In our nearly 20-year history, one of the most gratifying progressions has been a musician graduating from our now-dead Listen Up! column to being the subject of an Artist Feature to making it on to our cover. It has only happened three times so far — Mary Halvorson, Melissa Aldana and Tyshawn Sorey — but it speaks to the development of an artist over time, from scrappy to seeking to solidified. To this honored class we add pianist Helen Sung, who both celebrates her third album for Sunnyside at Flushing Town Hall and participates in Birdland’s annual John Coltrane celebration.

Our other features cover a typically wide swathe of jazz stardom: bassist Joshua Abrams (Interview), active since the ’90s and coming to Le Poisson Rouge in support of the newest album from his longtime vehicle Natural Information Society; saxophonist Caroline Davis (Artist Feature), who has her own third Sunnyside album to present at The Jazz Gallery; New Zealand-born, Australia-based pianist Mike Nock (Encore), who turns 81 this month and has been a major figure for over six decades; reedplayer Dewey Redman (Lest We Forget), who died 15 years ago this month but resurfaces with two new archival releases via former sidemen Mark Helias and Barney McAll; and Rataplan Records, led by drummer Devin Gray (Listen Up! in April 2012), which celebrates two new releases at Downtown Music Gallery.

Despite troubling trends in the course of the pandemic, more NYC clubs are opening, reflected in an ever-growing Event Calendar and CD Review section brimming with artists performing all over the city throughout the month.
Chuck Owen & The Jazz Surge

One Set Only! Sunday, September 26 @ 5:00 P.M.

Described as “...imaginative, paradigm-shifting and often exhilarating...episodic, dramatic and picturesque...”, seven-time Grammy® finalist, Chuck Owen and the Jazz Surge celebrate their new recording’s release in grand fashion with One Set at Birdland. Don’t Miss It!

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Despite COVID-19’s Delta variant, New Yorkers are cautiously congregating to absorb the healing powers of live jazz. In the balmy breeze of the Brooklyn Museum’s rear courtyard (Aug. 7th), their equipment set up in front of a large blackboard on which children had chalked their names in bright pastel colors, Brandee Younger’s trio with bassist Dezron Douglas and drummer Marcus Gilmore, presented by Carnegie Hall, dispersed the salubrious vibrations that would slowly, surely cure the crowd of any lingering ailments. With a new album (Somewhere Different, Impulse!) about to drop, the harpist was eager to share her latest material, which included two floating modal numbers, “Tickled Pink” and “Love & Struggle”; pegging/punky “Reclamation”; terse but alluring “Unrest; II”; and funky “Spirit U Will” (by Douglas)—the latter two premiere performances. To round out the set she added “Hortense” (from her 2011 EP Prelude) in reggae style and tributed heroes Dorothy Ashby and Alice Coltrane with a cover of the former’s “Games” and a mash-up of the latter’s “Journey in Satchidananda” with mongo Santamaria’s “Afro Blue”. Though the loud, slightly distorted bass initially dominated the lower volume harp, the audio mix was soon rectified and the music likewise jelled, accruing a curative effect that bonded trio and audience. Most endearing of all was a preschool girl in braids and a colorful dress that stood transfixed before Younger for much of the set. A jazz harp maestra in the making? —Tom Greenland

There’s very good reason that David Hazeltine is one of the most recorded contemporary jazz pianists of the modern era. He’s a smart, articulate player delivering substantive, solid mainstream jazz and that’s definitely cause for celebration. Reliability and authenticity are his strengths and assets. What Hazeltine also brings to the table is the ability to augment basically lyrical playing with a wide array of creative ideas that add to improvisation while close to the melody or away from it. That number, along with Kurt Weill’s “My Ship” (Sigmund Romberg, Oscar Hammerstein II), vocalizing like a bird in ecstatic flight.

Jazz on the Great Hill presented by Jazzmobile (Aug. 7th) offered three splendid hours of jazz, a feast after pandemic deprivation. Hosting was R&B, blues and jazz singer Alyson Williams, whose quick wit and verve kept the pace brisk. Part one belonged to saxophonist/vocalist Camille Thurman and the Darrell Green Quartet, featuring Wallace Roney, Jr. on trumpet. Thurman offered no vocalizing, but a full plate of prime bebop with Roney in top form. Allan Harris, an accomplished singer, guitarist and composer, brought a nonet to demonstrate why he’s a great showman as well as storyteller. With music from his new concept album, Kate’s Soulfood, Harris delivered plenty of rhythm, with a big, bright punch. Picking up the guitar only toward the end of the set, Harris excelled on “Run Through America”, a protest song worthy of any of the classics of the genre. Wrapping up the day, the 17-piece Dizzy Gillespie Big Band offered a full-bodied tribute to the music of saxophonist Jimmy Heath, the former member of Gillespie’s band and bebop composer who passed in January 2020. The players delivered a big, brassy sound with a lot of hipness in the mix. The appearance of singer Roberta Gambarini for a handful of tunes offered the perfect coda. A highlight: this amazing master of vocalese and scat powered through a staple of her own repertoire, a super-speed tempo of “Lover, Come Back to Me” (Sigmund Romberg, Oscar Hammerstein II), vocalizing.

For three years before the pandemic, saxophonist Stephen Gauci hosted a Monday night improvised music series in the basement of Brooklyn’s Bushwick Public House, a low-ceilinged space festooned with Christmas lights and graffiti, its walls checkeredboarded with slatted black foam squares, its floor strewn with amps, drumkits and other equipment. Since July, he’s back in action and your correspondent was (Aug. 9th) privy to five sets of free jazz. First up at was a trio of drummer Patrick Golden and reedplayers Daniel Carter and Jim Clouse, the set notable for the interplay between horns, Carter switching between trumpet, bass clarinet and alto, soprano or tenor saxophones, Clouse favoring soprano or tenor. Carter also featured prominently in the second event, quietly ‘leading’ the sextet (with Gauci, keyboardist Eric Plaks, guitarist Adrian McPartland, bassist Chay Café, Sabatino, drummer Colin Hinton) through a set intermittently galvanized by Gauci’s kinetic interjections on clarinet or tenor. Gauci and Hinton reappeared in the third set with bassist Sean Conly, which alternated between drum and bass or trio exchanges, when Gauci delivered a balanced and superlative set of some of his most potent musical statements. Fourth was Adam Caine’s two-guitar quartet with Bob Lanzetti, an edgy, loud, song-driven set boasting strong solos from both. Last came a sensitive quintet led by drummer Henry Mermer and bassist Henry Fraser, which was not afraid to explore lingering silences, gradually growing these into stirring climaxes.

For the past year or so, if I remember anything, it will be the bittersweet reminder of the impermanence of all things. I imagine this is why musicians make records—in live performance once the last note is played, the moment is over and everyone moves on... at least until the next concert where we do it all over again. May there be many more such concerts, and let us keep coming together to share music whenever we can—hopefully in person again, very soon! —Helen Sung (NYC, 2021)
Trombonist Craig Harris brought his Nation of Imagination band to Marcus Garvey Park (Aug. 13th) for a Nocturnal Nubian Ball for Conscientious Ballers and Cultural Shot Callers, co-presented by the Harlem Stage and Jazzmobile. The group, with trumpeter Eddie Allen, saxophonist Jay Rodriguez, keyboard players Adam Klipple and Yayoi Ikawa, electric bassist Calvin Jones and drummer Damon Due White, got things started laying down a funky groove. Singers Carla Cook, Helga Davis, Sam McKelton and Du’Bois A’Keen danced on to the stage chanting the group’s theme song, “CAB,” exhorting “It’s in the pocket, we just can’t stop it!” Cook scatted on “makanda” and got down on “Harlem”. The mood mellowed for Davi’s plaintive vocal on “On My Mind”, then picked up with Jones’ funky beat leading the band into “ceddo”. Cook brought the house down on “I Found God” and A’Keen’s spoken words on “The Writer”, “It all depends on the skin you’re livin’ in”, eliciting knowing cheers. Davis sang heavenly on “Lovejoy” and Cook tenderly on “Life”. “Song For A Friend” had singers imploring “Take the time to be kind”. Then Harris introduced 97-year-old Sun Ra Arkestra leader Marshall Allen, who played alto and EWI with youthful intensity on “Wilderness” and “Keep Your Razor Sharp” and ethereal exotism on “Pleiaades”. The pair blew rowdily on Harris’ “Ali Interpolations” and prettily on “Reminiscing”. The band swung “Discipline 27” then ended funking out with “Deep Thought”. — Russ Muto

A blustery hardboppin’ septet The Cookers wasted no time firing up the Blue Note bandstand, kicking off the second set of its one-nighter (Aug. 3rd) with a piece from their forthcoming album, George Cables’ “The Mystery Of Monifa Brown”. The pianist’s hard-hitting homage to the WBCO DJ recalled his days as a member of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers, his insistent staccato percussive vamp and Billy Hart’s propulsive drums driving extended incendiary solos by alto saxophonist Donald Harrison and trumpeter David Weiss, before Cables took his own turn. The band continued with Billy Harper’s “Destiny Is Yours”, an easy-grooving waltz featuring his dark sinewy tenor saxophone and Eddie Henderson’s bright lyrical trumpet. Cables’ fluid lines, buoyed by Cecil McBee’s Spanish-tinged bassline and Hart’s cadenced rhythms, introduced Harper’s “Priestess”, the horns playing the swinging melody in unison, after which the composer stepped out front, bowling bold serpentine lines prior to a spirited trumpet solo by David Weiss. The band slowed things down with Mcbee’s lush ballad, “Close Things”, a feature for trumpeter Harper, who blew sweetly, ending with an impassioned four-plus-minute-long cadenza, earning him an extended ovation. The set closed out featuring the band’s other 2021 NEA Jazz Master, Hart, on Freddie Hubbard’s Jazz Messenger Civil Rights era anthem, “The Core”, on which he soloed with unbridled intensity. (RM)

Back some 90 years or so, Art Arntzen wouldn’t have been viewed as unique. Plectrum banjo players who could locomote a jazz band with the force of a drummer, play chordal melodies and vamping, singing solos were common in the 1920s-30s. In some circles, they were even commodities (remember Johnny St. Cyr with Louis Armstrong’s Hot 5). But the growth of electric recording technology saw less need for the banjo’s bite and it came to be replaced by the guitar. Time be damned. Arntzen is the would-be banjo king right now, bravely proving it within the stripped-down trio of Danny Tobias (trumpet) and Vince Giordano (bass and bass saxophone), at Barbes (Aug. 12th). Okay, so Giordano was near metronomic playing his low-boy sock cymbals even while switching instruments, but the drive, harmonies, passing tones and fills were emanated from Arntzen’s period Vega. The instrument has probably seen many a stage, but this banjo player called on the ghosts of jazz past while never falling into Dixie hokum; the trio pumped with such intensity that the room soon filled with throbbing 20-somethings. Standards like “I’ll See You In My Dreams”, “Somebody Stole My Gal”, “Black and Blue” and “Dinah” breathed new life as improvisational segments between bass saxophone and trumpet, shattered the myths, propelled by Arntzen’s quarter-note command and dazzling breaks. By set’s end the shoo knock like the old Gennett studio each time the railroad whizzed by. Pass the hooch! — John Pietaro

The Jazz Foundation of America, in collaboration with Blue Note Records, Concord Music Group, Mack Avenue Music Group, Nonesuch Records, Universal Music Group, Verve Label Group and Warner Music Group, will release RELIEF, a compilation of previously unreleased music, on LP, CD and digitally (Sep. 24th), the proceeds of which will support ongoing efforts to aid musicians affected by the international shutdown of venues and other performance opportunities in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. For more information, visit store.jazzfoundation.org.

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Chick Corea, lost six months ago but long before anyone could accept, remains legendary, alive within the hearts he so moved. Pianist Dried Scott celebrated the legend with an evening of performance and reminiscence at Mezzrow (Aug. 4th). The club’s über-vibe featuring modernist artwork and vintage jazz posters in addition to the classic silhouette of namesake Mezz, was a warm home for such repertoire. Arriving early enough to catch the first set’s encore— “Spain”—for this reviewer it was clear that Scott, to our gain, had been harboring this gig since February. The material, drawn from decades of Corea works, was balanced by both vintage and genre, Scott’s dry banter acting as a welcome contrast to the performance intensity. Opening with 1983’s “Quintet #3”, the trio immediately danced over the pulsation, a sort of slow play drag and samba mix, Scott’s ringing parallel fifths enfaming the atmosphere under Matt Clohesy’s broiling bass and drummer Diego Voglino’s gallop. By the time “The One-Step” from 1978’s Friends #1, the trio magically turned the pulse, a corner of jazz history, getting along famously on one’s Manhattan. “There’s a difference between a song and a piece,” Scott remarked the tightly packed room just before launching into Corea’s quite epic “Quartet #1”. Opening with a piano solo screaming of Gershwin, just before launching into Corea’s quite epic “Quartet #1”, the trio immediately danced over the pulsation, a sort of slow play drag and samba mix, Scott’s ringing parallel fifths enfaming the atmosphere under Matt Clohesy’s broiling bass and drummer Diego Voglino’s gallop. JJ

WHAT’S NEWS

Tony Bennett has announced his retirement from live performance at 95 after August shows at Radio City Music Hall with Lady Gaga, capping a seven-decade career. The 2021 Festival of New Trumpet Music will take place virtually from Sep. 8th-15th with a theme of “Brass Without Borders” and including live-streamed performances from various venues around the world as well as a spiritual tribute to Randy Brecker. For more information and to live-stream, visit fontomusic.org/festival2021.

The Robert D. Bielecki Foundation has announced its latest round of grants recipients: Henry Threadgill, $20,000 in support for “Immigration and the Return of the Cheap Surf”, a multimedia project premiering at Roulette in May 2022; Artists Space, $10,000 Exhibition/Performance Grant for “Mildorf Graves: Fundamental Frequency” Exhibition and Performance Series premiere in October 2021; Avreeze Ra, $5,000 Unrestricted Grant; Sun Ra House Part 2, $4,000 Additional Repairs and Restoration; Nick Mazzarella, Ingbergh Håker Flaten and Avreeze Ra, $1,000 Grant in support for a forthcoming recording on Astral Spirits; Phyllis Chen, $500 Composition Commission in support for “Tone Grove”, a piece for two music boxes based on the teachings of Baulhaus artist Anni Albers (in collaboration with UgornroRosen); and Dave Liebman/Adam Rudolph/ Tysheawn Sorey Trio, $1,000 Performance Grant in support of a performance at The Jazz Gallery in September 2021. For more information, visit rubf.org.

The Jazz Foundation of America, in collaboration with Blue Note Records, Concord Music Group, Mack Avenue Music Group, Nonesuch Records, Universal Music Group, Verve Label Group and Warner Music Group, will release RELIEF, a compilation of previously unreleased music, on LP, CD and digitally (Sep. 24th), the proceeds of which will support ongoing efforts to aid musicians affected by the international shutdown of venues and other performance opportunities in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. For more information, visit store.jazzfoundation.org.

The Louis Armstrong House’s 2021 Virtual Gala, “Ambassador Satch”, will take place Sep. 23rd at 7 pm. For more information, visit lousaarmstronghouse.org/gala.

The complete output of two waves of commissions made during New Music through Funding by The Jazz Coalition, are now available for viewing at jazzcoalition.org/ commission-recipients.

Bassist and co-founder of ShapeShifter Lab Matt Garrison has produced an artist app available through the Apple Store, which includes albums, audio and video content, charts and scores, lessons and live-streams. For more information, visit apps.apple.com/us/app/matt-garrison/id1070722304.

The Detroit Jazz Festival, scheduled to take place Sep. 3rd-6th, has been transformed into a live-streaming event. For more information, visit detroitjazzfest.org.

Miller Theatre, as part of its “Live from Columbia” live-stream series, will present Arturo O’Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra Sep. 15th at 4 pm. For more information, visit millertheatre.com/events/arturo-ofarrill-the-afro-latin-jazz-orchestra-live-from-columbia.

The Afghan Jazz Alliance, in partnership with Lantern Organization and Mega Development The New York City Department of Housing Development and Preservation, has announced plans for Timble Terrace, a 16,000 square feet Afro Latin Music & Arts Center along with 330 affordable housing units in East Harlem.

Submit news to ahenkine@nycjazzrecord.com

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Joshua Abrams is, assuredly, the only musician whose credits include The Roots – in that band’s early years – and an ensemble conducted by New York School composer Earle Brown. Despite the seemingly disparate worlds, that is an aesthetic that fits in well with jazz in general and Abrams’ own approach to the music in particular, which is to reach beyond the mainstream idea of jazz rhythms and song form, album tracks with heads and solos, via his Natural Information Society. That band, organized around Abrams playing guimbri (North African bass lute), pioneers a unique blend of traditional Gnawa musical ideas, large-scale form and an idea of improvisation that doesn’t parse between group and solo voices.

The New York City Jazz Record: How did you first pick up the guimbri?

Joshua Abrams: I first heard the instrument on [Moroccan Gnawa musician] Maleem Mahmoud Ghania’s legendary recording with Pharoah Sanders, The Trance of Seven Colors. I found Ghania’s sound and style completely enthralling. The guimbri’s tone reminded me of gut strings on a bass and I was mystified how it produced notes simultaneously with its percussive attack. I imagined it to be like a proto 808 [Roland drum machine]. Years later I got to hang out with Maalem Najib Soudani and he sold me my first instrument. My first recording playing the guimbri was at [drummer] Hamid Drake’s request on his album with [late tenor saxophonist] Fred Anderson, From The River To The Ocean [Thrill Jockey, 2007].

