As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday with great anticipation of being able to overeat with our families in person rather than through computer screens, we would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude for those who do not get enough credit for what they do: the bassists. Sure, saxophones and trumpets are flashy and piano can do it all and drums get the crowds roaring but without the bass—upright or electric—it would not hit you in your soul, that deep resonance that ties everything together.

We feature three bassists this month, all of whom are well established and have new albums: Ben Allison (On The Cover) with Moments Inside (Sonic Camera), appearing at Birdland; Martin Wind (Interview) with My Astorian Queen (Laika) and gigs at Cellar Dog and Mezzrow; and Sean Conly (Artist Feature) with The Buzz (577 Records) and appearances at Flushing Town Hall and The Jazz Gallery. Plus we celebrate the history of the instrument with Calvin Hill (Encore) and Victor Sproles (Lest We Forget) and its present and future with a front-loaded CD Review section (pgs. 18-22) We also mourn the loss of a giant of the instrument, George Mraz, with a two-page In Memoriam spread of remembrances by friends and colleagues (pgs. 16-17).

We wish all of you, our dear readers, a joyful and meaningful Thanksgiving holiday.

On The Cover: Ben Allison (photo by Cees Van de Ven / courtesy of the artist)

Corrections: In last month’s What’s News, Henry Threadgill’s project is “Migration and the Return of the Cheap Suit”. In last month’s Obituaries, it was not Ulrich Kurth but his son who worked with JazzHausMusik.

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Marc Johnson
Overpass

Andrew Cyrille
The News

Marcin Wasilewski
En attendant

Craig Taborn
Shadow Plays

Enrico Rava
Edizione Speciale

Eberhard Weber
Once Upon A Time

‘Acid jazz that old souls and new ones will fall in love with in equal measure’

‘Psychedelic, groovy, and intelligent music for heart, body, and soul’

‘Modern Funk’

The Consecutives
Andrew Berman . Guitar
Ray Cetta . Bass
Dan Klug . Drums
Victor Pablo . Percussion
Tom Wilson . Keys

Rockwood Music Hall
196 Allen St, NYC
Stage 2
Thursday, Nov 4
10:30 PM
It was the first and only gig François Grillot ever missed. Until his passing last June at age 66 the Burgundy, France-born, longtime NYC resident had held down the bass chair in Matt Lallevé’s 12 Houses for hundreds of shows, ever since the very first one at University of the Streets ten years ago. The gig at Williamsburg’s Scholes Street Studio (Oct. 3rd) was a celebration of his life and though he wasn’t there in person, his living spirit was palpable in the crowded room. The 14-piece amalgamation – Lallevé (conductor/trumpet/alto clarinet), Mary Cherney and Cheryl Pyle (flutes); Stephanie Griffin (viola); Lee Odom, Charles Waters and Claire Daly (saxophones); Matt Lambiase, Nicole Davis and Art Baron (brass); Chris Forbes (piano); Hilliard Greene (stepping into Grillot’s shoes); Leonid Galaganov (drums); Jose Luis Abreu (percussion) – channeled this spirit into a lively, heartfelt set. They began by singing his name over a 4-note theme in 6/8: “Fran-çois Grillot: Fran-çois Grillot!” followed by three saxophone solos – Odom (alto), Daly (baritone) and Waters (tenor) – and a second meditation on his name. The remaining four pieces (“X Chord”, “6 A.M.”, “Blues in F”, “Hymn to the World”), all written by Grillot, spotlighted each musician in turn, capped by Baron’s talkative trombone solo “Hymn”. Following the music were spoken remembrances and a poem by G.E. Schwartz, which exhorted everyone in the audience to “keep the enlivening going”.

—Tom Greenland

Tenor saxophonist/flutist Lew Tabackin’s extraordinary career has included embracing things outside the mainstream, which now informs an impressively creative repertoire. In a post-lockdown monthly residency at Michiko Studios Stage 2, where the mood is collegial and highly informal, Tabackin has the freedom to gig without constraint. And that he did. (Oct. 13th), fearlessly and viscerally letting loose, his attack a full-bodied, intense choreography of movement. Also fully on display were the abrupt changes in mood, tempo and technique for which he is known, such as on a creative “I Hear a Rhapsody” (Jack Baker-Dick Gasparre-George Fragos) and another jazz standard, “Autumn Nocturne” (Kim Gannon-Joe Myrow). His own composition for flute, “Garden at Lifetime”, brilliantly displayed his cross-cultural fusion from jazz standards to American Songbook favorites and a Japanese ethos. On tenor, his “Tanuki’s Night Out”, the exploits of an imagined raccoon-like creature, featured a super-speed swing arrangement, putting Douglas to the test of remaining dexterous while maintaining rhythm and harmonic integrity. Brown, who can make a piano sound much more than it is, particularly soared on this tune. His magic lies in maintaining a light touch on the keys, yet conveying an assured, assertive mastery of sound. Another high point of the set was “Yardbird Suite” (Charlie Parker), a beautifully executed toe-tapper and homage to the bebop innovator.

—Marilyn Lester

The abundantly talented bassist Dezron Douglas delivered a treasure chest of music at (club previously known as Fat Cat) Cellar Dog (Oct. 21st), from jazz standards to American Songbook favorites to bossa nova, all with a seamless, organic flow of rhythm and harmony. The spotlight was on him out front as leader, yet the ultimate sound was fully interwoven, like a melodic tapestry, with pianist Keith Brown and drummer Curtis Fornum. Douglas has a charismatic presence at the bass. He coaxes the most out of it, as if tangling with a living, breathing creature. His mastery of the instrument includes a flexibility and agility that he makes seem completely effortless. “The Girl from Ipanema” (Antônio Carlos Jobim-Vinícius de Moraes) was a perfect storm of creativity on a samba beat platform, with Fornum recalling the samba band ethos, allowing him to shine, versus his role mainly as trio anchor. Great American Songbook standard “Just One of Those Things” (Cole Porter) featured a super-speed swing arrangement, putting Douglas to the test of remaining dexterous while maintaining rhythm and harmonic integrity. Brown, who can make a piano sound much more than it is, particularly soared on this tune. His magic lies in maintaining a light touch on the keys, yet conveying an assured, assertive mastery of sound. Another high point of the set was “Yardbird Suite” (Charlie Parker), a beautifully executed toe-tapper and homage to the bebop innovator.

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With a fanbase stretching across the worlds of jazz, hip-hop and R&B, it is no surprise Robert Glasper had been packing the house every night of his month-long residency at Blue Note. Opening the second set of the first night (Oct. 12th) of his Tribute To Wayne Shorter, the Grammy Award-winning pianist called for a round of applause for the man he described as “one of my heroes”, then joked with crowd noting, “I know some of you don’t even know who he is.” The band, with Keyon Harrold (trumpet), Jaleel Shaw (alto), Marcus Strickland (tenor), Vicente Archer (bass) and Kendrick Scott (drums), got things started with “Angola”. The set continued with “The Laverne Walk”, crisply playing the rhythmic melody and stretching out with an engaging solo, then walking strong backing for Vega and Malone features before taking it out. The trio played beautifully on Carter’s classic “Little Waltz” and then ended the set swinging hard on Fletcher Henderson’s “Soft Winds”. — Russ Musto

The Guinness record holder as the most recorded jazz bassist in history, with appearances now numbering over 2,500, Ron Carter is perhaps still best appreciated in live performances as a band leader. In his appearance at Birdland (Oct. 7th) with his Golden Striker Trio with guitarist Russell Malone and pianist Donald Vega, the NEA Jazz Master’s warm clear tone and impeccable beat were in sharp focus. The evening’s second set got started with Carter’s “Parade”, a jaunty Spanish-tinted outing built around a pulsating bassline. Vega soloed lyrically, buoyed by Malone’s percussive fretboard tapping, before the guitarist took his own turn, turning bluesy, quoting both “Eleanor Rigby” and “It Don’t Mean A Thing (If It Ain’T Got That Swing)”. The set continued with “The Third Plane”, Carter’s melodious dedication to erstwhile Miles Davis bandmate Wayne Shorter, which had the maestro alternating between leisurely bossa nova and brisk walking lines behind extended Vega and Malone solos. Malone was in the spotlight on “Candlelight”, another Carter dedication, this one to his longtime partner, the late guitarist Jim Hall. Carter took the lead on Oscar Pettiford’s “Laverne Walk”, crisply playing the rhythmic melody and stretching out with an engaging solo, then walking strong backing for Vega and Malone features before taking it out. The trio played beautifully on Carter’s classic “Little Waltz” and then ended the set swinging hard on Fletcher Henderson’s “Soft Winds”. — Russ Musto

The Cutting Room (Oct. 13th) shook with a certain excitement normally reserved for rock stars. As drummer Cindy Blackman Santana took the stage with her band of dynamas: guitarists Aurelien Budynek and David Gilmore, saxophonist Emilie Modesto, keyboard player Marc Cary and bassist Felix Pastorius, we may as well have been at the Fillmore East of old. The unique instrumentation, the leader later explained, was inspired by Ritchie Havens with dual guitars “to add that edge”. And it was ever-present in this enticing set of fusion, which delved heartily into the realm of James “Blood” Ulmer and something new. In other words, this was not your father’s jazz-rock. Right from opener “The Blue Whales”, Blackman tore into the atmosphere like cannons as guitars—in harmony—double lead lines of Modeste’s tenor and Cary’s synth impressionism. Pastorius, scion of bass royalty, was watched closely by the house, but had limited room in the sound tapestry. More than once, however, he and his six-string fretted beast (whatever happened to dad Jaco’s old Fender Jazz?) had intriguing solo features, but the rhythmic command was held by Blackman’s continuous commentary of Tony Williams-inspired tom fills and silvery, aerial shimmer. The band trod the underground and swung hard too, particularly in one piece of fiesty film noir music gone electric. Watch for this band and particularly for Budynek, a freely improvising, post-punk jazz master who tours with Marky Ramone (really), among others. — John Pietaro

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The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation has announced its 2021 Artists, each receiving an award of $275,000. In the jazz category, the recipients are pianist Wayne Shivers, pianists Kris Davis and Daniilo Pérez. For more information, visit dorisdukeartsawards.org.

On Nov. 4th, bassist Christian McBride will receive the Medal of Honor for Achievement in Music as given by the National Arts Club. For more information, visit nationalartsclub.org.

New Jersey Performing Arts Center has announced the five finalists of the 10th Annual Sarah Vaughan International Vocal Competition, taking place Nov. 14th and judged by Renee Rosnes, Steven A. Williams, Jazzmeia Horn, John Pizzarelli and Shelia Jordan. The finalists are Andrea Miller, April May Webb, Arta Jékabsone, C. Thomas Allen and Viktoria Gečyty. The first-prize winner will receive $5,000, second-place $1,500 and third-place $500. For more information, visit sarahvaughanchampionship.com.

The Erroll Garner-Martha Glaser Archive Research Award at the University of Pittsburgh has been established to support research into the Erroll Garner jazz collection: correspondence, sheet music, documents, photographs, memorabilia, awards, sound recordings and moving images documenting the life and work of pianist Garner. Grants up to $2,500 will be given. For more information and to apply, visit library.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/asg/Garner-Glaser Research Award Application.pdf.

ZC Comics and artist David Chiscolm, a pairing that produced a 2020 Charlie Parker graphic novel, have announced a new project, Blue Note Records - Enter the Blue, a fictional account of the famed record label. For more information, visit 2zcomics.com/bluenote.

David Rubenstein has donated $10 Million to “expand arts and civic engagement initiatives at Lincoln Center”, specifically programming at the David Rubenstein Atrium, founded 10 years ago with a gift from Rubenstein and featuring extensive free programming.

South Arts has awarded 52 Jazz Artists $2 million in grants supporting creative residencies. Recipients are Chico Freeman, Edward Simon, John Escreet, Marcus Roberts, Sammy Figueroa, Wycliffe Gordon, Damon Locks, Ernest Dawkins, Joshua Abrams, Mars Williams, Aurora Nealand, Ben Jaffe, Donald Harrison, Jason Marsalis, Felix Salés, Melmet Ali Sanilork, Terry Jemore, Marc Cary, Adegoke Steve Colson, Delbert Anderson, Adam O’Farrill, Andrew Dury, Aruani Ortiz, Bobby Pringle, Camille Thurman, Darian Krenn, Craig Harris, Elio Villarfanca, Fabian Almazan, Ches Smith, Immanuel Wilkins, Jamie Branch, Jason Moran, M3 Musicians LLC, Maggs Herreman, Meg Okura, Melvin Gibbs, Michele Rosewoman, Miles Okazaki, Nasheet Waits, Nina Hendryx, Ronnie Burrage, Naime Lowe, Jamealadeen Tacuma, Orn Evans, William Cepeda, Gregory Tartly, Lisa E. Harris, Kip Hanrahan, Amy Denio, Johny Hendrik and Julia Kooise. For more information, visit southarts.org.

Don Vappie has been named one of two winners of the Steve Martin Banjo Prize, receiving $25,000.

Resonance Motion, Inc. has named the 2021 Claire’s Continuum Artistic Collaborations: Taylor Simone Harvey and Johnnie Gilmore; Jackie Soro and Caili O’Doherty; and Carla Abrego. For more information, visit clairescontinuum.org.

The International Society of Jazz Arrangers & Composers (ISJAC) has announced Fundamental Freedoms, a special commission opportunity for women jazz composers. The winning piece will be premiered at the ISJAC’s symposium this spring in Austin, Texas. Applications are open to all women jazz composers regardless of age or nationality and will be accepted through Nov 4th. For more information, visit isjac.org/awards/2022-fundamental-freedoms-prize-guidelines.

Matthias Pees has been named the new director of Berliner Festspiele, which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year.

Submit news to ahenkin@nycjazzrecord.com
Interview

Over the past quarter-century, bassist Martin Wind has established himself as a versatile player and composer with an extensive discography as a leader and sideman. A native of Germany, Wind honed his craft as a young man on the continent then began to gain wider exposure through his work with pianist Bill Mays. Most of Wind’s albums have been issued by various European labels, even though he has long been a U.S. resident. His most recent album, My Astorian Queen (Laika), comes out this month. He also serves dual role as a professor of both jazz and classical studies. Wind’s warm arco playing rivals any bassist active and he is a valued player in any setting.

The New York City Jazz Record: Did you grow up in a musical family?

Martin Wind: My father was an amateur flute player, but nobody was playing an instrument around the house. In high school I started to play guitar. When I was 15 years old, the big band director asked me if I wanted to fill the electric bass position. I thought, “Sure, I’m not going to become a bass player because of that” but that’s exactly what happened. I found my voice that way, or the bass came to me. I played the electric bass for a couple of years. I took lessons with a classical bassist from the local orchestra and he kept working on me to finally pick up a ‘real instrument’. When I was 17, I finally started playing upright bass.

TYNCJR: Were you playing strictly classical music on the upright bass or were you playing jazz too?

MW: After two or three months, I brought the big bass into band and never looked back. We had a pretty good school orchestra, so from the time I learned to play scales and find my way around the fingerboard and get a decent sound with the bow, I was playing with the orchestra and the big band. That duality has been with me for my entire career and I think that it’s something that sets me apart.

TYNCJR: You use your bow a lot more than most. Do you attribute that to your classical studies?

MW: Absolutely! I graduated from high school when I was 19, because back then you went to school for 13 years in Germany and military service was mandatory, so I played in the navy band for two years and prepared myself for conservatory auditions because the entry level is so incredibly high. It’s tuition-free and open to people from other European countries and the entire world. Everybody who comes there can really play so I used those two years to get ready. I passed the audition and did a six-year program. I have a diploma as an orchestra musician and that’s where I truly learned how to play the instrument.

TYNCJR: Your professor, Wolfgang Beutler, really left a lasting impression on you.

MW: He was phenomenal. We’re still in touch. I got to see him in late 2018. He was an influence on so many levels. He was very influenced by Pablo Casals, the great cellist from Barcelona. His left-hand technique was completely different from the usual classical training. He was from Romania. He studied with a very famous teacher and bassist there so he had a very different bowing technique too, which worked out perfect for me. He was not interested in producing as many successful orchestra bassists as possible. His main goal was to turn us into independent, thinking artists, musicians who would find their own solutions and have their own way of finding interpretations. As a result, he was incredibly open-minded. He had no problem with me being a jazz player as well. He supported it wherever he could. I owe him so much.

TYNCJR: How did you learn about NYU’s jazz program?

MW: When I was about to join the navy band, they founded a national youth jazz orchestra in Germany. They auditioned and tried to put together an orchestra of the most talented young jazz musicians up to the age of 22 or 23. I was one of two bass players. That was a huge step for me, being exposed to the level of all those talented players. Till Brönner and Peter Weniger were part of that illustrious club. A lot of those players ended up in the excellent radio big bands like the WDR and NDR. We met twice a year for workshops and concerts and that’s how I got introduced to Mike Richmond. Mike came over as the bass teacher there and when I told him about my plans to come to New York, he hooked me up with NYU because he was already teaching there. In 1995, I hadn’t heard that NYU had a jazz department, it was under everybody’s radar, even though all those great players were teaching there. Joe Lovano, Jim McNeely, Kenny Werner came on later, Dave Liebman used to be there, Todd Coolman did his doctorate there. Since it was not a well-developed program when I got there, I was immediately the best player on my instrument. I ended up in the jazz orchestra right away, working with Jim McNeely and Tom Boras, and made it into the rhythm section that backed up all of the great artists brought in for master classes. I was in New York for maybe two weeks and backing up Joe Lovano, Randy Brecker and Mike Mainieri. I thought, “Wow, that’s what I came to New York for.” Even though it was a master class setting, it was an important first step.

TYNCJR: Did you start getting calls to fill as a bassist around this time?

MW: I started subbing in a band led by Bob Parsons, who was a teacher there. Since Tom Boras was on sabbatical when I arrived, it was Bob Parsons who sat down at the piano and auditioned me. After three choruses, he said, “I think we’re done here.” At that time, he led the after-hours session band at the Blue Note. Frank Kimbrough was the pianist. So I played in those session bands a lot and met many people that way. Those were all important steps for me to establish myself on the New York scene.

TYNCJR: Since you had Jim McNeely, Mike Holober and Kenny Werner as teachers, all gifted composers, how did each of them have an impact on your writing?

MW: I had heard Jim McNeely during the seven years I lived in Cologne, six of which I spent in the conservatory. We had the WDR band there and I knew most of the players by the second or third year.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)
You get a good insight into Colorado-born, Kansas-raised bassist Sean Conly’s playing style from his conversation: focused and direct. Of course that is not the whole story, as he also possesses a robust woody tone, pliable sense of swing and broad adventurous streak. That combination has made him a fixture for leaders as diverse as saxophonists Gregory Tardy (with whom he has waxed nine CDs), Darius Jones and Yoni Kretzmer, to the extent that he appears on over 80 releases. He is also helmed six dates under his own name, with the most recent The Buzz released on 577 Records last month.

In involved in music from an early age, Conly moved to New York City at 24 and, even while still at college studying with Rufus Reid, began taking on gigs. Trumpeter Philip Harper was one of the first but, as one thing led to another, he connected with big names such as trumpeters Freddie Hubbard and Nicholas Payton, pianist Andrew Hill and saxophonist James Moody. Even though his own music tends towards the modern improvised end of the spectrum, he continues to cultivate a presence across a range of styles. Conly explains: “I love having these different voices and it’s given me a lot of different opportunities. I don’t feel that style is necessarily indicative of creativity. Charlie Parker is just as free to me as Ornette. So I enjoy as a sideman having the possibility of all these different challenges.”

With his own music the challenge is different again. “I’m fascinated by how individuals can be in the moment with music and make beautiful sound in as many ways as possible. It can be that we’re playing very composed tunes or it could be more free but I want to surround myself with people who can do that. That’s the most inspiring thing for me.” One of his most frequent collaborators is saxophonist Michaël Attias, who performs on several of his leadership sessions, including the first, Re:Action (Clean Feed, 2007). They met through drummer Igal Foni, who had moved from Paris around the same time, and developed a strong relationship. “He has provided a lot of friendship and inspiration for me and I just love his writing and his playing. He has really been a huge part of a lot of my music. The relationships of playing with people over many many years is where you start to realize, yeah, you can start to play with someone once and it can be good but, boy, when you really know somebody it just gives you so many possibilities.”

