One of the most exciting facets of jazz—if not the most—is its unpredictability. The magic of improvisation or real-time creation leads to real music of the moment. These un-recreatable moments are precious and why live performance is especially integral to the appreciation of jazz. However, unpredictability in life is not so fun. Some two years into the pandemic, it is hard to know where one and the world at large stands. Previous periods of desperation gave way to hope, only to be pushed back down. As of this issue’s publication, New York is in flux as hospitalizations rise and a new wave of emotional weariness has set in. One victim of this is the cultural landscape, as concerts are being cancelled out of an abundance of caution and musicians, venues and audience members are again wondering if and when things will return to normalcy.

It is then another facet of jazz that we must look to in getting through this period. Jazz is a music of collective action, wherein the contributions of each player cannot be removed from the whole, lest the entire structure fall apart. So too in our society does the action of the individual have an outsized impact. It is up to everyone to do their part—even if it means inconvenience or an impinging on some sort of imagined freedom—in order that recovery and renewal can be in our personal and public future.

**On The Cover:** Jay Clayton (photo by Steven Goldberg/courtesy of the artist)

**Corrections:** In last month’s Label Spotlight, the correct name is Asian Improv Arts. In last month’s CD Reviews, Joe Farnsworth’s album was recorded live at Smoke and the bassist in Resilient Vessels is Josh Werner.
FEB 11–12  
DIANNE REEVES: LET’S FALL IN LOVE  
ERTEGUN JAZZ SERIES  
Continuing a hugely popular tradition now in its 10th year, vocalist Dianne Reeves sets the mood for Valentine’s Day weekend with a mesmerizing concert in Rose Theater.

FEB 25–26  
VOICES OF MISSISSIPPI  
A new multimedia event celebrating the music, art, and storytelling traditions of the people of Mississippi. Based on the 2019 double Grammy Award-winning Voices of Mississippi: Artists and Musicians Documented by William Ferris.

This program is presented through the generosity of Jody and John Arnhold.

FEATURING  
BOBBY RUSH AND RUTHIE FOSTER  
CEDRIC BURNSIDE  
SHAROE THOMAS  
LUTHER AND CODY DICKINSON  
of the NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

BLACK STRING – FRI, 2/18  
Presented with Chelsea Table + Stage and Korean Cultural Center NY

“Towering, Hypnotic, Psychedelic Korean Post Rock Majesty”  
- New York Music Daily

photo Nah Seung Yull

SIMON SHAHEEN – FRI, 2/25  
with the Near Eastern Music Ensemble

GlobalFest 2022 Artist Award Winner!

CHELSEA TABLE + STAGE  
152 W 26th St., Manhattan  
9:30PM | Doors 8:45PM

KAUFMAN MUSIC CENTER  
129 W 67th St., Manhattan  
8PM | Doors 7:30PM

WORLDMUSICINSTITUTE.ORG
On a stormy Sunday night (Jan. 16th), rain-melted snow making sidewalks dangerously slippery, where snuggler to shelter than North Williamsburg’s Union Pool? A high-calorie duet by tenor saxophonist Baden Powel Duvignau invited mentor Ron Carter to participate and recruited the great guitarist Bill Frisell to add his brilliant tones to a number of the pieces. For lovers of hard-driving, percussive piano with repetitive rhythms and tonalities, Benito Gonzalez is your man—one who even plays with the innards mic’d to emphasize the hammering of strings. At The Django (Jan. 18th), Gonzalez dove into a set of long-form pieces with surges of reiterated, modally-based notes dominating. This devotion to bold, forceful statements, with AfroLatin patterns, is traceable to the drum as a first musical experience in his Venezuelan childhood; the path eventually led him to a profound love of McCoy Tyner. It was Tyner’s “Fly With The Wind” that stood out in the set, partly because of the innate superiority of the work, which allowed bassist Will Slater more room for creative ideas, such as a solo in which the flapping of bird wings could easily be interpreted. Likewise, drummer Curtis McPhatter, Jr. was freed to exercise subtlety, particularly with sticks and cymbals, to widen the options generally required of Gonzalez’ concentrated style. For pure Gonzalez, opener “Visionary” was a tutorial in his hammering ethos. “Safari”, with a discernible melodic thread, included a very short riff of standard “Bye Bye Blackbird” (Ray Henderson-Mort Dixon), part of Tyner’s repertoire with John Coltrane. This musical insertion added some levity to the tune, although it was clear throughout that the intensely focused Gonzalez was having quite a lot of fun with himself—and sometimes with Slater, with whom he would exchange meaningful glances. —Marilyn Lester

Though in the ’90s it was easy to catch innovative Argentine pianist Guillermo Klein at weekly Gauchos gigs his relocation to Spain has curtailed local appearances. A treat then to hear him at Bar Bayeux (Jan. 12th), a long, narrow venue crammed with vociferous fans in Brooklyn’s Prospect Lefferts Gardens. The trim sound of Klein on acoustic piano, fellow Argentine Leo Genove on electric piano and synthesizer, Matt Pavolka on bass and Allan Mednard on drumset foregrounded Klein’s idiosyncratic yet highly accessible compositions. All songs were distillations of earlier big(ger) band versions, including “Push Me Not/Volante” from 2008’s Filtros, “ArteSano” and “Que Carrera?” from 2012’s Carrera, “Cameello 2022” and “Platense” from 2015’s Infinite Winds and “Upstate” from 2019’s Cristal. Each rendition stood on its own, not need for extended blowing, though Genove’s mercurial solos, laced with lightning-quick, keyboard-spanning runs, upped the excitement factor, eliciting appreciative cries from the cognoscenti, audible even from the opposite end of the room. A high-general excitement with adroit percussive punctuation, kicking those tricky rhythmic/melodic patterns in just the right places so that Klein’s unique compositions came to life. Like a well-rehearsed drill team the quartet performed the intricate pieces with joyous precision, showing that even the hardest moves become effortless once one’s artistic impulses have been amply inspired.

—Carlos Franzetti has turned to the optimistic torch songs of the 1940s and 1950s to bring listeners out of their pandemic induced gloom on his new recording, In The Wee Small Hours.

—Stefan Pasborg’s reinvention of Igor Stravinsky’s iconic works are as brilliant as they are invigorating. Ritual Dances doesn’t rewrite Stravinsky so much as bring his work into the 21st century in bombastic style.