TNYCJR: Who is Soudani and how did you get together with him?

JA: He is a master musician of the Gnawa tradition living in Essaouira [port city on Morocco’s Atlantic coast]. I met him through saxophonist Patrick Brennan, whom I met through Hamid Drake. I got to see him playing the guimbri up close and that helped me begin to understand some of the fundamental technique involved in approaching the instrument.

TNYCJR: How did the Natural Information Society [NIS] come to be?

JA: I formed the group after the release of my first LP of the same name on Eremite [recorded in 2008-09]. I imagined an ensemble that combined the process of interwoven, slowly evolving music with propulsive rhythmic structures. Our first tour was as a trio with Lisa Alvarado and Mikel Patrick Avery in the fall of 2010. That tour also began our practice of incorporating Lisa’s large-scale free hanging paintings as sets and context-shifters. We crossed the border into Canada twice in my 1988 Volvo 240 wagon. The routing was a mess and my car broke down in nearly every city.

TNYCJR: What were Alvarado and Avery playing on this tour? With the trio, could you still create the sound and force and textures of the Natural Information record?

JA: Natural Information is mostly composed of trio music with a few additional solo pieces so forming a trio to tour made sense musically and practically. On that first tour Lisa played electronics and percussion before switching to harmonium a few months later. Mikel played drums. We played some of the compositions from the album and some of the pieces that would later appear on the next record, Representer. I think of recorded music and performance as two very different experiences and am not too concerned with trying to duplicate a record. I am concerned with the music having vitality, the possibility of growth and being engaging.

TNYCJR: What are the qualities of the guimbri that you think make it right for music that has more to do with drone than song form or Western harmonies? Would the acoustic or electric bass work in the NIS? Would the guimbri work in a jazz group playing standards?

JA: I wouldn’t characterize NIS’ music as drone-based. That said, limitation can be a source of possibility. In case of the guimbri it is limited to three strings and one octave range. These limitations lend themselves to working with minimal music, where small changes are given room to be appreciated. I’ve considered Natural Information Society as a forum to create new settings for the guimbri. I’ve also recorded pieces with double bass on four of the group’s seven albums, one being a collaboration with Bitchin’ Bajas. I am much more fluent on the double bass than I am on the guimbri, but both instruments inform how I approach the other.

TNYCJR: Can you explain how that happens between the instruments? What does one bring to the other?

JA: When I started playing guimbri I approached it as a bassist but with time and experience it has become its own thing. I think the guimbri has a very vocal quality and that insight has changed my orientation when I play. Its sound cuts through other frequencies differently than a bass and it brings out a different relationship to the music’s rhythm. I think playing the guimbri has changed my outlook on how the double bass sits within an ensemble and can articulate melody. The bass is still my primary instrument and some of my technique and work exploring articulation has carried over to my approach to the guimbri.

TNYCJR: How ‘traditional’ – e.g., Gnawa – do you think the NIS is? Is it a hybrid of traditional and modern Western music?

JA: I don’t think of Natural Information Society’s music as traditional in the sense you are implying. It is not a hybrid in that sense. It is music developed in Chicago. If NIS’ music draws on a tradition it would be my experiences playing at Fred Anderson’s Velvet Lounge or at venues throughout the city. Chicago has a long tradition of creative music-making, open ears and minds that create new forms.

TNYCJR: Okay, but in terms of musical form, a lot of NIS is non-Western. Let me put it a different way, is Chicago a good place to explore non-song form music-making?

(Continued on page 13)
Saxophonist Caroline Davis has garnered recognition and attracted a number of opportunities to hone and refine her complex compositional fervor into an impressive catalogue of music since the release of her debut album, Live Work & Play, in 2012. What makes Davis unique is that she researches and interprets her music through a scientific and psychological lens, studying, for instance, the physical behavior of the human heart in order to understand and wholly express her feelings about her father’s diagnosis of heart arrhythmia for her 2018 album Heart Tonic (Sunysside). The saxophonist’s Ph.D. in Music Cognition roots Davis as an expert on “cognitive sciences, anatomical structures, trauma and the brain”, undergirding her approach to outlining and writing her compositions.

“I’ve been thinking a lot about the practice of healing and how it’s a metaphor for the work that I’m always doing, which is looking into science and data-driven fields of study,” says Davis from her Brooklyn home. “But there’s another side that is very much related to feeling and knowing intuitively. I’ve always been fascinated by people putting those two ways of being on opposite ends of the binary, but I don’t really believe it’s a binary. I feel it’s more of a spectrum. So, science can be driven by intuition and vice versa. I create with those two aspects as a continuum.”

For her newest album, Portals, Volume 1: Mourning (Sunysside), Davis continues to explore her relationship with her father, now in death after his passing in 2019. “I went to a writing retreat at MacDowell artists’ colony right after he died. It was so beautiful to be sitting there in nature and I came up with a bunch of sketches and I wrote a diary. I was thinking about all of the frequencies that are associated with grief.”

Davis’ exploration of vibrational frequencies she felt can be considered a positive way to stay grounded and in touch with the energetic working of one’s body: “Is this a high frequency or low frequency or middle range frequency? I was asking myself that question every day I was there. That turned into a texture and a range frequency? I was asking myself that question “Is this a high frequency or low frequency or middle range frequency?”

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Beyond the expansion of her compositional gifts as she embarked on composing for strings, Davis broadens her experience through work with women and non-binary musicians in jazz and creative music. She participated in Sara Serpa and Jen Shyu’s Mutual Mentorship for Musicians program earlier this year, sharing experiences of human beings who traverse the landscape of the male-dominated jazz community. “I look forward to more representation at visible events. I’m seeing a lot of festivals and events coming back and a lot of my friends and colleagues are noticing that there’s still an imbalance in reference to the programming and the curation of these events.”

There is, of course, a long road ahead before jazz industry gatekeepers and programmers will actively include a diversity of artists. “There are so many women and non-binary and trans people who are doing work. I would like to see them on more programming, but we’re seeing the pattern, which is slightly upsetting. It’s not about having women in jazz or a gender-focused festival that is separate. I wish it would be more integrated and more visible for those humans who are expressing themselves in different ways and not just male energy everywhere.”

When asked about a remedy, or rather, what male jazz musicians can learn from women and diverse composers, Davis spoke clearly about the attributes men glean from herself and her femme, trans and non-binary community. “Patience and growth. I mean that on the level of the music. It’s not a generalization because I’ve heard plenty of music made by women, non-binary and other identities, and I sense growth in their music. It’s not just high, fast and loud,” says Davis. “I played a gig and it was this larger ensemble and there were two women on stage out of 21 musicians. The music was written in a certain way and the solos needed to be high energy, even if the song is slow, and it feels forced. I can imagine if it looked different and there were other people represented there. How would it sound different? Davis’ music and presence are already different in that her unique mode of musical exploration and sound, derived from her individuality more than a reimagining of music already composed and performed, makes her an important part of the evolution of jazz and creative music.

She challenges the status quo and kindly offers herself to the world by bravely and honestly speaking about her experiences of illness, death and travel, finding ways to navigate and embed herself selflessly and legitimately in tight-knit musical circles. With time, Davis will be embraced and appreciated for her talent and vulnerable candor.
“God must have really wanted me to be a jazz musician because it’s something I never would have thought of for myself,” Helen Sung says with wonderment at how she has arrived at her place in the world of music, distant from where she could have envisioned herself ending up when she began classical music studies in her native Houston, Texas before the age of ten. A daughter of Taiwanese immigrant parents, she recalls, “I was trained by a very strict teacher from the Russian school who basically instilled in me that the only music worth listening to was classical music. So as a dutiful Asian student I followed her lockstep.” She continued her classical piano studies at the prestigious Houston High School for the Performing Arts, then went on to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees in classical piano from the University of Texas at Austin’s Butler School of Music.

It was while finishing up her studies at Butler that a seemingly ordinary event motivated the young student to veer from what had been her chosen path: “One day a friend of mine—we were typical classical music majors who spent most of our time in practice rooms and didn’t know much else—she said to me, ‘Harry Connick, Jr. is in town, let’s go hear him.’ I wasn’t familiar with who he was, but she said, you’ll really like him, so I said okay. He had his big band and that was very entertaining, but in the middle of the concert he sat down and played some solo piano pieces and I remember being so struck that I wanted to jump out of the chair and scream. Here’s a guy playing the piano in a way I’d been taught never to do my whole life, almost attacking it. But the music was so alive, it grabbed me in a way no other music had before.”

Sung began spending hours on end in the university library listening to the jazz recordings she could get her hands on and investigating the university’s fledgling jazz program, eventually enrolling in a beginner jazz piano course. While her friends thought that she was simply engaging in a “fun diversion”, Sung quickly realized it was much more. Her musical path was about to take a serious detour, one that would bring her east to Boston when she was accepted into the inaugural class of the Thelonious Monk Institute at the New England Conservatory.

It was while finishing up her studies at Butler that a seemingly ordinary event motivated the young student to veer from what had been her chosen path: “One day a friend of mine—we were typical classical music majors who spent most of our time in practice rooms and didn’t know much else—she said to me, ‘Harry Connick, Jr. is in town, let’s go hear him.’ I wasn’t familiar with who he was, but she said, you’ll really like him, so I said okay. He had his big band and that was very entertaining, but in the middle of the concert he sat down and played some solo piano pieces and I remember being so struck that I wanted to jump out of the chair and scream. Here’s a guy playing the piano in a way I’d been taught never to do my whole life, almost attacking it. But the music was so alive, it grabbed me in a way no other music had before.”

Sung began spending hours on end in the university library listening to the jazz recordings she could get her hands on and investigating the university’s fledgling jazz program, eventually enrolling in a beginner jazz piano course. While her friends thought that she was simply engaging in a “fun diversion”, Sung quickly realized it was much more. Her musical path was about to take a serious detour, one that would bring her east to Boston when she was accepted into the inaugural class of the Thelonious Monk Institute at the New England Conservatory.

She described the program, where her teachers included the likes of Clark Terry, Jimmy Heath, Barry Harris, Jackie McLean, Wynton Marsalis and Jon Faddis, as “a really great kick in the pants.” She notes, “Ron Carter was Artistic Director at the time and one of the things he told us was that if you want to find your own voice, you have to write music. As a classical music major growing up it was something I was never told to do...I never thought to do.” Following her graduation in 1997 Sung giggled around Boston for a couple of years, leading her own trio and accompanying local singers before relocating to New York in 1999.

As the new century unfolded Sung began to gain greater notice through her work with Terry, a brief stint with Wayne Shorter and as a member of Jazz Messenger alum bassist Loniex Plaxico’s group. In 2004 she recorded at the International Jazz Festival of Bern with Terry’s Young Titans of Jazz Band. That same year she released her debut record, Push, finding her own voice by penning seven of the date’s ten pieces, garnering Kenny Barron’s praise as a “brilliant composer”. Years later, her mentor Carter recalling a duo concert at Chelsea’s Rubin Museum, noted, “I’d forgotten how good she plays. I always look forward to playing her songs because she’s got some nice concepts that I should get more involved with in understanding why they work so well. They are specific to how she sees melodies and how she composes. She has a nice way of making the chords move that I don’t normally see in playing other people’s melodies. She earns those plaudits, man belief me.”

On her sophomore release, Helenistique, Sung put her own stamp on Great American Songbook standards and jazz classics by Barron, Joe Henderson, Ellington and Monk, of which she’s said, “That’s something that I like to do, presenting really well known songs in unexpected ways.” On 2007’s Sungbird, she merged her classical background with her increasingly personal compositional voice on a program intermingling originals with solo piano interpretations of individual movements from Spanish composer Isaac Albeniz’ “Espana, Op. 156”. That same year she achieved greater international recognition as winner of the Kennedy Center’s Mary Lou Williams Jazz Piano Competition.

Sung’s burgeoning reputation found her increasingly busy, both as a leader and supporting player, recording with Ronnie Cuber, Joe Chambers and Terri Lyne Carrington. She says, “Every experience of listening to and playing with other people is vital. Some things might be personally more exciting or meaningful, but all of it is important because jazz is music that really lives in the ‘doing of’ onstage, emulating those we admire and growing through both failure and success. I love what I heard Kenny Barron say about jazz: unlike classical music, which you perfect in the practice room before stepping on stage, with jazz music you step onstage to perfect it.” One of her most consequent experiences has been her tenure with the Mingus Big Band. She asserts, “Mingus’ compositions are a primer on fearless creativity, masterfully integrating different styles and genres, crafting unforgettable melodies and grooves. I also really admire how engaged he was with the times, powerfully speaking to societal issues through his art.”

Sung’s 2013 album Anthem For A New Day signaled her increasing confidence in her future as an important voice in the jazz community. “Lament for Kalief Browder,” from her 2017 landmark collaboration with poet Dana Gioia, Sung With Words, is a dedication to the Bronx teenager who committed suicide after enduring three years of incarceration at Rikers Island without a trial. Her involvement with Carrington’s Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice and Roxy Gumbel for being such a strong partner and advocate on my behalf. I couldn’t have done it without her. The logistics alone were overwhelming with all the COVID-19 precautions and I had never recorded such a large ensemble before.” Sung has produced a masterful work all the more impressive for the time in which it was created. The year 2021 is shaping up to be an even more memorable one for Sung with the awarding of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition. Asked how she reacted to the news, the now-renowned pianist/composer answered with characteristic humility, admitting, “I think it went something like this: total shock, followed by excitement and joy and then...uh oh, now I’ve got a ton of work to do!”

For more information, visit helen sung.com. Sung’s Quartet+ project is at Flashing Town Hall Sep. 16th and she is also at Birdland Sep. 21st-25th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Helen Sung — Push (Fresh Sound-New Talent, 2001)
• Brother Thelonious Quintet — Eponymous (Northate Brewing Co., 2009)
• Helen Sung — reCognition (SteepleChase, 2009)
• Helen Sung — Going Express (Sunnyside, 2009)
• Helen Sung — Anthem for a New Day (Concord, 2013)
• Helen Sung (with special guest Harlem Quartet) — Quartet+ (Sunnyside, 2021)
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What’s jazz these days?" pianist Mike Nock asks from his home in Sydney, Australia. “I’d say a thousand flowers are blooming.”

Nock is actually a New Zealander, but the opportunities were in the U.S. and, for the past 35 years, Australia. His American period was extremely fertile, though his San Francisco band The Fourth Way doesn’t get the credit it deserves for being there at the creation of fusion. Or maybe the problem is that the group was essentially before fusion.

Nock began playing early, at 18, primarily in Australia. His trio toured England, but proved short-lived. Like many top foreign-born jazz musicians, Nock’s introduction to America was via a scholarship to Berklee College of Music, in his case circa 1961. He was 21. The problem was his scholarship was for only $3,000, so he was essentially starving. “Three thousand dollars won’t buy a cup of coffee now and it basically didn’t back then, either,” Nock said. Even a job washing dishes didn’t pay all the bills.

“But after I’d been there a few months I was saved. Another call: from Dionne Warwick! ‘It wasn’t jazz, of course,’ Nock said. ‘She was great and even let me open some of her shows. The money was good, but eventually I saw it as a trap—I wanted to play my own music.’ Nock recruited drummer Eddie Marshall to play with Warwick and they talked about working together. They began to collaborate. Nock’s first solo album, Almanac (1967, released in 1977), which also had bassist Cecil McBee and saxophonist Bennie Maupin. Nock said the first stray rays of fusion were around then, with one adherent being flute player Jeremy and the Satyrs.

The relationship with Warwick lasted a year. The group eventually was booked to perform on an American television show, but Nock says the four members had disagreements. "We started playing. There was a buzz in those days." Nock was central to the band’s sound and a principal composer. He had met inventor Harold Rhodes, who introduced him to his revolutionary electronic piano. “The Fender Rhodes made it happen,” Nock said. “It enabled the piano player to have an equal voice and a sustained note that could cut through. I loved it immediately and had to learn a new way of playing, using effects pedals and a ring modulator. At 80 now I don’t want to be carrying a Fender Rhodes around, but I still appreciate that special thing the early Rhodes pianos had.”

White wanted to do his own music and was soon making spiritual jazz albums for Impulse. That was the end of The Fourth Way. The group could have continued with other players and saxophonist Hadley Caliman and saxophonist Dewey Redman, but Nock says the four members had a unique chemistry and with anyone else it would have been something else.

Nock returned to Australia around 1985. “I felt that my destiny was to come back and share what I had learned in America,” Nock said. He was an artist in residence in Brisbane and then at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music until 2018. New Zealand? Well, he was appointed an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Jazz in 2003. But he is in Australia to stay.

Nock has made dozens of leader albums, as well as sideman dates with Handy, Lateef, Teig, Tal Farlow, John Klemmer, Eric Kloss and David Liebman. He points listeners toward In, Out and Around (1978) with Michael Brecker (“he played his ass off”), George Mraz and Al Foster (“the first time that rhythm section played together”) and Onpas with Eddie Gomez and Jan Christensen ("celebrating its 40th anniversary.

Lest We Forget

15 years have passed since the death of tenor saxophonist Dewey Redman, who was 75 when he died of liver failure on Sep. 2nd, 2006. He continues to be remembered as a master of the avant garde who was also quite capable of playing postbop and standards. Although the tenor was his main instrument, Redman also played alto clarinet, musette and suona (a traditional Chinese double reed instrument).