Conly has composed his own music right from the outset. But he does so with particular individuals in mind, with the aim of constructing a universe within which they can shine. “Every project of mine I’m thinking about specific people. What kind of things they will sound good on.” On The Buzz he recruited drummer Francisco Mela and pianist Leo Genovese for a highly simpatico trio. How did that come about? “Francisco and I have known each other for a long time, but for the last few years Francisco has been very interested in new music and taken on this thing of, man, I want to be a great improvising drummer and not just a jazz drummer. I met Leo through Francisco. We were hired to go and teach at a jazz camp in Malaga [Spain] a couple of years ago and we did a bunch of concerts and I just really loved the fit of the three of us. It’s a joy to hang and make music with them. So I was like, wow, as soon as I can I want to make a trio record with these guys. They both have such huge ears. They hear everything, they know how to support and lead when they need to.”

One distinctive aspect of the program is that Conly often leads the line, handling the melody rather than piano, something he wanted to do for a while. “We play the Steven Sondheim song ‘Send In The Clowns’ and that wasn’t even supposed to be on the record. But we were in rehearsal and Francisco was like, oh man we should play like a standard or something and open it up. And I had been really in love with that tune for a while so it was sort of a last-minute addition. I felt like I want to embrace being the melody player a little more, so the whole project has a little more of that than my other projects.” It is not the only offbeat cover on the disc, which also features “Euterpe” by Sam Rivers, on which Conly carries the tune using his bow, and Paul Motian’s oblique blues “Good Idea” alongside his own numbers. “I was always a huge Paul Motian fan. He was a great inspiration to me and I love the fact that particular tune is a blues but the way he wrote it and what he came up with is very distinctive within being just a blues. Sam Rivers I’ve been a fan of since I was a kid and that particular melody I just always really loved that song. I just started messing with it with the bow and realizing that this would be a beautiful open rubato melody.”

Although Attias doesn’t appear on the album, the trio covers one of his tunes, “From C To Sea”. “That piece is interesting because basically he reversed an Ornette piece in a way. Like the melody is backwards. He loves to mess with palindromic kind of things, take them and do the mirror images and so on. He showed me that when we were playing at his house one day and I thought this would be a great open swinging melody for the band to play.” Conly’s title track is especially intriguing as it pitches disparate elements against one another. He explains further: “New York has such a city energy and I’ve always really just loved to walk the streets and that’s what ‘The Buzz’ is to me, that intense energy of New York City. The melody doesn’t fit in strict time over what the bassline concept is and I wanted it to have a little of that sense of when you’re hearing ten conversations at the same time and they’re all melding into one.”

While Conly’s teaching has carried on through the pandemic, along with a series of live streams, he is beginning to return to live performance and is thinking what comes next. “Right now I’m collecting material to figure out what the next project will be. Trying to figure out where I can get this band out now that the record is coming out. Just continuing to practice and hope that soon this whole thing will be over and that we can go back to some kind of real life.”

For more information, visit seanconly.com. Conly is at Flashing Town Hall Nov. 11th with Amanda Monaco and The Jazz Gallery Nov. 12th with Joe Fiedler. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- Sean Conly–Re:Action (Clean Feed, 2007)
- Sean Conly/Michaël Attias–Think Shadow (OutNow, 2009)
- Sean Conly, Alex Harding, Chad Taylor, Darius Jones–Grass Roots (AUM Fidelity, 2011)
- Mara Rosenbloom–Prairie Burn (Fresh Sound-New Talent, 2016)
- Joe Fiedler–Open Sesame (Multiphonics Music, 2018)
- Sean Conly–The Buzz (577 Records, 2020)
NPR recently wrote that bassist Ben Allison is “known for writing jazz that sounds like rock.” What that means, in essence, is that his work—while in no way compromised—is nonetheless accessible. He has a talent for catchy melodies, which he attributes to a study of his favorite composers: Andrew Hill, Herbie Nichols, Thelonious Monk and Ornette Coleman.

Allison is from New Haven, CT and lives in the East Village. He has released 14 albums as a leader and as a co-leader and made many others as a sideman, often with a revolving cast of players including saxophonist Ted Nash and guitarist Steve Cardenas. For the most part, they are a warm, enveloping listen.

In New Haven, Allison was fortunate to have discovered the Neighborhood Music School, where he started guitar lessons at nine. He also studied West African, Haitian and Cuban drumming with Richard Hill of the band Mikata and some of those influences come out in his music, too. Says Hill, “I remember Ben as an unusually focused, serious dude who seemed to always be digging for a deeper grasp and ability in the way he pursued the theory and technique of the music.”

“In high school, I struggled to find a musical identity,” Allison says. “My musical taste even then was pretty eclectic. I listened to everything. I played guitar and also drums, but couldn’t settle on anything. But then I had the opportunity to play the bass and it felt like the guitar and drums coming together.”

Playing in salsa bands was rewarding and lessons with bassist extraordinaire Steve Swallow, then a Connecticut resident, proved energizing.

“Steve is a super-great guy and a wonderful teacher,” Allison said. “I don’t remember the most useful piece of advice he gave me, but I was in touch but it was back in the ’80s. He is one of those guys who helped me by demystifying functional harmony. He taught me some basics. I think he is a phenomenal player and one of the sweetest cats.”

Allison has always had mentors. He moved to New York in 1985 to attend NYU as a University Scholar, studying bass and jazz performance. He remembers just after arriving in town going to hear the legendary Ron Carter play in a duo at the nearby Knickerbocker Bar & Grill on University Place. “I went up to him and asked him about something and he more or less gave me a bass lesson right there on the bandstand.”

Through pianist Frank Kimbrough, Allison met late pianist Hill and, in addition to being inspired by his memorable compositions, got some very useful advice. “I was just about to put out my first record with Koch Jazz and he recommended that I license the recording, not sell it outright. That way I would end up owning the masters,” Allison said. “He had a long battle with Blue Note over that issue. I took that to heart.” Allison owns his masters and is in the process of re-releasing 10 of his records.

Sometimes, when playing in jazz clubs, the atmosphere is not conducive to intimate, dynamically subtle music. One night, a piece Allison wrote with a section for three bass clarinets was drowned out by a bartender turning on a daiquiri machine. And so, in 1992 when he was 25, he joined with longtime collaborators Nash, Kimbrough, trumpeter Ron Horton and others to form the Jazz Composers Collective. The Collective presented over 100 concerts featuring the works of over 50 composers, the performances of over 250 musicians and, most notably, the premieres of more than 300 compositions. Allison was Artistic Director and a Composer-in-Residence.

“We wanted a more controlled environment and the ability to play our new music to people who were listening in a quiet room,” Allison said. An inspiration, besides the AACM in Chicago, was a collective set up by the composer Arnold Schoenberg. “I read a biography of him and he started his own loft scene in Vienna,” Allison said. “They put on regular concerts and Debussy and Webern were regulars.”

From 1996, the Collective was in residence at The New School, where Allison is now an associate teaching professor in the college of contemporary and performing arts. He teaches classes in entrepreneurship and music technology and has led deep dives into the music of Monk, Nichols, Miles Davis and others.

The Collective lasted until 2005. “We all got too busy touring and recording, doing the things we wanted to do when we started,” Allison said. “We thought about turning it over to a hired Executive Director. But, in the end, it felt better just to stop. There are TV shows that pass their peak and then do that one extra season that probably shouldn’t have happened. We wanted to avoid that and end on a high-note.”

Nash says of Allison, “Ben is one of the most creative composers and bass players I know. He has always found his own voice with the music he writes, the way he puts together and the way he approaches playing the instrument. When he formed the Jazz Composers Collective, he really understood the need for creating a forum where composers could explore their own voices.”

Allison has a political side to him, leading to involvement with the Recording Academy, the group that puts on the Grammys. He served two terms as president of the Academy’s New York chapter and testified before the U.S. House of Representatives in 2012, supporting performing rights. “We got most of what we wanted,” Allison said of the update to federal copyright law, its first significant change in a decade. “We addressed some of the challenges that streaming poses for songwriters.” While streaming services give unprecedented access to music, including a huge library of jazz, Allison points out that listeners don’t get any significant information about the tracks they are hearing, including who wrote them and who played on the recording.

Allison’s work as a composer received a welcome endorsement from the Jazz Sinfonica, an 80-piece orchestra (with a big band inside) in São Paulo, Brazil, which has featured his work three times, in 2005, 2008 and 2013. When COVID is no longer an issue, they will likely do it again: “It’s an amazing experience to perform your music with a full orchestra and big band. They have great arrangers who work off of the sheet music we send down. We do a few days of rehearsals where we put it all in shape, followed by two nights of performances. It’s hard to explain the thrill of hearing your music performed by a large orchestra. It’s a very emotional experience and deeply rewarding.”

Allison’s latest album, Moments Inside, comes out this month on his Sonic Camera label and features the interplay between two guitarists, Cardenas and Brazilian Chico Pinheiro. The whole album is beautiful, an enveloping cloud of music. “The past few years have been extremely difficult,” says Allison. “The rise of authoritarianism, the misery surrounding the pandemic. It’s been a very difficult time. As I sat down to write for this album, I was expecting the music to reflect this. Artists typically write what they feel. However, I was surprised to find that the music that came out was positive, calm, even optimistic. Looking back, I realize that I wasn’t writing what I was feeling. I was writing what I needed.”

The only cover is Nichols’ “House Party Starting”, which Allison says is the first tune that Kimbrough brought in when they started work on their Nichols project. “I wanted to include it on Moments Inside as a tribute to Frank [who passed in December 2020].”

Allison says, “Steve and Chico are very different players stylistically, but there is a clear chemistry between them. I wanted to write music that reflected that. Chico, being from Brazil, brings a great sense of lyricism and rhythmic intensity. The music on Moments Inside references some of my favorite Brazilian artists such as Milton Nascimento and Caetano Veloso.”

Allison is reflective about playing and composing. “I’d say that my playing and my writing are intertwined,” he said. “So, when I’m playing bass I try to think like a composer. Sometimes that means thinking melodically, creating lines that have lyrical structures and shapes. Other times, I think of my role as being closer to a drummer, utilizing the wide range of percussive effects that can be made with acoustic bass. My bass playing, in turn, informs my writing. My approach usually involves singing melodies along with playing bass notes. In this way, I get the basic shapes, the outline of harmonies, which I fill in later. Playing bass and singing is a very natural feeling. There’s nothing between me and my ideas.” That seems to be the crux of Ben Allison as a musician, no separation between the person and the music.

For more information, visit benallison.com. Allison’s Moments Inside project is at Birdland Nov. 4th-6th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Frank Kimbrough–Chant (lqmod, 1992/1997)
• Ben Allison–seven Arrows (Koch, 1995-6)
• Ben Allison & Medicine Wheel–Riding The Nuclear Tiger (Palmetto, 2000)
• Herbie Nichols Project–Strange City (Palmetto, 2001)
• Ben Allison–The Stars Look Very Different Today (Sonic Camera, 2013)
• Ben Allison–Moments Inside (Sonic Camera, 2021)
Django Festival Allstars
featuring Samson Schmitt,
Ludovic Beier, Pierre Blanchard,
Doudou Cuillerier & Antonio Licusati
Fri, Nov 5 @ 6 & 8:30PM
With energy and swing, the Django Festival Allstars pay tribute to legendary gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt.

Chaka Khan
with special guest Leela James
Sat, Nov 6 @ 8PM
You know it’s going to be a party when Chaka Khan hits the stage! Join us for an evening of fun and funk at NJPAC.

Nimbus Dance
Sat, Nov 6 @ 7PM
Nimbus Dance joins forces with tango virtuoso Pedro Giraudo for the world premiere of Raucous Caucus Tango!

Divine Sass:
Lillias White Sings Sarah Vaughan
Fri, Nov 12 @ 7PM
Tony Award-winning singer Lillias White and her trio return to NJPAC for a tribute to the legendary Sarah Vaughan.

Chris Botti
Fri, Nov 12 @ 8PM
Grammy Award-winning trumpeter Chris Botti has become the largest-selling American instrumental artist.

Dianne Reeves plus Artemis
featuring Renee Rosnes,
Anat Cohen, Ingrid Jensen,
Nicole Glover, Noriko Ueda
and Allison Miller
Sat, Nov 13 @ 8PM
An evening with the extraordinary women of jazz!

Dorthaan’s Place:
Cyrus Chestnut
Sun, Nov 14 @ 11AM & 1PM
Enjoy the piano stylings of Cyrus Chestnut during brunch at NICO Kitchen + Bar.

Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition
Sun, Nov 14 @ 3PM
Celebrate the 10th annual competition with special performances by jazz greats Christian McBride and Dianne Reeves.

A Celebration of George Wein
Sat, Nov 20 @ 7:30PM

Maria Schneider Orchestra
Sun, Nov 21 @ 3 & 7PM
“Revelatory, riveting, daring and beyond categorization”: NEA Jazz Master Maria Schneider’s orchestra takes the stage.

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ENCORE

CALVIN HILL

By Anders Griffen

Bassist Calvin Hill grew up in Bridgeport, CT in a family with a passion for music. He enjoyed listening to the greats on record at home and at concerts at the Pearl Bailey, Duke Ellington, Ray Charles and James Brown. By the end of high school, he started to think about becoming a professional musician.

“It was a dream. I said, man, if I could… I know I’m not going to be good enough, but I’m going to keep trying.”

It wasn’t long before he was accompanying the likes of Billy Eckstine, Mel Tormé, Mose Allison and John Lee Hooker before tenure with leaders such as McCoy Tyner, Pharoah Sanders, Max Roach, Michael Carvin and Joanne Brackeen, among others.

Hill started out on the trumpet in grammar school, but the band director switched him to trombone. He didn’t like it, but wanted to play music so badly that he stuck with it until he was able to switch to saxophone. Having played for some years at this point, he was able to read pretty well and got an opportunity to join some local big band rehearsals. This led to his personal discovery of the bass. “I was playing in the section and noticing the bass player. I liked the rhythms and the sounds of the drums and I noticed that [the bass had] a beautiful sound and it was kind of like the drums with some melody. His high school band director was delighted to have him switch to bass and set him up with an instrument and a teacher. “It was kind of from there point on (laughs), school ended (laughs), academics ended. Music totally took over my life.”

The local Boys’ Club had trumpetist Steve Furtado visiting from New York. Hill was sure to be there and ended up learning about Berklee College of Music, where he matriculated in 1963. His father covered his tuition provided that he majored in music education so that he had something to fall back on should he not make it as a professional, which was still a fantasy that seemed out of reach to the young Hill. However, his commitment was steady and by the time he had been playing for many years with Norman Simmons. He was definitely one of the greats.

While still in high school, Hill was offered the Sun Ra Arkestra and made several recordings. Not much else

is known about him in that period as so many of his bandmates have passed on. From his discography in the mid ’50s, along with his tenure with Sun Ra, Sproles was also with the Red Rodney-Ira Sullivan group and recorded with Stan Getz/Chet Baker and Simmons. By 1960 he had recorded with Johnny Griffin (The Big Soul Band, Riverside) and played in Muhlu Richard Abrams’ Experimental Band. He was very close with blind pianist Chris Anderson, who was also from Chicago and only a year apart in age, and they remained friends for many years. He also married around then as his pianist Chris Anderson, who was also from Chicago associates, including Clifford Jordan, and became very busy according to Williams’ recollections. Sproles worked with Williams, in fact, off and on the music business, but he was the bandstand until he did get a recording contract and there may have been a connection with the timing.

Once in New York he worked some with other Chicago associates, including Clifford Jordan, and became very busy according to Williams’ recollections. Sproles worked with Williams, in fact, off and on the music business, but he was the bandstand until he did get a recording contract and there may have been a connection with the timing.

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Harris’ Jazz Cultural Theater around then, where his friend Anderson often was and Williams remembers that Harris asked him to do a live recording there for Uptown. “I thought Victor was supposed to be on that, but the talent came and there was no Victor. So Rufus Reid luckily made the date. I don’t think I ever saw Victor again after that. He just kind of disappeared.”

Sproles became a Jazz Messenger in 1964, joining fellow Sun Ra alumnus John Gilmore, and toured and recorded with Art Blakey for about six months. After Gilmore left the band, alto saxophonist Gary Bartz joined the Messengers: “I joined in 1965,” recalled Bartz. “John [Hicks] and Lee [Morgan] recommended me after I heard that John [Gilmore] was leaving. It was actually my dad, who owned a jazz club in Baltimore, who first told me he thought Gilmore was getting ready to leave. He’d heard it. Victor was the bassist. I remember that we drove right across the country to Seattle. Art and Lee flew out and the rest of us had to drive. Victor shared the driving duties with the roadie John Smith. He got paid extra for that. We drove straight from the airport to the daughter’s mother drove with us, the only lady friend on the trip. We did two weeks in Seattle, two weeks in San Francisco and two weeks in L.A. with that band. We also made a recording, Soul Finger (Limelight).” That LP was Bartz’ recording debut.

Bartz remembers that Harris had been tough (CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)
As of this writing, Triptides has issued 11 albums, all on cassette, including saxophonist Travis LaPlante/ drummer Jason Nazary’s Tunnel to Lights; Typ by the trio of saxophonist Sam Weinberg, singer (and writer) John McCowen and bassist Henry Fraser; Luke Stewart’s Works for Electric Bass Guitar; Empty And/Or Church of Plenty by TAK with bassist Brandon Lopez; and Death in the Gilded Age from the quartet of violinist Gabby Fluke-Mogul, violinist Joanna Mattrey and guitarists Matteo Liberatore and Ava Mendoza. The most recent release is Steve Long’s solo organ album Code-Talker, drone-based music that hints at Olivier Messiaen and Philip Glass. The label’s aesthetic focus is clear: improvised music that draws from many formal traditions but occupies the floating, international space where musicians come together to create something brand new, on the spot and of the moment.

The style of the music comes directly out of Baldwin, his playing and connections. Like pretty much every label, it is grounded in what he himself knows and likes. He describes how it all began: “In the beginning, I basically made a short list of folks I wanted to reach out to. It was the beginning of the pandemic. Then the Bandcamp Fridays started and everyone was releasing all this amazing music digitally. As someone who loves physical media, I thought it would be great to have stuff like this on tape. Almost everyone responded and they were excited to put out music. I thought it would be two or three albums, but it was eight or nine and it turned out I had a catalogue for the year.” Triptides is now sufficiently established that these musicians are sending in demos. “We’ve been getting submissions,” Baldwin points out, “and I love getting them, whether I know the person or not, and I listen to everything. And so there’s much great stuff, we can’t even work with everything, we’re already set for late into next year.” Code-Talker was the label’s first solicited submission.

What about the unusual name? Baldwin explains that it comes from “one of my favorite books, by British writer Ann Quin. Triptides (1972) was her last novel. It’s the one most parallel to the music we’re putting out. She was part of the experimental literature scene, very non-linear and strange. There’s something very musical, I think, about her work.”

The label is mostly a one-man operation. By necessity, it will stay small and that is okay with him. “Just on a logistical level,” he says, “I’m doing most of the work. My wife is helping out with a lot of the design and a lot of other things. But even at this level, it is a lot of work. I want to put as much behind each release as I think they deserve. I want to keep showcasing things that in this world of experimental music is even at the edge of things.” The consistent musical quality and presentation of the label shows that Baldwin is putting quite a lot behind each release.

“I don’t think of this as a business. That would be a different thing,” he continues, “I want everything to be as visible as possible, but there’s only so much we can do and I want to get out this strange music to the people who love it.” Long’s album is an example: “That’s a unique record. I was drawn to it and decided to put it out within a minute of listening to it. I want to put stuff out that I imagine would have trouble finding a home elsewhere.”

That is the tale of Triptides. The organ album is something “that feels really unique,” Baldwin says.

(The continuing page 13)
Some of my friends and I would show up at the rehearsals and check out the writers and soloists. So I had experienced his writing but didn’t get involved with him until I was a student at NYU. He put up sign-up sheets that said, “I will be in on Tuesday from 3 to 6” and you could put your name in there and do whatever you wanted with him, play duos, talk about arranging or composition. I couldn’t believe that other students there didn’t take advantage of it more. I put my name in whenever I saw an open space. We ended up playing duos a lot, which was fantastic. At the same time, he taught arguably the best college class that I ever took. It was called Jazz Orchestra. He would talk about his compositional techniques, how he comes up with new harmonic and rhythmic material. I still have a whole binder with stuff that would last me with inspiration for the rest of my days. When he was there, he brought in first-class sub like Ed Neumeister or Richard Shemara. They would play some of their pieces for large ensemble and talk about their approaches. It was a phenomenal class and he’s one of the great writers and teachers.