—John Hébert assembled an incredible band to play with the spirit of Mingus.
In a career spanning more than half a century Dee Dee Bridgewater has been heard in a multitude of contexts, but seldom in the intimate setting of piano/voice duet as in her engagement with Bill Charlap at Birdland. The pair eased into their first set (Jan. 6th) with a delicately evincing rendition of “Here’s That Rainy Day”. The singer demonstrated her clarion-toned upper register and the pianist his notable facility as a sensitive accompanist. Charlap then ramped things up, laying down a potent dark vamp to set up a wildly swinging version of “Caravan”, Bridgewater delivering a dramatic reading of the lyric before taking off with a high-flying scat chorus Charlap matched with a starkly original solo mixing old timey and avant garde phrases, inspiring some riotously playful exchanges. The mood calmed with a hushed rendering of “My Funny Valentine”, which flowed into a rhythmically charged “In The Heat Of The Night”. A hilarious takeoff on “Honeysuckle Rose”, Bridgewater singing faux opera and Charlap quoting the Charlie Brown theme, was followed by a sultry “Just One Of Those Things” and a “Mood Indigo” oozing with sensuality. Bridgewater began “S Wonderful” slowly intoning the lyric before going into swing mode, ending with a comical tag. She invoked a raspy Louis Armstrong on “What Is This Called Love?”, then let loose with some formidable scatting on “Cotton Tail”, which had the crowd begging for encore of “Angel Eyes”. — Russ Musto

Leaping into their online session moments before expected, this trio of veteran improvisers soared into the cyberspace arena of Arts for Art’s Online Salon (Jan. 26th). Steve Swell, the acclaimed voice of the old-school New Thing on trombone and baritone saxophonist Dave Sewelson, an acknowledged master of his chosen horn, matched wits and liberties with drummer Michael Vatcher, a resident of Amsterdam’s experimental circuit since the ’90s. It may be his acclamation to Euro free improv that guided this set’s opening. Vatcher stroking and coaxing his kit, depressing drumheads with an elbow or drumstick, as Sewelson and Vatcher whispered and shushed when they may have otherwise let loose the howl. The effect was hypnotic, but the saxophonist soon bravved the elements with rapid key-snapping runs, drawing Swell into a moderato, tightly threaded call-and-response. A second piece opened with Vatcher solo, demonstrating uniquely wide, perhaps exaggerated motions, more akin to a Japanese calligrapher than a jazz drummer. Hands flailed and swirled over and under cymbals, toms and the bass drum’s shell leading to Sewell and Sewelson casting fiery swaths over the bare structure. Each sound was draped in the fabric of the whole even while shining individually. Slowly dream-like Sewelson’s slurred melodic descent recalling wonderful inebriations on darkest nights, with Swell’s looped canonic figures and resounding drones exhibiting the breadth of invention. — John Pietaro

The final evening of a four-night stand at Dizzy’s Club by the Emmet Cohen Trio, during which the pianist invited various guest horns to play with his working band of bassist Russell Hall and drummer Kyle Poole, had longtime colleagues trumpeter Benny Benack III and saxophonist Ruben Fox featured with the group. The Sunday night (Jan. 9th) early set got off to a mellow start with the trio playing a pretty rendition of Burt Bacharach’s “This Guy’s In Love With You”, recalling the elegant blues stylings of Ahmad Jamal’s units. Benack and Fox joined for Ellington’s “It Don’t Mean A Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing)”, living up to the title with steeped-in-tradition solos, along with Cohen, who took a boppish pass awash with Monk-ish fills, after which Poole and Hall had their turns. The quintet brought out, laying down a potent dark vamp to set up a wildly swinging version of “Caravan”, Bridgewater delivering a dramatic reading of the lyric before taking off with a high-flying scat chorus Charlap matched with a starkly original solo mixing old timey and avant garde phrases, inspiring some riotously playful exchanges. The mood calmed with a hushed rendering of “My Funny Valentine”, which flowed into a rhythmically charged “In The Heat Of The Night”. A hilarious takeoff on “Honeysuckle Rose”, Bridgewater singing faux opera and Charlap quoting the Charlie Brown theme, was followed by a sultry “Just One Of Those Things” and a “Mood Indigo” oozing with sensuality. Bridgewater began “S Wonderful” slowly intoning the lyric before going into swing mode, ending with a comical tag. She invoked a raspy Louis Armstrong on “What Is This Called Love?”, then let loose with some formidable scatting on “Cotton Tail”, which had the crowd begging for encore of “Angel Eyes”. — Russ Musto

Flutist Cheryl Pyle has been leading various iterations of the Beyond Group over the years, the first of which included the late Bern Nix as a full partner in sound. The band, realized with multi-winds and more, even well after the guitarist’s passing, has thrived on the improvisational boldness of its rotating membership, crafting complex works with nary a score in sight. A favorite tool has been the round robin, one member taking lead and trading statements with each of the others, calling on the full range of emotion, tradition and technical mastery to command the moment. Since the first COVID wave fell, performances, Pyle’s organization has presented its art remotely. This concert (Jan. 16th) featured not only the leader on alto and standard C flutes, but Haruna Fukazawa on the C and Gene Coleman on bass flute along with Beyond regulars vocalist Judi Silvano, soprano saxophonist Michael Eaton and bassoonist Claire de Brunner. The members’ listening skills were as ignited as were their chops as they crafted visions and concepts across town. Pyle poured out themes at once near Eastern and psychically fused, weaving neologisms into tomorrow’s melodies and stinging riffs. Eaton’s fire raptured and Fukazawa shimmered, piecing the dusk with a hybrid western classical, traditional Japanese and 20th Century evocations. De Brunner’s alternating winged and substratum forays severed boundaries, as did Coleman’s bass flute in contrast with dazzlingly blue piccolo solos. (JP)

WHAT’S NEWS

Carnegie Hall’s Afrofuturism Festival, exploring literature, music, film and visual art, will take place in person and online in February and March, both at Carnegie Hall and over 70 partnering venues. For the complete schedule, visit carnegiehall.org/events/highlights/afrofuturism.

It has been announced that British bassist Roy Babbington, veteran of hundreds of recordings since the late ’60s and most of the current iteration of Soft Machine, has retired from performance due to hand issues.

Nominees for the NAACP Image Award, taking place Feb. 28th at 8 pm on BET, have been announced. Relevant categories include Outstanding Soundtrack/Compilation Album: The United States vs. Billie Holiday (Music from the Motion Picture); Outstanding Jazz Album - Instrumental: Forever...Jazz–Jazzmin Ghent (srt); Love Languages–Nathan Mitchell (EMM Music Group); Somewhere Different–Brandee Younger (Impulse!); Sounds from the Ancestors–Kenny Garrett (Mack Avenue); The Magic of Now–Orrin Evans (Smoke Sessions); and Outstanding Jazz Album – Vocal: Dear Love–Jazzmeia Horn and Her Noble Force (Empress Legacy); Generations–The Baylor Project (Be A Light); Ledisi Sings Nina–Ledisi (Listen Back Entertainment / BMG); Let There Be Love–Freda Payne (Alain Franke Records); SALSWING–Rubén Blades y Roberto Delgado & Orquesta (Rubén Blades Producciones). For more information, visit naacpimageawards.net.

