you Milford for your wisdom, empathetic spirit and enormous inspiration. You gave everything you had to all of us in the world.

It’s time for us to carry on the work.

—SUSIE IBARRA, DRUMS

Milford Graves and Bill Dixon were my heroes before I enrolled at Bennington College in March of 1972 as a rebellious 27-year old to get my BA in Black Music. I studied two semesters as a private student of Professor Graves and one in workshops.

The knowledge he shared with me was invaluable. His lessons improved the independence of all four limbs and my ability to play the whole drum set. I would never have been the free jazz drummer I am today without his totally unique teachings and seeing his amazing solo drum performances.

He was known to have said, “The music you hear is your own heartbeat.” Over the years, I assimilated those words in my own way and it has worked for me to this day. Thank you, Professor Graves.

—WHIT DICKEY, DRUMS

I have been listening to Milford Graves on recordings and YouTube videos since 2005. Something that got my attention was his singing and drumming together but I never connected to that until I met him in person at the 2019 Vision Festival after his duo concert with Andrew Cyrille.

After the concert I went to introduce myself and as soon as I mentioned to him that I was from Cuba, he opened his eyes wide and grabbed me by my arms and invited me to his house in Queens!

Milford really loved Cuban music. I went to his house and we got to talk more about music and drumming. Then he asked me if I sang when I played, I said yes, which made him SO happy. Then we kept talking and talking about his musical concept until he said to me very softly, “I want to invite you to play with me, but I better don’t say it because of my health condition. I don’t want to talk about it if it is not going to happen.” In that moment I said to myself, “Milford I am already playing with you here.”

Milford really changed my life in drumming, my vision and my approach and I feel so grateful for that but at the same time very sad because I couldn’t share with him what I learned from him. He really taught me how powerful music is when we sing and play at the same time.

Thanks very much, Milford.
Milford lived every moment of his life using all of his God-given abilities and instincts. Searching and discovering his purpose in life. Then living inside that purpose, music healing singing a song inspired by the elders from Africa to South Carolina to Jamaica. A grandfathers song, which trains you to trust one’s intuitive nature. Baba Milford Graves was something else, as anyone who met him could attest to. His creative spirit was unstoppable. An extraordinary human being.

— WILLIAM PARKER, BASS

I was truly saddened to learn of Milford’s transition. For more than 50 years I have been an enthusiastic follower of Milford’s numerous creative activities in multiple disciplines. Through reading, listening, watching, performing, phone calls, rehearsals and visiting his home, I can truly say he was always full of energy, challenges AND surprises.....ASHE!!!

— FAMOUDOU DON MOYE, DRUMS

The night I got the sad news about Milford’s death from Michael Ehlers I was reading some old Japanese poems (translated by Kenneth Rexroth) and on the page I opened there was the following poem:

Did a cuckoo cry?
I open the door
And look out in the garden
There is only the moon
Alone in the night

I think that is a good way to remember that great man.

— PETER BROTZMANN, SAXOPHONE

Another terrible loss: the great Milford Graves. A unique and amazing soul. Nobody played like him, nobody thought like him, nobody sounded like him. A true original. Milford (or “The Professor”, as he was called by many of us who knew him) did everything his own way. His music, his sound, even his physical drum set, were like no one else’s. Refused to play a snare drum, feeling that snares got in the way of the natural sound of the drum. Wouldn’t use bottom heads on his drums either. The shells, and even the heads, were custom hand-painted—no factory finishes for Milford Graves! Professor Graves was an artist, thinker, philosopher, scholar, sculptor, teacher, writer, healer, scientist, herbalist and more, as well as a creative musician of the highest order. His decades of work and study on heart rhythms, and heart rate variability in particular, informed his playing style and his way of life. Listening to the rapid-fire crackle and intensity of his music was like being connected to an electric current, a stream of mental energy…a flow. In 2015, after many years of thinking about it, I finally got up the nerve to invite Professor Graves to my ScienSonic Laboratories recording studio. I recruited two other saxophonists I’d worked with previously, both masters of the creative music world: Marshall Allen and Roscoe Mitchell. Turns out that Roscoe had never played with either Allen or Graves, so it was a first-ever meeting. I am extremely grateful and proud that we were able to make this record (Flow States, released last year). Milford pronounced it “historic” and I believe it may be his last studio album. Now, sadly, our collaborative science/music performances will not be able to happen the way we had hoped…

— SCOTT ROBINSON, REEDS
Is Nir Felder’s sophomore document, a followup to his debut Golden Age on OKehe released back in 2014. Felder has become more of a presence on the jazz guitar scene since that effort, logging high-profile gigs with Jason Robinson, Greg Osby, Esperanza Spalding and Jack DeJohnette.

The new album makes good use of multi-tracking, allowing Felder to play a ton of instruments, including mandolin, banjo, electric sitar, keyboards, Theremin and loads of electric guitars. In support of all of that is Matt Penman (bass) and Jimmy Macbride (drums). Felder has got a warm, rich legato and a gift for clarity, apparent from the opener, “Longest Star”, which finds him in the center of a swirling mix of stringed instruments. There is an even split between modal rockers and more agitated material.

“Interrogation” is an attractive example of the former, reminiscent of some of Steve Khan’s work in previous years; Felder unwinds a long and complex solo over layered keyboards. “Fire In August” is another rocker, with power chords and snare drum on 2 and 4. It has an anhemitic feel, which wouldn’t be out of place on the Pat Metheny Group album American Garage and Felder’s solo narrative commands considerable interest. The band reaches an apotheosis on “Coronation”, where the guitarist spins that country twang that Bill Frisell and Metheny both do so well. His version of that aesthetic employs deft voice-twang that Bill Frisell and Metheny both do so well.

The album closes on “War Theory”, which finds him in the center of a swirling mix of reeds, bass, keyboard and drums. The band reaches an apotheosis on Felder’s solo narrative commands considerable interest. The band reaches an apotheosis on “Coronation”, where the guitarist spins that country twang that Bill Frisell and Metheny both do so well. His version of that aesthetic employs deft voice-twang that Bill Frisell and Metheny both do so well.

Thelonious Monk’s “52nd St. Theme” is a fun uptempo romp, which tumbles into the head at a brisk clip with witty piano fills. Stephens dips slyly in and out of the key and Iverson works pedal points against his right-hand lines. The tune ends with a rousing shout chorus and burning drum solo. Iverson keeps to the aesthetic of Powell while expanding his concepts with slick compositional techniques, gelling perfectly with the classic bop structures.

For more information, visit effendirecords.com. Bourassa live-streams Apr. 10th at jazzenradio.ca/en/events.