Kenny Werner was completely different. I studied composition with him; he’s very creative and the first lesson was by far the most important one. I could have walked away from lessons after that. What he asked the guitarist and me to do for the first few minutes was to sit down, grab an empty sheet of music paper and a pencil and for the next five to seven minutes, I want you to keep the pencil moving. Don’t think about what you’re writing, don’t try to make sense of it, don’t try to react to anything you’ve written before. You can write notes, rhythm, chords” and that’s what we did. He showed us techniques to generate material with what was on the page. It could be a three- or four-note motif. He might say, “I like the intervals, what would happen if we put those in the bass? Here are some chord qualities, how about we assign those chord qualities to those three or four notes?” Then he would play through it and say, “What if I played it backwards? How about taking every other chord down a half-step? That’s nice.” With that, random, way, we would find things that resonated with us. Some things that resonated with him didn’t resonate with me and it was a great way to learn. That brief period when the material was generated in a random fashion. That one exercise completely liberated my writing.

In that regard, you seem open to writing for particular musicians or does the composition come first?

MW: It depends. There’s a track on the new album (My Astorian Queen), “Solitude”, which I wrote in the pandemic after the lockdown, April 2020. A friend had sent me some photos from the Flensburg Fjord, the area where I grew up. It comes in from the Baltic Sea, beautiful beaches and landscape. You see Denmark in the background. I was inspired by those images. I was feeling a little blue and couldn’t visit my family. My folks are still over there. I wrote this piece while being influenced by all those emotions. One of the trademarks of a really good piece is that you can apply it to many different musical situations. It will work in a duo, arranged for orchestra, with a quartet, a horn player, with a guitarist playing the melody, and that doesn’t happen too often. Some pieces you write, record and move on while others will stay with you for a long time and keep coming back. I think that’s one of those pieces. I obviously had Scott Robinson on bass saxophone in mind for my arrangement of “Broadway”.

TNYCJR: When you write for small ensembles, are you writing for particular musicians or does the composition come first?

TNYCJR: How did you meet pianist Bill Mays?

MW: Bill and I both appeared at the North Sea Jazz Festival, I believe it was 1991. I was playing with a quartet and Bill invited me to perform with him. We played with a vocalist, Silvia Drost, who was the grand dame of jazz singing in Germany. Bill was with Ray Drummond and heard me. Right after the festival he was asked to tour with an American trombonist living in Hamburg, Jerry Tilton. He asked, “In case you’ve not asked a bassist yet, I just heard this young German guy at the North Sea Jazz Festival and why don’t you ask him to play this tour with us?” We ended up driving together and really hooked up. We still refer to it as the “tour from hell”. We’d play in Munich one night and Hamburg the next night, which is like Chicago, then New York City. We started playing trio concerts together in Germany with the late drummer Keith Copeland. I recorded my very first album with those two, Gone With The Wind.

TNYCJR: When you lead dates, you seem open to others’ originals and arrangements. I recall that you also didn’t solo on several songs in your CD Light Blue. Do you write for particular musicians or does the composition come first?

TNYCJR: Other musicians do you consider influences or helped you focus in the right direction?

MW: When I look at him, I wanted to be as perfect and do these things. He showed us techniques to generate material with what was on the page. It could be a three- or four-note motif. He might say, “I like the intervals, what would happen if we put those in the bass? Here are some chord qualities, how about we assign those chord qualities to those three or four notes?” Then he would play through it and say, “What if I played it backwards? How about taking every other chord down a half-step? That’s nice.” With that, random, way, we would find things that resonated with us. Some things that resonated with him didn’t resonate with me and it was a great way to learn. That brief period when the material was generated in a random fashion. That one exercise completely liberated my writing.

MW: I feel that the concept of the album is mine. I’m bringing in some of the arrangements or my own tunes, I feel that there is already enough of me represented in that piece, I don’t necessarily have to play a solo. I really try to see the whole picture, not just me trying to produce myself. [Drummer] Matt Wilson is such an inspiration for the rest of my days. When he was there, he brought in first-class sub like Ed Neumeister or Richard Shemara. They would play some of their pieces for large ensemble and talk about their approaches. It was a phenomenal class and he’s one of the great writers and teachers.

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MW: When we met, Maria, my wife of 24 years, had this cute little apartment in Astoria, Queens, more or less right under the Amtrak train. When I visited her there, the first time and the train came by, the cabinets and everything was shaking. I couldn’t believe it but it’s amazing what you can get used to. So I wrote this piece for her in the summer of ’96 when she turned 30. I recorded it and sent her the recording, because, in the meantime, she had broken up with me. It was for her and the times we spent there in Astoria, where our first son was born. When I think about pieces that have something to do with these 25 years in New York, this one had to be on the album.

There are a couple of other older pieces. “Out in PA” refers to Pennsylvania. Mays owned a place in the Poconos. That’s one of the things Maria and I did together, spending time with Bill Mays and his then-wife Thalia. I was mesmerized by the vibe and atmosphere there. It’s pristine and something I’d never experienced before. I think of it as one of the central pieces. I used a shout chorus that I’d written for a small big band at the Jazz Baltica festival. We recorded it and it was “Local Space Waltz”. I was listening to it before I even met him, I wanted to include it and do it as a duo because of how much he means to me. When we played it on Jul. 4th, it was something else to play this piece after all these years. The opener is a Thad Jones piece “Mean What You Say” and it refers to my subbing in the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, an experience you can only have in New York City. Every title has a connection to my time here and the people I’ve shared sounds with.

For more information, visit martinvind.com. Wind’s My Astorian Queen project is at Cal Bar Dog Nov. 18th and Mezzrow Nov. 19th. Wind is also at Birdland Theater Nov. 12th as part of a Frank Kimbrough tribute and Birdland Nov. 23-27th with Ken Peplowski. See Calendar. Recommended Listening:

- Martin Wind–Bill Mays–“Gone With The Wind” (September, 1993)
- Martin Wind–“Light Blue” (October, 2000)
- Jeff Gorgosz/Frank Kimbrough/Martin Wind–“Conversations with Owls” (November, 2009)
- Martin Wind–“Light Blue” (Laika, 2010)
- Martin Wind–Phillip Catherine/Ack Van Rooyen–“White Noise” (Laika, 2019)
- Martin Wind–My Astorian Queen (Laika, 2021)
Hill has been living in Englewood, New Jersey for 30 years now. He retired from teaching several years ago but continues to focus on his playing today. Next summer he is looking forward to the 10-year anniversary of the “Jazz Under the Stars” series with the Englewood Public Library. “Last year things kind of loosened up in September and we did four concerts for the month of September. So, we actually have not missed a year in nine years. I think we started [with] four, maybe six concerts and it turned out to be the most popular program that they have and it expanded up to ten concerts. We start in June and [go] to the end of August. It is an educated crowd, they know what they’re listening to. The people love the music.”

Recommended Listening:
• Pharoah Sanders–Village of the Pharoahs (Impulse, 1971-73)
• McCoy Tyner–Song For My Lady (Milestone, 1972)
• Max Roach–Pictures In A Frame (Soul Note, 1979)
• Hugh Lawson–Colour (Soul Note, 1983)
• Calvin Hill–I Can’t Give You Anything But Love (Arichi Music, 1996)
• Michael Cochrane–Minor Matrix (SteepleChase, 2000)

Recommended Listening:
• Sun Ra And His Arkestra–Sound of Joy (Delmark, 1956)
• Lee Morgan–The Rumproller (Blue Note, 1965)
• Andrew Hill–Dance With Death (Blue Note, 1968)
• Clark Terry–Ain’t Misbehavin’ (Pablo, 1979)
• Clifford Jordan, Von Freeman, Cy Touff, Norman Simmons, Victor Sproles, Wilbur Campbell–Hyde Park After Dark (Bee Hive, 1981)
• Vernel Fournier–Trio (TCB, 1990)

(ENCORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

album. Talk about high level, this is unbelievable. I had no idea he was going to do anything like this. Max had a way of putting you in a state. At the end of just about every night I played with him, I said, ‘what am I going to do tomorrow [if I] can make it through tonight?’ He put such demands on you and made you do things that you didn’t think that you could possibly do.”

While working with these artists in the ’70s, Hill recalls, “the direction of the music and the artists was searching higher consciousness, higher existence, higher levels of culture. It was going way beyond entertainment. It was really a message in the music. [A concert] was a total experience. You weren’t being entertained; the audience was part of the performance. That’s probably one of the biggest things that I miss. Back then, it was more like everybody was on the same wavelength, striving for something more than just commerceism or making money. It was…a total commitment to spirituality, or a higher existence.”

Reflecting on the significance of tradition, Hill says, “You’re handed down a heritage from your family. You inherit characteristics, behaviors, appearance. I’m from the Hill family and that means that there’s certain characteristics that would be different from the Smith family. In jazz there’s a family, there’s behaviors that are handed down, musically. I feel to be in the jazz family you have to have those jazz characteristics that have been handed down, that have been kept in the family, that have made it a family, that make it what it is. I think of the people I’ve been fortunate enough to play with, they’re like my forefathers, like my family. They handed the tradition to me and I try to pass it on to my kids.”
George Wein, NEA Jazz Master and famed impresario, responsible for the Newport, New Orleans, Playboy, Schlitz, Kool and JVC jazz festivals, among others, and whose Festival Productions presented thousands of concerts through the decades, died Sep. 13th at 95.

Wein was born Oct. 3rd, 1925 in Lynn, MA. He took up the piano as a child and played around Boston during his college days. It was in that town that Wein got his start as a producer, both running the Storyville club and its sister record label. As Wein told our own George Kanzler in 2006, “Playing is my raison d’etre for being in the business. And I enjoyed playing very much, but I knew I wasn’t going to be Art Tatum and found out I had a good head for organizing. So, the next thing I knew, I was a producer, but I still play.”

Wein would spend the next seven decades balancing his two loves. He released albums under his own name sporadically for Atlantic, Impulse and Concord Jazz—on the latter label with his Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars (“I could hire the musicians I wanted to play with and...I get a lot of gigs, because people like the idea. It was a good selling name”)—and worked as a sideman on dates by Sidney Bechet, Pee Wee Russell, Bill Will Davidon, Ruby Braff and others. Concurrently, he created and expanded the template of the modern jazz festival, beginning in 1954 with the Newport Jazz Festival, the first U.S. outdoor jazz festival, and continuing in 1970 with the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and many others under various corporate sponsorship labels and in both American and international cities.

Wein was pragmatic, a key trait in jazz longevity, and presented different acts at different festivals for different audiences. As he told Kanzler, “It’s very, very difficult you know. I mean there are very few attractions that can sell Carnegie Hall; you’ve got to cross over into different forms of music every so often. And there are only a few jazz players that can fill the big halls. It’s very difficult... But the Newport festival will be mostly pure jazz and we live and die with it up there.”

Wein’s activities have also included philanthropy with the Jazz Foundation of America as well as spotlighting another form of African-American art with the establishment—with his late wife—of The George and Joyce Wein Collection of African-American Art, pieces from which were displayed at Wein’s alma mater Boston University in 2005-06.

Wein received numerous accolades for his work: he was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master in 2005; was honored by two U.S. Presidents; awarded the Legion of Honor by the French government; and received several honorary degrees. In 2003, he published (with now-noted jazz critic Nate Chinen) his autobiography, Myself Among Others: A Life in Music (Da Capo Press).

Lonnie Smith, organ player and NEA Jazz Master, who had a seminal run of albums on Blue Note in the second half of the ‘60s and whose work both inspired future organ players and myriad hip-hop artists who sampled his work, died Sep. 28th at 79 from pulmonary fibrosis.

Smith, who later appended the honorific Dr. to his name and was known for his flowing beard and turban, was born in Lackawanna in upstate New York on Jul. 3rd, 1942. His early experience in music informed the soulful quality of his professional work. As he told Terrell Holmes for this gazette in 2003, “My mother and I used to sing around the house. And my aunts and uncles and cousins, we’d sit around playing gospel music. The joy was always there. It was always in my blood.” After being part of a local singing group, Smith was given an organ by a local music store owner and was soon playing around Buffalo.

His break came when he joined guitarist George Benson’s band in 1966—“I played my last gig in Buffalo and we went to his mother’s house,” he told Holmes. “We practiced two songs, ‘Clockwise’ and ‘Secret Love’, and we were off.”—which brought him south to New York City. He recorded on Benson’s 1966 Columbia album It’s Uptown and the same label released his debut album, Finger Lickin’ Good Soul Organ, the following year, which also saw him appearing on alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson’s Alligator Boogaloo [sic] and Blue Note. This led to five albums for the label through 1970, most notably 1968’s Think! and 1969’s Turning Point. After his Blue Note run ended, Smith made albums for Kudu, Groove Merchant, Black & Blue, Palmetto, Criss Cross, Pilgrimage and other labels before returning to Blue Note in 2016. In March of this year, he released Breathe, his last recording.

He was also in demand as a guest artist, compiling credits since the ‘70s with Jimmy Ponder, Jimmy McGriff, Ronnie Cuber, Eric Gale, Joe Beck, Richie Hart, Gerry Eastman, Donaldson once more, Jacov Jackson, Bobby Broom, Ed Cherry, Karl Denson, Akira Tana, Kresten Osgood, Ray Brown, Jazz Orchestra of Concertgebouw and Norah Jones. He was introduced, albeit indirectly, to a new audience via hip-hop, his songs being sampled by A Tribe Called Quest, Wu-Tang Clan, Brand Nubian and other groups, about which he told Holmes, “They’re using these songs that we did years ago and they’re coming up with some pretty nice things. Some of them, I won’t say all of them. My hat’s off as long as people are halfway musical.” In a flip, in 2003 Smith recorded an entire album of songs by alternative rocker Beck, Bogaloo to Beck (Scufflin’).

Smith never lost his spirituality. As he told Holmes about his career, “I didn’t do it to be popular or to be rich. You’re already rich when you play. It’s a gift from God. I was blessed and you never forget that.”
RUTH CAMERON HADEN (Jun. 4th, 1947 - Sep. 11th, 2021) The wife of late bassist Charlie Haden was his manager and produced his albums (occasionally adding vocals) for Verve, Universal, Naim and EmArcy, plus led two sessions as a singer in the late ’90s for EmArcy. Cameron Haden died Sep. 11th at 74.


ELEKTRA KURTIS (Mar. 16th, ??? - Sep. 16th, 2021) The Polish-born violinist worked with Steve Coleman, Henry Threadgill, Craig Harris, Butch Morris, Jason Kao Hwang, Adam Rudolph and Joseph Daley, led her Ensemble Elektra for three new millennium albums on Milo and co-founded the New York Jazz Philharmonic. Kurtis died Sep. 16th at an unknown age.

GEORGE MRAZ (Sep. 9th, 1944 - Sep. 16th, 2021) The Czech-born, longtime U.S.-based bassist did not lead many albums in a career beginning in Eastern Europe in the mid ’60s—this not counting many duo albums of which he was one-half with the likes of Walter Norris, Roland Hanna, Jimmy Rowles, Richie Beirach and Adam Makowicz—only a handful since the early ’90s on Arta, Milestone and Multisonic, the result of being too busy with hundreds of credits with SHQ, Jan Hammer, Oscar Peterson, Charlie Mariano, Steve Kuhn, Horacee Arnold, Billy Harper, Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Pepper Adams, Frank Foster, Zoot Sims, Jon Faddis, Grover Washington Jr., Carol Sloane, Kenny Drew, Jack Wilkins, Kenny Burrell, Art Farmer, Lionel Hampton, Tommy Flanagan, John Scofield, Mike Nock, John Abercrombie, Hank Jones, Bob Brookmeyer, Scott Hamilton, Stephane Grappelli, Art Pepper, Attila Zoller, Harold Ashby, Mark Murphy, Elvin Jones, Larry Coryell, Clark Terry, Stan Getz, Warne Marsh, Dexter Gordon, Phil Woods, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Dizzy Gillespie, Eddie Harris, Nick Brignola, Andy Laverne, Freddy Cole, Norma Winstone, Helen Merrill, Archie Shepp, Barry Harris, Joe Lovano, David Hazeltine, Billy Childs, Tete Montoliu, Arturo O’Farrill, Jim Hall, George Cables, Don Friedman, Ted Rosenthal, Roberta Gambarini, Kenny Barron, John DiMartino, Yelena Eckemoff and many others along with membership in New York Jazz Quartet, Quest and Keystone Trio and Keystone Quartet. Mraz died Sep. 16th at 77. [see an In Memoriam tribute on pgs. 16-17]

RUTH OLAY (Jul. 1st, 1924 - Sep. 3rd, 2021) The singer had albums from the mid ’50s-mid ’60s on Top Rank International, EmArcy, Mercury, United Artists, ABC and Everest and then again in the mid ’80s on Laurel. Olay died Sep. 3rd at 97.

MIKE RENZI (Apr. 28th, 1941 - Sep. 29th, 2021) The pianist and Musical Director for Sesame Street from 2000-10, was also Musical Director for Mel Tormé and Peggy Lee and had credits with numerous singers since the ’70s like Ann Burton, Meredith D’Ambrosio, Blossom Dearie, Lena Horne, Hilary Kole, Mark Murphy, Annie Ross, Carol Sloane and Grady Tate. Renzi died Sep. 29th at 80.

NISSE SANDSTRÖM (Mar. 13th, 1942 - Sep. 8th, 2021) The Swedish saxophonist had albums on Odeon, Phontastic, Dragon and Moserobie and sideman credits under Red Mitchell, Sture Nordin, Phontastic Dixieland Band, Ruth Olay, Rolf Ericson, Bertil Lövgren, Monica Zetterlund and others. Sandström died Sep 8th at 79.

PHIL SCHAAP (Apr. 8th, 1951 - Sep. 7th, 2021) The radio personality, historian, educator, producer, Charlie Parker authority and 2021 NEA Jazz Master got his start via his jazz historian father, went on to curate expansive jazz programming at Columbia University’s WKCR, starting from his student days up until his death, taught jazz history at Jazz at Lincoln Center, Juilliard, Columbia and Princeton and worked on archival albums for Savoy, Verve, EmArcy, Mercury, United Artists, ABC and Everett and other labels in both production and documentary roles. Schaap died Sep. 7th at 70.

MACIEJ STRZELCZYK (1959 - Sep. 28th, 2021) The Polish violinist worked with countrymen Kazimierz Jonkisz, Zbigniew Namysłowski, Tomasz Stanko, Włodzimierz Nahorny and Jarek Smietana, was a member of Sets Off and Jazz Trio + and made records under his own name for Polonia, Pomaton and Not Two. Strzelczyk died Sep. 28th at 62.
I played on and off with George Mraz since we met in Munich in 1967. Many many tours, club gigs all over the world and over 40 recordings with him. He was the best of the best.

Besides great tone, perfect intonation, deep swing, read anything first time, brilliant with his bow, George had a great open warm musical spirit. He had an abundance of love in his playing besides the amazing skills. He was a very great soloist and we played in every genre, from bebop to freely improvised compositional improvisations.

He was my spirit brother and I had the honour of playing in his band for the first time when he returned to Prague after him leaving just before the Russians rolled in with their tanks in 1968. I miss him and his extraordinary playing every day.

— RICHIE BEIRACH, PIANO

In thinking about playing with George Mraz the first thing that comes to mind is trust—trust beyond the notes. You could always trust that real music was going to be made and a real groove was going to be happening. And you’ll probably hear something to surprise you and inspire you. His presence was always a plus on and off the bandstand. He had a sense of humor that always kept me smiling. He will be missed.

— GEORGE CABLES, PIANO

For me George Mraz was one of the greatest musicians and bassists in the history of the music. I had the great fortune to know, travel the globe and create music with George in some incredible moments through the years in quartet settings with the likes of Hank Jones and Paul Motian/Lewis Nash, Grand Slam with Jim Hall and Lewis Nash and trio with Al Foster in particular.

George’s vibrant personality, sound and ideas will live on forever. He was well documented and lived a blessed life of love and music. He was everyone’s favorite! God Bless George Mraz.