Arts for Art will present the following live-stream performances in February at artsforart.org/online Salon Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7 pm: Mara Rosenblum (Feb. 1st); Avi Mendoza/James Brandon Lewis/Devin Hoff (Feb. 3rd); Karen Borca (Feb. 8th); Ingrid Laubrock/Jose Davila/Tom Rainey (Feb. 10th); Andrea Wolper/Virg Dzurinko/Judith Insell (Feb. 15th); Yoni Kretzmer (Feb. 17th); Darius Jones (Feb. 22nd); and Jamie Branch (Feb. 24th).

Jazz Power Initiative’s Open Studio, a free class in voice, dance and theater led by pianist El Yarni, vocalist Antoinette Montague and theater director and choreographer Mickey McBride, is now open for children ages 10-17 and will take place Feb. 17th and Mar. 10th, from 4:30-7 pm at United Palace, Broadway and 175th Street in Washington Heights. For more information, visit jazzpower.org/youth.

Applications are now being accepted for the DC Jazz Festival’s DCJazzPrix. Winners will receive a $15,000 cash prize along with a year-long association with the DC Jazz Festival organization that includes extensive public exposure, technical assistance, personalized career development services and a paid engagement to perform on the main stage at the 2023 DC JazzFest. To apply by Mar. 31st, visit dcjazzfest.org/dcjazzprix.

The Louis Armstrong House Museum (LAHM) has launched a new digital guide on the free cultural app Bloomz Connect app, making LAHM accessible for either on-site or offsite visits through photo, audio, and video features offering insights into the offstage life of Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong.

Andreas Brandis, who has had operational responsibility for the business side of ACT Music and led the company’s live management division Tanzmeister Management as its managing director since 2015 has now been appointed as a full partner and shareholder in ACT Music by the company’s founder, producer Siggi Loch.

Submit news to ahenkin@nyjazzrecord.com
Legendary trumpeter Arturo Sandoval was born and raised in Artemisa, Cuba. He grew up in the countryside in a poor family where there was little interest in the arts. A journalist turned him on to jazz and he became deeply inspired by Charlie Parker, Clifford Brown and Dizzy Gillespie. By age 12, he was playing trumpet with street musicians. His life changed when he met Dizzy Gillespie in Cuba who was touring the Caribbean. Sandoval emigrated to the USA under political asylum from Fidel Castro’s regime. Since then, he has established himself as one of the most highly regarded trumpeters in the world.

Sandoval has performed and recorded with Gillespie, Paquito D’Rivera, Tito Puente, Chico O’Farrill, Irakere, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Rod Steiger, Dr. John, Gloria Estefan, Ricky Martin, Alicia Keys and many others. He performed with Stevie Wonder at the White House, where he was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by President Barack Obama. Sandoval scores for film and TV and has composed for The Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Pittsburgh Symphony and the London Symphony Orchestra. He is also a revered educator and has taught at Florida International University, Whitworth University, led workshops at Dartmouth College and elsewhere. We spoke with Señor Sandoval via Facetime from his home studio in Los Angeles, California. Lighting a “tabaco” (the Cuban word for cigar), he was kind enough to answer our questions for this interview.

TNYCJR: How are you staying safe during this time of Omicron?

AS: You know, you have to take care. I wear my mask and I’ve got the three vaccines. So far I’ve survived. I know many people who’ve been infected. I try to stay home as much as I can.

The New York City Jazz Record: I hope you’ve been well and keeping busy during the pandemic.

Arturo Sandoval: To be honest, I’ve been composing every single day and have posted more than 500 videos of new pieces. Unfortunately, all my gigs have been canceled. But I keep practicing five hours a day because I can’t let this pandemic burn my groove. It’s important for me to keep learning and trying new things.

TNYCJR: Can you tell me about your upcoming show at Carnegie Hall with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra?

AS: It’s still scheduled, so I hope it happens! It’s going to be challenging because I have to play two trumpet concertos and another four pieces. It’s going to be a very interesting program. I think we’re going to open with the “Cuban Overture” by George Gershwin, then I’ll do a piece and then we’ll do “Andalucia Suite” by Ernesto Lecuona, then “A Time For Love” by Johnny Mandel, then my own tune “Everyday I Think of You”, which I wrote and dedicated to my mentor and hero Dizzy Gillespie.

TNYCJR: Have you played Carnegie Hall before?

AS: Yes, a few times. I’ve been lucky. I played there with Dizzy Gillespie, Tito Puente, The New York Philharmonic and my own band a few times. Recently, I played with Alejandro Sanz at Radio City Music Hall. He’s a very close, dear friend of mine.

TNYCJR: What are some of the challenges working with an orchestra versus a jazz band?

AS: With classical music, you don’t have as much freedom as you do with jazz. You have to be very consistent with the score. But for me, music is all one. I don’t care who wrote it, when, how or where. If it sounds good, I’m going to enjoy doing it.

TNYCJR: What other projects are you working on?

AS: I’ve got a new album coming out. The executive producer is very involved with crytocurrency and NFTs [Non Fungible Tokens]. He started releasing individual songs mainly for people who are involved in crytocurrency. In April we’re going to do a full release. It’s been a smart move because I see nice results. He knows what he’s doing.

TNYCJR: It must be interesting to see how the music business has changed this way.

AS: It’s a little complicated for an old man, but when you see good results I say “Hey, this is good!” It’s completely new, but you have to go with the flow and learn new technologies.

TNYCJR: What are some career highlights?

AS: One of the most important things that happened to me was in May 1977 when Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Earl “Fatha” Hines and a bunch of other musicians went to Cuba on a jazz cruise and stopped in Havana for a few days. That was crucial for me. Meeting my hero Dizzy and becoming close friends changed my life completely. He gave me so many opportunities by taking me under his wing, which helped me a lot. He even helped me with the process of political asylum. There’s an HBO movie about it called For Love or Country: The Arturo Sandoval Story. It’s a good movie, well produced with good acting. And it’s a true story.

TNYCJR: It must be very interesting to see your life told through a movie.

AS: Everybody has their own story to tell, so it was an honor and a privilege that they told my story. It will serve as a testimony and help my grandchildren know about my life and my struggle getting to this country.