Redman was born in Fort Worth, Texas on May 17th, 1931. His roots were born but during the ’60s he fully embraced the free jazz revolution. 1968 marked the beginning of his association with another Fort Worth native: pioneering alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman, one of the founding fathers of avant garde jazz. Redman remained with Coleman until 1972, continuing to perform with fellow Coleman sidemen after that. The ’70s/’80s quartet Old and New Dreams united Redman with fellow Coleman alumni Don Cherry (trumpet), Charlie Haden (acoustic bass) and Ed Blackwell (drums) and it was also during the ’70s that he played extensively with pianist Keith Jarrett’s American Quartet.

The ’80s-90s found Redman leading his own groups in addition to pursuing a variety of work as a sideman. Redman was employed by a wide range of players, from guitarist Pat Metheny on 1980’s 80/81 to drummer Paul Motian on 1988’s Monk in Motion. The saxophonist was also part of different lineups of Haden’s Liberation Music Orchestra, an adventurous band combining postbop and avant garde jazz with overtly political themes.

Two previously unreleased recordings by Redman have surfaced. Released by pianist Barney McAll in June, the digital-only Live in Chicago contains a performance from March 2002 with Redman leading a quartet of McAll, bassist John Menegon and drummer Matt Wilson. The group favors an inside/outside approach and includes some familiar standards such as Ray Noble’s “The Very Thought of You” and Axel Stordahl/Paul Weston’s “I Should Care”.

Redman continued, “When you play free, play free. When you play bluesy, play bluesy—and just react, because it’s all music,” McAll remembers. “He wasn’t concerned with genres or styles; he just was a deep-flowing river of sound and melody in whatever context he found himself in. He was one of the few that skirted that boundary. I mean ‘inventing’ playing’ but he was just a natural-flowing musician who was playing in the present moment and really listening. So, what came out of his horn was real and people could feel how real it was. It was emotionally very powerful.”

McAll continues, “I like to say that his seemingly eternal flow of melody was anciently familiar. Like you have heard it before, but it’s also the first time you have heard it. He was also a virtuoso and could read well and could interpret melody in a very intuitive and deep way. If you listen to his work with Keith Jarrett’s groups, he is negotiating very complex musical equations with great ease and flow. And if you hear him with Ornette Coleman, it’s a whole other way of playing, but he is very much Dewey in both contexts because he had a rare blend of deep intellect, bluesy funk and a completely free approach. I don’t know anyone else who could have done that.”

The other posthumous release is the also digital-only Pillars & Columns, a duo with bassist Mark Helias recorded in 1981 at a time when Helias was part of a powerful Redman/Redman trio with Eddie Moore on drums and Fred Simmons or Charles Ubarans on piano. “Pillars & Columns is from a duo concert that I remember booking with Dewey as part of a series in Massachusetts,” Helias notes. “It was the only duo gig we ever did, instead mostly playing in trio with Edward Blackwell on drums and Dewey on tenor.”

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Musician-run labels have gone from being an outlier to near ubiquitous. Certainly it’s a course that drummer Devin Gray of Rataplan Records would advocate anyone to pursue, particularly if creative integrity is a concern. Gray recognized early, even before attending college, that he was embarked on a career where the rewards were likely to be aesthetic rather than monetary and that self-determination was the way forward. But once in NYC, taking his Masters at the Manhattan School of Music, Gray worked hard to establish himself on the scene, leaving no time to launch a label as well. Having financed the recording of his leadership debut Dirigo Rataplan by a heavy-weight quartet comprising saxophonist Ellery Eskelin, trumpeter Dave Ballou and one of his mentors from Baltimore’s Peabody Conservatory, bassist Michael Formanek, in 2012, Gray was struggling to get it out. Happily Chris Speed’s Skirl imprint came to the rescue. Further albums ensued. But it wasn’t until he had Dirigo Rataplan II in the can in 2018 that he took the plunge and established his own outlet. Gray lays out his rationale: “I was sitting there in Brooklyn thinking do I need to email more people? No, I’m going to start my own record label. No harsh feelings. Nothing about money or ownership. I can get my compositional approach out in a way I’m OK with, so I can get onto the next artistic thing.”

Befitting a drummer-led outfit, the moniker of the group derives from the Latin motto of his native Maine “dirigo”, meaning “I direct”, and the French “rataplan”, an onomatopoeic word referring to an iterative percussive sound. It seemed an appropriate handle for the label too, especially so as Gray has been prominent on all nine releases to date in some combination or other. Each tends towards the imaginative and adventurous, with Gray’s unpredictable charts interpreted by classy collaborators who vary from saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and pianist Cory Smythe on Cloud Sounds to guitarists Ryan Ferreira and Jonathan Goldberger and bassist Chris Tordini on the odysseys of Fashionable Pop Music. Among the catalogue, two recent releases stand out. One is Melt All The Gams by another starry trio, completed by trumpeter Ralph Alessi and pianist Angelica Sanchez. Gray explains: “I wrote some music for them because there were some gigs I had and I wanted to play with them. Ralph’s music has been such an influence on me over the years. The same with Angie. I wrote a book of music for them and then we ended up recording about half of it.”

As is obvious from the thought that went into what to call his first band and then label, names are important to Gray. Where did the title come from? “I put a pretty strong political stance on it, because I was really feeling that at the time. I wanted to see what would happen if I said something that wasn’t just an abstract jazz title, but was something with a little bit more weight. I think it went well. The label gives me that freedom to pressure myself into doing things, taking more chances even. It comes down to what are you trying to say as an artist, what’s the message you’re trying to get out there.”

The second noteworthy recent release, 27 Licks, a duet with fellow percussion maven Gerald Cleaver, showcases a series of joint improvisations, which demonstrate that instrumental focus is no constraint on invention and intrigue. “That’s the accumulation of 10, 15 years of knowing each other.” On one track Cleaver sustains a press roll for over three minutes, which pitifully illustrates Gray’s approach to framing music. “I think about the moments that are the most interesting and that’s what I want people to hear. Instead of sitting there and listening to a 45-minute set, enjoying 15 minutes of it a lot and knowing it took the whole time to be able to do it, what if we grab those moments that I really like.” As a result the duration of some of the label’s releases is more EP than LP. For Gray it’s all down to artistic imperatives. “Make the music the way you hear it. I think the shorter medium also fits the internet structures. I like experimenting with length in general anyway, with live gigs, even with vinyl records.”

Gray has several other sessions ready to see the light of day. “I have about five records right now that I’m working on. I have a solo record, because I’ve never done that. It wasn’t pandemic-inspired. It was recorded before but it’s finished now and I’m trying to figure out what to do with that. There’s a thing with [guitarist] Wendy Eisenberg and [vibraphonist] Jessica Pavone. Also I did another record with [accordion player] Andrea Parkinson and [reedplayer] Frank Gratkowski, that one’s in the can. Another one with [cellist] Mariel Roberts and [saxophonist] Angela Morris in New York.” Enthused by Speed’s curation of Skirl, Gray also wishes Rataplan to serve as a platform for other

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VOXNEWS

FOUND THINGS

By Suzanne Lorge

In the mid ‘70s, Alice Coltrane – both an in-demand musician and a keeper of her late husband John’s legacy – began to remove herself from the hectic world of touring and recording, instead delving ever more deeply into the contemplative philosophies of Eastern spiritual traditions. By the early ’80s, she had changed her name to Turiyasangitananda and founded an ashram northwest of Los Angeles. Rough recordings from that time, never widely distributed, reveal that her music had changed, too. In July, Impulse! Records/UMe released Kirtan: Turiya Sings Nina Simone, a 1981 recording of just Wurlitzer organ and voice, a first-ever such combination for the prolific multi-instrumentalist. Both John and Alice had released seminal recordings on Impulse!, so it’s fitting that the legendary label would include the now-forgotten collaborative piece of its 60th anniversary celebration this year. On the nine tracks, Coltrane sings in Sanskrit, her voice reverential and chant-like as the organ holds blues and gospel chords underneath. On cuts like “Jai Ramachandra” and “Rama Katha” she uses simple repetition to create mood and wide spaces to generate tension; she doesn’t move until the right moment arrives. Though you can hear references to both American roots music (“Charanam”) and European classical (“Yamuna Tira Vihari”) in these meditative pieces, she doesn’t improvise or ornament any of the passionately phrased lines in expected ways; the focus remains on the mantras, as fits her devotion. The purpose of this music is “to praise the name of the Supreme”, writes saxophonist Ravi Coltrane, Alice and John’s son. “On this album, your heart and spirit will be turned toward divine inspiration and appreciation.”

There are other historic releases now on offer. This summer, BMG/Montreux Sound released live recordings of iconic singers who played the Montreux Jazz Festival over the years, part of the label’s massive UNESCO-cited heritage collection. The first, Nina Simone: The Montreux Years, presents her full program from her first Montreux appearance in 1968 and culminates from her subsequent four, 1976 through 1990. Schooled at Juilliard, Simone didn’t like playing festivals much, but she used their spotlight to her advantage. Hear the 1976 version of “Little Girl Blue”, and Langston Hughes’earing words on “Backlash Blues”. The second release, Etta James: The Montreux Years, chronicles her first European concert in 1975 and five festival concerts from 1977 to 1993. The high-octane blues singer, backed by rock and jazz heavyweights of the day like pianist Rick Wakeman and saxophonist David Newman, sets the ear aflame with tunes like “Breakin’ Up Somebody’s Home” and “Tell Mama”. James’ voice is simply irrepressible in these live performances.

Grammy-winning singer Ledisi recreates some of Simone’s most powerful musical statements on Ledisi Sings Nina (Listen Back). These seven tracks pull the activist-singer’s message into current musical parlance, integrating a large-ensemble sound with a modern R&B sensibility. Ledisi, who credits Simone’s music with lifting her out of a debilitating depression, sings full throttle, in contrast with Simone’s low-grooving contralto. These two emotional powerhouses share a talent, though: the ability to sway with a song.

More historic recordings: The Lost Recording’s Sarah Vaughan Live at the Berlin Philharmon 1969 has her still at her interpretive best on standards and pop tunes of the day by Burt Bacharach, The Beatles and Jimmy Webb. And this month Capri Records will release Sheila Jordan’s Comes Love: Lost Session 1960, recorded at New York’s Olmsted Sound Studios for the now-forgotten Chatam Records. The names of the players in the trio remain lost, but Jordan’s innate bop technique and incisive lyricism are unmistakable. This recording, predating Jordan’s 1963 debut on Blue Note, is now her first known album.

As more performance spaces reopen and gigs return, it’s important to turn out. Catch Kurt Elling and Jazzmeia Horn honoring Jon Hendricks’ legacy at Dizzy’s Club (Sep. 9th-12th); Gregory Porter at NJPAC (Sep. 24th) and Duchess at Birdland (Sep. 30th).
RICK LAIRD
BY ANDREY HENKIN

Rick Laird, Irish bassist best known for anchoring the first iteration of the Mahavishnu Orchestra from 1971-73 but with an impressive jazz resume on either side of that tenure and later a long career in photography, died Jul. 4th at 80 of lung cancer.

Laird was born Feb. 5th, 1941 in Dublin. He then moved to New Zealand at 16, followed by a couple of years in Australia (where he worked with another future-fusioneer-in-America, The Fourth Way founder pianist Mike Nock) and then, in his early 20s, relocation to London. It was there that his jazz career took off and while Laird is not as celebrated as peers like Stanley Clarke or Miroslav Vitous or later genre players like Jaco Pastorius or Ralphie Armstrong, he actually had a much greater jazz pedigree as part of the 1964-66 house band for Ronnie Scott’s club, backing visiting Americans like Prince Lasha, Al Cohn/Zoot Sims, Annie Ross, Sonny Stitt, Wes Montgomery, Victor Feldman, Roland Kirk, Don Byas, Yusef Lateef, Ben Webster, Sonny Rollins and more. Laird then received a scholarship to study at Berklee College of Music and, in 1969, got his first major gig as part of Buddy Rich’s big band.

In 1971, a connection from Ronnie Scott’s, British guitarist John McLaughlin, already in New York and established through work with Miles Davis, called to include him in a new band inspired by Davis’ jazz-rock explorations. That band was the Mahavishnu Orchestra (MO), originally completed by violinist Jerry Goodman, Czech keyboard player Jan Hammer and drummer Billy Cobham. Of all the bands to come out of the Davis circle, MO burned the brightest for the shortest period of time (though McLaughlin would keep using the name for other bands). MO released three albums in its lifespan – studio dates Inner Mounting Flame and Birds of Fire and live set Between Nothingness and Eternity (another studio session, The Lost Trident Sessions, was released in 1999) – and played over 300 gigs between 1971 and its disbandment after a final concert on Dec. 30th, 1973. Laird was the least flashy of the group (apart from his Ampeg Dan Armstrong Lucite bass), using his long experience as a rhythm section player to ground the proceedings for the pyrotechnics of his bandmates.

Laird stayed busy, working with Clive Stevens, Horace Arnold, Eddie Jefferson, Richie Cole, Vic Juris, Eddie Daniels, Stan Getz and others. He also released his sole album as a leader, 1976’s Soft Focus for Muse, a quartet date with tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson, pianist Tom Grant and drummer Ron Steen. But by the early ’80s Laird shifted his “focus”, hanging up his bass and devoting himself fully to photography, a side gig he had begun in the ’70s. Laird’s portraiture has graced albums by McLaughlin, Cobham, Nock, Sun Ra, Dave Liebman, John Abercrombie, Attila Zoller, Michael Brecker, Cindy Blackman, Larry Coryell, Lee Konitz, Jack DeJohnette, Bill Barron and many others.

JUNI BOOTH
(Feb. 12th, 1948 - Jul. 11th, 2021)
The bassist was active since the late ’60s, working with Marzette Watts, Sonny Simmons, Shelly Manne, Gary Bartz, Larry Young, McCoy Tyner, Freddie Hubbard, Masabumi Kikuchi, Joe Bonner, Hamiet Bluiett, Elvin Jones, Chico Freeman, Junior Cook, Ernie Krivda, Steve Grossman, Beaver Harris, Sun Ra, Charles Gayle, Franklin Kiermeyer, Illhan Ersahin and others. Booth died Jul. 11th at 73.

DINO J.A. DEANE
(Feb. 16th, 1950 - Jul. 23rd, 2021)
The trombonist/keyboard player had collaborative albums on Dossier, Ear-Rational, FMP, Victo and Zexr with Bill Horvitz, Butch Morris, Lê Quan Ninh, Myra Melford and others to go along with credits under Morris, Jon Hassell, John Zorn, Wayne Horvitz and Stephanie Richards. Deane died Jul. 23rd at 71.

JERRY GRANELLI
(Dec. 30th, 1940 - Jul. 20th, 2021)
The Canada-based drummer, despite being best known for his work in 1960s with Virgil Guzalda’s A Charlie Brown Christmas, currently he was not initially not even credited, had a long career: with Guzalda prior to Charlie Brown then Jon Hendricks, Denny Zeitlin, Mose Allison, Ralph Towner, Jay Clayton, Jane Ira Bloom, Lee Konitz, Robben Ford, Charlie Mariano and more to go along with albums since the ’70s on Excilibur, JMT, ITM Pacific, Loveslave, Songlines, Veal, Addo and, most recently, Sunnyside. Granelli died Jul. 20th at 80.

ANTTI HYTTI
The Finnish bassist/vocalist was a founding member of Pitparaupe and worked with Tomasz Stańko, Edward Vesala, Juhan Aaltonen, Jone Takamaki, Iro Haarla and others. Hytti died Jul. 3rd at 68.

ELLIO REECE (1925 - Jul. 2nd, 2021)
The pianist, though better known for his later career as a composer/arranger for film and TV, got his start leading dance bands in the ’50s playing period jazz tunes for albums on Fantasy, Vik, Jazztone and Vogue and recording with the reunited Four Brothers and Manny Albam. Lawrence died Jul. 2nd at 96.

CLARENCE MCDONALD (1945 - Jul. 21st, 2021)
The pianist/keybord player/producer recorded with Blue Mitchell, Sonny Criss, The Manhattan Transfer, Nancy Wilson, Freddie Hubbard and Stanley Turrentine among his many pop credits. McDonald died Jul. 21st at 75.

DON MARQUIS (?? - Jul. 29th, 2021)
The jazz scholar, based in New Orleans credits. McDonald died Jul. 21st at 75.

JOEY MORANT (1938 - Jul. 29th, 2021)
The trumpeter/vocalist worked with the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band, George Benson, Lionel Hampton Orchestra, Roy Ayers, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Benny Golson, Gene Ammons, Earl Bostic and others and released albums on Amy-Mala-Bell, Double L, SSS International and, in 2018, Blu jazz. Morant died Jul. 29th at 82.

BENNY MUSTAFA
(Sep. 22nd, 1939 - Jul. 2nd, 2021)
The Indonesian drummer worked with Bubi Chen, Jack Lesmana, Ireng Maulana and others but his most notable credit was on Tony Scott and The Indonesian All Stars’ 1967 SABA LP Djanger Ball. Mustafa died Jul. 2nd at 81.

VIC PITT
(Sep. 26th, 1941 - Jul. 27th, 2021)
The British bassist/tuba player, whose brother Tony was a guitarist and banjo player, was part of the U.K.’s trad-jazz scene with two of The Three Bs in Kenny Ball (1960-76) and Chris Barber (1979 into the new millennium) and also worked with Wally Fawkes, John Crocker, Ian Wheeler, Pat Halcox and others. Pitt died Jul. 27th at 79.