— JOE LOVANO, SAXOPHONE

I was shocked to hear of George Mraz’ death. It is so sad that one of the best bass players in the world has passed away. I knew George and played with him many times in clubs, jazz festivals and studios.

George Mraz didn’t just play the bass, but rather delicately pirouetted through the music, provided a sensitive lyricism that transcended accompaniment and made himself a true creative partner. I will miss the wonderful sound of his bass and the way he played.

— ADAM MAKOWICZ, PIANO

I met George Mraz in 1995, both of us members of the Slide Hampton Big Band. From 1998-2013, George and I recorded seven CDs together, mostly with great percussionist Billy Drummond. We did several tours over the years, some with my trio and others with his quartet.

George Mraz was an incredible musician and a stellar bassist, possibly the greatest of his generation. He personified perfection: perfect sound, perfect intonation, perfect basslines, perfect solos and always perfectly swinging.

I am sure I speak for the entire jazz world when I say George Mraz will be greatly missed, always remembered and very dearly loved. RIP George!

— DAVID HAZELTINE, PIANO
I had the pleasure of spending a lot of time over the years playing with George. We played in a lot of different bands together like Stan Getz and Tommy Flanagan, just to name a couple.

Every neighborhood around the world in terms of music and the musicians is filled with special, Eastern European classically trained bass players in jazz are a case in point. As the old expression goes “it must be the water!” We all know it takes more than just the water.

George was one of the most consummate musicians I ever played with. His consistency when the count off announced ‘here we go’ defied nature. What I mean is on the road—tired, doing one-nighters, jet-lagged, sleep-deprived, etc.—it didn’t matter. Once he and his bass came together, it was on.

On a humorous real-life note, George had that Eastern European classical prowess on the bow but didn’t get to play it with Stan Getz because Stan didn’t like the bow and he would say, “no bowing in my bow.”

Of all the great musicians that I have been lucky and blessed to play with George Mraz is certainly one of them. Of course, I will miss him dearly.

— VICTOR LEWIS, DRUMS

I remember meeting George Mraz in an NYC jazz club in 1971. I was had been alerted by European jazz aficionados that there was a young man heading our way coming out of conservatory in Prague and that we should pay attention! Hearing and grace into my memories is when I heard cellist Mstislav Rostropovich who was such a rave in Europe. Those same feelings came back when I heard George Mraz.

As a singer, I was always so privileged to have him on the bandstand with me. I usually worked with three musicians and George would always be my choice as one of those three. Certain conversations with him have remained with me throughout my life. I remember his explaining that he never really “practiced” jazz, that he had been playing so much in conservatory that there was no time left for “practice” of anything else other than his classical repertoire. He said how, in the studio, he would just hear the standard jazz tunes from the bandstand and learned that repertoire from simply listening. To learn to play jazz, he listened. That was the music of George Mraz.

— CAROL SLOANE, VOCALS

I had the great honor and pleasure to play with George Mraz on a few Japan tours with Helen Merrill. Subsequently, George played on two of my CDs. Playing with George was always a thrilling experience. He was the consummate bass player; great time, great feel, great notes and intonation and he could at once be extremely supportive and also was a virtuoso soloist. George was a fantastic accompanist and fantastic duo partner. As advanced as he was musically, playing with George was easy. Everything he played sounded right.

He also had a very dry sense of humor and we shared a particularly humorous and memorable experience playing a fancy private party where Sean Connery was attending and decided to sit in and steal with us—not successfully. We laughed the whole trip back and I got to hear George’s attempts to imitate Connery’s signature Scottish accent, with Czech overtones, of course!

— TED ROSENTHAL, PIANO

George Mraz was quite something. He covered all the bases. An extraordinary and very versatile bassist. Many well-known musicians wanted to work with George. Always in demand, he was able to fit in any context.

He had worked with a lot of different people before he was brought to my attention many, many years ago dating back to the early ’70s when we first played and recorded together on my album Live in New York (Cobblestone, 1972). I felt it prestigious that he agreed to record with me so early in my career.

I can’t give high enough praise to George, who was influenced early on by Scott LaFaro, one of my closest friends back in the day. George, like Scott, was also in a league of his own.

— STEVE KUHN, PIANO

George Mraz was a part of several what I will call “firsts” in my career: it was with him that for the first time I played with a lot of master-level pianists including Tommy Flanagan, McCoy Tyner, Hank Jones, Kenny Drew, Tete Montoliu, Don Friedman, Kenny Barron, Cyrus Chestnup. For some reason in that pianist world, I played with a lot of masters in my career and many to most were with George the first—very near the first time.

One of the most beautiful things about that as a young musician playing for the first time with someone at that star level is you could be thinking, “what can I bring to the table with this master who has already played with so many that probably more than me and I hope I can help out.” What I now realize is that we are part of a continuum and they are the connectors, significant that in that they connect us with what came before them and help us as those who are going to follow. And I was notably helped by the fact I had an established bassist like George who was there to assist me in my initial interaction with these many piano masters, making it as smooth and rewarding an experience as it could be.

My comfort level, and years of playing, with him really helped benefit any situation we could be as the rhythm section. You know, I actually hadn’t thought about this and all these “firsts” until he was gone.

— LEWIS NASH, DRUMS

Over the three decades that I worked as a producer and presenter with my dear friend George Mraz for dozens of memorable recording sessions and live performances, I was always deeply moved by the completely heartfelt and ceaselessly inventive lyricism that informed every note he played for any musical setting or program of which he was an invaluable part.

Hank Jones told me several times during the numerous gigs and record dates that they collaborated on, “you know, Todd, George Mraz is my favorite bass player because he always plays exactly what the music needs and absolutely no more and no less. The level of strong support he gives all of us on the bandstand or in the studio makes it both more fun and a lot easier to stretch out.” What I now realize was that Flanagan felt the same way about George’s totally empathetic and melodic accompaniment: “Always the best notes and nicest sense of song, George has this very special kind of musical intelligence and taste.”

George Mraz always remained supremely in tune with the song in his heart while most lovingly serving the music at hand.

— VICTOR LEWIS, DRUMS

George was a real nice guy, that’s number one. He was also a first-rate bassist—one of the most swinging! As everyone probably knows, many referred to him as “The bad Czech”. He was so creative whatever the groove was in, whether in or out, that anyone who played with him and said it was just a sound and didn’t say intonation he had. It was really a pleasure to play with him. He will definitely be missed.

— KENNY BARRON, PRODUCER

We made a lot of records together, George and I. So many records, and so many stories. But there is one I remember most when I think of George, who was famous for a bunch of things. But he was particularly famous and popular with certain musicians because he played so in tune, like no other bass player and I’m talking about NO other bass player! I was teasing him about that and he was saying that he really didn’t subscribe to that. He said: “I know a lot of people say that but, really, it’s not that important.” And so he told me this story that happened about 15 years ago with the classical violinist Itzhak Perlman. A friend of George was George’s then cellist for a while and Perlman and invited him to come to the rehearsal. So he went and sat there by himself. And as soon as there was a break, Perlman, who was listening with the Orchestra, walked out into the audience and said, “Guys, come see this!”

“You’re George Mraz, aren’t you? You probably noticed we were playing a little out of tune?” Mraz replied, “As a matter of fact I did notice. I do think you’re playing a little sharp.” Perlman said, “You’re not playing too sharp. It’s just that when I listen to the classical bassists I tune a little sharp and because I was doing that with the Orchestra, I was trying to follow. And I was notably helped by the fact I had an established bassist like George who was there to assist me in my initial interaction with these many piano masters, making it as smooth and rewarding an experience as it could be.

My comfort level, and years of playing, with him really helped benefit any situation we could be as the rhythm section. You know, I actually hadn’t thought about this and all these “firsts” until he was gone.

— BILLY HART, DRUMS

The first time I heard George was on Tommy Flanagan’s Eclipsio (Enja, 1977). I was new on the scene then and I distinctly remember buying that record and having it until after getting off a gig with Lee Konitz before getting home to play it. George’s in-tune playing, technique and time on that record was outstanding and he fit in so well with Tommy and Elvin Jones. Remembering where I first met him, I used to go check out Tommy’s trio with Al Foster and after Al had quit in the middle of a week, that was the first time I played with George. From the very beginning, it was amazing and a lot of fun. I played with him in Tommy’s trio for two to three years and we released the Jazz Poet album. Tommy and George: that’s just the strongest bass and piano team I ever played with! These two guys playing together was right, right, right. They had a strong bond and they were so strong, they would together step on my head and keep going. In terms of harmony, George could hear wet paint drying; any way Tommy would go harmonically George would go right with him. George was an amazing musician and an amazing person, very nice and soft-spoken though funny as hell, and an amazing player to work with as his musicianship was incredible.

— TADD BARKAN, PRODUCER

Ken Nash
Painters Winter
William Parker (AUM Fidelity)

Re-Union
William Parker and Matthew Shipp (RogueArt)
Music Freqs Our Souls, Vol. 1
Francisco Mela (featuring Matthew Shipp and William Parker) (577 Records)

by John Pietaro

To call William Parker an institution of New York new music is a woeful understatement. His presence as a bassist is only matched by his leadership of multiple acclaimed ensembles. As of late his busy schedule had him in the studio with a variety of name artists and for Painters Winter, he stands as a leader among leaders. From the opening notes of “Groove 77” —drummer Hamid Drake’s single-handed 12-stroke triplets —the sounds project the generations through which this music has unfolded. Parker’s bassline unites, accentuates and grows the tapestry of Daniel Carter’s horns and Drake’s kit, latter, as always, casting a veritable symphony within four truly independent limbs. Carter, here on muted trumpet, recalls Miles Davis at his most austere while unmuted he seems to fête lost compatriots Don Cherry and Roy Campbell. But when moving into the omnichord, where he is filled with finesse and mastery, the ensemble’s art becomes most evident. The title cut, however, flips the instrumentation into a new zone, with Carter’s flute matching melodic statements of Parker’s trombonium, a marching valve trombone he has used in tuha-strong brass bands. Setting off these two contrasting lines is Drake playing drum cases, or perhaps plastic trash cans. The combination, extreme percussive staccato, punchy low brass and mellifluous flute is intriguing. But, generally the music on this album runs patiently, carefully, yet with an ear-inviting ease. The sinewy jazz of “Happiness” and “A Curley Russell” and the global “Painted Scarf”, in which Parker’s shakhuhachi enrapratures Carter’s clarinet, is the new standard of free; these vets understand that the music is NOT a race. The album’s title refers to the long cold winter braved in the 2020-21 season, which found Parker as leader, demonstrate an economy of odd decisions over the course of the CD’s 51 minutes. They work quite well together, but they don’t really work like any saxophone trio. The album is full of what seems to be musical quirks and compulsive behavior, reaching an apex in “Born Slumming It”, where Cecilia Lopez joins in on synthesizer. While what, in a sense, is fascinating about the trio tracks is the holes left in the group dynamic, it is just as intriguing to hear those holes filled. The trio has previously recorded with her as the López 4 and Brandon and Cecilia have worked as a duet under the name LópezLopez. Familiarity here seems to breed intent. In this set of recordings there are a lot of ideas to play and a lot of playing with ideas.

For more information, visit aumfidelity.com, roguart.com and 577records.com. Parker is at Bar Baqueux Nov. 3rd with Zoh Anba, Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center Nov. 12th and Scholes Street Studio Nov. 20th with Stephen Gauci. See Calendar.

There was a time, in the infancy of recorded jazz, when musicians were constrained by the few minutes available on each side of a 10" disc. Their artistic descendants have been blessed with the curse of well over an hour of play time—endless hours of streaming if they want it—and the question has become, what to do with it? Recent releases featuring bassist Brandon Lopez, two of them as leader, demonstrate an economy of restraint and no bashfulness about high drama. Cecilia Lopez’ Red (DB) is a stunning exercise in group discipline and exertion, building almost steadily swinging perpetual motion. The development is crucial, building as it does into a crashing series of accents offset by displaced 16th note rests. Shipp’s not-so-secret delving, way back when, into the LES post-punk scene resurfaces here as elbow crashes and tone clusters in dubious battle with Parker’s slapping and pull-offs. The passage opens with a deep bass sound that is bright red, in this case suspended from the high ceiling at Roulette like huge mesh shopping bags. One of the nets holds a drum kit and the other three bass violts, creating acoustic spaces within the amplified field. Lopez crafts the sound from a mixing board with bassist Brandon Lopez and drummer Gerald Cleaver play their own instruments below the ensuared ones. It makes for quite a sight but Red (DB) is most impressive as a composition, doubtfully a noted one but seemingly following a time-based structure. It is an absolutely exciting piece of music. Cleaver is slow to come in but when he does it is in crashing waves. Brandon Lopez lurks within the electronic noise-bed, rising to surprise with unexpected acoustic sounds. It is a loud record, but one filled with subtlety and resolution with a two-steps-forward-three-steps-back tension, a thorough and satisfying realization.

Empty And/Or Church of Plenty, commissioned by and performed with TAK ensemble, comes in two parts, each about 20 minutes, and, presumably, comprising a whole, which, conceivably, is a part of a larger whole that includes Lopez’ 2018 solo recording The Church of Plenty, Empty. In any event, the two sides of the cassette bear the same note (and share no titles with the 2018 tape), so whether it is “and” or it is “or” is less than clear. It works, though, as a single piece in two sections. Rather like Red (DB), it starts in low and slow sonorities and builds, in the second half, to something fairly combustive. Again, like Red (DB), the individual voices are slow to make themselves known, even though they are there from the outset. The ensemble—composed of flute, clarinet, violin, voice, percussion and bass—adheres to the formula wonderfully well, executing unexpectedly quick and clear stops and changes in the second half.

Where the above albums are dark and gradual submersing, Live at Roulette by the López Trio (being Brandon and here with the added diacritical) is closer to a standard group improv outing, although as such it is an unusual one. While nothing particularly suggests the six tracks are intended as a suite (other than a pervasive attitude in the playing), it does come like one, with open spaces given to Cleaver and to saxophonist Steve Baczkowski along the way. There are also plenty of odd decisions over the course of the CD’s 51 minutes. They work quite well together, but they don’t really work like any saxophone trio. The album is full of what seems to be musical quirks and compulsive behavior, reaching an apex in “Born Slumming It”, where Cecilia Lopez joins in on synthesizer. While what, in a sense, is fascinating about the trio tracks is the holes left in the group dynamic, it is just as intriguing to hear those holes filled. The trio has previously recorded with her as the López 4 and Brandon and Cecilia have worked as a duet under the name LopezLopez. Familiarity here seems to breed intent. In this set of recordings there are a lot of ideas to play and a lot of playing with ideas.

For more information, visit relativitchurchrecs.com and triptickstapes.bandcamp.com. Lopez is at The Stone at The New School Nov. 5th and 12th and Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center Nov. 13th. See Calendar.

Amanda Monaco’s am4
20th Anniversary Concert
Amanda Monaco - guitar
Jon Trabagon - tenor
Sean Conly - bass
Jeff Davis - drums
Thursday, November 11, 8pm
Q&A to follow concert
Part of the Lioness* Women In Jazz Concert Series
Flushing Town Hall
137-35 Northern Blvd.
Flushing NY 11354
amandamonaco.com
flushingtownhall.org

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* Women In Jazz Concert Series
The South Bronx Story — a ten-part suite blending social history with persistent memories — offers a rare balance among ambition, information, first-rate artistry and accessibility. Bassist Carlos Henriquez, best known as the anchor of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, takes a top-notch nonet for a visit to his formative stomping grounds. Delivering music full of stirring statements set atop well-conceived architecture, Henriquez raises the bar while distinguishing himself as a master craftsman and storyteller.

Opening right smack in the heart of “The South Bronx”, the spotlight points toward tenor saxophonist Melissa Aldana (who encapsulates Henriquez’ early history with her horn) before shifting to trumpeter Terell Stafford for heated soeloing. That leads to an electrified “Hydrants Love All”, a joyful dance featuring vocalist Jeremy Bosch and recalling carefree days spent playing in open fire hydrants; the blazing “Boro of Fire”, telling the tale of “greedy landlords and corrupt political insiders [who] aided and abetted the burning of buildings” while showcasing several band members including trombonist Marshall Gilkes and the combustible combination of conguero Anthony Almonte and drummer Obed Calvaire; soulful and bluesy “Moses on the Cross”, addressing Robert Almonte and drummer Obed Calvaire; soulful and bluesy “Moses on the Cross”, addressing Robert Flack’s hit “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face”, is taken at Flack’s languorous tempo, Allen providing sensitive, caressingly intimate obbligati and solo. Allen is also outstanding in the same role on a swinging version of Simon’s “You Belong To Me”, also featuring one of Parrott’s rare scat excursions. Parrott’s bass and voice are equally featured on the two duets, with tenor on Burt Bacharach-Hal David’s “This Girl’s In Love With You” (a hit for Dionne Warwick) and guitar on the widely recorded folk song “The Water Is Wide”, also featuring Parrott’s only arco work. Lyrically, plummy pizzicato bass is front and center on the one instrumental (a piano trio) track: Don McLean’s “Vincent (Starry Starry Night)”. For more information, visit arborsrecords.com

Schnellertollermeier (Cuneiform) by George Grella

Schnellertollermeier is a progressive rock band with a similar technique to the Swiss Band Sonar, but a very different sound and style. It is something of an indicator of the richness of this long-derided genre that two bands can build music out of minimal, interlocking rhythms and not only produce such tectonic grooves but also get to far different aesthetic and expressive results. Schnellertollermeier does this as a trio and the name is an amalgam of the members: bassist Andi Schnellmann, guitarist Manuel Troller and percussionist David Meier.

Their latest album, S, is their fourth, following two previous strong releases on Cuneiform, X (2013) and Rights (2016). Across these records, the band seems to have become slightly less experimental, at least on the surface. The grooves on S are more grounded and direct, but this is in part a result of a change in form. On earlier records, the band created an atmosphere, anything from mysterious to industrial, out of which the grooves coalesced. On the new album, you can hear the trio laying down the bricks, lumper, mortar and nails. Like minimalism in general, this is process music. The opening track, “209 Aphelion”, sets out on an intertwined, complex polyrhythms and slowly adds details and extensions as it expands into a rugged rock jam. The meter is tricky to track, but the backbeat is clear, steady and in the pocket. Prog doesn’t get any better.

For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com

Bassist Nicki Parrott, a staple of the neo-swing and mainstream modern jazz scene for almost three decades, has, in recent years, increasingly added vocals to her playing. Earlier vocal albums included standards, a tribute to Blossom Dearie and, earlier this year, a Japanese import, Great 70’s (Venus). This album continues to explore the pop-rock and pop-folk hits of mostly that decade. Parrott is accompanied by pianist (plus Fender Rhodes on 2 of the 12 tracks) Larry Fuller, drummer Lewis Nash, tenor saxophonist Harry Allen and guitarist David Kleinborn. All five appear on only one track, the opener: “I Can See Clearly Now”, Fuller on Fender Rhodes.

Parrott has obvious fondness for these songs, keeping many in the tempos familiar from their hit versions. But she also channels her approach and arrangements, transforms them the way singers and musicians have for generations transformed pop songs of their day into appealing jazz. In the process, a few jazz singers have expanded the parameters by which we award standards status to songs, bringing Hit Parade pop music into the American Standards catalogue long considered exclusively the preserve of pre-rock, mostly Broadway and Hollywood, songwriters.

For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com

For more information, visit cuneiformrecords.com

As eloquently put by Whitney Balliett, jazz is indeed the music of surprise. A trio assembled on short notice, consisting of two already affirmed musicians — master drummer Alan Dawson and bass wonder Harvey S— plus an up-and-coming, ecletic, if not iconoclastic, guitarist named Mike Stern met at the 1369 Club in Cambridge, MA, for three nights, produced exciting music and then disappeared. Their paths probably crossed again, but this is the only document remaining of the trio; as the third evening set ended, the music was “gone in the air”, to paraphrase the late Eric Dolphy. Luckily, tapes existed and only Harvey S’ perseverance and keen awareness that something special happened in those July 1985 nights made that music see the light again.