TNYCJR: What do you keep from Cuba?

AS: You know, I’m Cuban and I’m going to die Cuban. I cannot change that. In Cuba, music is in the atmosphere. There are a lot of very talented musicians. People are very musical there in general. It’s something you have had in your blood since you were born. I hope I never lose that. But since the revolution in ‘59, the Cuban people have been suffering for 63 years of a horrible, stupid, horrendous dictatorship. Everything changed drastically. To be honest, I never wanted to leave. It’s a horrible feeling to have to escape from your home. But I didn’t have a choice. Otherwise, my life would have been miserable. I grew up extremely poor in the countryside where nobody was interested in the arts. I was kind of a hopeless kid. After I moved to the USA, my life changed completely. I’m so grateful and give thanks to God everyday. Not just for me but for my family as well. My son is a successful artist; he does animation, painting, sculpture and many kinds of things. My wife works in real estate. Over the years I’ve had the opportunity to work with so many artists I love and respect. I couldn’t have dreamt it.

For more information, visit arturosandoval.com. Sandoval is at Isaac Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra Feb. 19th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Irakere-Eponymous (Areeito–CBS Columbia, 1978)
• Dizzy Gillespie/Arturo Sandoval–To A Finland Station (Pablo, 1982)
• Paquito D’Rivera (with Arturo Sandoval)–Reunion (Messidor, 1990)
• Arturo Sandoval–Saying’in (GRP, 1996)
• Arturo Sandoval–Rumba Palace (Telarc, 2007)
• Arturo Sandoval–Dear Diz (Every Day I Think Of You) (Concord, 2011)
Can an artist be bold and groundbreaking while also revisiting his past? Trumpeter Marquis Hill is proving that this just may be possible as he is now operating in a circular fashion with his career on New Gospel Revisited, a reimagining of his first album, which came out 10 years ago.

Born in Chicago in the late ’80s, Hill grew up on a steady diet of ’70s soul, which would later manifest itself in his own music. As he explains, “even to this day, I feel like that music resonates with me pretty heavily…there’s a certain sparkle to it. It’s almost spiritual.” At the start of the new millennium, Hill was a high schooler already deeply imbued with jazz. By college, he was in the sphere of legendary bassist Ron Carter and would soon further his lifelong passions of music and education at DePaul University, earning a Master’s degree in Jazz Education.

By 2011, he was ready to bring his music into the world. “I just told myself, ‘I’m gonna challenge myself to write a set of music, put out a project and once that light-switch clicked in my mind, I just got it done. So I sat down, I remember sitting at the piano, and just going through tune by tune. ‘New Gospel’, obviously, it’s the title track. I heard the melody, I heard the groove and I put it together. And that was pretty much the process: sitting down at a piano and just really sussing out and working out each one of these tunes.” Using a small budget, he assembled a group of players/friends from the Chi-town area and recorded in a friend’s studio (housed inside a factory building) in one day, giving it a certain rawness. Hill decided to go the DIY route and put out New Gospel as a self-released project in an edition of 500 copies. “I remember being really, really determined to get my music out, get my voice out and I had so many different ideas.” The results spoke for themselves as Hill showed himself to be an auspicious new player on the scene, taking the calmness and control of bop and melding it with elements of soul, making the new sound his own.

That first album also helped him to lay a foundation for his musical journey. As he explains, “to this day, I’m grateful for that project, it shaped my sound and my compositional approach. You listen to all of my projects after New Gospel and it still has that similar sound.”

The album provided a springboard for Hill’s rapidly growing and evolving career over the next few years as he garnered prestigious awards, including first place in the 2014 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Trumpet Competition, and put out impressive followups: 2012’s Sounds of the City and 2013’s The Poet on the Chicago indie Skiptone label. Soon after, he moved to New York and recorded for the Concord Music Group (2016’s The Way We Play, part of the prize for the Monk competition).

For the next several years, Hill put out pairs of expansive, complex albums with shades of R&B, hip-hop and ambient music mostly on his own Black Unlimited Music Group label and in mainly instrumental and then vocal/rap versions, including 2014’s Modern Flosses, 2017’s Meditation Tape, 2019’s New Gospel and culminating with 2020’s masterful, Zodiac-themed Soul Sign. By then, he was on a trajectory that could have taken him anywhere musically.

After an extensive musical journey, how did this restless soul find himself coming back to his musical beginnings, to rerecord his debut as a live album? Hill sees a dual purpose. “To this day, this first set of music I composed is one of my favorite sets of music. We sound young, but we were hungry and we were interested in trying to connect. But then if I’m being honest, I’d say that you can hear how green, how young we were. A part of me cringes a little bit when I listen to the original recording. So we get to rejuvenate that music and bring that set of music not back to life, but breathe new life into the music. I’m not replacing the original New Gospel, but a part of me feels like it’s almost like I get to redeem myself a little bit by putting this new set of music revisited from 10 years ago.”

For what is his first album for Edition Records, Hill corralled an impressive group of Joel Ross (vibraphone), James Francis (piano), Walter Smith III (tenor saxophone), Harish Raghavan (bass) and Kendrick Scott (drums), with all except Ross being new collaborators and all, as Hill puts it, “innovative voices of their generations.” The results speak for themselves as the recording literally and figuratively took Hill back home, for a show recorded in Chicago in December 2019, just weeks before COVID hit the States. On the album Hill and the band luxuriate in the improved sound quality with a tighter dynamic and more in-your-face feel. While the debut showed the world a promising voice, now we hear him as the confident, seasoned veteran he has become.

After a brief, orchestral intro, opener “Law and Order” is stretched from its original five minutes to a quarter-hour with fiery solos by Hill and Smith, followed by a calming, extended meditative solo from Ross. “The Believer” now sports a simmering sexy lightness at which the original only hinted. The title track has a breezier quality to it, which leads to a lightly solo from Hill and a skipping, fluid Raghavan solo. The light bounce of “Autumn” is now meditative and more reflects the changing calm of that time of year. Where “A Portrait of Fola” once featured a swinging bounce, it now has a lighter, airier atmosphere thanks mostly to vibraphone. Interpersed are a few brief new tunes added in as standalone for the bandmembers, including a lovely piece featuring tenor (“Walter Speaks”), a masterful, controlled drum spot (“Oracle”), graceful, chime-like vibraphone (“Lullaby”) and trumpet sounding alternatively sweet and mournful (“New Paths”).

And what does this closing of the circle of his debut mean for Hill’s future? “I can check it off my list and continue on the path that I’m on, with the direction that I am going.”