L’Impact du Silence
François Bourassa (Effendi)
by Pierre Giroux

Pianist François Bourassa has been a fixture on the Canadian jazz scene for some 25 years. Without a doubt, he has toured internationally and did a six-month residency in New York City, his comfort zone remains firmly anchored in his native province of Quebec.

On his first solo recording, which relies entirely on his own compositions, Bourassa explores a broad soundworld, using improvisations, introspection and abstraction. By way of a dissembler, it would only be in a more liberal interpretation of the word ‘jazz’ that these compositions could be considered to fall into that category.

The opening number “Small Head” is a probing improvisation filled with harmonic tension, dense texture and moody undertone. The tone composition is “Blues Masqué”, relatively brief with a reflective and pensive theme Bourassa slides lucidly through each register with precision. “Interlude Y, Z” is amuse-bouches meant to whet the musical palate but are without much substance and disappear quickly without leaving any traces.

“Gaspard” was written for Bourassa’s younger son and has an airy and dreamy theme. The interpretation is artfully restrained, thoughtful and sensitive. “La Buissonne” is the name of a record label that won an award in 2018 as the Best French Jazz Label; Bourassa’s homage is dirge-like, with stony command and somber sound. The longest track is “Musique Pour Film”, which thematically fits with all the other compositions herein. Bourassa is clearly a virtuoso with an ethereal approach to his material. Nothing appears to be done by rote or perfunctory. The challenge is that it is not broadly accessible despite being so richly configured.

These are parlous and uncertain times. Individuals and families are isolated. Social interaction is dominated by the use of inanimate objects not offering any human warmth. One may have hoped that this music might have brought some relief and anticipation of brighter days. But this is not the case. The music is filled with angst and gloom, Bourassa appearing to be held captive by the weight of his own design.

For more information, visit effendirecords.com. Bourassa live-streams Apr. 6th at underexposed.live.
These CDs celebrate the African American tradition. The first builds on trumpeter Jeremy Pelt’s recently self-released book, Gríot: Examining the Lives of Jazz’ Great Storytellers, an heir of sorts to Art Taylor’s 1977 tome Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews, while the other is the third outing from the Black Art Jazz Collective (BAJC), which Pelt co-founded in 2012 with saxophonist Wayne Escoffery and drummer Johnathan Blake. Both projects embody BAJC’s stated purpose of “celebrating African American cultural and political icons, as well as preserving the historical significance of African Americans in Jazz”.

Many, therefore, are the commonalities, besides Pelt’s presence: the material, which combines an updated version of the somewhat ethereal atmosphere of mid to late ’60s Blue Note’s along with a more assertive jazz Messengers edge; dedications to elders, such as Larry Willis and Harold Mabern, who have recently passed; and pianist Victor Gould’s imprint as both an essential soloist and composer.

Gríot cleverly combines brief intimate interviews, including with Willis and Mabern, with heartfelt musical statements. These either blend in with the storytelling, as in the case of Pelt’s introduction, Warren Smith’s testimony and the brief conversation with Bertha Hope, followed by beautiful ballad “A Seat at the Table”, or take off and get inspiration from the oral testimonies.

A case in point is René Marie’s harsh recollection of her embarrassment at being American, reflected in the ensuing “A Beautiful (F*cking) Lie”, which also benefits from Brandee Younger’s harp. The group benefits from Brandee Younger’s harp. The group’s presence: the material, which combines an updated version of the somewhat ethereal atmosphere of mid to late ’60s Blue Note’s along with a more assertive jazz Messengers edge; dedications to elders, such as Larry Willis and Harold Mabern, who have recently passed; and pianist Victor Gould’s imprint as both an essential soloist and composer.

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When two master musicians get together, it’s a safe bet that things will go well. And when they’re friends who’ve been working side by side for nearly a quarter of a century, resonating on the same wavelength while shifting in and out of different formats and settings together, it’s practically a sure thing.

So is it any wonder that pianist David Kikoski and bassist Boris Kozlov—a tight twosome bonded through work in the former’s combos, the Mingus Big Band, Beattie Jazz and collective quintet Opus 5—should hit it off in a duo setting?

Putting aside that rhetorical question and a front-loaded stamp of quality, Kikoski and Kozlov go on to earn their praise at every turn in this eight-song set. The pianist’s well-structured offerings capture the life-affirming pulse, radiates beauty in its own sweetly logical way. “E” provides a touch of McCoy Tyner’s language in its head but moves further afield in its development. A stop-off in the world of Emerson, Lake & Palmer—“Fugue” from “The Endless Enigma”, harkening back to 1972’s Trilogy album—gives Kikoski a chance to revisit an early influence in his own fashion. And the ruminative “Strength for Change”, auguring hope in its every line, finds comfort in its spaces.

Kicking off the second half of the program with the recently departed Chick Corea’s “Quartet #1”, Kikoski and Kozlov flex their minds and musical muscles without ever breaking a sweat. Then they run laps through John Coltrane’s “Satellite”, a classic referencing “How High The Moon” in structure and representing advancement through the composer’s signature harmonic changes; tackle the Jerome Kern-Ira Gershwin title cut, nodding to the version on 1953’s The Amazing Bud Powell, Vol. 2 while sprucing things up with new harmonies, rhythms and an odd-metered gait; and finally conclude with Miles Davis’“So What” and Kikoski’s tribute to “Sweet Georgia Brown” interpreted with alacrity and shot through with animated exchanges. Matching the gazes on the cover photo, this album delivers the sound of looking up.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. Pelt live-streams Apr. 14th with Cloris Nicolas at smallslive.com.

The more politically-motivated tracks, trombonist James Burton III’s “Tulsa” and Escoffery’s “Involuntary Slavery”, are more complex and satisfying offerings, yet fail to convey fully the drama that those historical events elicit.

With bassist Rashaan Carter and drummer Mark Whitfield, Jr. taking over for Archer and Blake, respectively, from previous CDs, BAJC has become more assertive and driven, while Gould replacing Xavier Davis adds depth in the composition department. The use of the electric piano, however, sounds a tad dated in “For the Kids”, possibly the least interesting piece of the CD. Other pieces, such as “Mr. Willis” and brief ballad interlude “No Words Needed”, suffer from the above noted predictability.

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I’ll never forget my first time. I was listening to Bitches Brew and a haunting, almost reptilian sound seemed to slither through the electro-acoustic jungle of Miles Davis’ music. It was Bennie Maupin’s bass clarinet. Three recent projects led by bass clarinetists place the low reed’s unforgettable tone front and center.