The late Dawson, eldest of the three, had a long resume and was on faculty at the Berklee College of Music; either in trio or solo he provides a clinic on modern drumming. Harvey S, a Berklee alumnum himself, has a deep, warm sound and over the years would establish himself among the bassists of choice by singers, most notably Sheila Jordan. Last but certainly not least, Stern, another Berklee alumnum, at the time better known as a fusion player, cruises through the hip material, showcasing his typical metallic, edgy sound. For those who have had the good fortune of stumbling on Stern in one of his many evenings at the 55Bar, there is no need to spell it out; for all the others, just listen to his delicate treatment of Horace Silver’s “Peace”, the infectious swing of Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke standard “Like Someone in Love” and what he is able to do in on his original “Breeze”, the somewhat rowdy reaction of the audience being a clear giveaway. But each piece is memorable. From the somewhat spacey treatment of Bronislaw Kaper’s “On Green Dolphin Street” to the lively interpretation of Sigmund Romberg-Oscar Hammerstein II’s “Softly, as in a Morning Sunse” to the bouncy Chick Corea waltz “Windows”, everyone’s play is remarkable.

This is a trio that could have developed into something truly unique had they had the opportunity of playing together for a longer period.

For more information, visit jazzdept.com. Harvey S is at Birdland Nov. 19th-20th with Sheila Jordan. See Calendar.
Though the acoustic bass is often consigned to a supportive role, when featured it reveals remarkable vitality and versatility. Three albums (two bass duos, one bass quartet-cum-tuba) verify its range. To celebrate a two-decade musical relationship, Lisbon-based João Madeira and Hernani Faustino played a two-night stand at O’Culto da Ajuda, which provided the music for bDuet. The free improvisations show different players, independent yet cooperative, executing an improvised score of timbral manipulations and special effects, the emotional arc swinging smoothly but widely between gentle lulls and manic heights. After experimental exchanges, “Primeira” ramps up mid-track to a coordinated yet chaotic climax, swiftly followed by a quieter, though equally expressive section. “Segundo” is similarly mercurial and eclectic, opening with airplane engine hums, each then taking a turn as ‘leader’ before another rumbling, grinding co-climax. The shorter “Final” moves from guitar-like power chords to the sounds of grunting sumo wrestlers and thumping hiccups, ending abruptly.

Swiss bassists Peter K Frey and Daniel Studer too share a 20-year collaborative relationship as Kontrabassduo Studer-Frey, celebrated in April 2019 with ten half-hour concerts at Zurich’s Kronen-Gallerie, which provided the music for ZIP, their sixth CD. The seven tracks are named for the types of teeth used for zippers (curved, triangular, saggitate, semicircular, lustre, shape and trajectory, respectively), interesting images of specific shapes ‘zipping’ the bassists together. Thus “Curved Teeth” contains short, ricocchetting phrases that ape a sped-up game of computer Pong, lingering silences and swirls of circular bowing. While their titles are not obviously programmatic, the tracks are notable for their scope and inventiveness, conjuring images of footsteps down a hallway, raccoons rummaging through trashcans, growing wolves, raindrops, mice in the cupboard, bulldozers pushing felled trees and the like, all testament to sonic flexibility.

Rested Turquoise, a studio date by Hungarian/Serbian composer Szilárd Mezei’s Tubass Quintet, features a larger group (bassists Ervin Malina, Ernő Hock, Zoltán Csányi, Mezei and tuba player Kornél Pápsta) under greater compositional control. Fanned across the channels from left to right, tuba (often muted) in the middle, it is often possible to pinpoint each musician in the mix, except when Mezei’s directions call for loosely played unisons and/or quiet drooping tones. Not a free blow, the date is nevertheless replete with aleatoric elements. Thus “Hep 26” starts with a 12-beat chromatically ascending and descending pattern that sounds like a migrating elephant herd until it devolves into less organized caterwauls and cacophonies before reprising the theme. Just as the dynamics curve unexpectedly back towards another, so too are the music and order similarly reorderable, each subsumed into a collectively intoned mantra of simmering intensity.

Since Dave Holland arrived in New York City from London, at the invitation of the legendary Miles Davis to fill the bass chair in his quintet (replacing Ron Carter), there has been little doubt that he would achieve legendary status himself. These two albums represent a perfect set of bookends by which to examine Holland’s illustrative career. He was already quite a monster—having played with Davis and Anthony Braxton to name just a few—from the time Braids was recorded (May of 1979) live in Hamburg, Germany. On the other end of the spectrum is Another Land, Holland’s most recent offering as a leader, with his trio of guitarist Kevin Eubanks and drummer Obed Calvaire, recorded after a tour workshopping the material in September 2019.

Holland’s tenure with the Sam Rivers Quartet was an especially fruitful association and this particular iteration could hardly be more dangerous, with Joe Daley (tuba) and the criminally underrated Thurman Barker (drums). It is a document of the Rivers aesthetic at the time (totally free improvisation), hence the rather unimaginative titling: “An Evening in Hamburg Part I and II”. Those titles might be dulled and the sound (it must be said) is rather one-dimensional but the music on Braids is nothing short of astonishing. The first selection finds Rivers in top form, blowing all over his horn with John Coltrane-ish energy as Holland and Daley offer independent slices of furious timekeeping. The music ranges from freetop to a bossa nova groove. The second selection is almost twice as long and begins with a blistering drum solo. This is where the quality of the recording becomes an issue, however. Compare this to the Braxton live record Performance [Quartet] 1979 on hatART to hear how Barker actually sounded to understand what is missing. Holland fares somewhat better sonically. He has got a huge natural sound with more wood than an acre of old-growth forest, conjuring imagery of footsteps down a hallway, raccoons rummaging through trashcans, growing wolves, raindrops, mice in the cupboard, bulldozers pushing felled trees and the like, all testament to sonic flexibility.

Another Land is a studio session and Holland’s trio has virtually limitless potential. In a sense, this album belongs as much to Eubanks as it does to the leader. Each player contributes four original compositions to the mix. There is an unmistakable rock energy at work, with electronics, overdubbing and instrumentation (Holland plays electric bass on a few tunes). In fact, it is a Eubanks tune (“Marshup”) that steals the show. Imagine the infamous James Brown chord careening through an M-Base centrifuge. Eubanks is on fire and Holland walks from here to eternity and back while Calvaire’s crisp ride cymbals ping keeps everything pushing forward. Also noteworthy is Holland’s “Quiet Fire”, which first appeared on the incendiary 1988 ECM date True. It features Steve Coleman and Jack DeJohnette. At the last minute, the composer offered the tune to Eubanks to interpret as a vehicle for solo guitar. It is one of those ‘happy accidents’ that makes this music come alive.

Recorded live in Prague in 2014 at the festival “VS. Interpretation”, this is three of the world’s most liberated musical minds in one 43-minute improvisation that asserts its operating principle in its monosyllabic title, at once direct and allusive. Joëlle Léandre plays bass and sings, Pauline Oliveros plays a Roland Button V-Accordion, an instrument with expanded capacities, and George Lewis plays laptop electronics as well as trombone. Though there is a definite latitude suggested by Lewis’ laptop, it hardly prepares a listener for the wide-ranging sonic collage marking the beginning of this work: Léandre’s voice may suggest opera stage or Romany campsite, but the rapid combining of sounds seems to multiply each voice, human, processed or instrumental, constantly recontextualizing the most briefly sustained sounds to suggest a school of Vienna choir and a string section far more diverse than even Léandre’s expansive bass. The button accordion can itself suggest an organ or a synthesizer, inserting sudden abstracted runs while electronics shift textures every second or so, mining a range of sampled sounds.

It is an initial disorientation, if one wishes to risk the “interpretation” condemned in the festival’s name, but also an insistent liberation from expectation, an assault on the notion of points of view the instrumentation suggests. By the 15-minute mark, the individual parts, even though some of them are transfigured in identity, begin to settle down a little. There are harsh, insistent rhythms and consistent whistling high frequencies, whether Lewis’ transformations or Léandre’s bowed harmonics. It is as if the trio has been getting all of that chaos out of our systems.

Rhythmic bass figures come from trombone, spicato bass and laptop, assembling into an orchestra of inchoate menace, extending to that electronic accordion. This dark mass thins to a bowed bass and a woobbling metallic shuddering, laptop and trombone combined one imagines, but the quality of mystery is far richer than any self-imposed blindfold test around instrumental identities. The trio is as intense, as collectively self-aware, as some of the best long-standing ensembles, producing work of a transformative impact, far richer than any mere sonic costume party. Bass and accordion create a distorted mirror version of a French café while voices are cut and pasted digitally into a Swingle Singers dementia with cutting plunger-muted trombone. A subtle pause serves not to introduce new voices but to shift the discussion of all those other parts, words from trombone and chorused near-Swingles discuss matters just outside the range of comprehension, suggesting dream text as possible definition of a range of music. Sudden massed sound—accordion a stand-in for a cathedral’s pipes’ potential for clashing overtones—appears after the half-hour mark, gradually giving way to a distant soundscape, its echoes seemingly sound-lit by bells. By the time it is over, there will be giant mosquitoes.

No mere trio improvisation, this invention suggests symphonic construction with the voices of a massed unconscious rising just below the surface, standing finally on the depth and range of its compound discourse and suggestion, achieved with profound seriousness, rare aplomb and intensely concentrated invention.

For more information, visit trost.at
Three years after being laid down in a São Paolo studio, Marc Johnson’s Overpass comes to light. Indeed, light is in abundance across the full spectrum of this solo effort. The double bass, whether due to its size or range, is easily typecast as a darker instrument. And yet, as this set of eight pieces proves, it has plenty of brightness to share with the world. A hint of that inner glow is found in Eddie Harris’ “Freedom Jazz Dance”, the first of three classic tunes to triangulate Johnson’s original grammar with iridescent crossbeams. Its meshing of firm foundations and lithe upswings renders a fitting prologue to broader expositions of architectural proportion. The other touchpoints in this vein are Miles Davis’ “Nardis” and Alex North’s “Love Theme from Spartacus”, each of which seems to inspire the other in mutual admiration. The latter melody is among the album’s airiest and, as such, speaks to the wisdom of a life drawn to affectionate things. Like “Life of Pai” that follows, it is fueled by the gentlest of propulsions, singing as if it were speaking. While hands and mind remain quicker than the eye. The double bass, whether due to its size or light is in abundance across the full spectrum of this 2CD set.

For more information, visit ecemrecords.com

Irvin’s Comet
Barry Guy (NoBusiness)
by Stuart Broomer

Ceci Taylor once remarked, “If I was a bass player, I would want to be Barry Guy.” It is hardly a self-effacing remark, for Guy’s commitment to the near-impossible—tempo, density, complexity—seems like homage to Taylor himself, or to the late Scott LaFaro, Guy’s nearest predecessor in stretching the bass’ limits. There are parallels, too, with circular breathing multiphonic collaborators Evan Parker and Peter Evans. Technique for technique’s sake? Hardly. All artists try to gather the materials needed to realize their visions; some just need more.

Recorded in October 2019 during Improdimesija at MAMAstudios in Vilnius, Irvin’s Comet alludes to the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work that may have suggested the cover art, the painting “Comet” by the late British artist Albert Irvin, a work.

“Old Earth Home” is a pizzicato lament, a work as emotionally direct as one could imagine, suffused with specifically Spanish passions. Heir to Narciso Yepes or Charles Mingus, it moves from the dark intensity of minor modes towards the playful light of the major. The concluding “Barehead” is a maestoso of bowing and plucking, energized runs and pinpoint lights amid upper-register harmonics, plucked chords and bowed frenzy. Fully appreciating Gayle’s performances requires the visual component. It ends nagging questions about how he is accomplishing one thing or another, even while hands and mind remain quicker than the eye. Meanwhile, Irvin’s Comet is a good stand-in.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com

For decades, bassist William Parker has been at the center of the free improvisation world, appearing on hundreds of recordings with a deeply centered tone and incredible groove. Parker’s ability to unite almost any ensemble instantly has long qualified him as sui generis in that world. When he partnered with drummer Hamid Drake in 1993 to drive saxophonist Peter Brötzmann’s Die Like A Dog Quartet, a ‘dream team’ was born. Parker has become to free jazz what Ron Carter is to postbop and for those who hear that call, the publication of Universal Tonality by author, blogger and historian Cisco Bradley is both long overdue and richly appreciated.

Universal Tonality: The Life and Music of William Parker
Cisco Bradley (Duke University Press)
by Robert Bush
Sequestered at home, separated from bandmates and in-person live performance opportunities as a result of pandemic restrictions, musicians were compelled to find different avenues for the advancement of their artistry. Alto saxophonist Jaleel Shaw began recording himself practicing improvised ideas to see/hear where they would lead him. The result is this imaginative recording, which represents many of the thoughts and ideas upon which he meditated during the enforced period of isolation.

The music begins with “LEE”, a five-minute long improvisation created with friend and mentor Lee Konitz, one of the first jazz victims of the pandemic, in mind. The song reflects Konitz’ influence in its purity of tone and boppish lyricism, propelled by an internal rhythmic drive, which comes as no surprise considering the many years Shaw has been a member of Roy Haynes’ Fountain Of Youth Quartet.

The news of Breonna Taylor’s death stirred an emotional reaction reflected in “Breonna”, a poignant lament employing electronic delay pedal to create echoing apropos to the fact that yet again another person of color died at the hands of the police. “Tulsa” is another reflection on racism in America with torrents of notes that cry and scream before closing with a bellowing wail.

“Improvisation for Mom” builds on an appealing melodic motif, which progresses with increasing complexity, offering insight into Shaw’s improvisational process, while East-African tinged “Tesmegen”, its title an Ethiopian term meaning to be blessed, reflects the process, while East-African tinged “Tesmegen”, its complexity, offering insight into Shaw’s improvisational melodic motif, which progresses with increasing bellowing wail.

For more information, visit bluenote.com. Charlap is at Birdland N. No. 2nd-6th. See Calendar.

The piano trio format is such a classic in the jazz imagination that one can be surprised to realize actually just how few piano trios—as working bands—there have been in the history of the music, especially compared to all the quartets and quintets led by horn players: Red Garland, Ramsey Lewis and Ahmad Jamal’s trios, the Bill Evans Trio, Keith Jarrett’s Standards Trio, Jason Moran and Bandwagon and Brad Mehldau’s Trio amount to the bulk of the mainstream discography.

Another long-standing and contemporary group is the Bill Charlap Trio, tracing the jazz world with their seventh album, released over what is now nearly a 25-year existence. Grace is both a verb and a noun with this group, which in the late 20th Century seemed wise beyond its years and now in 2021 seems both ageless and bursting with the springtime of youth. What has changed is the natural progression of any longterm intimate association; from a lead voice (mainly pianist Charlap) and accompaniment (bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington) the musicians are now speaking the same language with such unanimity that the blend of timbres between these very different sources can sound like one inseparable voice.

There is also a feeling of inside knowledge and humor between the three, but it is not rude. We may not get the punchline, but we get that, when Charlap teases at the dynamics or rhythms, ghosts a few notes in a run, he is playing at something with both Washingsons and everybody is in on the good feelings, the wit. It is part of the sensuality of this group, which is all about what mood and sound they can produce.

Charlap is the most sensual pianist on the scene, working with so many variations of touch. He is a connoisseur of the instrument, one of the few players who can shape the timbre of a series of notes and keep the legato flowing. The program is a masterclass in good taste and musical judgment: Dave Brubeck’s “The Duke”, Billy Strayhorn-John LaTouche-Duke Ellington’s “Day Dream”, a stunning take on Michel Legrand-Alan and Marilyn Bergman’s “What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?”, a great song that few groups take on. A gorgeous, humane record, every moment a perfect realization of the jazz mainstream.

For more information, visit jazzdepot.com. Charlap is at Birdland N. No. 2nd-6th. See Calendar.
For jazz fans not residing near New York City, there will always be musicians who have been active locally for decades yet fly under the radar due to limited touring. One such player is pianist David Janeway, a professional for over four decades though, like Denny Zeitlin, also a full-time psychiatrist. In addition to forming the Hastings Jazz Collective with Harvie S, Tim Armacost and others, Janeway has recorded a number of CDs for his own label, so that may explain why this CD is on SteepleChase LookOut, a sub-label normally for up-and-coming artists. He recruited two seasoned veterans for the session, bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Billy Hart, with whom he has performed over the years, and the setlist has a wealth of treasures, including rarely recorded jazz works, jazz standards and the pianist’s strong originals.

Hank Jones’ demanding bop theme “Minor Contention” showcases the potent interplay of the trio and the pianist’s formidable chops. Mercer Ellington’s “Blue Serge” dates from the ‘40s and although his famous father performed it, the piece fell into unjust obscurity. Janeway’s bittersweet introduction gives way to an upbeat, lyrical setting that simmers rather than catches fire, with a creative baseline and skilled brushwork adding valuable seasoning to the leader’s eloquent solo. Gary Peacock’s “Gardenia” is a natural fit for Brown’s inventive soloing, as he is also a master worthy of comparison to the late composer. Brown sets the mood for Wayne Shorter’s “Nefertiti” with an exotic solo before Janeway makes a surprising shift to electric piano and the trio offers a delicate, moving setting of Prez’s opening solo, as well as an imaginative treatment of Duke Ellington’s “It Don’t Mean a Thing” sizzles with surprising choices, as Jordan transforms the swing anthem into a bebop frosting. She is creative and fresh.

For more information, visit remyleboeuf.com. This project is at The Jazz Gallery Nov. 5th. See Calendar.

The trombone solo on Antônio Carlos Jobim’s “Wave” performed by the Buddy Rich Band is ethereal and unique arrangements permeate this sophomore session with a bossa-ish foundation perfectly supporting trombonist Natalie Cressman’s inviting stand; and “Rumpus”, nodding to raucous, blues-coated soul—and it is clear that L. Boeuf and his Assembly of Shadows have managed to create and maintain a perfect record with Architecture of Storms.

For more information, visit remyleboeuf.com. This project is at The Jazz Gallery Nov. 5th. See Calendar.

For more information, visit steelp chase.dk. This project is at Mezzrow Nov. 3rd. See Calendar.

Not A Novelty
Jennifer Wharton’s Bonegasm (Sunnyside)
by Elliott Simon

The trombone solo on Antônio Carlos Jobim’s “Wave” performed by the Buddy Rich Band is ethereal and raises goosebumps. The reasons are that Bill Reichenbach, Jr. is playing a bass trombone in an arrangement perfectly suited for the song and his instrument. Solo moments like this for bass trombone are rare in jazz but Jennifer Wharton is ensuring they implement a methodology of commissioning pieces and arrangements specifically for the band in ways that highlight her instrument. In this milieu, her tone and range are superb and illuminate the session. This is most evident on Remy Le Boeuf’s touchingly delivered “Face Value” and Ayn Inserto’s more uptempo “Blue Salt”.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecord.com. This is at The Jazz Gallery Nov. 4th with Anna Webber/Angela Morris and 5th with Remy Le Boeuf and Birdland Nov. 14th with Yilge Lee. See Calendar.

Architecture of Storms
Remy Le Boeuf’s Assembly of Shadows (SoundSpore)
by Dan Bilawsky

Shadows envelop all that they touch. So it goes that a band with an incorporeal identity surrounds and suffuses the ears with colors and character both bold and poetic in nature. Having already netted two Grammy nominations for music from this large ensemble’s 2019 eponymous debut, Remy Le Boeuf now extends and augments Assembly of Shadows’ reality on a sophomore set as powerful as it is downright attractive.

With the seven original works that make up the sophomore set as powerful as it is downright attractive.

With the seven original works that make up the sophomore set as powerful as it is downright attractive.

Life can be mighty monotonous, but not when Sheila Jordan is taking chances on a stage and certainly not when her ethereal voice is singing into your headphones. The ageless “Jazz Child” remains one of the last entertainers born in the ’20s who is still standing, let alone working. Born in Detroit, this month she turns 93 and is still touring, meaning she has been singing professionally for nearly 80 years. Although she was only 31 years old at the time she recorded her official debut, this lost session, so the piano-bass-drums trio remains unidentified for now. They took no solos and granted much support on this mix of then-contemporary ’50s songs and fresh readings on standards by the Gershwins, Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart and Duke Ellington.

The 98-second rollercoaster that is Ellington’s “It Don’t Mean a Thing” sizzles with surprising choices, as Jordan transforms the swing anthem into a bebop frosting. She is creative and fresh.