Recommended Listening:
- Marquis Hill–Sounds of the City (s/r, 2012)
- Matt Ulery’s Loom–Wake An Echo (Greenleaf Music, 2013)
- Marquis Hill, Jeff Parker, Joachim Florent, Kendrik Scott–The Bridge Sessions (Concord, 2014)
- Marquis Hill–The Way We Play (Concord, 2016)
- Marquis Hill–Soul Sign Instrumental (s/r, 2020)

For more information, visit marquishill.com. Hill is at Le Poisson Rouge Feb. 11th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- DAVE LIEBMAN: SELFLESSNESS

Selflessness is the latest in Liebman’s Coltrane-tribute catalogue which includes titles such as Homage To John Coltrane, Compassion (with Joe Lovano), Jay (with the Dave Liebman Big Band), John Coltrane’s Meditations, and Lieb Plays the Blues à la Trane. He also has participated in various Coltrane tributes such as “Life Under the Sky,” a famous concert in Tokyo with Wayne Shorter in 1957. portrait of Tristano’s musical genius available.
Living legend Jay Clayton recently celebrated her 80th birthday in style, gigging at The Jazz Gallery with Ed Neumeister, Gary Versace, Jay Anderson and Billy Drummmd. As a performer, in-demand educator and busy collaborator, Clayton juggles it all herself and has never been in it for the money, prioritizing her heart ahead of her bank account for many years. “That’s just the way it goes with the music I chose, or I guess you might say, the music that chose me,” she says via Zoom from her Chelsea apartment. “I never wanted to be famous, but once I became hooked on this music, I very much wanted to sing. I had to. And when I couldn’t get a gig, I made one up! And that is something I still do to this day and tell all my students to do it too. Find a place, make it happen.”

Born Judith Colantone in Youngstown, Ohio, on Oct. 28th, 1941, she first heard the Great American Songbook from her mother, whose dreams of being a big band singer were never realized. “My mother sang as a teen but after she got married, that was that,” Clayton recalls. “She didn’t know who Billie Holiday was even though she kind of sounded like her. She didn’t know what jazz was, because in those days those were just the pop songs. So I kind of learned some of those standards without even trying. My actual intro to jazz proper happened when my cousin gave me those records on, I was smitten. I didn’t know I was going to sing it yet, but it had already captured my soul.” About a year later, her first time on the mic was in 1959 sitting in with a band at a local dance in Youngstown, finding the courage to sing “Moonlight in Vermont” despite her nerves.

To this day Clayton performs and records material from the Great American Songbook, often shedding new light on obscure tunes or unearthed novel approaches to the familiar. Scintillating diction, consistent connection and an understated delivery make her a skilful interpreter, but Clayton is more widely known as a pioneer in the free jazz movement, moving beyond Tin Pan Alley into uncharted sonic territory. When singing ‘free’, Clayton’s courageous scat style explores texture, timbre, rhythm, range, space and intensity; it clearly reveals her primary influences of John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk and Eric Dolphy. Furthermore, in exploring the possibilities of the voice beyond scat, she is known as one of the first vocalists to incorporate poetry and later the use of electronics, both live and in recordings.

“When it came to the poetry, I was first inspired by Jeanne Lee and even though I loved the standards and still do, I think part of it was that I wanted to go deeper with the messages, I wanted it to be more than just about love. So I was very drawn and still am drawn to the work of poets like e. cummings and Emily Dickinson. But back then I was very shy to do it because it can sound very contrived; it isn’t easy to make it sound natural, speaking somebody else’s words.”

A live set by Clayton will often combine jazz standards, poetry and singing free. Besides her precise pitch and percussive vocal delivery, what ties it all together is honesty and connection with the source material, her fellow musicians and, in the lucky case of live performance, the audience.

While Clayton has been performing for over 60 years, it wasn’t until 1980 that she stepped into the studio as a leader with her debut recording All-Out, which had Jane Ira Bloom (soprano saxophone), Larry Karush (piano), Harvie S (bass) and her former husband Frank Clayton on drums. “I really see recordings as documentation. You do it, you record it, you move on. By the time I started recording under my own name, I had already guested on recordings and it actually took me years to really be able to enjoy that process. For a long time I struggled without an audience in the studio, but after a while, I figured it out.”

Career highlights include guest appearances with prolific minimalist Steve Reich, which proved a rare situation of minimal improvisation and a large touring band; credits on three albums with avant garde composer John Cage (John Cage, 1977, Four Walls, 1979 and Three Constructions, 1989); two outings of astounding a cappella with “Vocal Summit” alongside Bobby McFerrin, Jeanne Lee, Urszula Dudziak, Lauren Newton, John Cage (John cage – Love is), 1982) and Norma Winstone and Michele Hendricks (Conference of the Birds, 1990); and Outskirts, a collaboration of nearly 30 years with Bloom and recently departed drummer Jerry Granelli, a musical soulmate with whom she worked for decades including a fine album in 2014, Alone Together.

Her first of seven releases for the Sunnyside label was Beautiful Love, a gorgeous straightahead duologue of well-known standards with pianist Fred Hersch (1994). A must-hear (especially with headphones) is Clayton’s triumphant recording of solo voice and electronics called The Peace of Wild Things (2007). A good discography exists on her website, with a handful of titles available for sale on Bandcamp including Circle Dancing (1996), Harry Who? (2013), in honor of Harry Warren, and Unraveling Emily (2017), an artful collaboration with Kirk Nurock with text from Dickinson.

In addition to her achievements as a recording artist and performer, as an educator Clayton has nourished literally thousands of vocalists since she began teaching in the 70s. Mostly freelancing now, she has taught for years at the Vermont Jazz Center alongside Sheila Jordan, a close friend and frequent collaborator. As a versatile musician and an honest communicator, Clayton was a natural to move into teaching. “Back in the day, people asked me if I teach and initially I said you can’t teach this music, you just have to go out and listen to it. But then I formed workshops in my loft and I never stopped. The hardest part about teaching is knowing what they should do next. You can’t put the cart before the horse. You can’t just jump in. As teachers it is important that we remind people to sing. I always waited all the way until the end of the gig and then after I sat in, if I got asked to sing a second tune, I knew it went okay. But now, there aren’t really a lot of sessions anymore. There are open mics now, but not so many sessions where you can just jump in. As teachers it is important that we make an environment for learning. In my workshop I introduce singers to free music and a lot of them are surprised by how much they enjoy it. When you’re singing free you really have to connect to the music and to the moment that we all share together.”

Reflecting on her 80 years on this planet, Clayton counts herself lucky to have had so many rewarding musical experiences. “One thing happens after the next. We look back and we call it coincidence, but it is not. Wisdom is knowing what to do next.”