BILL RAMSEY
(Apr. 17th, 1931 - Jul. 2nd, 2021)
The singer, though born in Ohio, based his career in Germany after serving there with the U.S. Air Force, recording for Polydor, Columbia, Electrola, CORnet and Intercord, both as a featured performer and in collaboration with Paul Kuhn, Inge Brandenburg, Toots Thielemans, Dieter Reith and others. Ramsey died Jul. 2nd at 90.

SAM REED
(Oct. 18th, 1935 - Jul. 7th, 2021)
The stalwart Philly saxophonist worked with The Metronomes, The Ambassadors, Grady Tate and Sunship and was a longtime member of Odean Pope’s Saxophone Choir, appearing on albums the band made for Soul Note in the ‘80s-90s. Reed died Jul. 7th at 85.

Out Of This World
New digital album
FROM MIKE NOCK
Mike Nock
Hamish Stuart
Julien Wilson
Jonathan Zwart

Pianist Mike Nock, known for his work with names like Michael Brecker and Yusef Lateef as well as his seminal ‘Ondas’ on ECM Records, is joined by masters of Australian Jazz - Julien Wilson, Jonathan Zwart and Hamish Stuart.

Their latest offering ‘Out of this World’ presents original compositions by the group, recorded by ABC Jazz in Australia and available now.
**INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

**JA:** That is a slippery statement to put on the group. I suppose it depends where you consider the invisible cultural borders between East and West to exist. What about North, South, Up, Down and Center? If you are trying to assert that the formal structure of NIS’ music is lifted from traditional sources I would disagree and question what music you have in mind. If we played the same music arranged for violin, banjo and sousaphones would you make the same claim? Perhaps that is an association based on the group’s instrumentation or by how it sounds?

All that said, I tend to be musically omnivorous and am inspired by sounds from all over: traditional folk music, contemporary music, acoustic, electronic, sacred, secular etc. The influence of traditional folk musics on ‘Western’ music could almost be considered a tradition in itself. I’m thinking about Bela Bartók, Igor Stravinsky or Don Cherry, to name a few. In different ways they all drew from the well of traditional folk musics. Does that make the music they influenced Eastern or Western? Hopefully through playing the group in NIS I can respectfully point a few more ears to the vast musical contributions the Gnawa have shared with the world.

To get back to your question, Chicago is a fantastic place to explore all kinds of music-making, in part because there have and continue to be so many dynamic exploratory musicians who are willing to cross boundaries of genre and try to arrive at new sounds. Chicago’s music scene has also remained fertile because there are venues and audiences that have historically supported and been engaged with that sort of exploratory trajectory—shout out to Constellation.

**TNYCJR:** Do you use microtonality or non-equal tempered tunings/scales in NIS?

**JA:** Not so much but it is an area that the music could explore in the future.

**TNYCJR:** NIS has an ensemble sound and aesthetic, at least to this listener. How do you incorporate a lead voice like Evan Parker into NIS’ musical values?

**JA:** I’m glad that comes through for you. In July of 2019 we had two nights at Café OTO in London. Evan joined us the second night and we played a new composition that became the [new record]. Evan is a luminary of the music and his language is masterfully realized. I felt the two languages could interweave and run parallel effectively, if we left space for him to go where he wanted. Both approaches draw inspiration from the music of John Coltrane. I think both of our languages make music that feels vital.

**TNYCJR:** Do you make music in NIS with any non-musical goal in mind?

**JA:** I think music is a conduit for shared energy. I try to make music that feels vital.

**TNYCJR:** How well do you think the NIS fits into jazz venues, with audiences in seats or at tables? What’s the ideal performing situation for NIS?

**JA:** Our music fits well where people feel like listening. How people listen is their choice and experience. They could be dancing or sitting very still. We have played concerts at jazz clubs, rock clubs, concert halls, festivals, churches, cemeteries, museums, meeting halls, cinemas, fountains, boats, The Henry Miller Library, parks and parking garages.

For more information, visit joshaubramsmusic.com. Abrams’ Natural Information Society with guest William Parker is at Le Poisson Rouge Sep. 27th. See Calendar.

**Recommended Listening:**

- Joshua Abrams—Cipher (Delmark, 2002)
- Mike Reed’s Loose Assembly—The Speed of Change (482 Music, 2007)
- Joshua Abrams—Natural Information (Eremite, 2008-9)
- Nicole Mitchell’s Ice Crystals—Aquarius (Delmark, 2012)
- Dave Remps/Joshua Abrams/Arreayl Ra + Jim Baker—Perihelion (Aerophonic, 2015-16)
- Natural Information Society with Evan Parker—descension (Out of Our Constructions) (Eremite-Aguirre, 2019)

**ENCORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10**

In Australia, Nock had a long stint running the Naxos Jazz label, putting out albums by the New York Jazz Collective, singers like Lenny Welch and McCaslin and dozens more. The label owner, whose experience was in classical music, sent him 10 albums he’d put out. And when Nock told him exactly what was wrong with them he got the gig. “I didn’t go looking for it, it came to me,” he said. “We sold more than half a million records before he pulled the plug.”

Secure in Sydney, Nock says he’s “been lucky,” even though he had a long recovery after a truck ran over him. “Jazz has been good to me,” he said.

For more information, visit mikenock.com

**Recommended Listening:**

- Yusef Lateef—1964 (Impulse!, 1965)
- The Fourth Way—The Sun and Moon Have Come Together (Harvest, 1968)
- Mike Nock Quartet—In Out And Around (Timeless, 1978)
- Mike Nock—Oulas (ECM, 1981)
- Mike Nock Trio—Not We But One (Naxos Jazz, 1996)
- Mike Nock/Dave Liebman—Duelogue (Birdland, 2004)

**LABEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11**

Upon listening to the tape, I felt it was a great example of Dewey’s improvisational approach and flow. I thought it should be heard.” Helias stresses that whatever type of jazz he was playing, Redman was quite recognizable. “I think it is more germane to discuss the uniqueness of Dewey Redman’s sound and form of musical expression,” Helias observes. “He was very original in his voice and approach… I would say that Dewey always found a way into the music, whatever it was, to broaden it and make it better. He came into my first Enja recording and put a stamp on the session with a kind of lyricism and energy that still rings so true to this day, a wonderful, funny and gentle man of the highest integrity.”

15 years after Redman’s death, McAll still has fond memories of the years they played together. “Dewey was rare,” McAll says. “Dewey related to me that he was from a line of griots stemming back to Africa and I certainly feel that is true. And when you listen to him play, you know it’s true in your very soul.”

**Recommended Listening:**

- Dewey Redman—Look For The Black Star (Fontana, 1966)
- Ornette Coleman—New York Is Now (Blue Note, 1968)
- Keith Jarrett—Backlund (ABC Impulse!, 1974)
- Don Cherry, Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden, Ed Blackwell—Old And New Dreams (ECM, 1976)
- Dewey Redman/Ed Blackwell—Communication (Black Saint, 1980)
- Dewey Redman—Live in Chicago (Extra Celestial Arts, 2002)

Artists as well as Helias has been actively soliciting submissions. “I’m listening for the thing that I’m really going to connect with, that I really want to put what I have behind.”

Gray doesn’t have a fixed schedule for releases. “Because it’s me doing it and it also depends on if the bands can play. But quarterly maybe is the answer.” Although a grind, Gray is clear that the route offers its own recompense: “To me it’s really liberating to have complete control over the whole process, especially compositionally. I don’t think at this point that anyone’s going to come along and give me $10,000 to do my record in the way I want it done. That’s not a negative statement; it’s actually a really positive statement, where people have more resources than ever to be able to think creatively for themselves. I don’t want to encourage other musicians, maybe the next generation younger than me, to keep going and to trust if they have an idea, they should trust in themselves to follow through.”

For more information, visit rataplanrecordsonline.bandcamp.com.

A Rataplan showcase is at Downtown Music Gallery Sep. 25th. See Calendar.
Too Close for Comfort

George Cables (HighNote)

William 1978 (Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series 45) Delaware (HighNote)

by Ken Dryden

George Cables has rebounded with a vengeance following a scary health challenge that temporarily sidelined the pianist prior to the COVID-19 epidemic. Too Close for Comfort, his seventh CD for HighNote, features him leading a trio with bassist Essiet and drummer Victor Lewis, in-demand veterans who have been his regular collaborators for years.

Cables mixes in several standards on this studio session, beginning with an angular romp through the Jerrry Bock-George David Weiss-Larry Holofcener title track, jokingly referring in his liner notes to the social distancing suggested to slow the spread of the virus. His lyrical, deliberate setting of J. Fred Coots-Sam M. Lewis’ “For All We Know”, played as a duet with Essiet, reinforces his reputation as a masterful ballad interpreter, as their intimate dialogue brings out new facets of this time-tested favorite.

A prolific composer who has a knack for creating catchy melodies, Cables introduces several new works in this outing. “Circle Of Love” is an upbeat, breezy jazz waltz infused with the pianist’s creative spirit. The Latin-tinged “This Is My Song” is even livelier, as the composer’s bright melodic line reflects his positive outlook, even in the midst of dealing with the seriousness of his recent illness. Yet it is his poignant miniature, the ballad “A Valentine For You”, which packs the most emotional punch. This solo piano feature seems destined to become a frequent request during his live sets, ranking alongside his beloved “Lullaby”.

Cables took part in numerous recordings by the late vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson during the 70s-80s and Hutcherson recorded many of Cables’ works, so it isn’t surprising that Cables returns the favor with two of the jazz master’s compositions. The intense samba setting of “Roses Poses” glistens with Cables’ strident, rich chords while the twisting treatment of “Teddy” showcases much of the original’s tech setup. Fellow pianist Tadataka Unno brought his “Crazy Love” to Cables’ home and asked him to give it a title. Cables was immediately drawn to it and dives head first into this demanding, constantly shifting vehicle, a duet, featuring Lewis’ hand percussion.

After spending over a decade living and working in Europe, Dexter Gordon came home to the U.S. to play at the Village Vanguard in 1976, resulting in In the U.S.—but caused some of its luminaries, such as Caetano Veloso, to flee the country for a time.

One of Tropicália’s leaders was guitarist João Gilberto, who pioneered a ‘radical’ approach to his instrument, violão gato or slamming guitar, with its changing patterns and syncopated swing. It’s a technique Ben-Hur shows off splendidly in “Bebê” (Hermeto Pascoai), flying through the piece like a speeding train, finally building a dramatic arc to a fierce conclusion with percussionist Sepia and his quartet. This modern arrangement of “Bebê”, a political statement about consumerism in the upper half of the keyboard. Reid and Gladkken make a formidable team supporting Gordon and Cables. This 1978 broadcast by Swiss Radio, sourced from the station’s tapes, has excellent fidelity. While there are a lot of later period Dexter Gordon live CDs available, this long hidden gem is worth the investment.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com and tcb.ch.

Too Close for Comfort

Samba do Arraial (special guest Leny Andrade)

Roni Ben-Hur/Percio Sapia Quartet (Tratore)

by Marilyn Lester

It’s easy to understand why bebop-trained guitarist Roni Ben-Hur gravitated to Brazilian samba music early in his career. His new CD with the Percio Sapia Quartet is an ode to the legacy of Tropicália, the revisionist movement of the’50s-60s in Brazil, which not only upended traditional styles—as bebop did here in the U.S.—but caused some of its luminaries, such as Caetano Veloso, to flee the country for a time.

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Guitarist Joel Harrison has been quietly assembling a stellar body of work since his debut in 1996. 20 albums later, Harrison is back with a riveting collection of duets with four fellow musicians (Ben Monder, Steve Cardenas, Pete McCann and David Gilmore) plus the electric bass of Steve Swallow. In his liner notes, Harrison states that he had been avoiding the writing of simple, instrumental melodies in favor of other challenges, but had come back to the concept for these sessions. The album is dedicated to the memory of Vic Juris, for whom Harrison penned the memorable “Sunday Night With Vic”, hoping to include him on the date. McCann spells Juris on this one and returns on “Rebound”, which could refer to the prodigious amounts of delay/reverb both employ. It swings in its own sweet way and McCann is a definite keeper. Monder and Harrison are a solid match, illustrated on the swelling, orchestral “Autumn in Olivebridge” and “Winter Solstice”, the latter an exercise in melodic clarity. The default motif is probably the pensive ballad that kind of hangs in the air, as in the duet between Harrison and Cardenas on “I Knew Right Away”. The tunes with Swallow are especially potent. On the first, Harrison’s solo is chock-full of Pat Metheny-esque double-stops while Swallow’s contribution explores aggressive counterpart. The second, “I’m Still Asking the Question”, is a loping, bluesy groove reaffirming their ties to the jazz tradition. Black Mountain Breakdown with Gilmore has a more baroque, on the beat feel to it. At times, these duets recall the spirit (if not the letter) of Sargasso Sea, the 1976 ECM masterpiece by John Abercrombie and Ralph Towner.

In an album devoted to the art of the duet, what is most striking is the penultimate tune, a solo guitar exploration of Duke Ellington’s “Reflections in D”. It is gorgeous and timeless and Harrison’s interpretation continues to linger in the ear.

For more information, visit agsrecordings.bandcamp.com. This project is at Soapbox Gallery Sep. 2nd. See Calendar.
Virtual Birdland

Arturo O’Farrill/Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra (ZOHO)

dreaming in lions...

Arturo O’Farrill/The Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble (Blue Note)
by Russ Musto

Shortly after its two-and-a-half-decade-long Sunday night residency at Birdland shut down in the spring of 2020 due to COVID pandemic restrictions, Arturo O’Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra took to cyberspace and began a weekly series of virtual performances streamed on Facebook and YouTube. Painstakingly assembled from the individual tracks laid down in isolation by each of the band’s 18 musicians and some guests from locations near and far, the resultant music is a powerful testament to resiliency.

The ten pieces on Virtual Birdland are among the best of the more than 100 recorded as part of the series. The orchestra’s horn sections and solists are propelled by the driving polyrhythmic underpinning provided by the pianist/bandleader and his rhythm section mates, bassist Bam Bam Rodriguez, drummer Vince Cherico, congaists Keisel Jimenez and bongocero Carly Maldonado. Things begin with O’Farrill’s “Gulab Jamón”, a bubbling molten pot of influences, including not only the Indian and Latin referenced in its title, but also European classical and American blues.

The multi-layered French language vocal of guest Malika Zarra is heard on Kali Rodriguez-Peña’s arrangement of her “Pouvoir”, a lilting affair in the imagery of a Middle Eastern caravan with fluent solos by the composer (quoting Ornette’s “Lonely Woman”) and trumpeter Seneca Black (referring John Coltrane’s “Impressions”). Barcelona’s Miguel Blanco’s beautiful arrangement of the Larry Willis Fort Apache Band classic “Nightfall” provides rich harmonic support for lyrical improvisations by trumpeter Rachel Therrien and tenor saxophonist Ivan Renta.

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Travis Laplante is one of the most physically dynamic saxophonists in contemporary music. He’s a master of circular breathing and he uses that as an expressive tool to channel a palpable force of musical intensity through his tenor. You can feel sinew and muscle and lung in his playing. That strikes the listener immediately with the opening title track on this new duo album with percussionist Jason Nazary.

“Tunnel To Light” is full of that force and exciting intensity; it sounds like the musicians are indeed digging their way out of hardship to a better place. Coming first, it promises a lot about the record, but the following tracks don’t all fulfill that, or match the grip of the opener. Issued on cassette, with an A- and B-Side, the album is split between three acoustic improvisations of the opener. Though freely improvised, it sounds initially like it was hatched on a hilltop in Appalachia with the sun shining. Gradually bits of concordant noise emerge, one vaguely like a sawmill. The piece drifts to a free ensemble, each musician finding their own path, but it maintains a sense of organic reflection for all of its alternative directions. Demonstrating a masterful economy, the shortest track is “Two-Faced”; a very fast passing of clipped picking for electric guitar and strings, it is a subtle fusion of amplified and acoustic sounds until guitar adds reverb and then it all disperses in little more than a minute.

William Parker’s Mayan Space Station has been heralded as the eminent bassist’s first album with a trio including electric guitar in a jazz-rock mode, with Mendoza joining Parker and drummer Gerald Cleaver. Parker, however, is no stranger to pressing his music in mainstream directions, including his exploration of Curtis Mayfield’s music. It’s not that much of a stretch to the improvisatory flights of Jimi Hendrix or Eddie Hazel or the energized feedback that Sonny Sharrock brought to free jazz. Mayan Space Station foregrounds Mendoza’s spiky clarity of line in a trio of special rhythmic force, a group with a narrow timbral range, which delivers an hour of intense music, developing continuously and finding new dimensions in Parker’s compositions. Parker and Cleaver are a brilliant rhythm team, whether it’s the latter aligning a drumbeat with the former to create a hybrid bass sound or the two creating a perfectly synced rhythmic acceleration. The title track, first recorded by Parker’s Little Huey Orchestra, emphasizes Mendoza’s ability to develop a long, engaging solo while “The Wall Tumbles Down” is a highlight, gradually expanding from an intense dialogue into a sonic invention in which Mendoza’s extended glissandi become sirens in the kind of disturbing mimesis that distinguished Hendrix’ “Machine Gun”.