85 year-old Michel Portal is one of the founding figures of the French free improv scene, recording in the late ’60s and early ’70s with groups like New Phonic Art, later winning three César Awards for his film score. MP85 is an adventurous yet accessible outing with trombonist Nils Wogram, keyboardist Bojan Z, bassist Bruno Chevillion and drummer Lander Gyselink. The repertoire, often written in minor keys with propulsive, riff-based grooves and hummable melodies, supports fluid interplay between the bass clarinet, trombone and keyboards. Portal seems to favor the upper register of his bass clarinet, often sounding like an alto saxophone until he dips down into the instrument’s Twilight Zone range; during free blowing sections he draws on multiphonics, growls, trills and electronic effects to vitalize his ideas. Wogram, equally adroit, versatile and creative, serves as Portal’s sparring partner.

Israel-born, Amsterdam-based bass clarinetist Ziv Taubenfeld seems more interested in the instrument’s lowest registers and raspy timbres, using a grab-bag of extended techniques to push its sonic possibilities. Full Sun is the eponymous debut of his septet with reedplayer Michael Moore, trumpeter Luis Vicente, trombonist Joost Buiss, pianist Nicolaus Chienatori, bassist Shay Hazan and drummer Onno Govaert, close listeners with outwardly bound intentions. Though based on compositions, much of the music, even the cued sections, sounds intuitively generated. The musicians aren't afraid to lay out, leaving expansive spaces, or else chatter together energetically in thick, four-part polyphony, like a barbershop quartet with all lead parts. Closing “Naturian Dream” is especially good, with fine solos by Taubenfeld and Vicente and a surging climax.

Norwegian reedplayer Mathilde Grooss Viddal’s Notre Dame - Meditations and Prayers is very different, comprised of four-part acapella lyrical statements with Mariana Rezende. The title song is presented as the classic country-infused “Beautiful and Cruel” standards) are creative enough to hold the listener’s attention. The reed arrangements are frequently surprising; toward the end of an already unorthodox version of Earle Hagen-Dick Rogers’ “Harlem Nocturne”, on which the organ is shadowed by gentle flute drones, the music stops and all four horns burst forth in all-too-brief freedom.

The longest track on the album by far is a version of Ray Noble’s “Cherokee” that lasts nearly 14 minutes. That’s a long time to spend on such a familiar theme, but Fishler keeps the rhythm twitchy and energetic and the horns weave past each other like dancers fingered solos all around. The title piece is much more...
The term “concept album” is usually used in connection to classic rock of the ’60s-70s. But jazz has also had its share of imaginative concept albums over the years, from Miles Davis’ *Sketches of Spain* to Duke Ellington’s *The Far East Suite*. Swedish flutist Elsa Nilsson’s *Dark Is Light Is* easily qualifies: instrumental jazz spins on familiar Nordic songs associated with Lucia, a Swedish holiday celebrated in December, with a quartet of guitarist Jeff McLaughlin, acoustic/electric bassist Alex Minier and drummer Cody Rahn.

Although Lucia-associated songs like Ruben Liljefors’ “När Det Lider Mot Jul” and Carl Bertil Agnestig’s “Så Mörk Är Natten” are traditional in Sweden, what Nilsson does with them is not. She draws on elements of postbop, avant garde jazz and fusion, with McLaughlin bringing a lot of rock muscle to his solos. When he stretches out on “När Det Lider Mot Jul”, Emmy Köhler’s “Nu Tändas Tusen Juleljus” or Christmas song “När Juldagsmorgon Glimmar”, the influence of John Scofield, Bill Frisell and other fusion guitarists comes through.

Many of Nilsson’s solos are highly lyrical. The Swedish flutist, who was born and raised in Gothenburg, Sweden but now lives in Brooklyn, brings a warm, lilting quality to “Nu Tändas Tusen Juleljus”, “När Det Lider Mot Jul” and other melodic offerings, favoring an inside/outside approach.

Anyone who expects to hear these Lucia-associated songs performed in a strictly traditional way will have to adapt. Nilsson isn’t shy about taking chances with it. “Sankta Lucia”, for example, receives a Latin jazz-influenced makeover while “Julpolska” and “Hej Tomtegubbar Slå I Glasen” incorporate elements of Middle Eastern music. *Dark Is Light Is* celebrates Swedish culture, but it doesn’t claim to be a typical Swedish folk date. Nilsson has put a lot of thought into it—from the musicians to the choice of material to the arrangements—and it pays off.

For more information, visit elsanilssonmusic.com. Nilsson live-streams Apr. 22nd at soapboxgallery.org.

A native of Japan who moved to New York City in 2012, Miki Yamanaka is a promising young composer, pianist and arranger who has studied with notables like Fred Hersch, Jeb Patton and Larry Goldings. For *Human Dust Suite*, she brought demanding original music into the studio for a quartet of alto saxophonist Anthony Orji, bassist Orlando Le Fleming and drummer Jochen Rueckert.

One can hear a multitude of influences in her writing while her self-confident arrangements turn over much of the spotlight to her fellow musicians, all of whom are outstanding players. Opener “Pre-School” is anything but elementary, a darting bop anthem with repeated lines and sudden twists before it moves into more straightahead territory. Her liner notes tease that it is a contrafact of a standard (“I Remember You”), inspired by Lee Konitz, but dry, mysterious saxophone and the striking interplay of the rhythm section keep one guessing. Her spirited “March” blends an upbeat theme with just a hint of melancholy infused by soft, intricate horn.

The centerpiece is the five-part title suite, inspired by her viewing of a photographer’s shots of cremated remains. Of the individual movements, the humor within “Feet Go Bad First”, with Le Fleming carrying much of the load and Yamanaka overdubbing vibraphone in the background, is an obvious favorite. To wrap the project, Yamanaka’s lively interpretation of the late Randy Weston’s “Berkshire Blues” builds upon its Caribbean flavor, though she doesn’t attempt to duplicate Weston’s heavier touch at the piano. Just as with her original compositions, her band devours this infrequently performed work, conjuring a virtual street parade as they sway down the street playing this jazz anthem. With her inventive songwriting and considerable chops, more great music is expected from Miki Yamanaka.

For more information, visit outsideinmusic.com. Yamanaka live-streams Wednesdays at facebook.com/mikiyamanakamusic.

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**hasaan ibn ali**

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Art Davis – Bass / Kalil Madi – Drums

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New Orleans drummer Joe Dyson is known for his work with trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis and organ player Dr. Lonnie Smith. Look Within finds him leading a band of trumpeter Stephen Lands, tenor saxophonist Stephen Gladney, pianist Oscar Rossignoli, bassist Jasen Weaver and percussionist Daniel Sadownick on a program combining elements of Blue Note postbop with the '60s spirituality of saxophonists like John Coltrane, Yusef Lateef, Pharoah Sanders and Rahsaan Roland Kirk.