For more information, visit jayclayton.com. Clayton is at Roulette Feb. 20th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Marc Levin Ensemble–Songs Dances and Prayers (Sweet Dragon-Centri-Fuiga, 1972)
• Jay Clayton–All-Out (AnimaProductions, 1980)
• Fred Hersch/Jay Clayton–Beautiful Love (Sunnyside, 1994)
• Jay Clayton/Fritz Pauer/Ed Neumeister–4 For The Road (MeisteroMusic, 2001-2)
• Jay Clayton/Jerry Granelli–Alone Together (Sunnyside, 2014)
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Ed Neumeister may just be the best jazz trombonist you never heard. The softspoken Neumeister, with his stylish white goatee and almost shoulder-length mane, has mastered the trombone and the tools of composition. Over the course of a long career, Neumeister has distinguished himself as a total musician, one who has mastered the trumpet and the tools of composition. He learned early on to play a wide variety of styles and is respected by the best jazz, commercial and classical players. When asked how he maintains almost perfect technique for the diversity he embraces, Neumeister said that “nobody told me it was difficult to do that. My formal background is classical, but I have been doing everything, which seemed like the natural thing.”

Contrasting Neumeister’s relative anonymity with the splash trumpeter Wynton Marsalis made when the Neumeister formed “a diverse and inclusive orchestra” which he was a leading figure. He was an original improvisor. The result is that the focus is on pure music as opposed to “trombone music.”

Neumeister has had a number of notable recent albums. What Have I Done?, with longstanding quartet of Gary Versace (piano), Drew Gress (bass) and Tom Rainey (drums), combines quirky melodic lines, odd meters, adventurous solos and intricate arrangements in a surprisingly accessible setting. “These are all colleagues who I have played with for many years. Not that many musicians can navigate complex notated music. I improvise around a general idea, but every time the way these guys do.” 3 for the Road, a deeply emotional, often thrilling album with vocalist Jay Clayton and pianist Fritz Pauer, was recorded in Austria in 2000-2001 but not released until 2020. It is lovely, combining an eclectic selection of tunes and tight playing. Alone Together, released in 2021, is a duo with talented Austrian guitarist Karl Ratzer, in which the two navigate mostly standards. Neumeister’s lengthy solo on “Body and Soul”, with electrifying use of the mute, is a new standard for the piece. One Only Offers an incredible display of range, compositional skills and techniques that sets the bar for solo trombone albums, as Neumeister leads the listener in an exquisite display of talent in a mostly live performance that was named a Concert of the Year in this gazette in 2017.

Speaking to the divisions of our time and how the jazz community can help to heal us as a nation, Neumeister formed “a diverse and inclusive orchestra” called Assembláge. He explains that “in these days, more than ever, we need to come together as a humanity. Music can be the metaphor for life when people from different backgrounds and sensibilities act as one voice with each of the individual voices contributing their own musical personality into the common goal of the music of the moment, whether in an improvisatory or notated context.” He describes the music he is preparing for the orchestra as “wide-scope: Schoenberg meets Monk meets Sun Ra, with a little Lutoslawski and James Brown thrown in for spice.” By focusing on racial, ethnic and gender diversity, Neumeister hopes his orchestra will contribute to the healing so many desire. The orchestra started rehearsing in the summer of 2019, with one rehearsal in spring 2020 before the pandemic halted its plans. The world debut of Assembláge is scheduled for April 2022 at Birdland. Neumeister is now busier than ever, always broadening his abilities: “Lately, I have been focusing on extended techniques, mostly multiphonics, and expanding sonic horizons, while exploring new colors. I just finished a piece for symphony orchestra, with a jazzy feel. I’ve actually written more than one hundred compositions and arrangements for jazz orchestra.”

With years of experience, boundless energy and discipline, Neumeister has passion for life, and this may be his breakout year for Neumeister, a man with a mission, with high hopes for a major comeback in New York as he prepares his next course of action. ♦

For more information, visit edneumeister.com. Neumeister is at Roulette Feb. 20th with Jay Clayton. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- Noel Jewkes And The Dr. Legato Express - Just Passin’ Thru (Caliph, 1977/78)
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra–Lickety Split (Music of Jim McNeely) (New World, 1997)
- Jim McNeely Tentet-Group Therapy (OmniaTone, 2000)
- Ed Neumeister–One and Only (Trombone Solos) (MeisteroMusic, 2015-16)
- Ed Neumeister Quartet–What Have I Done? (MeisteroMusic, 2021)
WE INSIST!
BY JIM MOTAVALLI

The Italian independent jazz label We Insist! was named for Max Roach’s landmark Candid recording, subtitled Freedom Now Suite, but don’t expect recordings of American expatriates in Europe. It is home for homegrown Italian talent. Since the launch in 2018, the label has issued 16 albums.

According to Anna Harwell Celenza’s Jazz Italian Style, “When jazz arrived in Italy at the conclusion of World War I, it quickly became part of the local music culture. In Italy, thanks to the gramophone and radio, many Italian listeners paid little attention to a performer’s national and ethnic identity.” That meant Louis Armstrong had equal footing in Italy with homegrown stars like Corinna Kramer. Today, Italian jazz stars such as trumpeter Enrico Rava, vocalist Roberta Gambarini and saxophonist Stefano di Battista are well known, but up-and-comers like Francesco Diodati (guitar), Marco Colonna (clarinet and sax), Paolo Botti (viola and banjo) and Matteo Borlione (bass) haven’t been on the radar as much in North America.

We Insist! is out to change that. It is a musicians’ label, formed by a group of multi-talented friends: flutist Maria Borghi is the graphic artist and illustrator; veteran clarinetist Giancarlo “Nino” Locatelli is the label’s artistic director; guitarist Gianmaria Aprile acts as sound engineer and record producer; and clarinetist Pietro Bologna is the photographer. The varied backgrounds “stimulate us to conceive and realize projects of wide scope, within which we can create new partnerships,” the collective says.

The music is quite varied. Locatelli is heard in duo format on From Here, From There (with Alberto Braida on piano) and the influence of soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy, who spent time in the mid ’60s in Italy, is prominent (two albums on the label, Locatelli’s Situations and Pipeline 8’s Prayer, feature his music). But Eric Dolphy’s playing on Mal Waldron’s The Quest, you will love this.

Braida is heard in trio format on Cats in the Kitchen (with bassist Silvia Bolognesi and drummer Cristiano Calcagnile) and it swings with a gentle, Monk-ish touch. On the other hand, clarinetist and soundscape artist Paolo Gaiba Riva’s Expeditions—recorded all over the world with different collaborators—uses a lot of found sounds and is bracingly avant garde. Italian jazz is varied, and so is the label.