Cellist Erik Friedlander’s Sentinel presents both a new trio of that name, with Mendoza and drummer Diego Espinosa, and a program of Friedlander’s compositions, with strong melodies and often forceful rhythmic impetus. It suggests a jazz group with roots in rock, emphasized by the hard-edged, sometimes overdriven sound of guitar and strong cello ostinatos. Friedlander picks up on resonances and techniques from a broad geographic swath, from the Middle East for the extended “Ember” to the American West with “Feeling You”, Mendoza finding her inner Bill Frisell in its near-country lyricism. The rhythmic emphasis is everywhere, with the brief “Bristle Cone” a feature for Espinosa’s inventive percussion. Apart from a series of engaging themes, what makes the music so successful is the balance achieved by Friedlander and Mendoza: each moving in and out of the foreground, providing shifting sounds, strong foundations or sudden virtuosic bursts, whether sudden guitar chords or cello’s corresponding arco wails.

For more information, visit trip ticksstapes.bandcamp.com. Mendoza is at Green Lung Studio Sep. 11th as part of The Whatever Guitar Festival. See Calendar.
JazzFest welcomes jazz greats, as well as rising stars this September!

**ARTISTS INCLUDE:**
- Emmet Cohen Trio • Theo Croker Quartet • Erena Terakubo • Ray Blue Quartet with special guest Samara Joy • Gabrielle Garo

**Joe Chambers** returns to Blue Note with *Samba de Maracatu*, reaffirming his stature as a composer, vibraphonist and drummer. Chambers’ career spans six decades, from early associations with some of the most forward-looking musicians of the '60s like Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, Bobby Hutcherson and Andrew Hill, to Max Roach’s percussion-only ensemble M’Boom and his own albums since 1974’s groundbreaking *The Almo mastrop.* A specialist of AfroBrazilian rhythms with a long-standing interest in West African music, Chambers, in the tradition established by Sidney Bechet’s 1941 “Sheik of Araby”, dialogues with himself on drums and vibraphone accompanied by pianist Brad Merritt and bassist Steve Haines.

All the references to such an illustrious career are, however, transformed for the current times, without a speck of nostalgia. “Circles” was written for M’Boom in the ‘70s, reinterpreted in contrapuntal style on Chambers’ 1998 Blue Note date *Mirrors* and now energized by a samba/baion rhythm while Shorter’s “Rio”, itself another Brazilian tribute, takes a bossa nova inflection and the title track is a reference to the AfroBrazilian music of the state of Pernambuco.

Besides new interpretations of standards like Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz’ “You and the Night and the Music” and Jay Livingston-Ray Evans’ “Never Let Me Go”, the latter with vocalist Stephanie Jordan, the album features a glowing tribute to Hutcherson with his mesmerizing “Visions”, recorded with Chambers in 1968, and a reworking of “Eacroh” by Horace Silver. “Sabah al Nur” sounds quite exotic but it means merely “Good morning” (literally, morning light) and you hear the salute frequently in Arabic-speaking countries. In this case it’s the title of an evocative tune by Austrian jazz guitarist Karl Ratzer.

DJ Premier sampled Chambers’ 1977 “Mind Rain” to construct Nas’ classic “New York State of Mind” in 1994 and outstanding “New York State of Mind Rain” features a glowing tribute to Hutcherson with his mesmerizing “Visions”, recorded with Chambers in 1968, and a reworking of “Eacroh” by Horace Silver. “Sabah al Nur” sounds quite exotic but it means merely “Good morning” (literally, morning light) and you hear the salute frequently in Arabic-speaking countries. In this case it’s the title of an evocative tune by Austrian jazz guitarist Karl Ratzer.

Bassist Ken Filiano also shares history with Gauci, appearing with him in assorted configurations between 2006-11. Having first come to prominence in the company of West Coast reedplayer Vinny Golia, Filiano has since become a mainstay of the NYC scene, highly appreciated for his robust tone, whether plucked or bowed, supple swing and flair for drama. In tandem the pair hew close to the free jazz template on “#5”, where muscular saxophone skronk draws a vigorous bass rejoinder, making clear the connection by echoing the saxophone’s machine gun stutter at one point; even so the piece ends with Filiano laying down a tolling note, eliciting a near ballad response from Gauci. On “#7” Filiano repeatedly mirrors Gauci’s angular phrases in a fugue-like start, then, before it wears thin, they shift into freewheeling discourse. Sitting alongside such anticipated fare are more challenging situations, as Filiano utilizes electronics, loops and what sounds like an octave divider as well as thumb piano and chimes. Gauci responds obliquely, often with a waveling altissimo, in murmurs and blunts, in what suggests a voyage of discovery for both participants.

Cuban-American saxophonist David Leon furnishes Gauci with a less familiar sparring partner. Although only at the start of his career, Leon already embraces a variety of modes. While he won the 2017 ASCAP Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer’s Award and subsequently appeared at the Newport Jazz Festival, this duet gives him the chance to air his saxophonist’s craft.

When everything shut down in March 2020 due to COVID-19, New York City native tenor saxophonist Stephen Gauci initiated what he thought would be a set of five duet recordings in a refusal to be cowed by the lack of performance opportunities. In fact, the download-only collection ran to some 19 albums over that summer, combining seasoned performers with newer voices. Each partners with Gauci’s distinctive amalgam of falsetto squeal, meaty bottom register, gruff overtones and unpredictable syntax in a series of spontaneous inventions, exposing different facets of the saxophonist’s craft.

Bassist Adam Lane has been a cornerstone of Gauci’s Trio/Quartet, which has acted as the house band at his Bushwick Improvisers Series at Bushwick Public House since its inception in 2017, but prior to that he helmed a string of fine releases for variously-sized ensembles back in the early 2000s. The upshot is that he is an accomplished improviser, with a strong sense of form, singularly well equipped to meld with Gauci’s striking conception. In fact, the eight cuts here constitute one of the best recent showcases for Lane’s nimble nuanced work. But although brief unaccompanied interludes emerge it is largely an intense two-way stream of consciousness affair. A palpable bond exists between the two, nowhere better exemplified than in the second half of “#2”, Lane extemporizing a deep dirge-like melody, accompanied by sombre, prolonged, but subtly shaded, saxophone yowls. Elsewhere Lane creates a framework that varies from choppy pizzicato to slippery arco, which buoys Gauci’s fluid corkscrewing lines. But even at pace, there’s a measured cohesion to their interaction, which makes this one of the most satisfying entries in the series.

**For more information, visit bluenote.com. Chambers is at Governor’s Island Sep. 11th. See Calendar.**
As per Webster’s Dictionary, onomatopoeia is “the use of words whose sound suggests the sense.” This definition seems to contain the boundlessness appropriate to the universe of sound emitted by electric guitarist/banjo player Brandon Seabrook. Stretching considerably beyond musical scales and tunings, his music would best be described in terms onomatopoetic. His work with Anthony Braxton, Bill Laswell, Gerald Cleaver, Marco Cappelli and Jessica Lurie, as well as within his own ensembles, speaks for itself. Seabrook’s mix of learned post-punk, free improvisation and sound art is evident in most every stroke and on these releases his manic engagements only thrive further.

The trio Three-Layer Cake is something of a Downtown prophecy come to fruition, fulfilling the promise of that moment in time when punk aesthetics painted raw experimentalism and free jazz liberation. Electric bassist Mike Watt is best known as a founder of Minutemen and fIREHOSE, through which he increasingly demonstrated the chops and concepts to drive punk’s ethos into daring challenge. Taking it a step further, Watt’s partnership with Black Flag bassist Kira Roessler cast the uniquely dark harmonies of Dos and he’s since gone on to compose three punk operas. It seems natural that he would coalesce with Seabrook and drummer/percussionist Mike Pride, another Braxton associate whose CV includes Butch Morris, Nels Cline, Sonny Simmons, Marc Ribot, Nona Hendryx, William Parker and Tim Dahl. Pride is also a proponent of something called “death free jazz”, which this writer means to seek out next. True to form, Stove Top kicks off with “Beatified, Bedraggled and Bombed”, a gripping, vexing work featuring streams of rapid tremolo lines by flat-picked tenor banjo. Seabrook’s very physical approach to technique is near matched by Watt, whose free-reining bass is wrapped in a sheath of driving industrialism. And Pride, moving between full throbbing drummers, falls into atmosphere with electric organ, blending with Seabrook’s takes and bowed banjo, the override of which hangs in the pot of his Bacon & Day Silver Bell banjo. The heart of the album, “Tilter”, features an angular melody pairing banjo with Pride’s overdubbed marimba to an utterly alluring outcome. The effect is only bested by the two collectively improvising in contrasting directions as distorted guitar, gargantuan bass and explosive drumming push relentlessly. But it doesn’t stop there. “Big Burner” is reminiscent of Massacre’s best (remember “Legs”?), the guitar’s searing effects echoing long moments after the listening. And then “Luminous Range – Anxious Valve”, a postmodernist suite filled with spy guitar, glockenspiel, roving bass and free drumming, may just be the last word on jazz-cum-no-wave, among the height of this sacred anti-genre.

The layers propelling Stove Top are enacted as real-time duet on Voluptuaries by Seabrook (here only on electric guitar) and pianist Simon Nabatov. Leading with the crashing, tearing “Daggers”, the pair improvise their way through a dozen titles, calling on the many facets of free music, at points all in the same phrase. But even on the motion-filled opener, Seabrook and Nabatov’s coda stops time, allowing the reverb of both instruments to linger ominously as Seabrook manipulates his volume knob and Nabatov his sustain pedal. Similarly, on “Who Never Dies”, after burning through rapid-fire runs, the pair shifts dynamics considerably and the piano’s lower strings are plucked, the effect somewhat reminiscent of Harry Partch’s percussive metallic tubing. “Dust Storms”, however, is the piece that lures the ear, a moving evocative piano melody, at once modern and romantic, colored by open chording, tremolo bar and volume manipulations, as well as use of detuning the instrument’s low E string to fathoms below. “Grospeak” contains the same evocative power, more so, though here the masterful, dark piano playing recalls a distant howling on a starless night. The duet itself—its levels and sympathetic interplay—seems to have reached its zenith on this piece, with the piano’s maximalism both thwarted and advanced by the electric bite of guitar.

For more information, visit rarenoiserecords.com and leerecords.com. Seabrook is at Barbès Sep. 12th as part of The Whatever Guitar Festival and Barbès Sep. 22nd with Henry Fraser. See Calendar.
Max Roach isn’t in *Summer of Soul* for very long, but the late musician’s brief appearance is a prime example of what Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson’s documentary does so well. First, we see Roach seated at his drums before a wall of colorful paralelograms. This is the stage backdrop for the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival and Roach is zipping through “It’s Time”, the title track from one of his signature albums. Next, we hear from Roach’s wife, who tells Thompson about the racial consciousness informing his father’s music. This is followed by an archival interview with the drummer himself, who stresses the importance of Black-owned music businesses. Finally, we return to the 1969 festival, when Roach and wife Abbey Lincoln perform an eerier version of John Coltrane’s “Africa”. In a two-minute montage, Thompson gives us vibrancy, history and biography.

*Summer of Soul* chronicles a concert series held 52 years ago in Mount Morris Park (now Marcus Garvey Park). The multi-weekend Harlem Cultural Festival, organized by promoter Tony Lawrence, drew a primarily African American audience of about 300,000, who saw Mahalia Jackson, Stevie Wonder, The 5th Dimension and many others perform at the foot of rocky hills near 120th Street in Manhattan. Hal Tulchin, a TV producer, filmed the proceedings but couldn’t persuade white entertainment executives to release it. The reels sat unseen until the 2010s, when Thompson learned of their existence. His film celebrates the dynamism of performances providing entertainment and catharsis to festivalgoers coping with the recent assassinations of Black leaders, needless deaths of thousands of African American soldiers in Vietnam and countless instances of state-sanctioned discrimination.

Attendees say the shows were beautiful, inspiring events. The footage backs this up. As vibraphonist Roy Ayers and flutist Herbie Mann play a buoyant “Chain of Fools”, Thompson cuts to a little girl in a pink dress, dancing with a hand in her hair and delighting the audience. We see Jackson, Mavis Staples and saxophonist Ben Branch team up for a rousing “Precious Lord”; the song, a favorite of Martin Luther King, Jr’s, has particular resonance given that, as the Rev. Al Sharpton tells Thompson, King spoke his final words to Branch. Several of the performances are backed by thumbnail history lessons. The Staples Singers’ appearance gives Thompson a reason to reflect on gospel’s roots in Black churches. Thompson’s interview with writer Greg Tate, who discusses the late ‘60s “embrace of neo-super Blackness”, dovetails with footage of Sly Stone, fearless and charismatic in purple satin and black fringe. When trumpeter Hugh Masakela takes the stage, the conversation turns to South Africa’s brutal Apartheid regime. This is an ambitious, intelligent, enthralling film, a documentary capturing the vitality of an important, underappreciated chapter in music history.

For more information, visit hulu.com

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Count Basie’s “Atomic” band was recognized for its great soloists (trumpeter Thad Jones and saxophonists Frank Foster and Frank Wess), great arrangers (Neal Hefti/Ernie Wilkins/Quincy Jones) and perhaps the best rhythm section in jazz (guitarist Freddie Green, bassist Eddie Jones and superb drummer Sonny Payne). On Jun. 27th-28th, 1961, the band recorded *Basie At Birdland* for Roulette Records, one of the most enjoyable recordings the band made during this period.

Count Basie Orchestra (CBO) directed by Scotty Barnhart came to Birdland from Jan. 15th-18th, 2020 to record this live session and honor that aggregation in its most fitting way. Over two CDs, many of the touchstones of the Basie book are played, including five numbers from the original *Basie At Birdland* album.

CBO is a disciplined organization, dedicated to continuing the tradition of exceptionalism that drove the formative iteration of this band. It swings with a natural jauntiness and provides solid footing from which soloists can create their expressive statements.

On the Wilkins number “Basie”, the band is in full throttle uptempo mode with tenor saxophonist Doug Lawrence riding fearlessly over the band, propelled by drummer Robert Boone, Jr. For a change of pace, the Jones opus “I Need To Be Bee’d With” has a solid groove with a stellar intro from Pearson showing excellently crafted chords and thoughtful lines. Then trombonist Clarence Banks jumps in using his plunger mute to create sounds that have a sly warmth and crying tone.

There are many other whipsmart performances including “The Kid From Red Bank”, “Kansas City Shout” and “Moten Swing” (featuring a soulful trumpet solo from Barnhart), as well as a classy version of “Shiny Stockings” that has former Basie drummer Butch Miles (1975-79 and then with the ghost band from 1997-2007) showing he still has game. Both discs close with the Basie theme “One O’clock Jump”, which brings to mind the old saying “often imitated, never duplicated”.

For more information, visit candidseptreleases.pages.dev. This band is at Birdland Sep. 14th-18th. See Calendar.

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The album recalls Charlie Parker with Strings (1950), an album most scorned for decades before being acknowledged for its brilliance.

Readers of this gazette will know the jazz guys, but not the saxophonists who make up the PRISM Quartet: Timothy McAllister (soprano), Zachary Shemon (alto), Matthew Levy (tenor) and Taimur Sullivan (baritone). Like the Kronos Quartet, they’re an adventurous group who stray far from their classical roots. The quartet has commissioned hundreds of works and is already planning a third edition, also with Zonen.

“Forbidden Drive”, by Levy, features a full-bodied Lovano on tenor. The piece is a lightly written score, over which Lovano freely improvises. Trumpeter Randy Brecker works with European orchestras on music like this and it’s as if they were born to play this way. The piece moves through both bright and somber passages.

Potter’s work, “10 Improvisations”, includes inter-related improvisations that constitute a self-contained edgier listen than Levy’s piece. There are even hints of minimalism in the sections and C composer Terry Riley would approve. Potter is featured with Coltrane and the short “Interlude 1” appears to be those two ‘talking’ to each one another in a remarkable dialogue. “Improvisation 2”, without the guests, is movie music for a night scene. “Improvisation 3”, with Potter and great work from Sullivan, is lovely and almost swings.

Lovano’s own piece is “Super Sonix”, from 2017, in seven sections. He cites Third Stream pioneer Gunther Schuller, as well as Ornette Coleman, as influences. The music is loosely structured, with plenty of space for improvisation. “Following the Sound” includes bells and gongs out of the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Lovano picks up the soprano for “Natural Beauty” and dialogues in fits and starts with the Quartet. On “Sound Sculpture” there’s some collective improvisation that never gets dissonant. It’s a wild listen on headphones. “On a Roll” has an edgy feel with a splash into individual statements against the group’s cushion before resurfacing. The melody is memorable. “On Hipsters & Flipsters”, Lovano is at the drum kit, which gives the section an initial jazz feel before the train departs, destination out.

Coltrane’s composition is “Tones for M” (for his aunt, Mary Leyerly Alexander, the “Cousin Mary” of dad John’s tune who died in 2019) and it provides a somewhat somber ending for the record. The composer is on soprano and Potter is on bass clarinet. The pair improvise collectively on these instruments, as the tension builds, and respond to each other in colorful exchanges. It’s over too soon.

Classical music has almost never mixed well with rock, but the sound of an improvising saxophone against the warm pillow of an orchestra will never get old. Four saxophones does not an orchestra make, but PRISM’s work with these first-rank jazz improvisors is truly remarkable and will endure.

Hearing Volume 2 will make listeners want to seek out Volume 1 and also to attend some of the live concerts that PRISM is doing with jazz artists.