When the horns of Lands and Gladney come together on “Pious Walk”, “Forward” and “Fleeting Faith”, one hears some of the crispness and energy that Blue Note’s small groups were known for during the ‘60s. Lands is obviously well aware of big-toned Blue Note trumpeters such as Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw and Lee Morgan and Coltrane’s early ‘60s quartet is an equally prominent influence, Gladney and Rossignoli recalling the saxophone trailblazer’s work with pianist McCoy Tyner during that era.

A female singer, L.E., is featured on the title track, which combines postbop with a touch of ‘70s soul, L.E.’s performance, stylistically, somewhere between Abbey Lincoln and early Deniece Williams. On other vocal offerings, however, Dyson doesn’t feature actual singing but, rather, uses samples from church or mosque sermons, including “Naysayers” and “Come to Thee”. The speakers sampled include his father Rev. Roland Kirk.

Out of ten tracks, nine are Dyson originals. The exception is Thelonious Monk’s “Rhythm-a-Ning”, tackled at a medium tempo, giving it an unexpected Caribbean flavor. With its festive mood, this is a departure after so much Coltrane-mind ed introspection and nods to Tyner, Sanders and Lateef, feeling like a vacation in the Bahamas. Dyson was wise to place it at the end.

Look Within doesn’t pretend to point jazz in any new directions. Nonetheless, this is a respectable, albeit derivative, outing from the young New Orleans drummer.

For more information, visit joedyon.com. Dyson livestreams Apr. 28th at barbeyaux.com.
Accepting that Ali was an important influence is one thing, but explaining that influence is difficult. Pope and others tell us that the pianist provided a model for Coltrane’s demanding work ethic and influenced his harmonic thinking, as well as his “sheets of sound” approach to improvising. But we cannot point to any unified theoretical approach like George Russell’s Lydian Chromatic Concept and it doesn’t help that things made us hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords. He himself felt that he was extending an approach used by Hope, though most people would hear Hope as an advanced bebopper. It’s easy to feel his influence, though nothing of the sort when we hear that Ali talked about things like twenty-ninth chords.
Cal Tjader: The Life and Recordings of the Man Who Revolutionized Latin Jazz (Second Edition)

by Ken Dryden

Cal Tjader’s contributions to Latin jazz have been somewhat overlooked since his death in 1982, though he was a pioneer whose innovations were absorbed into the style after his career began to blossom in the ‘50s.

S. Duncan Reid (McFarland Books)

Jazz has had a century to flourish in the company of poetry—Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance through the Beats, Umbra, Bob Dorough, the Barakas and Black Arts, Ishmael Reed, David Henderson, William Burroughs, Anne Waldman, John Giorno, Louis Reyes Rivera, Philip Levine and voices well beyond—and yet this commix stands boldly tenacious, seeking further expose. Especially now, during National Poetry Month.

In his foray through the fused genre of spoken word/jazz, saxophonist Benjamin Boone now unites a dozen voices in a joint venture of improvisational music and the spoken word, in The Poets Are Gathering. This album follows two posthumous releases Boone recorded with Levine, so he’s all too familiar with the terrain. Boone’s alto and soprano partner with Kenny Werner’s piano, Corcoran Holt’s bass and Ari Hoenig’s drums, but multiple other musicians are called to duty on varying cuts, adding horns, guitars (Ben Monder and Eyal Maoz) and rhythm sections for seamless blends in the rage of emotions. Right from the top, Patricia Smith (author, Incendiyary Art) launches into “That’s My Son There”, a piece at the very core of the Black Lives Matter movement. Boone seems to reimagine John Coltrane’s “Alabama” as Smith, alarmingly static, embodies a parent grieving one more police killing, numbed with reality. The effect is nothing short of chilling. “That’s my son there / shot a kill / shot as payback… / shot for sport / shot for sport as history”.

The album’s liner notes cite injustices of the Trump years and Boone’s 2017 start of this project, culminating in the leadup to the 2020 election. But under no circumstances is this agit-prop at the cost of creativity. Pulitzer-winning Tyehimba Jess emotes in “Against Silence” with Werner casting harmonies of perfect dissonance against the naming of the many murdered in police shootings: “I’m a question passed from one generation to the next… ask the silence about your right”. His skill is making sensible of the rage of emotions. Right from the top, Patricia Smith (author, Incendiyary Art) launches into “That’s My Son There”, a piece at the very core of the Black Lives Matter movement. Boone seems to reimagine John Coltrane’s “Alabama” as Smith, alarmingly static, embodies a parent grieving one more police killing, numbed with reality. The effect is nothing short of chilling. “That’s my son there / shot a kill / shot as payback… / shot for sport / shot for sport as history”.

A blues record from a jazz master who’s been around since 1927 and who turns 94 this month. If you’ve got any respect for your elders, you’ve got to check it out. It’s got that easy, wailing, frailing feeling that makes any respect for your elders, you’ve got to check it out. It’s got that easy, wailing, frailing feeling that makes any respect for your elders, you’ve got to check it out. It’s got that easy, wailing, frailing feeling that makes any respect for your elders, you’ve got to check it out. It’s got that easy, wailing, frailing feeling that makes any respect for your elders, you’ve got to check it out. It’s got that easy, wailing, frailing feeling that makes any respect for your elders, you’ve got to check it out.
Horace Silver isn’t obscure, but he deserves even greater recognition than he gets as an incredible composer. Gary Smulyan, who turns 65 this month and Ronnie Cuber, who will reach octogenarian status at the end of 2021, do their part on Tough Baritones by recording four of his tunes in an uncompromising hardbop session. Think back to those ’50s blowing dates on Prestige for what this album sounds like. It could be described as a “cutting session” if these two veteran baritone saxophone masters were trying to one-up each other.

Let’s start at the beginning with Silver’s “Blowin’ the Blues Away”. Both players come boiling out of the speakers at breakneck speed, Smulyan (in the right channel throughout) and an equally intense Cuber (on the left). Then pianist Gary Versace shows why he’s on an old practice popular in jazz to avoid paying publishing fees but also a way to put new wine into old bottles—in a no-hiding trio with bassist David Wong and drummer Rodney Green. Not quite as viscerally as Wong’s variation on “My Old Flame”. Whatever the source material, it’s a welcome ballad.