But it is all committed music. Writing in the July 2021 issue of this gazette, Tom Greenland said the tales on Pascali Contet and Joëlle Léandre’s fourth duo album, Area Sismica, “spiral over and under each other like a musical double helix.”

Locatelli says he started talking about We Insist! with Borghi in 2012. “It took a few years to clarify the path we wanted to take,” he said. “It was born from Maria’s strong determination to support and spread my music and the music of musicians who, like me, for various reasons are on the sidelines or risk ending up there.” The label’s philosophy, he added, “is to try and do things in the time they need, taking care of all the details. But above all to live each project as a collective work.” The collective identifies with Roach’s work, unafraid to release challenging, politically conscious work. Both Roach and Charlie Mingus, who also recorded for Candid, had been part of the Newport Rebels group that organized an alternative to the mainstream Newport Jazz Festival in 1960. Locatelli described the founding of an independent label as “a militant, political act, an act of resistance against the mercantile music industry.” Incidentally, the Candid records—many of them classics—will also be rereleased as the label relaunches. Expect a profile here later in the year.

As to what is on the label, Locatelli says he doesn’t like the term avant garde “because it assumes there’s a rear-guard.” He prefers Monk’s quote, “You’ve got to dig it to dig it, you dig?” To which he adds, “I like diggers, even if they dig in places I personally would never go… What matters is where you arrive, not where you start from.”

Given the photographer and illustrator involved, it is not surprising that the album covers are visually striking, but also quite varied. ECM packages may have a recognizable look, but We Insist! has a variety of arresting approaches to visualizing the music. Speaking of diggers maybe the crate variety will see the colorful covers and decide to investigate the music within.

Six releases are planned for 2022, ranging from projects with 10 musicians to a solo work by trombonist Sebi Tramontana. 7 Rocks is a duet with Locatelli and bassist Enrico Fazio and another release features trumpeter Gabriele Mitelli’s trio with the British rhythm section of John Edwards and Mark Sanders.

For more information, visit weinsistrecords.com

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LOVE LINES
BY SUZANNE LORGE

Singer Maria Hawkins—who sang under the name Maria Ellington—founded many notable swing bands in the ’40s. Count Basie, Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington all courted her talent. She was opening for The Mills Brothers as a solo act at Club Zanzibar in Manhattan in 1946 when she met Nat King Cole, who had been called in to sub for the popular quartet. Two years later, the two were married by Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. at Harlem’s famed Abyssinian Baptist Church. The couple’s daughter, Natalie Cole, born 72 years ago this month, deserves enormous credit for the revival of the Great American Songbook in the ’70s-80s. Her 1991 album Unforgettable...With Love, Cole would turn out many more studio albums affirming her appreciation of all things Songbook, without ever fully returning to the R&B pop tracks that had earned her fame in the ’70s-80s. In 2008, she recorded Still Unforgettable (DMI/Atox), featuring “Walkin’ My Baby Back Home”, another virtual duet with her father. Natalie, who passed away in 2015, would earn her final Grammy for this record, her second in the Best Traditional Pop Vocal Performance category.

Singer Catherine Russell, too, descends from two consequential jazz figures: Her father, vocalist Ljubis Russell, worked as Louis Armstrong’s musical director for years and her mother, Carlene Ray, made history as a vocalist and instrumentalist with the revolutionary band, International Sweethearts of Rhythm. Russell is an undeniable talent in her own standing, too, with a voice, both familiar and reserved, wraps each syllable in a subtle warmth—it is a refreshing take on this classic.

This month at Birdland, Russell will celebrate Valentine’s Day, Mardi Gras and the album’s impending launch, slated for April. She plays with her septet on Feb. 14th (Valentine’s Day for Lovers) and Feb. 15th (New Orleans Carnival); in trio formation with Carolyn Leonhart and LaTanya Hall, her fellow vocalists from Steely Dan, on Feb. 16th (The Danettes Valentine); goes solo with the rhythm section of John Edwards and Mark Sanders. 7 Rocks is a duet with Locatelli and bassist Enrico Fazio and another release features trumpeter Gabriele Mitelli’s trio with the British rhythm section of John Edwards and Mark Sanders.

Gregory Porter will present his annual Valentine’s Day concert at the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and Oxford University, on Feb. 12th. This year’s guests include Kurt Elling and Samara Joy. Dianne Reeves takes to Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Rose Theater with “Let’s Fall In Love” (Feb. 11th-12th). Svetlana’s Big Band offers a Special Valentine’s Day Eve Show at the Birdland Theater, on Feb. 13th. The band can be heard at the Django (Feb. 16th), Mezzrow (Feb. 27th) and Dizzy’s Club (Feb. 28th). His Edition label mate Gretchen Parlato headlines Blue Note (Feb. 21st-23rd). And the extraordinary Meshell Ndegeocello kicks off her Symphony Space residency on Feb. 24th.
IN MEMORIAM

BARRY HARRIS
BY ANDREY HENKIN

Barry Harris, pianist, educator and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Jazz Master, died Dec. 8th, 2021 of complications from COVID-19 at 91. He had given his last public performance on Nov. 12th, 2021 at Flushing Town Hall as part of the venue’s annual NEA Jazz Masters celebration alongside Jimmy Owens, Kenny Barron, Sheila Jordan, Billy Hart and Donald Harrison.

Harris was born Dec. 15th, 1929 in Detroit. He began playing piano at age four and credited the city’s school system for its emphasis on music. Among his friends and colleagues were future fellow legends Kenny Burrell, Tommy Flanagan and Hank, Thad and Elvin Jones. His formative influences were Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk. Speaking to this gazette in 2006, of the former he said, “He was the best one of all of them as far as this music was concerned.” Of the latter, he remarked, “Monk was an individual...his solos weren’t like anybody else and his songs weren’t like anybody else.” Harris began his professional career in his hometown but, like most, eventually moved to New York. In 1956, he undertook a tour with Max Roach, subbing for Powell’s younger brother Richie who had died in a car accident.

During his eight decades of playing Harris made over two dozen albums for Argo, Riverside, Prestige, MPS, Xanadu, Uptown, Concord, Candid, Enja, Alfa Jazz, Reservoir and other labels and was a valued sideman with Cannonball Adderley, Joshua Breakstone, Charlie Byrd, Donald Byrd, Al Cohn, Sonny Red, Red Rodney, Jack Sheldon, Sonny Stitt, Don Wilkerson and others.