For more information, visit prismquartet.com. This project is at The DiMenna Center Sep. 15th with guests Melissa Aldana, Terell Stafford, Chris Potter and Rudresh Mahanthappa. See Calendar.
African Ripples

Keith Brown Trio (Spacetime)
dan Bilawsky

Autobiographical and universal elements are at play in this album’s sophisticated and profound sounds. Pianist Keith Brown wrote and packaged this work with the express intention of presenting and exploring his “personal experiences through Black music and how it has rippled out in so many different directions.” But that’s not to say this project is an endeavor of self-involvement. In fact, anything but. As Brown is quick to note, these ripples fan out to all of us, highlighting the many and varied connections common to our existence.

Teaming up with bassist Dezron Douglas and alternating drummers Terreon “Tank” Guly and Darrell Green, Brown delivers his own modernistic take on the piano trio format with captivating originals and the occasional choice cover fitting the theme. Shifting tides keep ears on their toes during “Truth and Comfort”. Uncertainty gives way to propulsive rhythm on the punchy “NAFID”. A frenetic energy seemingly speaks to city life’s pace on “118 & 8th”. And a relatively reflective glide, buoyed by essential piano. Anderson and Riley provide tasteful and steady support throughout.

Happy Destiny sounds more consistent than Other Matters but still delivers a fair amount of diversity across the pieces, from the understated funkiness of “Everything”, underlined by Versace’s moody minor reference to Monk’s “Misterioso”, to the somewhat ethereal “Luft”, reminiscent of Miles Davis’ “Nefertiti” atmosphere.

For more information, visit steepchase.dk. Perry is at Smalls Sep. 17th with Mark Soskin. See Calendar.

Happy Destiny

Rich Perry (SteepleChase)
by Marco Cangiano

Rich Perry is a well-known entity in modern jazz. A pillar of both the Vanguard and Maria Schneider Orchestras, since 1993 Over the past decade, Mitchell has been one of Berne’s most frequent collaborators. They’ve produced a series of duet albums demonstrative of their bond. The pianist seems to relish his parts in Snakeoil, but operates with a little more freedom in the duo. On Spiders he breezes through the themes yet it’s during Berne’s solos where Mitchell clearly shines. Harmonically he anticipates where Berne is heading. “Julius” is rife with surprising detours but when they arrive at the final theme, stated in unison, it’s an arresting moment. Spiders shows they still clearly still have plenty to say and with each other.

For more information, visit intuktrec.ch and outofyourheadrecords.com. Berne and Mitchell are at Soapbox Gallery Sep. 4th. See Calendar.

The Deceptive 4 - Live

Tim Berne’s Snakeoil (Intakt)
Spiders

Tim Berne/Matt Mitchell (Out of Your Head)
by Robert Iannapollo

The link on these two albums lies in both alto saxophonist Tim Berne and pianist Matt Mitchell. The release of Berne’s first album (The Five Year Plan, 1979) promised great things, something he has consistently delivered for the past 40 years, in composition, improvisation and through a series of well-conceived bands. Perhaps the most successful has been the quartet Snakeoil, which, since 2013, has released five albums on ECM and Intakt. Initially a quartet of Berne, Mitchell, clarinetist Oscar Noriega and drummer/vibraphonist Chés Smith, it expanded to a five-piece with the addition of guitarist Ryan Ferreira.

For The Deceptive 4 – Live, they’ve reverted back to the original lineup and that’s not a bad thing. Snakeoil is known for its high-energy performances of complex compositions. While there’s a lot to absorb throughout this double-disc set of music taken from shows at Firehouse 12, Ibeam Brooklyn and Roulette, it’s the atypical moments that stand out. “Spa/Citta” begins in a misteloso quiet mood, gradually accruing momentum and energy, yet the initial impression lurks in the background of everyone’s mind. The brief (only six minutes) “Scanners” has a jaunty, playful quality right up to its abrupt conclusion. “Deception” contains an unusual duet between Mitchell and Smith. Noriega is an excellent foil for Berne and Smith drives the ensemble with complex rhythms built into the compositions. The lack of bass has never hampered the group and actually gives it a lighter, more nimble sound, making the complexity seem natural, less obtrusive. The Deceptive 4 – Live is a strong release and bodes well for the band’s continued future.

CDs, downloads and streaming available at Amazon, GooglePlay, Apple Music & Spotify.

Listen to Track 1 here: [Link]

For further info and bookings: DavidJaneway.com or connect on facebook.com/davidjaneway5
Martian Kitties
Gordon Grdina/Jim Black (Astral Spirits)
by Kira Grunenberg

Martian Kitties, the duo debut of guitarist/oud player Gordon Grdina and drummer/electronics player Jim Black, projects an aura equal parts zany and sophisticated. The surface imagery is that of juvenile science-fiction, an easily envisioned combination of two concepts: space aliens and cats. However, when considered in the context of a grander creative work like a novel, film or, in this case, an album, this subject holds vast and intriguing potential surrounding the deeper layers of interpretation achievable through extensive world-building and/or detailed conceptualization.

The LP provides plenty of the sonically unexpected, thanks to the tonal versatility shared between Grdina and Black’s four-instrument toolkit and uninhibited nature of the 13 compositions, whose attributes, including rhythmic balance, melodic solidity and duration, vary throughout. The latter quality goes to extremes, with six tracks running less than two minutes while also going to great lengths to ensure every moment within is kept active with as much performative activity as possible.

One could hope to find predictable, conceptual respite in “Short Scale”, yet, past the intermittent, rapid, step-wise oud flourishes, there is little stability to be had. Black’s snare hits, loud and crisp, clash with the tempo and rhythm of Grdina’s passages, forcing the listener to remain alert to the changes. A similarly restless flow arises on the longest track, “Brushes with Death”, but the imbalances are presented through a more mentally forgiving ebb and flow of tonal freneticism and deliberation of tempo, giving the music a more approachable stride.

For more information, visit astralspirits.bandcamp.com.

Since immigrating to the U.S. from Brazil in the ’70s, accomplished pianist Eliane Elias has explored postbop, classical, fusion and more in addition to the music of her homeland. These sessions feature her playing duets with two giants of piano, the late Chick Corea and Cuban master Chucho Valdés. With their shared interests, creativity and versatility, Elias meshes well with both, as their collective gifts of inventive improvising, strong rhythm and anticipating each other’s direction makes them much more than a “gimmick”, as the late pianist Tommy Flanagan once described piano duo recordings.

The performances are reminiscent of some of the best episodes of Marian McPartland’s Piano Jazz NPR radio series, minus the occasional vocal responses by one pianist to another’s lick. The songs featuring Elias and Corea are more widely known, beginning with an invigorating workout of his “Armando’s Rhumba”, a piece he recorded numerous times yet never in a duo piano setting. Kenny Dorham’s “Blue Bossa” has long been a jazz standard and the players excel at finding new paths within it. Corea’s “Mirror Mirror” dates from the late ’70s, recorded in a duet with vibraphonist Gary Burton and as a sideman with tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson. The most straightahead performance is the rollicking treatment of the standard “There’ll Never Be Another You”, where they just don’t seem to want to stop.

Elias suggested songs by Spanish and Mexican composers to Valdés, all tunes that he knew but was surprised at her familiarity. Brazilian and Cuban rhythms blend perfectly in their interpretation of “Esta Tarde Vi Llover” and the setting of “Corazón Partío” becomes very intense while retaining the romance of its infectious theme. The introduction to the subtler ballad “Sabor A Mi” brings to mind Bill Evans’ arrangement of Leonard Bernstein’s “Some Other Time” before its elegant theme is revealed.

For more information, visit candidseptreleases.pages.dev.

Elias is at City Winery Sep. 15th. See Calendar.
Vocalist Stacey Kent, like many entertainers denied the joy of live performance, searched for ways to express her gifts during the pandemic lockdown. What she (and others) found was that still being able to make records offered a creative lifeline. The result is Songs From Other Places, an eclectic romp through the geography of the mind, the map and emotion. The connective tissue of this landscape is the Blossom Dearie-esque voice of Kent—light and girlish—and how she uses it carefully to craft each tune she sings.

A Brazil-ianized opener, “I Wish I Could Go Traveling Again”, was written for Kent by Kazuo Ishiguro and Jim Tomlinson; its double-entendre lyric of personal and philosophic desire sets the tone of the album’s through-line of exploration. This same quality closes the album, with an intensely reflective interpretation of Stevie Nicks’ “Landslide”, underscoring another quality Kent brings to the music. In addition to an innate feeling for jazz, she possesses the ethos of a folk singer, a sensibility that certainly applies to her way with vocal narrative. She’s a fine storyteller.

Two originals by Ishiguro and Tomlinson, “Craigie Burn” and “Tango In Macao”, spotlight Kent’s strength in lyric interpretation, particularly in telling a story economically. The latter number is also a lot of fun, revealing the singer’s ability to put across humor and wit successfully.

Antônio Carlos Jobim’s “Imagina”, sung in excellent Portuguese, allows Kent to use her vocal flexibility way into high notes that dance lyrically to a solid vocal choreography. In “Les Voyages” (Raymond Lévesque), sung in French, an air of Edith Piaf is redolent of ritual, repetition and rhythm. Augmenting his quartet of pianist Vernell Brown Jr., bassist Corcoran Holt and drummer Ronald Bruner with percussionist Rudy Bird, as well as adding voices, other percussionists/snare drummers and a trumpet on various tracks, Garrett often achieves an incantatory feel on these eight tracks.

“It’s Time to Come Home” opens and closes the album, the opener augmenting the quintet (including Bird) with the voice of Jean Baylor and bata drum and vocals of Dreiser Durruthy. The closer, dubbed the “original” version, is just the quintet. The piece is built on a sinuous, repetitive polyrhythm mining AfroCuban and West African roots, under an insinuating yet simple, repeating melody.

Garrett, with his muscular tone and forthright attack, which pares away most of the arpeggios and fleet runs we have come to expect from modern alto players, has mastered the art (sometimes associated with Minimalist classical composers) of incrementally enhanced or evolving repetition. On “It’s Time to Come Home” his solo builds slow, legato lines, eventually blending into a second theme with (on the opener) saxophone joined by Baylor’s wordless vocal. It concludes with a rap-like incantation from Durruthy in a Cuban dialect of Yoruba, accompanied by his bata drum.

Two tracks pay tribute to deceased musicians with whom Garrett has worked. “Hargrove”, for trumpeter Roy, adds trumpeter Maurice Brown as well as three singers, Linny Smith, Chris Ashley Anthony and Sheherazade Holman, to the quintet. A midtempo shuffle with a backbeat, it interpolates parts of John Coltrane’s “A Love Supreme”, including the singers intoning the title phrase behind trumpet, alto and tandem solos. “For Art’s Sake” pays tribute to drummer Blakey, with Bruner and Bird prominent, the theme augmented by electric piano (Garrett) and Fender Rhodes (Johnny Mercier) as well as piano.

Snare drums come to the fore on the longest and one of the most arresting tracks: “Soldiers of the Fields/Soldats des Champs”. Lenny White is added as a second snare drummer alongside Bird, their paradiddles and intertwined rhythms generating tremendous momentum under solos from alto and piano, including, in the second part, Garrett’s most intense, ecstatic statement on the album.

For more information, visit candidseptreleases.pages.dev. This project is at Birdland Sep. 28th-Oct. 2nd. See Calendar.
During the worst days of the pandemic, it would not be an understatement to say that jazz musicians had a very difficult time. Even the most fortunate, those who had savings and/or could teach and occasionally perform online, missed live audiences and interacting with other players. If one played the ‘wrong’ instrument (nearly everything except piano and guitar) and did not have a family member who was skilled on a complementary instrument, the options were much more limited in live-stream performances and live (as opposed to overdubbed) recordings.

Champian Fulton is more fortunate than most since she is a self-sufficient pianist-singer who has often performed solo, including on her weekly webcast Live From Lockdown. With her strong left hand, mastery records—has been forged with links of style that shine the decades—various iterations of Material; albums of styles. For many listeners that’s more than sufficient. He does for himself and other musicians from behind music. His bass playing and the production work has always found him to be a frustrating of beguiling B

For more information, visit champian.net. Fulton is at music louder and continue being patient. The world is not coming to an end. One just has to play the world’s problems. The Fultons’ performances of “Look For The Silver Lining”, plus a couple of “Moonglow”, “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles” and such timeless numbers as “I Hadn’t Anyone Till You”, their performance online, missed live audiences and interacting with other players. If one played the ‘wrong’ instrument has established herself as a key figure in jazz in Canada, an essential component in several bands and, since 2005, the leader of a stellar quartet with a subtly conversational dynamic all its own.

On Common Ground
Mike Sopko, Bill Laswell, Tyshawn Sorey
(MOD Technologies) by George Grella

Bill Laswell has a devoted following, but this reviewer has always found him to be a frustrating of beguiling musician. His bass playing and the production work he does for himself and other musicians from behind the mixing board have distinctive and prominent styles. For many listeners that’s more than sufficient. But for at least one, the long chain of music through the decades—various iterations of Material; albums of world music put out on his Axiom label; ambient records—has been forged with links of style that shine with brilliance but don’t seem to have the heft or strength to pull along anything of real significance. This new album is another link. Credited to the trio of guitarist Mike Sopko, drummer Tyshawn Sorey and Laswell, this volume of Laswell production. From the start, the sound is a dead giveaway. There are multiple instrumental colors that lie in a sonic emulsification placing everything not only on the surface but seemingly in the same location. It’s not stuffy, but there’s too little air and light in between the instruments to allow for anything other than a mellow hue. One expects musicians to come pouring out of the speakers, but instead the playing seems to collapse to some inward point that never escapes the studio confines.

The sonic homogeneity reflects what’s going on musically. There are five tracks, a total duration of 55 minutes, and just not enough variation to sustain the whole experience. Energy is the primary focus, with Sopko scrabbling around the fretboard, Laswell throbbing underneath, Sorey filling up every other space. There’s little in the way of specific rhythms or riffs; Sopko works with sound as much as notes, Laswell plays some riffs but mostly via rubato and Sorey undertakes what is essentially an extended solo. Individual moments are interesting, but the musicians themselves seem little interested in details. It’s monotonous and slightly snobbish, like high-end furniture that looks sleek and can’t be sat on.

For more information, visit modreloaded.com. Sorey is at Scholes Street Studio Sep. 18th with Stephen Gauci, Le Poisson Rouge Sep. 26th with Vijay Iyer and The Jazz Gallery Sep. 30th with Dave Liebman and Adam Rudolph. See Calendar.

CHRISTER BOTHÉN 3 - OMEN
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September 15 @ 7 PM, DiMenna Center 450 W 37th St., New York City
$30 general admission, $20 students/seniors
Tickets/info: prismquartet.com

For more information, visit linaallemano.com. Allemano live-streams Sep. 12th at facebook.com/festivalofneutrumpetmusic.

Heritage/Evolution
Marathon & Album Release Concert
PRISM Quartet
Melissa Aldana
Rudresh Mahanthappa
Chris Potter
Terell Stafford

On Common Ground
During lockdown the trio of trumpeter Thomas Heberer and drummer Joe Hertenstein, Germans who split their time between New York and their homeland, and bassist Joe Fonda, worked up the exploratory repertoire heard on *Remedy*. Each brings pieces to the party, but authorship is less important than the comprehensive group spin they put on them. Thus every track on the hour-long program comes packed with engaging incident. Even though there are only three of them, they think orchestrally. So the frequent drum breaks in the splendid opener “The Closer You Are, The Further It Gets” consolidate and further the writing rather than being just ‘solos’. Here and elsewhere Hertenstein’s fluent amalgamation of crisp execution and savvy tonal organization recalls the great Ed Blackwell in his pomp. Similarly Heberer, a superb technician exhibiting fluent amalgamation of crisp execution and savvy tonal organization, unleashes a panoply of assorted textures in the ensuing unhurried control, finesses the thematic materials and illuminates the album, as when bugle-reveille interjection elicits an immediate drum-corps-type response during a passage of bass and drum interaction on “Zebra”. Among many highlights, Fonda’s “For Wadada Leo Smith”, which appears in two versions, feels like something its dedicatee could have penned with its lightly elegiac air and ordered use of space.

For more information, visit freecords.net. Heberer is at Bushwick Public House Sep. 20th. Fonda is at The Loft at 100 Greene Street Sep. 19th. See Calendar.

When multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson organized his 12-set residency at The Stone in 2016, it was shaped as a story of development in size and scope. Duos gave way to trios and quartets. An evening of interstellar engagement with saxophonist Marshall Allen (in his storied career. Delivering the first unaccompanied show he’s ever performed on a single instrument, he willingly let himself go while taking a finely tuned (and understandably) solipsistic approach. Blocking out the exterior and focusing on the moment, he miraculously created a world through himself. Preserved and presented here exactly as it happened, save for some applause removed to minimize distraction(s) and maintain artistic continuity, that show is now an opportunity for listeners to get lost in their own spaces.

With the exception of a relaxed and elegant, mid-set reading of “I’ve Got the World on a String”, all of the sequentially numbered performances are improvisations. “Solipsism #1” — the longest at just under eight minutes — sells mystery with long tones, space and lines of intrigue and “Solipsism #3” — the shortest, at around two-and-a-half minutes — delivers pops, clipped notes, squawks and tremolo(s) with taste and tension fixed into its figure(s). The rest make vastly different impressions: “Solipsism #4” uses extended techniques and found sounds in finding its footing; wildly offbeat “Solipsism #8” plays like the tale of a revving and sputtering engine; and, perhaps most striking of all, “Solipsism #9” interrupts refined expression(s) with thorny asides. Direct, curious, edgy and honest, it simply doesn’t get any more real than this set.