For more information, visit capricecards.com. Jordan is at Fushing Town Hall Nov. 12th and Birdland Nov. 18th-20th. See Calendar.
On one level, it is just a pitch, a trumpet sustain. It does not even stray from equal temperament into the intriguing world of microtone, as trumpeter Arve Henriksen is wont to do. Only the dynamics change, opening the gateway for the countless timbral intrigues for which traditional Western musical vocabulary has not even got a suitable analog. It is a diminuendo followed by a crescendo, but the event beginning at 6:15 of “Morning Song” and governing the next 12 seconds is more than the sum of any components, especially given what guitarist Jakob Bro and drummer Jorge Rossy interweave around and through one of many extraordinary moments from Uma Elmo.

The disc brings Rossy, a relative ECM newcomer, together with veterans Bro and Henriksen and a better-matched trio would be difficult to fathom. When Henriksen nuances and widens that pitch, Bro and Rossy just hang back and paint the borders. They dot and swirl a transparent but palpable miasma of skewed repetitions placing Henriksen’s overtones in a shifting series of kaleidoscopic contexts, which, in the proverbial nutshell, could encapsulate the album. It actually ends with another take on “Morning Song” and the differences render the approach crystal clear. In the first take, the melody eases its way into focus; the second foregrounds it, starkly beautiful against Bro’s effects and Rossy’s gently atmospheric “Drumscapes”, to appropriate a title from Bro’s The Stars are All New Songs.

That album also contains a much earlier version of “Reconstructing a dream”, one so vastly different that the current version comes to spectacular life as a recomposition nearly twice the original’s length. The melody is present but disected and reharmonized, initially sent forward in gracefully slow dance, floating over the chords and arpeggios only to build, taking on time and meter as-or have solo structures are constructed by Henriksen and then swept aside. A gorgeously sustained modality pervades, nearly static as the dynamics rise, only propelled by staggeringly fluid-time drumming and crystal-clean church-bell guitar distortions.

As with many ECM albums, there is an abiding sense of calm that the music does not disrupt, no matter how busy or dynamically charged. Rossy is largely responsible for the various states of motion and stasis that keep the music in a kind of meditative limbo. His playing can be deceptively understated, as with the opening of “Music for Black Pigeons”, and his nearly imperceptible cymbal work gracing the already-enigmatic “Beautiful Day” before he incorporates the rest of his kit. What subtle work with sticks and brushes? Those who know such psychically poignant galaxies of sound were possible? Bro and Henriksen rain down tones and loops too difficult to define save that, despite everything, they are often sparse and more frequently downright gorgeous.

It is in “Mahmoud Darwish” where a powerful existential rush of emotion is loosed. The tune is a heart-rending dirge in tribute to Darwish, the late Palestinian poet whose art and work—most particularly these words, “I am from there. I am from here. I am not there. I am not here.”—inspired the album. Finally, in the closer “Wintry Mix”, in which, mid-section, Lossing magically evokes dancing, falling snow, the ensemble conveys indecision, until the final notes of the piece turn to uplift. Clearly now, there is reason to believe that all is, without doubt, right and well.

For more information, visit freshsoundrecords.com. This project is at Scholes Street Studio Nov. 10th. See Calendar.

Tenor saxophonist Lena Bloch knows first-hand what it means to leave home (Russia), spend periods of time living here and there—often with struggle—and then finally plant roots in a new home, in this case, Brooklyn (in 2008). Her new CD, Rose of Lifta, with her quartet Feathery, speaks to that wandering, seeking and finding (even the album art remarkably conveys the musical contents therein); each of the seven tracks is a discrete story of a suite that is a journey of longing and resolution.

Lifta is an Arab village in Israel with a legacy of contention and a fight for survival. In the title track, the melancholy is palpable, as if watching a thing of beauty climbing to survive in the sun. The beauty of Rose of Lifta is that Feathery—Bloch, Lossing, bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Billy Mintz—are so deeply in the pocket that their ensemble work prevails beyond any solos taken. Even the extraordinary opening bass on the Middle Eastern-influenced “Promise of Return” or the mournful extended saxophone intro to an essentially non-melodic “Mad Mirror” carry the psychic overtones of the collective.

Feathery takes inspiration from a wide variety of music traditions and prides itself on playing with a mix of composition and spontaneous improvisation. The result is a wondrous creation of mood. In “New Home” the tone is light, yet unsteady and unsure but hopeful while, in contrast, in “Old Home”, there is a push and pull, an up and down of emotion.
FRED FRITH TRIO WITH LOTTE ANKER AND SUSANA SANTOS SILVA ROAD (2 CDs)
Fred Frith: Electric Guitar, Voice
Jason Hoppes: Bass - Jordan Glenn: Drums
Lotte Anker: Saxophones - Susana Santos Silva: Trumpet

JAMES BRANDON LEWIS QUARTET
CODE OF BEING
James Brandon Lewis: Tenor Saxophone
Arúan Ortiz: Piano - Brad Jones: Bass - Chad Taylor: Drums

OHAD TALMOR TRIO WITH DAN WEISS AND MILES OKAZAKI
MISE EN PLACE
Ohad Talmor: Tenor Saxophone
Miles Okazaki: Guitar - Dan Weiss: Drums

ANGELIKA NIESCIER – ALEXANDER HAWKINS
SOUL IN PLAIN SIGHT
Angelika Niesicer: Alto Saxophone - Alexander Hawkins: Piano

KAPPELER / ZUMTHOR
HERD
Vera Kappeler: Piano, Toy Piano
Peter Conradin Zumthor: Drums, Toy Piano

BORDERLANDS TRIO
STEPHAN CRUMP – KRIS DAVIS – ERIC MCPHERSON
WANDERSPHERE (2 CDs)
Stephan Crump: Bass - Kris Davis: Piano
Eric McPherson: Drums

OHAD TALMOR TRIO WITH DAN WEISS
MISE EN PLACE
Ohad Talmor: Tenor Saxophone
Miles Okazaki: Guitar - Dan Weiss: Drums

BROKEN SHADOWS
Broken Shadows
Tim Beme: Alto Sax - Chris Speed: Tenor Sax
Red Anderson: Bass - Dave King: Drums

SARAH BUECHI CONTRADICTION OF HAPPINESS + JENA PHILHARMONIC
THE PAINTRESS
Sarah Buechi: Voice - Vincent Membrez: Piano
Wolfgang Zwauner: Bass - Lionel Friedl: Drums
Estelle Beiner: Violin - Isabelle Guitreau: Viola
Sara Oswald: Cello - Jena Philharmonic

CHRIS SPEED
LIGHT LINE
Chris Speed: Clarinets

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Ancestors
Frank Kimbrough (Sunnyside)
KIMBROUGH
Various Artists (Newvelle)
by George Kanzler

Pianist Frank Kimbrough, who died last December at 64, is remembered on these two projects. *Ancestors* was recorded in 2017 with the unusual lineup of piano, bass (Masa Kamaguchi) and cornet (Kirk Knuffke). *KIMBROUGH*, available as a download, is a tribute by 67 musicians—colleagues, students and admirers—on 61 tracks ranging from solo to septet, playing Kimbrough’s compositions and benefitting the Frank Kimbrough Jazz Scholarship at The Juilliard School.

Kimbrough had a singular, airy lyricism, letting notes and chords linger into space, often with barely a pulse or a very slow tempo, the strategy on most of *Ancestors*, which consists of his own tunes, save for one by wife Maryanne de Prophetis. The album is full of contemplative moments, the trio in close rapport centered more on the melodic than harmonic content. A majority of the tracks on *KIMBROUGH* are also in slow tempos and many with bass and drums feature them suspending rhythm to proceed in freeform swirls of semi-rubato, much like the introductions or preludes on pieces before the rhythmic time takes over.

The adaptability of Kimbrough’s tunes can be heard in the six included on both albums, two especially. *Ancestors*’ title track is introduced by cornet over a barely discernible pulse, with languorous solos from piano and bass. On *KIMBROUGH* it features a sextet and Tim Horner’s drums, ranging freely rather than keeping time, setting the stage for the theme, delivered semi-rubato by trumpeter Jesse Neuman and baritone saxophonist Allan Chase. The horns solo in tandem over slow, rolling rhythms, followed by similar tandem soloing from guitarist Steve Cardenas and bassist Tony Scherr; chattering drums herald a solo from pianist Addison Frei before the horns return with the melody. “Over”, a rare uptempo track on *Ancestors*, begins with bass, then cornet and piano play an Ornette Colemanish line, followed by a jagged piano solo and a probing cornet part before the theme is reprised. A Coleman-style quartet—Ron Horton (trumpet), Michael Blake (tenor), Michael Formanek (bass), Tony Moreno (drums)—plays “Over” on *KIMBROUGH*. The tempo is faster, horns limning the theme in unison, drums, tenor and tandem horns soloing before the theme reprises.

Among the many surprises and delights on the *KIMBROUGH* collection is the chance to hear the pairing of Joe Lovano’s tenor and Dave Douglas’ trumpet in a quartet not doing music by, or inspired by, Parker. “222” they immerse themselves in Kimbrough’s elastic melodic and rhythmic universe. Lovano is also heard in a quartet with fellow tenor Donny McCaslin (“Helix”), and in trio with pianist Craig Taborn and guitarist Ben Monder (“Elegy for P.M.”). Douglas also appears on two trio tracks, as well as on another quintet one, “C Minor Waltz”, with alto saxophonist Alexa Tarantino, guitarist Todd Neufeld, bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Matt Wilson. Kimbrough was comfortable writing heartbeat tempos, from a trio led by pianist Helen Sung, and a septet version of “Waltz for Lee”, a bouncy AABA tune with an expressive trombone solo from Ryan Keberle, who shares the solo space with resonant pianist Samora Pinderhughes. Other notable turns on the collection come from Steve Wilson, on alto or soprano, not tenor as mis-credited; Ted Nash, on tenor, clarinet and soprano, the last on the lush, romantic “Capricorn Lady”, a duet with pianist Gary Versace. Among other significant contributors to the proceedings are tenor saxophonists Scott Robinson, Rich Perry and Noah Preminger and pianists Fred Hersch, Elan Mehler, Dan Tepfer and Glenn Zaleski.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com and newvelle-records.com. A Kimbrough tribute hosted by Newvelle Records is at Birdland Theater Nov. 11th-13th. See Calendar.

Joe Fiedler’s Open Sesame (Multiphonics Music)
by Steven Loewy

After the acclaimed 2019 album *Open Sesame*, trombonist Joe Fiedler works his magic once again on *Fuzzy and Blue*. There was immediate talk of a sequel, following a free-wheeling performance at Dizzy’s Club, joined by Wynton Marsalis and Elmo, to celebrate the Sesame Street franchise for years as an arranger, musical director and instrumentalist, has tweaked the group’s sound by expanding the presence of Steven Bernstein (trumpet, flugelhorn, slide trumpet and G trumpet, adding a fourth valve) to all tracks and adding the delightfully fitting vocalist Miles Griffith, who blurs, bobs and scats, often to hilarious effect, with a triumphant contagious affection on the songs on which he appears. As with its predecessor, *Fuzzy and Blue* should appeal to a range of listeners, from school-age children who love the catchy melodies to others who relish Fiedler’s accessible but sophisticated arrangements, outstanding improvising and unique swirl of styles, from free jazz to hardbop and funk, with even a touch of the Caribbean, performed in an uplifting way, reminiscent of the positive outlook of the show.

Fiedler’s unique arrangements capture the essence of the tunes while providing fertile ground for superb improvisations. Fiedler covers the range of his horn, adding a touch of multiphonics (singing while playing, producing chords in a way perfected by German trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff, whom Fiedler names as one of several influences), which are especially potent in the Dixie-inflected “Bip Bippadotta Suite”, where Fiedler blows in the lower register juxtaposed against the higher tones of soprano saxophonist Jeff Lederer and Bernstein. The trombonist sometimes uses an inverted Harmon mute and solos passionately, with regular forays into the upper register, spitting out notes with lightning speed, but generously shares solo space with his colleagues. Bernstein can always be counted on for his imagination and off-the-wall humor, adding a fourth valve (trumpet, flugelhorn, slide trumpet and G trumpet, adding a fourth valve) to all tracks and adding the delightfully fitting vocalist Miles Griffith, who blurs, bobs and scats, often to hilarious effect, with a triumphant contagious affection on the songs on which he appears. As with its predecessor, *Fuzzy and Blue* should appeal to a range of listeners, from school-age children who love the catchy melodies to others who relish Fiedler’s accessible but sophisticated arrangements, outstanding improvising and unique swirl of styles, from free jazz to hardbop and funk, with even a touch of the Caribbean, performed in an uplifting way, reminiscent of the positive outlook of the show.

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For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com and newvelle-records.com. A Kimbrough tribute hosted by Newvelle Records is at Birdland Theater Nov. 11th-13th. See Calendar.
Master musician Andrew Cyrille could just be the most underrated drummer in modern jazz. At 81, he has the curriculum vitae to which only his most celebrated peers can aspire. He is all over jazz history—his early years range from Coleman Hawkins to Cecil Taylor—and his association with ECM goes back to 1970 and Marion Brown’s "Afternoon of a Georgia Faun. The News" is his third session as a leader on ECM, following "The Declaration of Musical Independence" (2014) and "Lebroba" (2017), made with Bill Frisell (guitar) and Ben Street (bass) with late addition David Virelles filling in for an ailing Richard Tietelbaum. The sound of his drums is nothing short of glorious. The cymbals are so clearly articulated that the listener can hardly resist surrendering to their call. On “Mountain”, a tune by Frisell, Cyrille plays freely across barlines with coloristic rolls over groaning bass whole notes; Virelles picks up the baton with an ebullient solo to take the tune out.

There is a dream-like feel to much of this album, a gauzy sheen of rubato that will be a familiar backdrop to fans of the ECM sound (although this disc was recorded at Sound on Sound in New Jersey rather than Europe). Frisell is brilliant, particularly so on his original “Go Happy Lucky”, an abstracted blues that leans heavily on the tradition but also wanders gleefully when Virelles takes the helm. The sound of brushes spread across snare drum dominates the leader’s title track. Also noteworthy is “Leaving East of Java”, a composition by AACM composer/pianist Adegoke Steve Colson (previously recorded by Cyrille on a Trio 3 session with Oliver Lake and Reggгиe Workman.) Large parts of the tune seem through-composed, although Frisell’s solo tugs at the edges.

For more information, visit ecmrecords.com. Cyrille is at Village Vanguard Nov. 12th-14th with Jakob Bro. See Calendar.

The early 2020s have been difficult times in the United States: the COVID-19 pandemic; George Floyd’s murder and the months of unrest that followed; Donald Trump’s efforts to subvert democracy and steal the 2020 election, culminating in the Jan. 6th insurrection. Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis reflects on the turbulence the U.S. is experiencing on this digital-only release.

Marsalis and other Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO) members form a septet: Marsalis, saxophonists Ted Nash and Walter Blanding and trombonist Elliot Mason are joined by pianist Dan Nimmer, bassist Carlos Henriquez and drummer Obed Calvaire. This downsized version of JLCO often recalls Blue Note groups of the ‘50s. In fact, the hard-swinging opener “Be Present” is right out of the Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers school as are “It Come ‘Round ‘Gin”, “That Dance We Do (That You Love Too)” or “Deeper Than Dreams”. The influence of New Orleans jazz is impossible to miss on the exuberant “That’s When All Will See” and saxophonist John Coltrane’s drawing on Eastern religion in the ‘60s is an inspiration on “Sloganize, Patronize, Realize, Revolutionize (Black Lives Matter)”. While the album does not use lyrics to express its themes, titles like the aforementioned “Sloganize, Patronize, Realize, Revolutionize (Black Lives Matter)” and “Ballot Box Bounce” emphasize the political underpinnings. There is also a spiritual element; African-American gospel is a major influence on “Out Amongst the People (For J Bat)” and “That’s When All Will See”. Pundits described 2020 as the year from hell and have been saying the same thing about 2021, yet The Democracy! Suite by no means wallows in pessimism. Nor does the material come across as bitter. Thomas Paine famously said, “These are the times that try men’s souls.” Marsalis responds to the challenges of our times by encouraging not only political involvement, but also hope.

For more information, visit 2021.jazz.org/blue-engine-records. Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis is at Rose Theater Nov. 18th-20th. See Calendar.
So many jazz greats have passed in the last few years that one could easily put together a heavenly all-star big band. Drummer Willie Jones III pays tribute to five on Fallen Heroes: Roy Hargrove, Larry Willis, Jimmy Heath, Ndugu Chander and Jeff Clayton.

While three of the nine numbers are mournful and even gloomy in spots, overall the music is more upbeat, remembering the joyful spirit of the musicians. The set begins with a well-constructed four-minute drum solo, “Something For Ndugu”. “Fallen Hero”, one of three Larry Willis pieces, is taken quite slowly with alto saxophonist Sherman Irby in the lead.

The mood changes quickly with one of Heath’s beloved songs, “C.T.A.”, featuring solos and trades by Irby and fellow alto Justin Robinson and a fine spot for pianist George Cables. Hargrove’s “Trust” is given a somber treatment with a vocal by Renee Neufville and pianist George Cables. Hargrove’s “Trust” is given a

Cables and bassist Gerald Cannon all make statements.

A pair of Willis pieces, modal jazz waltz “Annika’s Lullaby” and To Wisdom, The Prize”, include rewarding solos from the horns and Cables. “I’ve Just Seen Her” starts out with an introspective piano solo by Isaiah J. Thompson, includes some warm trumpet playing and also has a return spot for Thompson that is a bit happier. The CD concludes with up-tempo minor blues “Jackin’ For Changes”; it begins with unaccompanied drums, adds fast walking bass, includes blazing Cables, Robinson and Pelt solos and ends as it started, with bass and drums and finally Jones solo.

While paying tribute to the departed, Fallen Heroes also shows that their music will carry on through those who are still with us.

For more information, visit wj3records.com. Jones is at Birdland Nov. 23rd-27th with Ken Peplowski. See Calendar.

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. Douglas is at Birdland Nov. 30th-Dec. 4th. See Calendar.
NOV 18–20
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Join the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis for a special concert celebration of Marsalis’s milestone birthday.

DEC 15–19
BIG BAND HOLIDAYS
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“Thanks for giving!”
Dear Love
Jazzmeia Horn and Her Noble Force
( Empress Legacy Records )
by Russ Musto

The followup to Grammy-nominated Social Call and Love and Liberation, Dear Love finds Jazzmeia Horn displaying impressive abilities, not only as a strikingly original vocalist, but as a skilled arranger, writer and poetess. Leading a 13-strong big band of first-call players she has dubbed Her Noble Force, Horn presents originals and arrangements extending the traditions personified by Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Betty Carter and Abbey Lincoln.

The date opens with Horn’s “I Feel You Near” on which she recites her poem “Grand Rising” over a processional rhythm anchored by Jason Marshall’s baritone saxophone. A multi-tracked vocal interlude, “Be Perfect”, introduces Lafayette Harris’ “He Could Be Perfect”, a grooving outing with Horn singing the wishful lyric in a full-bodied soprano voice over the rhythm section of Keith Brown, Eric Wheeler and Anwar Marshall with Jason Marshall soloing boldly on a bottom-heavy arrangement. The ensemble swings straightahead on Horn’s uptempo arrangement of Gene de Paul-Don Raye’s “He’s My Guy”, which features her high-flying upper register and scat chorus and Keith Loftis’ wailing tenor. The singer’s sensual “(Let Us) Take Our Time” lives up to its title and includes a spoken word oration of her poem “Hearts Choose” over Freddie Hendrix’ muted trumpet. A multi-tracked vocal chorale introduces Sigmund Romberg-Oscar Hammerstein II’s “Lover Come Back Me”, which includes a tour de force scat section and foot-stomping shout chorus. Horn is accompanied only by piano and string quartet on a delicate reading of The Beatles’ “Can’t Buy Me Love”, interspersing her socially conscious poem “Faces”. On Yunie Mojica’s beautiful “Nia”, Bruce Williams offers an impassioned alto solo, complementing Horn’s ardently reading of the lyric. Horn’s multiphonic voice initiates her poetically-charged anthem “McCoy’s Luminous Mountains” is a driving work of The Red Hot Chili Peppers; the brittle guitar sound of The Beatles’ “Can’t Buy Me Love”, interspersing her originally written “Stick Pimps” is a sudden change in direction.

On the latter, the strings establish the repeating theme with multiple alternating episodes before Broadbent slides in with a solo filled with slicing swing. The theme is then repeated with ever increasing intensity until a crescendo closes out the number.