Finally, lest we forget that Smulyan came to swing, there’s his sprightly “Sourpuss” to clean the palate. It’s turned in muscular explorations of its mysteries. “Split Kick” is another Silver gem, first recorded with Art Blakey at Birdland in ’54. His “The Preacher” is much more familiar and given a loping treatment. Listen to Versace supporting the horns on the closer, Cuber’s “Intervals”. The album is beautifully recorded with each instrument clear as a bell. This is pre-COVID work, but it still sounds like two giants tasting free air after a long down time.

Tough Baritones has no Smulyan tunes, but he makes up for that on Our Contrafacts, which has six of them—based on the harmonic structure of standards, an old practice popular in jazz to avoid paying publishing fees but also a way to put new wine into old bottles—in a no-hiding trio with bassist David Wong and drummer Rodney Green. Not quite as viscerally exciting as the duo album, Our Contrafacts is a celebration of the lead’s on-steroids baritone playing, heard without a net.

“Quarter Blues” is a cool tune from Green’s pen others should pick up on and it really gives Smulyan a chance to stretch out. The solo ends with the theme again, sliding into a relaxed solo from Wong and Green gets some at the end. Smulyan’s “Drink Up”, a variation on “Angel Eyes”, is equally catchy. “Homeboy” is another Smulyan original and a standout for the sheer authority of his solo. This is what it would be like to hear Smulyan live, with the tarnished bell of his baritone mere feet away from your head. Wong takes out his bow as the three musicians trade licks. Green’s “It Happens” is based on “Watch What Happens” and shares a pensive feel. Smulyan plays with a lighter touch, though the intensity builds. The tune is nearly stolen by Wong, whose solo swings the second half. Smulyan’s “Miles Tones” is based on, well, you know. Smulyan really digs into the lower register of his horn and Green is heard to good advantage, supporting another typically probing Wong solo, before Smulyan leaps back in. “How Deep” is Wong’s take on Irving Berlin and the bassist is featured, but Smulyan is particularly bright—and there’s lovely drum work. Smulyan’s “Tritonious Monk” is the pianist filtered through “I Got Rhythm”. Continuing the trickery, Smulyan’s horn on “What’s Her Name” initially sounds like it’s going to slide into “But Beautiful” but, in fact, it’s Wong’s variation on “My Old Flame”. Whatever the source material, it’s a welcome ballad.

Finally, lest we forget that Smulyan came to swing, there’s his sprightly “Sourpuss” to clean the palate. It’s in fact anything but sour. All three are really on for this one and Green is particularly strong. If one has to choose, give the nod to Tough Baritones, simply because it’s such a simpatico meeting of the horns, but either is a good introduction to the artistry of Gary Smulyan.

For more information please visit steeplechase.dk

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Of course, there had to be more. It seemed obvious that live performances by a band consisting of bassist Hugh Hopper, drummer John Marshall, saxophonist/keyboards player Elton Dean and guitarist Allan Holdsworth must have been documented, demonstrating that other levels to which this extraordinary group ascended beyond studio confines; finally, we have an official release! As satisfying as their 2003 album Abracadabra often is, the extremes of this performance, recorded in Japan in August of the same year, offers the urgency and immediacy of an audience experience and that makes all the difference.

The double-disc constitutes one of only 11 performances Soft Works gave us before Holdsworth resumed his solo career. For the die-hard Holdsworth fan, of which your humble narrator is one, the album contains an official release of the Soft Works take on “Alphrazallan”, a delightfully swinging Holdsworth composition. As for his playing, every solo is precious. Yes, there’s a gorgeous solo on “Alphrazallan”, but the one on Dean’s “Seven Formerly” attains concise mastery as it rises angelically and returns to Earth against its composer’s Fender Rhodes and the filigreed brillianceflung and laid down by Hopper and Marshall. The latter is in especially fine form, digging firmly into jazz and rock traditions while coloring each moment as he has done so often over the past half century.

To hear Dean in a similarly ecstatic state, check out Hopper’s no-holds-barred “Facelift” concluding the album, one of only a few tracks not taken from Abracadabra, even the first few notes from his saxello, jumping register and transgressing timbral boundaries, his playing even more rawly beautiful as he and the band propel each other to new dialogic heights, especially at the gloriously unbuttoned five-minute mark, with Holdsworth floating those magical chords over Hopper and Marshall’s bone-and-fire groove and rattle. What drummer besides Marshall could be so sensitive as proceedings wane, letting gentle cymbals and a breath or two from the snare bring everything serenely to rest on those luscious B-flats Dean halos around everything? Hopper is magnificent throughout but especially on his rollicking “First Train”, where the overused term ‘walking’ doesn’t even begin to describe the majestic tones and dare-devil intervallic jumps as he lays the foundation for another Holdsworth solo.

Yes, the band is wonderful, the audience appreciative, and, despite some deep reverberation, the sound very good, but there’s a moment to consider, one that brings another side of Soft Machine’s legacy to listener attention. When Soft Machine co-founder Robert Wyatt used to do “Dedicated to You, but You Weren’t Listening”, he’d bring a deep and slightly snarky humor to the table and Soft Works does the same on the exquisite Phil Miller-penned “Calyx“. As on the studio album, Hopper and Dean play the tune in octaves, but dig the last note of the second phrase as Dean drops down to the unison and changes up the overtones, introducing just a microhint of growl, but the microtonally-inflected octaves concluding the third phrase are even better, an irreverent inclusion that might bring a smile to Wyatt’s face. Yet, when that last unison is reached and Holdsworth comes in with his jasmine-scented harmonies, frozen moments in first thaw, humor gives way to transcendence and two polar

but intricately linked aspects of Soft Machine’s influence are encapsulated.

Like the current Softs lineup, the intergenerational dialogue Soft Works brings to the table goes well beyond the music of that seminal ’60s and ’70s band whose legacy they perpetuate. Such is also the case with Leonardo Pavkovic, boss of MoonJune, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, whose tireless work and commitment to all things Soft Machine cannot be overstated. The long and intersecting journeys leading to this concert, Pavkovic being at their center, are expertly documented and exhaustively presented in the set’s accompanying booklet. The multiple reminiscences therein place the music in wonderful historical perspective, crowning a package whose pride of place in the broader Soft Machine discography is matched only by the sonic pleasure and intrigue it will afford.

For more information, visit moonjune.com
I pledge allegiance to the flag— the white flag
Stephanie Nilles (Sunnyside) by George Kanzler

"I consider Charles Mingus a beacon in a world gone mad. His music celebrates the joy of living, mourns the pain of grief—and simultaneously harangues injustice. That it manages such a thing boggles my mind (and, I believe, transcends the construct of genres). I hope to continue to live with this music as long as I'm privileged to do so," writes Stephanie Nilles in the notes to these solo piano (and occasional vocal) renditions of music by the legendary bassist/composer, who would have turned 99 this month.