For more information, visit sciensonic.net. Robinson is at Smalls Sep. 29th. See Calendar.

**NEW!**

**Remedy**

Thomas Heberer/Joe Fonda/Joe Hertenstein

(Fundacja Słuchaj)

*by John Sharpe*

Armored with a battery of acoustic guitars (7-string baritone, 12-string, 6-string, 8-string), Claus Boesser-Ferrari has expanded the Hendrix cosmos by adding new colors.

Boesser-Ferrari grapples with this material in an inimitable and individual way that certainly demarcates itself from the many tribute-to-Hendrix recordings. He stripped his Hendrix down to his DNA and lovingly and respectfully redesigned him using his own personal and free-spirited vocabulary.

**The Wind Cries Mary**

*by Dan Bilawsky*

Starting off the week with nothing but a C melody saxophone in his hands, Robinson broke new ground in his storied career. Delivering the first unaccompanied show he’s ever performed on a single instrument, he willingly let himself go while taking a mildly (and understandably) solipsistic approach. Blocking out the exterior and focusing on the moment, he miraculously created a world through himself. Preserved and presented here exactly as it happened, save for some applause removed to minimize distraction(s) and maintain artistic continuity, that show is now an opportunity for listeners to get lost in their own spaces.

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For more information, visit sciensonic.net. Robinson is at Smalls Sep. 29th. See Calendar.
Sweden's bass clarinetist Christer Bothén, who turns 80 this month, has been having a bit of a late-career renaissance, mostly through work with younger countryman Mats Gustafsson's large ensembles of the past decade Fire! Orchestra and NU Ensemble. The latter (who wrote the liner notes herein) is a champion of a particular generation of avant garde players (Joe McPhee, Akira Sakata, et al.) and with Bothén there is not only the shared origins but also Bothén's early work with Don Cherry—a major Gustafsson influence—during the trumpeter's 70s Scandinavian sojourn.

That is not to say that Bothén has not been busy over the decades. Some of his work has been in what can broadly be classified as world music, as practiced with Cherry and informed by his own travels and collaborations where he plays instruments like the donso n'goni and guimbri alongside his clarinets, while other efforts are more within an avant garde realm in groups of varying sizes and instrumentation, including a quintet for five contrabass clarinets.

Bothén's notes were added for later pressings, but it is an anyway's guess. Guitar Talk by Joel Harrison goes a long way toward righting that wrong. Harrison conducts interviews with 27 of the most important guitarists in the jazz field over the course of this 300+ page book. Like Notes and Tones, this is a document that the interested reader can return to repeatedly.

This writer found Guitar Talk to be an absolute page-turner, basically staying up most of the night to consume the whole thing in one sitting. A large part of its charm lies in the fact that Harrison has an obvious affinity for every one of the players, which enables him to ask pointed and intelligent questions.

Where else would one discover that Ralph Towner played at the original Woodstock with folkie Tim Hardin? Apparently, the gig didn’t go that well, because Towner is grateful that no tapes exist. Harrison’s conversation with Pat Metheny rightfully centered on the importance of melody, which Metheny hears everywhere. He also reveals that he will often play a new tune hundreds of times to determine if it can take the nightly pounding of a world tour.

Many people are aware of Michael Gregory Jackson’s time with Oliver Lake and other members of the Black Artists Group but his days in a three-piece punk band that gigged at CBGB’s was a gem typical of what these interviews reveal.

Bill Frisell emphasized the importance of Joe Mitchell to his early development. Another highlight is Harrison's conversation with Mary Halvorson, who could just be the most dangerous player in the book. She gets into her time with composer/multi-instrumentalist Anthony Braxton and how his approach and encouragement continues to inspire her to this day.

Anyone interested in the state of jazz guitar needs to grab Guitar Talk in a hurry. Hopefully a sequel is on the way.

For more information, visit terranovapress.com
**Quintet Sessions 1979**

Wolfgang Lackerschmid/Chez Baker (Sandra-Dot Time)

**Summer Changes**

Wolfgang Lackerschmid (Dot Time)

by Jim Motavalli

It’s surprising these 1979 quintet sessions, released as a German LP back then, aren’t better known. They represent a super session of sorts, teaming German vibraphonist Wolfgang Lackerschmid (who turns 65 this month) in a Stuttgart studio with an all-star group from the U.S.: Chez Baker (trumpet), Larry Coryell (guitar), Buster Williams (bass) and Tony Williams (drums). Lackerschmid was in Baker’s band at the time and the pair played duos, preserved on the successful *Ballads for Two*.

Lackerschmid was in Baker’s band at the time and the pair played duos, preserved on the successful *Ballads for Two* recording. Coryell, then playing with Sonny Rollins, wanted to make it a trio. Baker didn’t think they needed a rhythm section, but his agent did and the resulting sessions are what we have here.

It’s a nice record overall, but suffers from its hasty organization. Coryell (who has four compositions) and Lackerschmid are both featured and Baker (mostly) holds up his end. Nothing need be said about the peerless contribution from the two Williamses, who flew in and didn’t get much rehearsal time. “Mr. Biko,” a Tony Williams tune, is a modern postbop swinger, with guitar, trumpet and vibraphone tripping on the head. It’s fusion- and ego-free, with all the players serving the tune.

There are two takes of Lackerschmid’s moody “Balzwalts,” with the second one existing because Tony Williams exclaimed that the composer’s solo was “bad”. Lackerschmid was not versed in this jazz lingo, so he insisted they take the tune again. Buster Williams sounds particularly good on the second version and Baker more probing. But the first take includes Baker singing wordlessly, perhaps making it up on the spot.

Coryell’s “The Latin One” has Baker up front but sounding a bit tentative. The composer is a bit better, but also seems to be finding his way through it. Lackerschmid shines in support, but maybe this is the one that needed a second take.

Baker and Coryell are fortunately morecaffeinated for another midtempo tune, “Rue Gregoire du Tour,” and the former’s lovely tone is on display. Coryell displays the mainstream chops he was only 51 years ago this month, Hendrix was moving away from his classic psychedelic blues/rock trio formula and heading in a more free direction. Boesser-Ferrari takes over “Fire” with explosive percussive techniques, finds the hidden flamenco aspect of “Hey Joe” and then takes over “Fire” with explosive percussive techniques, finds the hidden flamenco aspect of “Hey Joe” and then.

**The Wind Cries Mary**

Claus Boesser-Ferrari (Acoustic Music)

by Elliott Simon

Although there is not a Fender Stratocaster in sight, German guitarist Claus Boesser-Ferrari tackles aspects of The Jimi Hendrix Experience’s well-known early catalog on *The Wind Cries Mary*. Right before his death 51 years ago this month, Hendrix was moving away from his classic psychedelic blues/rock trio formula and heading in a more free direction. Boesser-Ferrari gives that a nod and deconstructs and reconstructs these well-known songs using parlor, resonator, 6-, 7-, 8- and 12-string guitars in combination with octave pedals, overdrive, reverb and hand percussion. Pieces like the title cut are spontaneously expanded and explored to make them unrecognizable but on other cuts the tune rediscovers itself and the signifier becomes the focus.

A cross-medium music/dance improvisation gave rise to some of these cuts and in this milieu, interpretation coexists with performance. Boesser-Ferrari is very comfortable there, for example spending an extended period of time probing tempo changes to the ingenuity of Dylan and All-Age Hutchinson. After listening to these ‘analyses’, the original will not be ‘experienced’ in the same way and the session supports the assertion that the best way for a listener to get inside overly familiar music is to hear another musician play it.

As Boesser-Ferrari teases out themes for exploration, he clearly dominates these classics and the tension with the original bubbles below the surface. He takes over “Fire” with explosive percussive techniques, finds the hidden flamenco aspect of “Hey Joe” and then.

For more information, visit acoustic-music.de

**Quintet Sessions 1979**

Comparisons to Gary Burton (Coryell’s onetime boss) are probably apt.

This group really jells in the studio, playing the leader’s tunes (plus Krzysztof Komeda’s “Rosemary’s Baby” and Nat Simon’s “Poinciana”). Piano and vibraphone are a natural combination and these two had been playing together in several contexts. The title track is particularly pretty, with Lackerschmid and Lackerschmid sounding a bit tentative. The composer is a bit better, Soksin really plays brightly on it and he and Lackerschmid weave colorful tapestries when they groove together. Dig the jet propellant that is Nussbaum on this one.

The ballad “Mother’s Dream”, given its first outing, is a showcase for vibraphone and bass. “We Ain’t No Magicians” is a tribute to the late Bobby Hutcherson, a onetime collaborator of Lackerschmid, whose best playing is here, in a loping, gently glowing solo. Soksin follows, inspired by the boss to play a building solo that culminates in a luminous crescendo. A highlight of the album.

“Rosemary’s Baby” is from the movie of that name and grooves along, with Nussbaum enjoying a compact solo spot. “Poinciana” has Anderson and Soksin locked in, Lackerschmid stating and embellishing the memorable melody. Vibraphone and piano once again knit to bring the venerable warhorse fully home. “Studienwazten” ends the album on an up-note, with Anderson displaying why he is a first-call bassist.

Even if you’ve never heard of Wolfgang Lackerschmid, take a chance on this one. It will reward repeated listening.

For more information, visit dottimerrecords.com

**Fire Music**

Directed by Tom Surgal (Submarine)

by Kurt Gottschalk

The easy criticism of documentary *Fire Music* is that it imagines New York as the wellspring and eternal font of free improvisation, which, apparently, it isn’t. In its 88 minutes, about 5 minutes are given to Chicago and another 5 to Europe. The rest is tightly focused not just on the city but also on the fairly brief span of 1956-70. If we take that as a given, however, rather than a criticism, it proves to be the strength of the film, allowing the narrative to go deep without getting bogged down and, hopefully, without losing the uninitiated.

Director Tom Surgal knows the ground he’s covering. His work as a drummer includes projects with Nels Cline and Thurston Moore (both credited as executive producers) and his duo White Out with Lin Culbertson, who serves as co-producer. That familiarity with form is evident in the way he assembles the film and the subjects. The story orbits around the greats—Albert Ayler, Karl Berger, John Coltrane, Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy, Charles Mingus—but told by an impressive roster of players. With no voice-over narration, we get plenty of history and perspective straight from the mouths of Carla Bley, Dave Burrell, Oliver Lake, Evan Parker, Prince Lasha, Ingrid Sertso, Sironne, John Tchicai, Sonny Simmons and many others. Through original and archival footage, more than three dozen musicians are represented, discussing the pivotal years in free, and Black, musical expression.

All the unfiltered talk points to what might be taken as a second criticism: while the film is laced with music, familiar themes laid under the artists being discussed, there is not much by way of performance footage. Those who aren’t familiar with the history will be left with a strong feeling of the times and the movement, but may not take away from it names of musicians they want to hear more. 20 or 25 minutes of the fire which gave the film its name would have still kept it under the two-hour mark while striking the heart as much as the head.

But as it is, it is also a smart and satisfying overview, with nice fragments of artful montages and editing. *Fire Music* does a fine job at framing a particular shining moment in American music, the vibrations of which we are still feeling today.

For more information, visit firemusic.org. This film premieres at *Film Forum Sep. 10th*. For more information, visit filmforum.org.
French bassist Joëlle Léandre, turning 70 this month, is a consummate improviser alloying unrivaled facility to boundless imagination. As such, she has become a fixture in the annual Jazz Autumn in the Polish city of Kraków, regularly gracing the stage of the legendary Alchemia club. Her residency at the 2019 edition was captured and is presented as a handsome three-CD set (though it would easily fit on two discs), which slots into a discography with over 200 entries since 1981. While youthful contact with American expatriate free jazzers like Frank Wright, Bobby Few and Alan Silva in Paris fired up her passion and independent spirit, many of her early recitals were in new music, particularly works by two of her major touchstones, John Cage and Giacinto Scelsi, both who composed specifically for her. But it wasn’t until she played with iconiclastic English guitarist Derek Bailey in New York in 1982 that her dedication to free improvisation took flight. Léandre has long since outgrown explicit influences, but they still inform her authoritative tone, ecstatic and incantatory phrasing and adventurous outlook.

On the first CD, Léandre forms part of a quartet completed by a pair of Poles, clarinettist Mateusz Rybiński and another double bassist Zbigniew Kozera, and Slovenian percussionist Zlatko Kaučič. Staccato pulses, separated by silence, begin the piece, as if they are collectively taking stock and preparing the next move. Standard fare for the likely another first-time meeting for Léandre, among a lengthy catalogue of such events. It must be a challenge for another bassist to partner with the Frenchwoman, but Kozera makes a sterling effort, often adopting oppositional stances: arco versus pizzicato, high against low. Nonetheless, it’s Léandre’s contributions that make the music seem whole, her entrances transforming monochrome to color. Highlights include a wonderful passage of overlapping sustained notes in which the pitches oscillate between diatonic and harmonic, and later a series of intersecting repeated figures from bleating clarinet and saw and plucked basses, punctuated by Kaučič’s astutely-judged thuds.

For Léandre the duet is the format that has seen her most extraordinary performances, as evidenced by encounters with Anthony Braxton, George Lewis and India Cooke. Fortunately this month; he died in 2014) was a disciple of Cherry, Organic Music Societies, recently closed and the BBC aired a 2011 program entitled Blue Notes, Cold Nights discussing Cherry and other Black musicians’ relationship to Europe and also Scandinavia in particular. The critical element of these relationships was the desire of Black musicians to live and play freely, outside as much as possible, of the daily vortex of U.S. racism and the music business. This recording is a legacy of those roots.

Trumpeter Roy Campbell (who would have turned 69 this month; he died in 2014) was a disciple of Cherry and others in the collective avant garde jazz movement. He lived in the Netherlands in the ‘90s and this music, a single 37:46 piece recorded at the Birnhus in Amsterdam as part of Doek 2013 Festival, springs from that space. Of his long-time partner with Campbell, though they played together a total of six times and only once in this ensemble, saxophonist John Dikeman recalls, “Roy was a truly authentic voice. He also had the amazing ability to play in very different situations of completely different dynamics or aesthetics. He did so effortlessly and somehow managed to fit completely in every environment and still sound exactly like himself.”

Both share an interest in folk music and Egyptology, a reference to which could be gleaned from the almost hieroglyphic forms of musicians in black and white adorning the cover. Peter Jacquesyn, who is both the bassist on the recording and a sculptor, contributed these drawings. His experiments with the voice sound like a didgeridoo at points. This limited 500-CD edition is straight and to the point: a black and white photo of Campbell playing his horn confronts one when the CD is lifted from the sleeve; there are no notes, but the introduction to the CD on the label’s website includes this quote: After their improvisation, Campbell told his fellow musicians, “We have to start moving.” This moment was the beginning of Lockdown’s movement: it is lightly somber. Along with resilience and remembrance, the session also brims with passion, and remembrance, the session also brims with passion, imbuing them with an enhanced sense of scale.

The collective compositions add further dimension. “Deep Rabbit Hole” teems with life, a wealth of delicate detail that begins in a muted forest of shakuhachi fowl and expands from there. An internal dialogue arises in the quietly busy “Quarantina,” wandering clarinet lines turning to cry or metallic buzz, bright prepared piano springing to new life. “After Lunch” is a burst of tumbling energy while “Popcorn” is a strange collocation of repeating figures, with a kind of abstracted blues feeling arising from insistent pentatonic piano figures with hand-damped strings.

Completion of the quartet, Sylvie Courvoisier/Ned Rothenberg/Julian Sartorius (Clean Feed) Recorded in a Bern, Switzerland studio in October 2020, the complex moods of the COVID-19 lockdown are reflected in the music of this trio of pianist Sylvie Courvoisier, drummer Julian Sartorius and Ned Rothenberg (alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet and shakuhachi, who turns 65 this month). The mood is often serious, but the work is hardly despairing, with a level of execution that is itself matter for celebration. The music is divided between composed structures and improvisations. The disc begins with three compositions, followed by four improvisations, then a concluding composition. Courvoisier’s “La Cigale” moves through dimensions, from densely clattering piano with rambunctious percussion and intense alto runs to off-kilter, dissonant piano wanderings. Rothenberg’s “Outlander”, too, has a suite-like form, shifting from lively interludes to quiet reflection to bursting life, with him shifting instruments and techniques. Courvoisier’s “Requiem d’un Songe” has moments of stellar three-way dialogue and foregrounds the trio’s collective avant garde edge. For all their distinctions, the pieces reflect the special terrain of improvisers with strong European classical/Romantic/Expressionist influences, the music often characterized by dense harmonies, virtuosic execution and dramatic intensity, imbuing them with an enhanced sense of scale.
In this era when streaming services are eclipsing the relevance of physical recordings on discs, this is a rare and welcome exception, an opulent, career-encompassing set of five CDs, encased in a cloth-bound coffee table book with 48 pages of text and large black and white photographs. Although there is a plethora of Bill Evans albums in release, many of them live dates rescued from oblivion since the advancements of digital remastering and coming decades after his death 41 years ago this month, this is the first anthology encompassing the pianist’s career across multiple record labels.