“Brubeck, with his classical music education, never shied away from compositions that utilized rhythms and time signatures considered non-standard. Two numbers in this category are “Bossa Nova USA” and “Blue Rondo à La Turk”. On the former, the bossa nova rhythm is crisply articulated and the lush string arrangement provides the cushion for Broadbent and space for Harvie S to show his strength and sensitivity. On the latter, the strings establish the repeating theme with multiple alternating episodes before Broadbent slides in with a solo filled with slicing swing. The theme is then repeated with ever increasing intensity until a crescendo closes out the number.

For more information, visit robsechspmusic.com. Scheps is at The Cutting Room Nov. 3rd. See Calendar.

Griot: Examining The Lives of Jazz’s Great Storytellers, Vol 1
Jeremy Pelt (s/t)
by Russ Musto

The West African tradition of the itinerant musician storyteller, the griot, resonates greatly in the world of jazz. Inspired by Art Taylor’s landmark Notes And Tones, trumpeter Jeremy Pelt (who turns 45 this month) takes the tradition into the 21st Century in this first volume of musician-to-musician interviews, which offers a telling insight into the music through the lens of Black experience. To call it a most valuable addition to the bibliography would be a gross understatement.

Paul West, Warren Smith, Bertha Hope, Eddie Henderson, Larry Willis, René Marie, Lewis Nash, Wynton Marsalis, Peter Washington, Terri Lyne Carrington, Justin Robinson, Greg Hutchinson, JD Allen, Robert Glasper and Ambrose Akinmusire offer a broad perspective on what it means to be a Black Jazz musician (Pelt capitalizes both words throughout, emphasizing their importance to the narrative).

Pelt queries each concerning parentage, emphasizing their importance to the narrative. The camaraderie between author and subject is apparent throughout and contributes greatly to the tone of the discussions, which move easily between colloquial and eloquent. Many of Pelt’s questions and the interviewees’ often divergent responses on the subjects of race, segregation, the meaning of swing and the efficacy of the word jazz are bound to engender controversy and invite further discussion.

And rightly so. It is time for a candid conversation regarding these matters. But if there is a key message to be taken away from what is told here, it is best expressed by JD Allen:

“A lot of things made a point and realize that we were intelligent...You have all these great Black intellectuals...but when we came out with Jazz you could not deny that we are some very intelligent people.”

For more information, visit jeremypelt.net. Pelt is at Smalls Nov. 2nd with Adam Stulman. See Calendar.
A confluence of influences, this release from trumpeter Michael Rodriguez taps into his experiences working with jazz icons. Sharing a frontline with tenor saxophonist John Ellis and engaging a stellar rhythm section of pianist Gary Versace, bassist Joe Martin and drummer Obed Calvaire, he delivers an arresting program focused on originals speaking to travels with legends and lessons learned along the way.

Opening on the title track, Rodriguez uses both driven straight-time and seriously swinging space to genuflect to the giants of the music. He then focuses on specific artists who have figured into his journey: “In Due Time”, gliding along gracefully, nods to Kenny Barron (and Rodriguez’ decade-long tenure in the pianist’s quintet); sinuous “Just in Case”, supported by seductive grooves and exiting with wonderfully twined lines, honors Gonzalo Rubalcaba, another pianist who employed the trumpeter and left a strong impression; and literal centerpiece “Crossroads”, recognizes pianist Chick Corea and bandleader Maria Schneider in its development. Rodriguez, having written the piece after recording with Corea’s Spanish Heart Band in 2019 and absorbing the colorful melodies and shapes in Schneider’s art as a member of her Heart Band in 2019 and absorbing the colorful melodies and shapes in Schneider’s art as a member of her orchestra, intentionally and lovingly infused the essence of both singular visionaries into this work.

The last of Rodriguez’ composition, “Solid Ground”, calls to Corea in more overt fashion, accentuating a playful energy that is absolutely magnetic. Things come to a close with different yet complementary covers: guitarist Bill Frisell’s “Throughout”, in tribute to Charlie Haden and serving as a reflection on Rodriguez’ time with the bassist’s Liberation Music Orchestra; and Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart classic “Spring is Here” in 2019 and absorbing the colorful melodies and shapes in Schneider’s art as a member of her orchestra, intentionally and lovingly infused the essence of both singular visionaries into this work.

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Silver Lining Suite
Hiromi (Telarc)
For more information, visit rodbrosmusic.com. Rodriguez is at The Jazz Gallery Nov. 5th with Remy Le Boeuf. See Calendar.
We Knew What We Had: The Greatest Jazz Story Never Told
Directed by Jeff Sewald
Produced by Marty Ashby (MCG Jazz)
by Thomas Conrad

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: It is not a place name redolent with mystique and romance. But writer/director Jeff Sewald and producer Marty Ashby intend to change your understanding of Pittsburgh. Early in their 57-minute documentary they stake a claim: “Pittsburgh produced more jazz innovators than any other city its size.” Their supporting evidence includes names such as Earl Hines, Billy Strayhorn, Erroll Garner, Kenny Clarke, Billy Eckstine, Ray Brown, Stanley Turrentine, Ahmad Jamal, Mary Lou Williams, Art Blakey and George Benson. Their film contains entertaining footage of all of the above in action. It also sheds light on the social conditions and historical events that engendered an artistic flowering in Pittsburgh.

Black migration into the city started in the early 1800s. Pittsburgh schools desegregated in the 1870s. The music curriculum of the schools was classical. There was a strong classical component to the Black musical culture that developed in Pittsburgh (one example: the National Negro Opera Company began there in 1941). Saxophonist/educator Nathan Davis says, “For the jazz musicians with classical training, that standard of perfection of the instrument was always there.” Style-making pioneers like Hines, Strayhorn and Garner came into jazz with substantial classical backgrounds.

From the ’40s, the nerve center of the Pittsburgh jazz scene was the Black district, known as “The Hill”. You could go from club to club (the most important The Crawford Grille) seven nights a week and hear jazz and blues moaning. Yet the scene was more intimate than in larger cities. Trombonist/historian Nelson Harrison says, “I was of the generation that had direct access to the innovators. They were up close and personal.”

This documentary tells its story through fascinating performance clips, a rich cache of historical film footage and photographs and commentary from many authorities and eye witnesses: musicians, educators, producers, recording engineers and historians. It is a kick to see, even in cloudy black and white, Duke Ellington usher Strayhorn to the piano for “Take the ‘A’ Train” and Williams unleashing her extraordinary left hand and to experience Garner’s orchestra, which was himself alone, playing “Misty”.

There is sadness at the end when the original Hill district is demolished by urban renewal. Historian Ralph Proctor says, “You began to lose that culture. What you are left with is the memories.”

But memories are always at risk of fading into the shadows of history. This film safeguards those memories. A quality of sweetness accompanies the serious purpose of this project. We Knew What We Had is an act of love for a place and time long gone.

For more information, visit mcgjazz.org

Russ Lossing is a pianist who covers a wide spectrum of jazz styles, equally at home in mainstream and avant garde jazz. A 2014 studio meeting with drummer Gerry Hemingway produced Twice, a stunning album of free improvisations, where the players seem to be of one mind. Lossing’s manipulation of the piano strings, whether by hand-muting as he plays a chord or strumming them, creates moody, striking textures while Hemingway’s deft use of his drumkit adds to the tension, especially his fascinating cymbal work. The opening track, “Yellow Light”, has many twists and uses space effectively, making it perfect for a soundtrack to a suspense film. In “Keeping Still” some of Hemingway’s percussive effects are reminiscent of those used by avant garde classical composer Edgard Varèse in “ionization”, ominous gong-like sounds drawn from his cymbals, blending with mysterious piano. The centerpiece of the threatening “In What Is Small (For John Cage)” is the recurring vocal-like sounds by Hemingway, which could include him drumming on his cheeks with his mouth open, though only he and Lossing know for sure. The piano introduction to “Earth Mother” is the closest thing to music that sounds composed, with jagged lines that seem inspired by Igor Stravinsky’s early 20th Century ballets while the Russian composer’s influence is also heard in the rapid piano finale to “Water Above And Below”. The music within this duo date is not for casual listening. It demands full attention without any distractions, likely the requirements for Lossing and Hemingway to create this stimulating music.

Lossing’s quartet recording Metamorphosis from 2017 is a straightahead session for the most part, featuring three talented veterans: saxophonist Loren Stillman and bassist John Hébert, both of whom have recorded with him a number of times, plus drummer Michael Sarin. The pianist brought eight strong compositions, making it clear whether the band had the opportunity to test these works on live audiences, the musicians are clearly stimulated. One of the things that is refreshing about Lossing is that he puts so much emphasis on the contributions of his sidemen, willing to step back to feature them at length, though he is a dynamic, inventive soloist when he steps into the spotlight. Lossing worked quite a bit with Paul Motian, hiring the drummer for recordings and also appearing along with him on others’ CDs. He is clearly a fan of Motian’s compositions, having devoted an entire CD to some of them, so dedicating the title track to the late giant is no surprise. This extended work has a melancholy air with mournful soprano saxophone supported by the rhythm section’s spacious backdrop. Lossing’s introspective solo slowly unfolds in dramatic fashion while Sarin emulates Motian’s frequent ‘less is more’ approach to percussion, providing sporadic accents versus being constantly active. The lyrical ballad “Main Street” has a wistful memory tinged with a sense of loss through emotional alto saxophone “Blind Horizon”, dedicated to the late pianist/composer Andrew Hill, creates a mysterious mood with its tautening solo piano introduction, the addition of soprano and the rhythm section shifting the piece to a more foreboding mood. “Canto 24” takes a different direction; it brings to mind Ornette Coleman’s compositions with its angular lines and sudden changes of direction. This is another strong addition to Lossing’s discography.

The one record the late Lowell Davidson (born 80 years ago this month) made for ESP-Disk’ was recorded in 1965 and gained some attention among free jazz fans for the simple reason that there were not yet a lot of records available by the generation of players to come up in the post-Ornette Coleman era. Then it was mostly forgotten. Davidson didn’t record again or gig very much and his music seemed opaque even to people who were digging The New Thing. As time has passed, however, a growing number of people seem to be reevaluating Davidson’s music and we may hope that this vinyl reissue pushes things along in this direction.

To mid ’60s ears, Davidson’s piano style seemed to synthesize very different approaches. He built his improvisations largely on short, abstract phrases that seemed to start in mid-sentence and veered off in unexpected directions before dissolving, reminiscent of Paul Bley at his best. But the vocabulary used for these brief flights sometimes evoked Cecil Taylor. One can also detect a tenuous relationship to both Mal Waldron and Andrew Hill’s playing. Compositionally, Davidson’s pieces are similar to the quizzical kernels Carla Bley was writing at the time and, like her, he can be almost painfully lyrical (“Stately I” here). But there were things about Davidson that didn’t sound like anyone else, especially harmonically. At times the sense of harmonic progression felt almost ‘normal’, but then suddenly things could move in a way that left listeners asking themselves what just happened, as if they had fallen down a rabbit hole and popped up in an unfamiliar landscape. More often, Davidson halts any feeling of harmonic progression, even repeating a fairly straight chord with his left hand while the right goes off on seemingly unrelated tangents. There was much more tension than release in this music and the listener must give full attention, perhaps taking it one track at a time while getting used to this demanding approach.

The fact that Davidson asks a lot of his listeners may explain why he did not attract more of an audience. Another is that he was ahead of his time even by the standards of free jazz. While most of the music does conform to the idea of a head played at the beginning and end with room for soloing in between, there are passages where the three musicians all play very minimally to create a group improv much like that associated with European players in the following decade. And bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Milford Graves are at their absolute best, not only plugged into what Davidson was doing but also seeming to play in ways they never did before or since. It is a must for serious Graves fans!

Does it all really work? Is this record as good as some people think it is? Listeners should answer that question for themselves, certainly, but no one who loves free music should ignore Lowell Davidson. That has already gone too long.

For more information, visit espdisk.com
Germany's first Jazz label and its treasure trove of pioneers and international jazz stars

High-quality reissues on LP and CD, re-mastered from the original master tapes, have hit the US and Canada at last.

Reissues by Oscar Peterson, George Duke, Monty Alexander, Ella Fitzgerald, Freddie Hubbard, Dexter Gordon, Bill Evans, Baden Powell and many more!

Find out more: www.mps-releases.com

EUROPE’S ICONIC JAZZ LABEL AND ITS MOST PERFECT SOUND
Don Cherry, who would have turned 85 this month, and his wife and collaborator, Moki, left New York behind in 1970 to establish a home of music and art in Tägarp, Sweden. This 1972 concert, whose audio was taken from a video of the titular French festival, represents Cherry’s departure from the exploitative world of jazz, drugs and city life and his immersion in music as an environmental alternative way of life. Opening track “Dha Dhin Na, Dha Tin Na” is an Indian chant, the audience heard clapping a rhythm with a cowbell and Cherry on piano and vocals accompanied by saxophonist Doudou Gourirand. The music flows into a charming second piece, “My Butterfly Friend”, Cherry singing the title phrase repeatedly. Nothing of the avant garde that made him famous is to be found here except, perhaps, the improvisations and the pieces flow into one another. On “Ganesh”, Cherry sings with piano, rarely accompanied by Gourirand and Naná Vasconcelos on light percussion, creating a feeling of folksy mysticism. Hari Krishna is invited and Cherry sings to the audience, “I wanna give you something from my heart.” He jokes that folk don’t smile much in the North as compared to folks from the South. It is a happy, playful scene that is set, like being immersed in a hippie commune in the ’70s.

At least two decades before it became a household word, what is here is world music, taken from many spheres and melded into a sound that speaks to Cherry’s concern that music be a part of everyday life with no separation between performers and audience. There is Brazilian, Malian, South African, Indian and Native American music in these tracks. “Relativity Suite, Part 1” features the donso ngoni, a hunter’s guitar from Mali, which brought Swedish reedplayer Christer Bothén to Cherry’s attention when Cherry saw him play the instrument on TV, and Vasconcelos on berimbau, an instrument of African origin played in Brazil.

The two-CD set is attractively packaged, with a bright orange cover image reminiscent of Moki’s contribution to expanding jazz, music of the spirit.

For more information, visit blankforms.org

Nothing is more challenging to navigate than a duo setting. Tony Coe (clarinet, turning 87 this month) and pianist John Horler elevate the event to a celebration. Coe’s focus on the clarinet makes the music even more essential compared to his more familiar tenor saxophone, thus offsetting Horler’s occasional exuberance. The result is an exceptionally well-balanced and joyful set benefitting from the acoustics of Appleby St. Michael Church and an attentive and appreciative audience.

Whereas Coe enjoys global recognition, Horler’s exposure outside the U.K. has been somewhat limited. He is a well-rounded pianist who has absorbed Bill Evans’ legacy via Chick Corea. But that would be limiting his palette as he has a rare ability of dissecting and recomposing standards reminiscent of Martial Solal. The dynamics between his two hands is infectious right from the start of the program with Evans’ rarely executed “Re: Person I Knew” and comes across loud and clear in Cole Porter’s “Night and Day”.

The empathy is uncanny as the two have lived and breathed immortal melodies such as Johnny Green—Edward Heyman-Robert Sour-Frank Eyton’s “Body and Soul” and Thelonious Monk’s “Blue Monk” for most of their lives. Coe’s woody sound introduces his “Some Other Autumn”, an intriguing paraphrase of “Autumn Leaves” featuring Horler’s tuneful counterpoint. Horler’s “Piece for Poppy”, dedicated to his wife, initially brings back a certain Evans-esque atmosphere, piano picking up the pace, soaring towards a more rhythmic territory after a delightful clarinet interlude. Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz’ “Dancing in the Dark” follows a similar approach, but this time it is clarinet providing a dose of exhilaration prior to wrapping up the theme. In such a program, a touch of blues could not have been absent: Horler’s “Round in Three” and paradigmatic “Blue Monk”, Coe’s bowing towards Pee Wee Russell over the imaginative tapestry provided by Horler, conclude the celebration.

For more information, visit gearboxrecords.com

Swinging music is still quite enjoyable even if the set’s ‘plot’ is a bit diminished. A more serious fault has to do with the packaging: although the CD has liner notes, nowhere are the soloists identified (other than the guests), an inexcusable omission for an orchestra with many excellent improvisers.

Things begin with “Passing Of The Torch”, a midtempo blues by Todd Bashore, which features tenor, bass trombone (Omeed Nyman), trumpet, piano, bass and guitar solos. It serves as an excellent introduction to the professional-sounding college band. The title track, a line Dizzy Gillespie once said in tribute to Louis Armstrong, was commissioned by Gillespie; the boppish trumpet soloist is excellent as is the tenor saxophonist. Other selections include a tribute to the Philadelphia tenor player Bootzie Barnes lost to COVID-19 (“Bootzie”); a pair of spirited vocals by Danielle Dougherty (Sam H. Stept-Sidney Clare’s “Please Don’t Talk About Me When I’m Gone” and a very effective version of Shirley Scott’s “The Blues Ain’t Nothin’ But Some Pain”); “Voice Of The Saxophone” (a ballad showcasing a warm-toned tenor); and “The Wise Old Owl” (written in memory of Temple University’s longtime basketball coach John Chaney).

Of the guest performances, “In That Order” is a feature for Joey DeFrancesco’s hard-swinging organ, “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love” is entirely a bass solo by Christian McBride and “Perdido” finds DeFrancesco and McBride taking their turns along with a variety of fine soloists from the band. By then, one can be forgiven for having long forgotten the connection of this album to Jimmy Heath. Without You No Me is easily recommended to fans of straightahead big band jazz.

For more information, visit boyertemple.edu

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**UPCOMING SHOWS**

**Friday, December 4th**

**GEORGE COLLIGAN TRIO**

**Saturday, November 13th**

**DAVE MEDER TRIO**

**Friday, December 3rd**

**JUNE BISANTZ QUARTET**

**Saturday, December 4th**

**TYLER BLANTON (ft. Hello Alves)**

**Friday, November 12th**

**GILAD HEKSELMAN TRIO**

**Friday, November 19th & 20th**

**BOBBY WATSON QUARTET**

**Friday, November 5th & 6th**

**JOHNNY O’NEAL TRIO**

**Friday, December 10th & 11th**

**GEORGE COLLIGAN TRIO**

**Use code “NYJAZZ” for 5% off at thesidedoorjazz.com**
Recorded 41 years ago this month, Detail-90 (available as LP or download) presents two side-long improvisations from the seminal free jazz unit: Norwegian alto saxophonist Frode Gjerstad, expat American bassist Kent Carter and British drummer John Stevens (who died in 1994). By this stage the group was eight years old, with the only significant change being the passing of original member South African bassist Johnny Dyani in 1986. However the shift in personnel didn’t alter the trio’s essential character and it remained a pioneering co-operative thriving in the fertile soil between jazz and abstraction.

Stevens looms large in the outfit’s triangulations here, with a firm hand on tiller, steering the interplay and dynamics from behind his kit. Even his choice of when not to play proves decisive in calibrating the overall trajectory while his prompting and cajoling act as a fulcrum around which saxophone and bass pivot. He often lays down a regular pulse, pitching the exchanges towards freebop (indeed Stevens maintained a band of that name for several years), with Carter walking propulsively and Gjerstad unfurling bright Ornette Coleman-inspired dancing lines in response.

At other times Gjerstad adopts a querulous raw-edged tone, embellished with dissonance and multiphonics, presaging his later approach. Carter (who cut his teeth in the ’60s with the Jazz Composers Orchestra and Paul Bley, then was part of Steve Lacy’s groups in the ’70s) moves in resonant parallel to Gjerstad, switching easily between bow and fingers. Interaction between the pair reaches a high on the second side, with Gjerstad gradually running repeated phrases together in swinging style as Carter fashions a buoyant counterpoint, before they peak with sustained notes from alto and arco bass pleasingly intertwined.

With much of the band’s discography out of print, this flowing set makes a fine addition, particularly timeless in all senses of the word when they strike out into the unknown.

For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com

One of the joys of the jazz scene in Los Angeles during the ’80s-90s was seeing pianist Horace Tapscott (1934-99) regularly lead a trio with bassist Roberto Miranda and any one of several drummers. Tapscott had a very original sound, based in the modern mainstream while looking forward.