Nilles doesn't employ a band here and the 30-something singer-songwriter confesses to a classical piano background. In fact, she doth protest too much, claiming she doesn't swing when she obviously does. Just listen to her "East Coasting" or "Remember Rockefeller at Attica." But Mingus' music has often been characterized by the often-headlong energy of ensembles, testifying horn soloists and rhythm sections accelerating and deaccelerating behind it all. Nilles jettisons all that, paring down Mingus' pieces to skeleton and scaffolding, showing us the bones that hold the tunes together. Nilles does employ one favorite Mingus strategy: varied dynamics. The contrasting melodies of "Pithecanthropus Erectus" rise up off her piano keys like the titular character rising from the primordial ooze into great clashing, banging chords. And "Peggy's Blue Skylight" contrasts soft tinkling intro with sprightly main melody.

The hypnotic, mesmeric quality of Mingus' best melodies comes out in a deeply meditative "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" while the longest track, "Fables of Faubus," rolls off into an extended improvisation, which includes quotes from "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho," "Yankee Doodle," "Lift Every Voice and Sing," and some classical pieces, as well as including Mingus' lyrics. Nilles also sings and bluesily plays "Devil Woman" and "Oh Lord Don't Let Them Drop That Atomic Bomb On Me." This album pares away Mingus' music to its core, in revelatory fashion.

For more information, visit 577records.com

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For more information, visit 577records.com

\(\text{\textbf{Creation}}\)

\textbf{Sabir Mateen (577 Records) by Phil Freeman}

\textbf{Saxophonist Sabir Mateen, who turns 70 this month, is an old-school fire-breather. He started out as a member of Horace Tapscott's Pan-African Peoples Arkestra in the late '70s and early '80s, but came back to the East Coast (he's originally from Philadelphia) and made his name during the free jazz resurgence of the '90s, most notably as a member of TET with fellow reed player Daniel Carter, bassist Matt Heyner and late drummer Tom Bruno. Their subterranean performances were notable for being audible over the crash and roar of subway trains and MTA announcements. Mateen performed and recorded in any number of other situations, of course, including brilliant duo recordings with drummers Hamid Drake and the late Sunny Murray. Of late, he lives in Europe, which is where this set was captured; it's a document of a 2012 show in Berlin, featuring three German musicians: vibraphonist Christopher Dell, bassist Christian Ramond and drummer Klaus Kugel.}

\textbf{The physical version of this release contains just over 45 minutes of music, divided into a 15-minute track and a 31-minute track, though they flow seamlessly into each other. The digital version adds a third piece, running about 24 minutes. The first two tracks are culled from appearances over a span of eight years, from 2002-10 in Bologna, Italy; Kiev, Ukraine; Paninx, France; and Amsterdam, Holland. (He retired from public performance in 2014 and died three years later.)}

\textbf{Mengelberg was the rare example of a performer with deep knowledge and long experience of Mingus' music. There were plenty of quotes and phrases up his sleeve, but he was as committed to absurdism as he was jazzology. He could work in prolonged ideas, but was nevertheless happy to have plans interrupted or subverted. That playfulness, the willingness to accept the accidental as part of the rest, is on display within the first 60 seconds of Rituals of Transition, when a baby in the audience erupts in what sounds like amused delight and Mengelberg accepts it as an invitation to a duet.}

\textbf{It was easy during Mengelberg's concerts to be distracted by waiting for the humor, rather like the anticipation that arises while anticipating Inspector Clouseau's return to the screen during a Pink Panther movie. Rituals of Transition rewards the wait in the final 14-minute track. In between times, there's plenty of the rest of what made Mengelberg great: a wonderful ear for melody, an odd predilection for broken syncopation and an ever-endearing playfulness in the playing.}

For more information, visit idichidiangelica.bandcamp.com

\(\text{\textbf{DROP THE NEEDLE}}\)

\textbf{Talking Gong Susie Ibarra (New Focus) by Franz Matzner}

\textbf{The centrality of percussion on Susie Ibarra's Talking Gong is nothing shocking, considering her prolific awards as a percussionist, composer, sound-stylist and researcher. It is the nature of the percussion that both surprises and mesmerizes. The album has Alex Peh on piano and Claire Chase on woodwinds, offering an amalgam of the novel sounds each has developed on their respective instruments. Utilized in ways that merge traditional Western-European, jazz, folk styles and pure innovation, the overall effect is like nothing else. Drawn from Ibarra’s Filipina-American heritage and the Philippines’ environment, Talking Gong reflects the traditional Philippine use of gongs to communicate. Ibarra also folds in other percussive tools, including a standard drumkit. Chase presents her own diversity of wind instruments, including piccolo, flute and bass flute. Peh’s notes and plucked strings dance and dart with unexpected techniques. Expanding overtones spread through gaps of silence. The piano rumbles in its lowest register. A piccolo breaks forth, simulacrum for more ancient instruments. Melodic shapes flicker. A plucked piano string here, a jaunty rhythm there. Drums and piano chase and tumble in a playful duet. “Kolubri (hummingbird)” and “Sunbird” underscore Ibarra’s environmental engagement. Dedicated to a tiny Philippine hummingbird, the former solo drum piece is astonishing in its sheer technical achievement. The triumph, however, is Ibarra’s ability to evoke the bird’s singular beauty and strength in exquisite detail. Extraordinarily fast brush-shave rolls flutter like wings, complex tom patterns dart and dive. Similarly, “Sunbird”, a songbird known for its gorgeous music, gives Chase a platform to develop her own crystalline evocations. Trills, whistles, scattered melodies, tremulous bass, all unfold into a detailed sonic rendition of the attributes of the unique winged species. An album of joy and sophisticated technique and improvisational delight, Talking Gong is a nuanced universe of sound grounded in traditional musical roots and natural splendor.}

For more information, visit newfocusrecordings.com. This project live-streams Apr. 13th at twitch.tv/hammerin_hammerin
Planter Joe Castro (1927-2009) is today best remembered for recording two albums for Atlantic (1956’s Mood Jazz and 1959’s Groove Funk Soul) and working with tenor saxophonist Teddy Edwards. However there was much more to his musical life than that relatively brief period, as the liner notes for the six-CD Sunnyside set Passion Flower (and the previous Lush Life) reveal. A professional musician by the time he was 15, Castro served in the Army during 1946-47 and then formed a trio that spent time working in Hawaii. Influenced by Bud Powell, Castro gradually developed his own bop-oriented style. After he met Doris Duke (one of the richest women in the world) in 1952, they had a 13-year relationship. At her homes in Beverly Hills and New York, Castro hosted allstar jam sessions, much of which was recorded but unreleased until recently.