A compilation like this, distilling a career of myriad recordings down to five discs, roughly six hours, is comparable to a museum show presenting an artist’s oeuvre through a small, but representative, sample of that work. Curated well, such a show can illuminate the work; one this reviewer saw recently, Calder-Picasso, does just that, presenting a new and different angle on two seminal 20th Century artists and how they shared concerns and impulses.

The producer of this album, Nick Phillips, uses his selections to highlight facets of Evans’ artistry, illuminating aspects of his talent and work sometimes overlooked.

In the later ’50s and the ’60s, Evans forged a new way of playing, putting him among the most important and influential of postbop pianists. His unique approach to voicings and chords, subtly dynamic manipulation of touch and tone and melding of left and right hands into conversational colloquy, often obliterating usual bar lines, created a new paradigm. And he furthered it by reimagining the piano-bass-drums trio in similar fashion, making it a triumvirate rather than a piano with rhythm accompaniment.

The album consists of five volumes (CDs), the first two titled Trialogues, featuring him in the classic piano-bass-drums format that was his most famous. Volume Three, Monologues, consists of solo piano tracks, including instances of overdubbed pianos, in one case with an electric piano too. Volume Four, Dialogues & Confluences, collects duo and group (quartet and quintet) tracks. Volume Five, Epilogue, is yet another newly discovered live trio date, from a club in Vancouver in 1976.

Neil Tesser’s astute and revelatory booklet notes include two quotations gleaned from broadcast interviews Evans did. They may well be the best expressions of his jazz aesthetic: “It’s very important to remember that no matter how far I might diverge or find freedom in this format [the trio], it only is ‘free’ insofar as it has reference to the strictness of the original form. And that’s what gives it its strength. There is no freedom without being in reference to something.” And: “No matter how much human feeling you put into something, if it’s architecturally weak, it’s going to be weak regardless; and if it’s architecturally strong and you add the human feeling, it’s just that much heavier.”

Those statements do a lot to explain why Evans’ repertoire was steeped in classic American pop standards as well as his own, well-crafted, compositions. There are only three tunes duplicated among this set’s 61 tracks. One is the Irving Berlin standard “How Deep Is The Ocean”, heard in a studio recording by his first “classic” trio with bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian. That reflective performance contrasts with a faster, less introspective take from the live club set on Disc Five with bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Eliot Zigmund. His own “Waltz for Debby” is also heard by the “classic” trio, as well as in a short, poignant solo take on Disc Three. Miles Davis’ “Nardis”—an Evans favorite Davis never recorded—appears solo on Disc Three and in the Vancouver live set.

Surprisingly, considering his trio aesthetic, Evans’ favorite drummer was the powerhouse Philly Joe Jones, who is heard not only in an early trio recording, but also prominently in different quintets with Freddie Hubbard, Zoot Sims, Harold Land, Jim Hall and Kenny Burrell. From those tracks to ethereal, empathetic duos with guitarist Hall and bassists Gomez and Marc Johnson and hard-swinging quintets with tenor saxophonist Stan Getz, trumpeters Hubbard or Tom Harrell, Disc Four is full of revelatory moments that expand our appreciation of Evans.

For more information, visit craftrecordings.com
Wednesday, September 1

- Gilded Helserwino Trio with Jon Michel, Obad Calvare
- Pedro Gisazon Tange Quartet with Nick Grassian, Rodrigo Zarate, Ahmed Alon
- Andy Starman Trio with Jim Whitney, Larry Eagle
- David Osuakt's Louis Armstrong Project
- Strata-East 50th Anniversary Celebration: Charles Tolliver Quartet with Billy Harper, George Cables, Buster Williams, Larry White

Thursday, September 2

- Strata-East 50th Anniversary Celebration: Charles Tolliver Quartet with Billy Harper, George Cables, Buster Williams, Larry White

Friday, September 3

- Oscar Noriec's Crooked Quartet with Marts Sanchez, Jordan Tordi, Jason A. Ramos
- Pedro Gisazon Tange Quartet with Nick Grassian, Rodrigo Zarate, Ahmed Alon
- Strata-East 50th Anniversary Celebration: Charles Tolliver Quartet with Billy Harper, George Cables, Buster Williams, Larry White

Saturday, September 4

- Lucian Bar Matt Manari
- Strata-East 50th Anniversary Celebration: Charles Tolliver Quartet with Billy Harper, George Cables, Buster Williams, Larry White

Sunday, September 5

- Imaar Borocho
- Stephanie Wrennel
- Arturo O'Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble with Ivan Renta, Jim Seeley, Rafi Makiel, Vicente Cherico, Zack O'Farrill, Victor Pablo, Carly Maldonado, Juanita Tapia, Bam Rogers
- Todd Herha Quartet

Monday, September 6

- Hiyua Park Trio
- Jaimie Branch/Tcheser Holmes; Tim Angulo, Mary Halvorson's Amaryllis and Belladonna with Adam O'Farrill, Jacob Garchik, Patricia Brennan, Nick Dunston, Tomas Fujiwara and The Mivos Quartet: Firey String Sistas!
- Mimi Jones, Katty Rodriguez, Arcoiris Sandoval, Lessie Vonner, Charenee Wade
- Gregory Lewis Organ Monk

Tuesday, September 7

- Tatsutaka Umo Trio with Danton boiler, Jamie Jennings
- Arturo O'Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble with Ivan Renta, Jim Seeley, Rafi Makiel, Vicente Cherico, Zack O'Farrill, Victor Pablo, Carly Maldonado, Juanita Tapia, Bam Rogers
- James Francis
- Yuka Aiakwa
- Arooj Aftab and The Vulture Prince Ensemble with Maeve Gilchrist, Shahzad Ismaily, Isaiah J. Thompson Quartet with Julian Lage, Tracy Young, TJ Reddick

Wednesday, September 8

- David Osuakt's Louis Armstrong Project
- Strata-East 50th Anniversary Celebration: Charles Tolliver Quartet with Billy Harper, George Cables, Buster Williams, Larry White

Thursday, September 9

- Naked Love: Tad Rogers, Brad Holm, Shoge Kemah, Shanna Stoneman
- Free钢琴家: Jessica Lewis, Greg Glassman, Brian Marsella, Jon Madoff, Joshua Frickert, Chris Strangfeld
- Arturo O'Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble with Ivan Renta, Jim Seeley, Rafi Makiel, Vicente Cherico, Zack O'Farrill, Victor Pablo, Carly Maldonado, Juanita Tapia, Bam Rogers
- James Francis
- Diana Krall Trio
- Sonya Fein Quartet
- Firey String Sistas!

Opening for the Jon Hendricks Centennial Celebration: Kurt Elling, Jazzmeia Horn, Kevin Burke, Anto Hendricks, Michelle Hendrickx with Andy Farber, Steve Ash, Neil Miner, Andy Watts

Fifth Hammam: 8:30 pm $30; 10:30 pm $30; 12 pm $20

The Jazz Gallery 7:30, 9:30 pm $15-35

Brooklyn Bowl 8 pm $20

Dizzy's Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $40

Mezzrow 7:30, 9 pm $20

Bar Lunatico 9 pm $10

Scopion Gallery 8 pm $20

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World Jazz News
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CHRISROGERSJAZZ.COM
September 24

**Monday, September 20**

- [37x73]•
- Eddie Allen, Franz Hackl, Yayoi Ikawa
- John Dikeman, Rob Brown, Taylor Ho Bynum, Hamid Drake
- Lonnie Plaxico, Steve Smith
- Nolan Tsang, David Byrd-Marrow, Jacob Garchik, Erica Dicker, Joanna Mattrey
- John Dikeman, Rob Brown, Taylor Ho Bynum, Hamid Drake
- Lonnie Plaxico, Steve Smith
- Jen Baker, David Taylor
- Nick Panoutsos, David Gould
- Anna Webber’s Simple Trio with Matt Mitchell, John Hollenbeck; William Parker’s Celestial Light House with Dave Burrell, James Brandon Lewis
- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jaleel Shaw, Helen Sung, Frank Vignola Quartet
- Jane Irving Trio
- Cory Henry
- Saul Rubin Trio with Charles Goddard, Mark Lewandowski
- Oscar Petrossian, Eugene Kim, Alex Hitchcock, Bruno Delbonnel
- Tadd Shull
- Bashiri Johnson 40 Year Career/Birthday Celebration
- Chuck Owen and The Jazz Surfers
- Stephane Wrembel
- Matt Aronoff, Jared Schonig
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington

**Tuesday, September 21**

- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jascha Shav, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plasico, Steve Smith
- Peter Bernstein, Larry Goldings, Bill Stewart
- Kuni Mikami
- Larry Yogatayama/Viriah Grace
- Ari Hoenig Trio with Dennis Buxrose, ecoardo Boe
- Ashley Pozzoli
- Christopher Muir and guest William Parker; Steve Gunn/John Truscinski
- Michel Bar, Dan Tepfer
- Sean Hawthorne
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington

**Wednesday, September 22**

- [37x73]•
- Owen Howard Quintet with John Ellis, Dave Smith, Pete McCall, Matt Pavloka
- Saul Rubin Trio with Charles Goddard, Mark Lewandowski
- Henry Fraser Trio with Brandon Seabrook, Francisco Mela
- David Ostrowski’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band
- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jascha Shav, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plasico, Steve Smith
- Todd Rosenthal Trio
- Cory Henry
- Kuni Mikami
- Isaiah J. Thompson
- Henry Hey
- Jane Irving Trio
- 10C
- Dan Aran
- Zach Brook
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington

**Thursday, September 23**

- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jascha Shav, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plasico, Steve Smith
- Pasquale Grasso Trio
- Cory Henry
- Nicole Glover Trio
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington
- Sana Naganou Group with Peter Aynemba, Koolunutu Masumo, Ken Filiano, Danny Sher
- Taylor Eigsti
- Manhattan School of Music Jazz Orchestra conducted by Marc Cary
- John Coltrane Birthday Celebration
- CounterCurrent: Rico Jones, Alex Heffron, Hunter Roberts, Brandon Khan
- Anna Weiller’s Simple Trio with Matt Mitchell, John Hollenbeck, Idan Vil Langerman; Anna Weiller, Nathaniel Tang, Tessa Uesaka, Nolen Tsang, David Byrd-Morrow, Jacob Garchik, Erica Dicker, Joanna Mattrey, Marcel Roberts, Matt Mitchell, Nick Dunston, John Hollenbeck, Eric Weissbe
- Curtis Nowosad
- Marilyn McInerney Trio with John Di Martino, Nicolai Ueda
- Ari Hoenig Trio
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington

**Friday, September 24**

- Pedro Giraudo Tango Quartet with Nick Danielson, Rosgold Zanetti, Ahmed Alom
- Birdland Big Band
- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jascha Shav, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plasico, Steve Smith
- Cory Henry
- Kuni Mikami
- Craig Harris and Harlen Nightjohns with Joy Rodriguez, James Stewart, Frank Vicci, Eddie Allen, Frank Hockl, Kasia Kowal
- Mike Moreno
- Timo Hammer Trio with Leo Hua, Mars Weis, Sara Schoenbeck, Michael Sarin
- David Tossidar’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band
- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jascha Shav, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plasico, Steve Smith
- Cory Henry
- Kuni Mikami
- William Parker’s Celestial Light House with Dave Burrell, James Brandon Lewis, John Dikeman, Rob Brown, Taylor Ho Bynum, Hamid Drake
- Craig Harris and Harlen Nightjohns with Joy Rodriguez, James Stewart, Frank Vicci, Eddie Allen, Frank Hockl, Kasia Kowal
- Mike Moreno
- Timo Hammer Trio with Leo Hua, Mars Weis, Sara Schoenbeck, Michael Sarin
- David Tossidar’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band

**Saturday, September 25**

- Steve Lacy with Sip Sip and Heath Davis, Frank Vignola
- Joel Pizzarelli, Randy Brecker, Ed Lozz, Steve Smith
- Michael Esper with Alex Heffron
- John Ellis and the Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble
- Mona Hatoum, Sarah Natan
- Oscar Petrossian, Eugene Kim, Alex Hitchcock, Bruno Delbonnel
- Tadd Shull
- Bashiri Johnson 40 Year Career/Birthday Celebration
- Chuck Owen and The Jazz Surfers
- Stephane Wrembel
- Matt Aronoff, Jared Schonig
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington

**Sunday, September 26**

- Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Latin Experience
- Sue Maskarik
- Nicole Connelly Ensemble; Robert Kirkland, Andrew Rees, Ken Filiano, Michael TA Thompson; Steve Gunn/John Truscinski
- Michael Bar, Dan Tepfer
- Sean Hawthorne
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington

**Monday, September 27**

- John Ellis and Double Wide
- Stacy Kent/Kiri Hisa
- Julian Rodriguez
- Sue Maskarik
- Bill Charlap Trio with Dennis Buxrose, ecoardo Boe
- Joshua Abrams Natural Information Society with Lisa Losada, Nikky Avery, Jason Stein and guest William Parker, Steve Gruen, John Tedeschi
- Le Bertucelli
- Matt Wilson Trio with Jeff Leder
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra

**Tuesday, September 28**

- John Ellis and Double Wide
- Stacy Kent/Kiri Hisa
- Julian Rodriguez
- Sue Maskarik
- Bill Charlap Trio with Dennis Buxrose, ecoardo Boe
- Joshua Abrams Natural Information Society with Lisa Losada, Nikky Avery, Jason Stein and guest William Parker, Steve Gruen, John Tedeschi
- Le Bertucelli
- Matt Wilson Trio with Jeff Leder
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra

**Wednesday, September 29**

- Jerome Sabath Trio with Joe Martin, Al Foster
- Heino Alper/Guillermo Monteiro
- Michael Bates and Matthew Shipp, Ken Filiano, Jonathan Chebanne, Jaleel Shaw
- David Ostrowski’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band
- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jascha Shav, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plasico, Steve Smith
- Cory Henry
- Kuni Mikami
- William Parker’s Celestial Light House with Dave Burrell, James Brandon Lewis, John Dikeman, Rob Brown, Taylor Ho Bynum, Hamid Drake
- Craig Harris and Harlen Nightjohns with Joy Rodriguez, James Stewart, Frank Vicci, Eddie Allen, Frank Hockl, Kasia Kowal
- Mike Moreno
- Timo Hammer Trio with Leo Hua, Mars Weis, Sara Schoenbeck, Michael Sarin
- David Tossidar’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band
- Coltrane Revisited 20th Anniversary: Eric Alexander, Jascha Shav, Helen Sung, Lonnie Plasico, Steve Smith
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- William Parker’s Celestial Light House with Dave Burrell, James Brandon Lewis, John Dikeman, Rob Brown, Taylor Ho Bynum, Hamid Drake
- Craig Harris and Harlen Nightjohns with Joy Rodriguez, James Stewart, Frank Vicci, Eddie Allen, Frank Hockl, Kasia Kowal
- Mike Moreno
- Timo Hammer Trio with Leo Hua, Mars Weis, Sara Schoenbeck, Michael Sarin
- David Tossidar’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band

**Thursday, September 30**

- Nels Cline Consensull Quartet with Ingrid Laubrock, Chris Lighttrip, Tom Rainey
- Stacey Kent/Kiri Hisa
- Duchess: Amy Vigil, Hilary Gable, Melissa Stupinovitch with Michael Cabe, Matt Atonoff, Jared Schonig
- Gordon Lewis/Johnathon Behar
- Sue Maskarik
- Grace Kelly
- Brandon Goldberg Quartet with Stacy Gillott, Joel Evans, Ben Wolf, Donald Edwards
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington
- Bill Charlap Trio with Kenny Washington, Peter Washington
The full title is Live At The 1996 Ford Montreaux Detroit Jazz Festival, with organ player Lyman Woodard’s trio appearing on the Absolute Stage at Hart Plaza. So, for those counting, we have an American car, Swiss jazz festival, Swedish vocalist, U.S. Senator from Michigan. Woodard was a Detroit lifer who documented himself (and others) on his Corridor imprint. With him are two other Motor Cityites in guitarist Bob Tye and Young Leonard King on the piano...
LET’S BE CANDID !!!
NEW RELEASES COMING IN SEPTEMBER
ALONG WITH NYC PERFORMANCES!

ELIANE ELIAS — MIRROR MIRROR
With Chick Corea And Chucho Valdés

Multi GRAMMY® winning pianist/singer/composer Eliane Elias’ latest album *Mirror Mirror* is a lifelong musical dream come true—an extraordinary piano duet recording of Eliane with the late legendary jazz great Chick Corea and famed Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés.

Available September 10th
Live @ City Winery — September 15

COUNTR BASIE ORCHESTRA —
LIVE AT BIRDLAND

In 1961 The Count Basie Band played in the iconic New York jazz club Birdland. The album from those nights, *Basie at Birdland!*, has been called simply “the best live recording of a big band ever.” Almost 60 years later, the band, now under the direction of Scotty Barnhart, returns to the storied club once again with their new album *Live At Birdland*.

Available September 17th
Live @ Birdland — September 14 - 18

STACEY KENT —
SONGS FROM OTHER PLACES

A captivating and eclectic collection of voice and piano duets. Traveling with Stacey on this musical journey is her dear friend, pianist, Art Hirahara. The idea for this album germinated when “I Wish I Could Go Travelling Again,” written for her by Nobel Prize-winning author, Kazuo Ishiguro, and her long-time collaborator and husband, Jim Tomlinson, was the most talked about and requested song by her fans on social media.

Available September 17th
Live @ Birdland — September 28 - October 2