Oddly enough, Tapscott, while featured on records leading his Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra, heading allstar combos and trios and on a series of solo piano albums, only recorded with Miranda in a trio on one occasion, 40 years ago this month. The Nov. 12th, 1981 session in Santa Barbara resulted in two records originally released by Nimbus West. The Pure Pleasure label has reissued the music on two LPs.

Vol. 2 begins with “Lino’s Pad”, a piece in 7/4 time with Miranda mostly playing a six-note bass pattern with occasional departures. Tapscott, Miranda (bowing his bass) and drummer Sonship Theus each have solos. “Close To Freedom” is a boppish number that features the trio swinging with a celebratory mood. Miranda and Theus are both interactive with Tapscott behind his solo, driving the piece and offering melodic and rhythmic ideas that fit in well with Tapscott’s musical direction.

The second side of the album is completely filled up by a 22-minute version of Miranda’s “St. Michael”. Part of each chorus during its first section is a vamp while the remainder features the trio cooking. The music is beyond hardbop but not quite avant garde, occupying a fertile middle ground. After the piano solo, the trio plays out of tempo, creating thoughtful ensemble passages, which gradually build in passion before the theme returns and Theus concludes the music by hitting a gong.

While it is too bad there is not more of Tapscott and Miranda in this setting, one should be grateful that the tapes were rolling during this very musical evening.

For more information, visit purepleasurerecords.com

Veteran bassist Leon Lee Dorsey and drummer extraordinaire Mike Clark have forged a deep simpatico over the course of four projects on Dorsey’s Jazz Avenue 1 label.

2019’s Monk Time (with guitarist Greg Skaff)
2020’s Play Sgt. Pepper (with pianist Michael Wolff)
2021’s Thank You Mr. Mabern (with late, great pianist Harold Mabern)

Freedom Jazz Dance is the latest release from bassist Leon Lee Dorsey alongside drummer extraordinaire Mike Clark and the brilliant Cuban-born pianist Manuel Valera. Dedicated to the late Puerto Rican-born piano master Hilton Ruiz.

Get the music: Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, Amazon, Pandora, Deezer

Leonleedorsey.com
**BOXED SET**

**Creation Series**
Joel Futterman (NoBusiness)
by John Sharpe

Pianist Joel Futterman recorded this outstanding five-volume solo set between June-December 2008, but it has only now been released on the enterprising Lithuanian NoBusiness imprint. While grounded in the tradition and classical study, Futterman quickly graduated to freer means of musical expression in a career largely pursued out of the limelight, having moved to Virginia from his native Chicago back in 1972. But that hasn’t held him back as he has followed his muse in consort with stellar collaborators such as saxophonists Jimmy Lyons, Joseph Jarman and Kidd Jordan, as well as alone. Now 75, he has amassed a discography of over 70 entries, showcasing a style in which laser focus, independence of movement between different voices is evident in the combination of high-speed undulations across the keyboard at the same time as atmospheric manipulations of the innards and speed undulations across the keyboard at the same time as atmospheric manipulations of the innards and gets its fullest manifestation when he plays curved soprano saxophone and piano simultaneously, a tactic he deploys sparingly, only on the final two volumes, what might come next, but a regular occurrence is the scuttling, the sort of contrast on which he thrives. One particularly effective ploy is the sudden hiatus just when he seems in full spate. It is impossible to predict what might come next, but a regular occurrence is the dive under the bonnet to extract drastically dissimilar timbres. Through his adroit command of keys, wires, pedals and touch he generates a wide range of textures: percussive taps, koto-like plucks, spectral pedals and touch he generates a wide range of textures: percussive taps, koto-like plucks, spectral

**For more information, visit nobusinessrecords.com**
This is the very rare, original issue of Roland Kirk's leader debut, made for the King label, based in Cincinnati.

Pittsburgh pianist Charles Bell's quartet was on the schedule for the infamous 1960 Newport Jazz Festival canceled due to rioting. After that missed opportunity came quartet albums for Columbia and Atlantic (including a young Allen Blakean on drums) and this final trio session for local label Gateway. The location is Pittsburgh's Carnegie Lecture Hall and the band is completed by Thomas (bass) and William Harris, Jr. (drums). Unlike the earlier albums, jazz standards outnumber Bell's original compositions.

Serbian trumpeter Dusko Goykovich, thru 1966's germinal jazz export, is found in recording, in a band with a local label with a Spanish (Tete Montoliu), Dutch bassist (Rob Langereis) and German drummer (Joe Nuy). By this point Goykovich had been a professional for 13 years as a leader or sideman (often with big bands of Kurt Edelhagen, Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland, Maynard Ferguson and Woody Herman). He wrote three of the six recorded compositions, one the other jazz and Songbook standards.

Two days after a set at the recently defunct salon jazz club, documented on this 1994 CD, U.K. pianist/Fluxus band leader Mike Westbrook entered the studio to record Respect, released in 1987 on HatART. The music is by Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868), including overtures from opera William Tell and The Barber Of Seville. The band is also the same.

ON THIS DAY
by Andrey Henkin

BIRTHDAYS

KIM A. CLARKE
November 14th, 1954
Acoustic and electric bassist Kim A. Clark has had a long career both as a performer and presenter. She is a longtime member of the Joe Henderson Quartet and Joseph Boyce's Defunkt, worked with Art Blakey, Mary Lou Williams, Bertha Williams, Clifford Jordan, Steve Coleman, Andy Bey, Louis Hayes, Lionel Hampton, Arturo O'Farrill, Donald Byrd, Candido, Patato, Billy Taylor, Getz, Al Cohn, Wild Bill Davis, Billy Taylor, Stivín and many others; formed numerous groups, founded the LADY GOG'S Women's History Month Music and Arts Festival in 2015, and been a valued collaborator with the Jazz Foundation of America. (FM)

CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1. Winter & Winter reissued its albums
2. NYC jazz clubs better stay on the up and up with it
3. Bassist who played with Monk and Sun Ra
4. Noted recording engineer David Macero
5. Producer Macero
6. Bassist ne Norris Jones
7. Singer Cookes
8. Maria Schneider label
9. AACM band
10. This saxophonist wasn't born in Canada
11. At the heart of bassist Ockeghem
12. German clarinetist Seifert
13. This saxophonist did not have a mohawk
14. Bassist Eddie Harris
15. berries and fruits
16. 1954 Benny Moten His Master's Voice compilation
17. Element of harmony
18. Scion of the Waits drumming family
19. Short-lived '90s festival organized by the Berlin Improvisation Free Initiative
20. 1990 Grammavision John Scofield album
21. Lee Morgan wrote "One for all" for his boss' son
22. British trad-jazz label
23. What jazz musicians could all use
24. Father of 26 Across
25. Repeated, NEA Jazz Master singer

DOWN
1. German clarinetist Theo
2. This saxophonist did not have a mohawk
3. Producer Macero
4. Bassist ne Norris Jones
5. Singer Cookes
6. Maria Schneider label
7. AACM band
8. This saxophonist wasn't born in Canada
9. At the heart of bassist Ockeghem
10. German clarinetist Seifert
11. This saxophonist did not have a mohawk
12. Tree used for kalimbas and ukuleles
13. How Dizzy liked his chop
14. What jazz musicians could all use
15. Evan Parker ers.
16. Vibratot who moonlighted as a cop, or vice versa
17. Bassist Eddie Harris
18. Bassist Eddie Harris
19. Bassist Eddie Harris
20. Bassist Eddie Harris
21. Bassist Eddie Harris
22. Bassist Eddie Harris
23. Bassist Eddie Harris
24. Bassist Eddie Harris
25. Bassist Eddie Harris
26. Bassist Eddie Harris

32. Label founded by Chris Cutler
33. You will need this curr. for the Windhoek Jazz Festival
34. Pianist Richard

THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | NOVEMBER 2021 37
Sunday, November 22
- Lyle Mays Trio
- Oscar Peterson Trio with John Patitucci, Mike Johnson
- Florentine Ensembles: Ensemble Contemporain
- The Shanghai Quartet with Ludwig Kanner, Jennifer Koh, Takeshi Kondo
- The Blue Note Band featuring Randy Brecker, Joe Griffo, Wouter Kellerman
- The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra
- Jalopy 8 pm $15
- The Django at Roxy Hotel 7, 9 pm
- Dizzy’s Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $40
- Chelsea Table & Stage 9:30 pm $22
- Center for Performance Research 8 pm $10
- Cellar Dog 7 pm $10
- Blue Note 8, 10:30 pm $55
- Birdland Theater 8:30 pm $30
- Village Vanguard 8, 10 pm $40
- Soapbox Gallery 8 pm $25
- Room 623 at B2 Harlem 8 pm $12
- Rockwood Music Hall Stage 3 7 pm $15
- Pangea 7 pm $25
- New Amsterdam Musical Association 8 pm
- Minton’s 8, 10 pm
- Mezzrow 7:30, 9, 10:30 pm $20
- Dizzy’s Club 7:30, 9:30 pm $35
- Mezzrow 7:30, 9, 10:30 pm $20
- Barbès 8 pm $20
- The Stone at The New School 8:30 pm $20
**Saturday, November 6**

- A Crusaders Tribute: Craig Dreyer, Clark Gouyot, Brian Charette, Al Street, Matt Chojnacki, Tony Mason
  Bar Lowland, 9, 10:15 pm $10
- Bill Charlap Duets with Ron Carter
  Birdland 8:30, 10:30 pm $60
- Ben Allison Quartet with Stevie Darden, Chico Pinheiro, Allan Mednard
  Birdland Theater, 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- Robert Glasper Trio with Chris Davis, Dexter Houston
  Dizzy’s Club, 7:30, 9:30 pm $40
- Steve Blum; Miki Yamanaka
  Cellar Door, 7, 9:15 pm $10
- Stephanie Wrenn's Django New Orleans, with Eric Stensgaard, Josh Kaye, Daisy Castro, Nick Driscoll, Joe Comia, Scott Ketter, David Langlois
  Dizzy’s Club, 7:30, 9:30 pm $45
- Charles Owen, Joe Fernandez
  The Django at R euler Hotel, 7, 9 pm
- Eli, Alex, Noah Kaplan, Andrew Smiley, Giovanni Moreno, Will Simone, Rolf Verderess, Daniel Fransco
  Downtown Music Hall, 8 pm $30
- The Music of Oliver Lake: Dance Clarinets led by JD Parran
  Dizzy’s Club, 7, 9 pm $20

**Monday, November 8**

- Travis Sullivan Quartet; Nixtaband; Robert Fernandez; Jhoely Garay/Alec Castro Sextet;
  Andrew Hartman Group; Meg Okura and The Pan Asian Chamber Jazz Ensemble;
  Lo Wood, Bryan Davis, Charles Clausen, Michael Sarian, Alex Norris, Ric Becker,
  Pete Malinverni/Juliet Kurtzman
  The Music of Oliver Lake: Dance Clarinets led by JD Parran

**Tuesday, November 9**

- Anything Goes: John Chi, Richard Julian, Stacy Dillard, Dan Roser
  Bar Lowland, 7:30, 10 pm $10
- Harold López-Nussa’s Timba la Americana con Gregoire Maret, Luques Curtis,
  Roy Lopez-Nussa
  The Django at R euler Hotel, 7, 9 pm
- Jim Cline, Daniel Carter, Patrick Graffin, Gabriel Zucker Ensemble; Stephen Gauci,
  Adam Lane, Colin Hinton, Jerry Solomon, Victor Weta-Bianco, John Moran;
  Santiago Labrador Ensemble with Fabrizio Marzi
  Village Vanguard, 8 pm $30
- Willy Rodriguez
  Bushwick Public House, 7, 9 pm $15
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra
  Village Vanguard, 9 pm $40

**Wednesday, November 10**

- Don Ekim
  Barnes 7 pm $20
- Peter Cincotti
  Vanguard, 7, 9 pm $30
- Harold López-Nussa’s Timba la Americana con Gregoire Maret, Luques Curtis,
  Roy Lopez-Nussa
  The Django at R euler Hotel, 7, 9 pm
- On a Dime, Jesse Dulaney, Will Dickey
  Downtown Music Hall, 8 pm $15
- Kevin Sun Quartet with Dan Saul, Victor Weta-Bianco, Matt Horan
  Lowlands, 9 pm $20
- Magno Lawrence
  Village Vanguard, 7, 9 pm $25
- Julius Rodriguez
  Village Vanguard, 9 pm $25
- Matt Pavone Quartet with Jason Rigby, Santiago Labrador, Matt Feiter
  Village Vanguard, 7, 9 pm $20

**Thursday, November 11**

- Amanda Monaco’s am4
  The Cutting Room, 8 pm $20
- Delfeayo Marsalis with the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra
  New Orleans Jazz Museum, 8 pm $20
- Peter Cincotti
  Village Vanguard, 8 pm $25

**Friday, November 12**

- Daymé Arocena effortlessly blends traditional Santerian Afro-Cuban rhythms. “Reigniting the Cuban soundtrack wherever she plays” (NPR)

**Saturday, November 13**

- Frank Vignola’s Guitar Night with Jimmy Bruno, Peter Washington, Vince Cherico and
  David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band
  Dizzy’s Club, 7:30, 9:30 pm $35

**Sunday, November 14**

- Nick Hakim/Roy Nathanson
  Bar Lowland, 9, 10 pm $15
- Sarah King
  Bar Bongos, 7 pm $20
- Arturo O’Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra
  Birdland 8:30, 10 pm $30
- Ashley Pezzotti Trio
  Village Vanguard, 8:30 pm $20
- Robert Glasper Trio with Chris Davis, Dexter Houston
  Birdland Theater, 7:30, 9:30 pm $30
- Bruce Harris Quartet
  Bar Lowland, 9, 10 pm $15
- Pete Malinverni; Julia Kortman, Bill Driscoll, Joe Comia, Scott Ketter, David Langlois
  Dizzy’s Club, 7:30, 9:30 pm $35
- Travis Sullivan Quartet; Nixtaband; Robert Fernandez; Jhoely Garay/Alec Castro Sextet;
  Andrew Hartman Group; Meg Okura and The Pan Asian Chamber Jazz Ensemble;
  Lo Wood, Bryan Davis, Charles Clausen, Michael Sarian, Alex Norris, Ric Becker,
  Pete Malinverni/Juliet Kurtzman
  The Music of Oliver Lake: Dance Clarinets led by JD Parran
**Monday, November 22**
- Freda Payne
  - Birdland 7 pm $40

- Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Latin Experience
  - Blue Note 8:30 pm $35

- Joe Lovano/Dave Douglas Sound Prints
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $40

- Nonga
  - Birdland 5:30 pm $30

- *The Manhattan Transfer*
  - Birdland 7, 9:30 pm $40

- *The Real Mother Blues* with Alex Harmes
  - Birdland 8 pm $25

- Koko Taylor
  - Blue Note 11 pm $30

- *We Are the World* with Juan Pablo Carletti's Biggish
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

**Tuesday, November 23**
- Ken Peplowski Quartet with Glenn Zalecki
  - Martin Wind, Willie Jones III
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

- *The Manhattan Transfer*
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $40

- *Day for Night* with Christian Scott
  - Birdland 8 pm $40

- *Two Fold: Neta Raanan, Kevin Sun, Dan Pappalardo, Jay Sawyer*
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

**Wednesday, November 24**
- Brandon Lee Unit with Wopie Apeshaule, Clovis Nicole, Aaron Kimmel
  - Bar 94 8:30 pm

- David Ostrowski's Louis Armstrong Elegy Band
  - Birdland 9:30 pm $40

- *The Manhattan Transfer*
  - Birdland 7, 9:30 pm $40

- *The Real Mother Blues* with Alex Harmes
  - Birdland 8 pm $25

- *We Are the World* with Juan Pablo Carletti's Biggish
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

**Thursday, November 25**
- Ken Peplowski Quartet with Glenn Zalecki
  - Martin Wind, Willie Jones III
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

- *The Manhattan Transfer*
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $40

- *Two Fold: Neta Raanan, Kevin Sun, Dan Pappalardo, Jay Sawyer*
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

**Friday, November 26**
- Oscar Noriega's Crooked Quartet with Martha Sanabria, Christopher Tordini, G villagers, Audrey Park
  - Birdland 8 pm $40

- *Miss Mayall and The Jazz Artists* with Charlie Jordan, Brian Nalepka
  - Bar 94 9 pm $20

- *TRIO Words Within Music* with Daniel Schmiedt, Rob StabLenski, David Taylor
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

- *Wycliffe Gordon International All-Stars* with AdRon Cunningham, Ehud Asherie, Yasuyuki Nakamura, Alvin Akimoto
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $40

- *Red Williams Quartet*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

**Saturday, November 27**
- *Arcoiris Sandoval's Sonic Asylum* with Theo Wentaliny, Lucas Kadish, Hannah Marks, Connor Parks, Zosha Warpeha, Abby Swidler, Tamr Frankel Danani, Kana Miyamoto, Alfredo Colon
  - Birdland 8 pm $40

- *The Django at Roxy Hotel*
  - 7:30, 9:30 pm $40

- *The Cutting Room*
  - 7 pm $20-25

- *Blue Note*
  - 8, 10:30 pm $65

- *Birdland*
  - 7 pm $40

**Sunday, November 28**
- Stephanie Wemble
  - Birdland 9 pm $20

- *Cocomona*
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $30

- *Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra*
  - Birdland 9 pm $40

- *The Manhattan Transfer*
  - Birdland 7, 9:30 pm $30

- *Jacky Terrasson Quartet*
  - Birdland 7 pm $30

- *Wycliffe Gordon International All-Stars* with AdRon Cunningham, Ehud Asherie, Yasuyuki Nakamura, Alvin Akimoto
  - Birdland 8:30 pm $30

- *Judee Sill Ensemble*
  - 8 pm $30

- *Sansone & The Quattro*
  - 9 pm $30

- *Two-Fold: Neta Raanan, Kevin Sun, Dan Pappalardo, Jay Sawyer*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Jaison Moran and Bandwagon with Tanu Matese, Natasha Waltz*
  - Village Vanguard 8 pm $40

**Monday, November 29**
- Matt Pawka Band with Ben Monder, Santiago Leitgebo, Allan Mednard
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Anna Kochilas Quartet with Michael Kanin, Paul Skike, Evan Sherman*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Latin Experience*
  - Blue Note 9:30 pm $35

- *Fung Chem Hei, Shawn Lovato, Colin Hinton, Cosmos Gallego, Joe Sullivan, Jared Radich, James Michael, Stephen Gau,
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Juan Pablo Carletti's Biggish with Yonie Kretzmer, Rick Parker, Benny Werner, Kenneth Jimenez, Ben Stapp, Jake Henry, Arian Quinn, David Leon, Walter Stinson, Matt Aron, Mandy Smith, Matt Mullen, Gabe Zablow*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Humbolt Atrium CompCopt Big Band with Jay Rodriguez, Dennis Brandon, Scott Hoffy, Mitch Cusato, Silen Ewen, John Cleary, Michael Seltzer, David Whitwell, David Taylor, Franz Hidell, David Glass, Dennis Hernandez, Eddie Abner, Alan Nachman, Lawrence Goldman, Rose Avila, Marlon Trifan, Gabe Pitarres and guests Valery Pomeneva, Gery Biren*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Aaron Comess Group with Tommy Kupeshel, Richard Hammond, Keith Lofthus, Leon Grandmaitz*
  - Rockefeller Music Hall 2 pm $10

- *Vanguard Jazz Orchestra*
  - Birdland 10 pm $40

**Tuesday, November 30**
- *The Secret Trio* with Amy Kupfer, Ismael Redman, Adam Pietrangeli
  - Birdland 8 pm $30

- *Joe Lyrano/Dave Douglas Sound Prints with Lawrence Glasgow, Linda May Han Oh, Joey Baron*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Sampa forgota*
  - Blue Note 9:30 pm $40

- *Minus Five Big Band*
  - The Darmouth at Roxy Hotel 7:30 pm $30

- *People of the Earth*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Steve Davis*
  - Birdland 9 pm $30

- *Christian McBride Insight Straight with Steve Wilson, Warren Wolf, Peter Martin, Carl Allen*
  - Birdland 10 pm $40
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Christian McBride

The National Arts Club congratulates seven-time GRAMMY®-winning bassist, composer, and bandleader Christian McBride, recipient of the NAC Medal of Honor for outstanding achievements in music.

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