In the late ’50s, Castro worked in L.A. both with Edward’s quartet and bassist Leroy Vinnegar’s trio. He also was an accomaniant to Anita O’Day, June Christy and Tony Martin. In 1963, he and Duke started Clover Records. Several albums were recorded but all that was released was 1965’s Lush Life and a few singles. In 1966 both their relationship and the label were finished. Strangely enough Castro made no further recordings (although a cassette with O’Day in 1985 later came out) despite being active for another 43 years. The pianist worked in Vegas, most notably as the musical director for the Tropicana Hotel’s Folies Bergère for quite a few years and he was happily married from 1967 until his wife’s passing in 2008.

The 2019 Sunnyside six-CD set Lush Life – A Musical Journey consisted entirely of previously unreleased performances from 1954-66, including a complete disc dedicated to Teddy Wilson (highlighted by a wonderful quartet session with Stan Getz) in which Castro does not appear. The more recent Passion Flower – For Doris Duke is also comprised of six CDs; most of the music is making its first appearance.

The first disc features Castro during 1955-56 at the head of trios with either Vinnegar, Red Mitchell or Paul Chambers on bass and Jimmy Pratt, Lawrence Marable or Philly Joe Jones on drums. This CD serves as an ideal place to get introduced to Castro’s playing. As on Lush Life, Castro does not appear on the second disc. Pianist Paul Bley is featured on five solo numbers and five with a trio from 1956 when he was a fine boppish player who had not yet formed himself on three numbers, becoming a quartet and one original. The final disc showcases the trio by performing nine standards, a Johnny Hodges blues solo numbers are joined by four previously unreleased performances: two other songs and two alternates. While Castro plays quite well, Edwards often steals the show with his inventive playing and big tenor sound.

The final two discs jump to 1965-66 and mostly have Castro playing with bassist Teddy Kotick and drummer Paul Motian. The fifth CD features the trio performing nine standards, a Johnny Hodges blues and one original. The final disc showcases the trio by themselves on three numbers, becoming a quartet with Edwards on “Just Squeeze Me” and playing four songs in which they are joined by six horns (the Bob Cooper Ensemble) arranged by the pianist. The final two performances on this box (“Passion Flower” and “Remind Me”) have Castro and the trio interacting with another pianist, possibly Duke herself.

While there is a great deal of rewarding music on Passion Flower and Lush Life, one hopes that Sunnyside will eventually put together a third Castro set, one that includes the elusive Lush Life Clover album along with more unheard gems.

For more information, visit sunnysidercords.com
DO: This is what I was just talking about. What I want to project with the band is what he did to me in an instant. I felt like every human emotion was embodied in every note that he played. He gave me chills down my spine. He made me cry. He made me joyous. He made me think about other people. He seems to hit all the common nerves of humanity and it just knocked me over, that there could be one person who could do that. “Swing That Music” in particular. As a 15-year-old full of pep and vigor, I was excited by the speed and the unbridled joy of the music. And so that’s what kind of caught my eye. That was the first one. I started getting more and more interested in reading about him and learning about him, learning about how he lived his life and how he was treated and how he treated other people, how he dealt with adversity and it all matched up with his playing.

TYNCJR: Was your attraction to the tuba as dramatic as your discovery of Armstrong?

DO: The passage of time has revealed an answer, but it took a while for me actually to realize what it was about the tuba because for years, when I was asked that question, I would give a flippant sort of silly answer. Like how can you not want to play the tuba? A few years ago, I was hanging out with a friend of mine who showed me a clip of a 1963 ballet of Romeo and Juliet with Margot Fonteyn. There was a musical section called “March of the Capulets”, which has the most incredible, beautiful, heavy, deep tuba part. I’d actually seen that production when I was 10. Shortly after, I was passing the band room in school as we were running out for recess. I saw the tuba there. It was actually a sousaphone, the kind that wraps around. It was gold and beautiful. And, as I remember it, there was a ray of sunshine coming in through the window onto this golden horn. I screeched on the brakes, like in a cartoon, and I ran in and I started blowing on it. The band director came out and gave me my first lesson on the spot. I realized when I saw the clip that there was a connection between it and learning to play the tuba. That ballet lesson sunk into my head and it changed my life. Since then all I ever wanted to do was to have kids and play the tuba in that order.

TYNCJR: And because of that first desire you also became a lawyer.

DO: I did. In the beginning I tried to keep it secret that I was a lawyer because I didn’t want people to think I was a part-time musician. I found a position where I could cut out to do gigs and I never turned down any gigs. I didn’t make huge amounts like some lawyers do, but I made enough to assure an income and I was able to do gigs along the way. I had worked for two years for a lawyer who did personal injury and divorce cases and I really hated it. So, I quit without another job. I wasn’t married at that time. When I did go back to being an attorney, during my interview my prospective employer allowed that he’d spoken to my old boss and learned I’d leave the office for a gig from time to time. I wanted to be up front about it, so I told him that most of my gigs are at night or on weekends so those won’t affect the job. I added that occasionally a gig will come up during the day and I won’t turn it down. Let me assure you, I said, if you hire me, I’ll continue to do that. He hired me and it worked out. I’ve been very lucky.

TYNCJR: How do you feel about the future?

DO: We can’t be stopped. At some point we’re going to be back at Birdland. I’m sure of that. I think that, before you know it, things will ease back into where they were. Hopefully, hopefully so much that many people will appreciate more what they have, because of what was taken away from them. And so, I’m optimistic about the future, not only for my band, but also for humanity. As for streaming and virtual concerts—I really need to work live, so those platforms we rely on now will fade away eventually. And on a bright note, things are beginning to pick up. On April 30th on International Jazz Day, we’re going to be doing a live stream from Flushing Town Hall. We’re going to be playing at the Newport Jazz Festival on July 30th and we also have a concert that Ricky Riccardi of the Louis Armstrong House runs at Ocean County Community College in Toms River, New Jersey on June 27th. For more information, visit ostwaldjazz.com, Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band live-streams Apr. 30th at flushingtownhall.org.

Recommended Listening:
- Big Joe Turner—With Knocky Parker And His Houserockers (Southland, 1983)
- Gully Low Jazz Band—In Dreamland (G.H.B., 1983)
- David Osztwald’s Gully Low Jazz Band—Down To Earth (G.H.B., 1985)
- David Osztwald’s Gully Low Jazz Band—Blues In Our Heart (Nagel Heyer, 1998)
- Randy Sandke and The New York Allstars—George Avakian Presents: The Re-Discovered Louis and Biz (Nagel Heyer, 1999)
- Proceed with Caution (INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

Jazzmobile’s “Keep The Music Playing” celebrates Bell’s centennial on International Jazz Day, Apr. 30th, on JZMTV. For more information, visit jazzmobile.org.

Recommended Listening:
- Calvin Keys—Shawn-Neq (Black Jazz, 1971)
- Ahmad Jamal—Steppin’ Out With a Dream (20th Century Fox, 1977)
- Calvin Keys—Standard Keys (LifeForce, 1992)
- Calvin Keys—Detours Into Unconscious Rhythms (Wide Hive, 1999)
- Gloria Coleman—Sweet Missy (Dodden’, 2007)
- Calvin Keys—Electric Keys (Wide Hive, 2012)

(LEST WE FORGET CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

I was pleasantly surprised that my friends kept calling and heard about all this great music that’s coming out. It was also in 1970 that he met Gene Russell, who was about to get Black Jazz Records off the ground. Keys realized his dream of producing his own albums, Shawn-Neq (1971) and Proceed with Caution (1974). “Cause it was a movement going on then. Whatever you’re about you better proceed with caution in this madness. And I had that experience. We were going through the same thing that we’re going through now, but it was 50 years ago!”

In 2020, Keys took part in the Black Jazz 50th Anniversary tour with bassist Jamil Nasser and drummer Frank Gant. “He has been incredibly successful and we’re going to make a bit to put towards future releases. Overall it has been incredibly successful and we’re going to keep pushing forward and putting music out.”

Whereas Hopkins and Clark schedule the physical releases for their tours a year or two far apart that they can devote attention to the production and marketing, they aim to issue Untamed albums as fast as possible. Upcoming physical releases include Asp Nimbus from cellist Christopher Hoffman’s quartet and a solo guitar/harmonium outing from Wendy Eisenberg while the latest editions of Untamed are live documents from Jonathan Goldberger/Simon Jermyn/Mat Maneri/Gerald Cleaver and a saxophone/drum duo from Chicago pair Nick Mazzarella and Quin Kirchner. Beside sharing music, OOHJ has engendered other benefits. “In hindsight it was a great thing for me to start when I left NY. The record label has been an incredible way, especially during COVID, to stay in touch with people, still be involved in the music scene and hear about all this great music that’s coming out.”

(LABEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

For more information, visit outofyourheadrecords.com. Live-streamed at 8 p.m. on Apr. 8th at constellation-chicago.com; Anna Webber with Simon Jermyn, Devin Gray/Simon Jermyn with Nick Dunston, Canu Tanrikulu, Jim Black on Apr. 6th at a-trans.de; and NEA Jazz Masters Presents: Henry Threadgill with Christopher Hoffman, David Virelles and Roman Filia on Apr. 22nd at arts.gov/about/news/2020/national-endowment-arts-announces-2021-nea-jazz-masters.
On Apr. 17th, 1956, tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin sawed his leader debut for Blue Note. Then, as the story has it, on his way back to Rudy Van Gelder’s in Hackensack to record the followup, he ran into John Coltrane.

This is the fifth of nine volumes of Sammy Skidmore’s The Jazz Masters of Manhattan, mostly Swedish artists. While others feature international bands, Side B here is a sextet led by bassist Palle Danielsson with Roland Jeppesen and Lennart Ahlgren (tenor), Sture Nordgren (trombone), Gunnar Lindgren (tenor/soprano), Gunnar Forss (trumpet) and Lars-UlJe Hege (bass).

By the time of this live recording from Carnegie Hall, Stockholm’s Theatro Thumor was just one of dozens of stars—from Ray Brown to Barry Guy—that had been part of the 50th anniversary celebrations in Sweden. And John Marshall (drums), the latter a member of the earliest iterations, on five of Carr’s originals.

* * *

# Crossword

## Across

1. Drummer El Zarab’s to his friends?
2. Musical line of great imp.
3. This TV host won the 1964 Grammy Award for Best Original Jazz Composition
4. A see-through place (abbr.)
5. A wave of avant garde players
6. Rolf Kühn, Harry Beckett, Winstone, Elton Dean, George Christie
7. Son of fellow tenor Jimmy, one of the Ss in the famed British saxophone trio S.O.S
8. One of the Ss in the famed British saxophone trio S.O.S (John Surman), tenor/soprano saxophonist
9. His 15th studio album, debut on the UK’s first major label
10. The artist alone decide what you will hear on their ESP-Disk. (abbr.)
11. Leaders need this info, from their band
12. 1956 Buddy Collette Contemporary Album
13. Traveling musicians are very much aware of this.
14. British clarinetist
15. The artists alone decide what you will hear on their ESP-Disk. (abbr.)
16. Many Parts
17. Traveling musicians are very much aware of this.
18. British saxophonist Bellamy
19. 1955 Sydney Beckham Prize 45 Dansons Samedi
20. He banned jazz in China
21. 1978 Takeshi Inomata/Akira Sakata 45 based on the Ziegfeld Follies song
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## Down

1. Irreversible Entanglements saxophonist Neuringer
2. Mack is one
3. Crawford Kwadu album album
4. Me Make It Through The Night
5. William Parker named an album for these prehistoric people of Mexico
6. Woody Shaw legacy
7. Allen, Harry
8. Bassist Allison or Williams
9. 7lbs Mexican Epic catalogue prefix
10. She is best seen by starlight
11. His 19th studio album, one of the most famous in jazz
12. “The artists alone decide what you will hear on their ESP-Disk.” (abbr.)
13. Many Parts
14. Traveling musicians are very much aware of this.
15. British clarinetist
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62. Traveling musicians are very much aware of this.

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Visit nyjazzrecord.com for answers.

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**BIRTHDAYS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Musicians</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>John LaPorta 1902-2004</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry Carney 1910-73</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duke Jordan 1922-2006</td>
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<td>Eric Ineke 1947-</td>
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<td>Frank Tura 1947-</td>
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<td>Gil Scott-Heron 1949-2011</td>
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<td>Antoine Romey 1963</td>
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<td>April 2</td>
<td>Max Gee 1926-2015</td>
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<td>Blister Little 1938-61</td>
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<td>Tsal Nistic 1940-91</td>
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<td>Harry Cornell 1947-2017</td>
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<td>Rabbias and Roland Barber 1947-80</td>
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