From the ’80s onwards, Harris became known as an educator through his weekly workshop in which he mentored many generations of future players. As to what he taught, Harris said, “How to improvise. That’s the biggest challenge. I want [students] to be proficient on their instruments...You have to find a way to teach all this kind of stuff. It’s hard...They have to have the means and the means is the technique. You have to have that. [I’m not] really teaching bebop or something like that. I’m just trying to teach how to improvise.”

Harris was named an NEA Jazz Master in 1989. He received the Presidential Award from the International Association of Jazz Educators in 1995, received a Congressional Letter from the White House for his work in 1998 and was inducted into the American Jazz Hall of Fame in 2000.

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HARRY COLOMBY (Aug. 20th, 1929 - Dec. 25th, 2021) Though working in cinema later in his career, the then-high-school-aged jazz fan (Hilton Riju, brother to Signall Records founder Jules Colomby) became Thelonious Monk’s pianist at the pianist’s request from 1955-69. Colomby died Dec. 25th at 92.

PEDRO GONÇALVES (??? - Dec. 4, 2021) The Portuguese bassist worked with Paulo Curado, Lisbon Improvement Players and Mikado Lab, co-founded Dead Composers and Parents and was a recording engineer for Creative Sources. Gonçalves died Dec. 4th at 51.

JOHN HEARD (Jul. 3rd, 1938 - Dec. 10th, 2021) The bassist was active since the ’60s, working with George Duke, Cal Tjader, Azar Lawrence, Luis Gasca, Joe Henderson, Mc أوorant Santos, Aitro Moreira, Ahmad Jamal, Harry “Sweets” Edison, Count Basie, Lew Tabackin, Kenny Burrell, Yoshikoh Akiyoshi, Oscar Peterson, Shelly Manne, Nick Brignola, Bill Watrous, Ira Sullivan, Zoot Sims, Tete Montoliu, Clark Terry, Harold Land, Gene Harris, Lou Levy, Pharoah Sanders, Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, Claude Williamson, Joe Williams, George Shearing, Bud Shank, Bobby Hutcherson, Lou Bellson, Gary Foster, Mike Campbell, Benny Carter, Frank Strazzeri and many others along with albums as a leader or co-leader for ITI and Straight AHead. Heard died Dec. 10th at 83.

SANDRA JAFFE (Mar. 10th, 1938 - Dec. 27th, 2021) The jazz pianist co-founded New Orleans Preservation Hall in 1961 with her husband, which has been a crucial venue for presenting traditional jazz and the site of recordings by Jim Robinson, Percy Humphrey, Chris Barber and the club’s own Preservation Hall Jazz Band, currently run by Jaffe’s son Ben. Jaffe died Dec. 27th at 83.


ANDY KAUFMAN (Oct. 5th, 1945 - Dec. 14th, 2021) The music industry professional was the booker for both Blue Note (1989-95) and Birdland (1995-2005) clubs, managed Kevin Mahogany and produced Cachao and Grupo Folklorico Y Experimental Nuevayorquino albums for Salsoul. Kaufman died Dec. 14th at 76.

WALTER LANG (1961 - Dec. 16th, 2021) The German pianist worked with Rick Hollander, Beate Kittsteiner, Harald Rüüschenbaum, Johannes Herrlich, Jason Seizer, Adrian Mears, Jennifer Evens, Thomas Fait, Lisa Wahlandt, Wolfgang Lackerschmidt, Dusko Gojcikov, Don Menza and others, was a member of Full Moon Trio and Trio Elf and had albums under his own name for Double Moon, Chitei, Nagel Heyer, Stomp, Pirouet, Jawo, Mdl. Atelier Sawano, Enja and ACT, including two co-led with Lee Konitz. Lang died Dec. 16th at 60.

ROHN LAWRENCE (1961- Dec. 30th, 2021) The guitarist had credits under Najee, Norman Connors, Lonnie Liston Smith, Will Downing, Boney James, Nestor Torres, André Ward, Bob Baldwin, Art Sherrod, Jr., Marion Meadows and Rick Braun and mid ’90s albums on Atlantic and Jazzateria. Lawrence died Dec. 30th at 60.

DON PALMER (Apr. 9th, 1939 - Dec. 17, 2021) The Canadian saxophonist had credits under Tito Puente and Lee Konitz in the ’70s and then Paul Cram in the new millennium to go along with a membership in Alive and Well and the Benghazi Saxophone Quartet in the ’90s, plus a co-led release with Tim Cohoon, Joe Sealy and Skip Beckwith in 1976. Palmer died Dec. 17th at 82.


OSCAR LÓPEZ RUIZ (Mar. 21st, 1938 - Dec. 24th, 2021) The Argentine guitarist and composer (and brother to bassist Jorge López Ruiz) was in Astor Piazzolla’s group from 1961-86 and also worked with Sergio Mihanovich, Lalo Schifrin, Dino Saluzzi, Gato Barbieri and others and would go on to compose for numerous films. López Ruiz died Dec. 24th at 83.


ROBBIE SHAKESPEARE (Sep. 27th, 1953 - Dec. 8th, 2021) The Jamaican bassist was best known as half of the reggae duo Sly & Robbie, who collaborated with Monty Alexander, Nils Petter Molvær, Meshell Ndegeocello, Manu Dibango, Kazumi Watanabe, Barry Adamson, Michael Colina, Bernie Worrell and others. Shakespeare died Dec. 8th at 68.

LEIF STRAND (Jun. 7th, 1942 - Dec. 1st, 2021) The Swedish composer, conductor and saxophonist incorporated compatriot jazz musicians, such as Arne Domnérus, Bengt Hallberg, Rune Gustafsson, Georg Riedel, Egil Johansen, Putte Wickman, Lars Danielsson and others plus vocal choirs into his works, recorded for His Master’s Voice, Interdis, Proprius, Europa Film, Air and Earmall. Strand died Dec. 1st at 78.

GREG TATE (Oct. 14th, 1957 - Dec. 7th, 2021) The journalist and guitarist published cultural criticism essays on music and Black culture, wrote for the Village Voice and other publications, co-founded the Black Rock Coalition, led the Burnt Sugar band and wrote liner notes for albums by Charles Tolliver, Meshell Ndegeocello, Don Pullen and others. Tated died Dec. 7th at 64.
musical influences such as Charlie Parker and Eric Dolphy and his knack for writing interesting and quite demanding compositions. He also remembers the collegial atmosphere of that period in London with most musicians playing in the same groups, recording in local studios during the day and flying to the continent for evening concerts. That camaraderie was evident in the early ‘90s when Dean joined the Dedication Orchestra, an ensemble formed in tribute to the exiled South African musicians who were at the core of the original Blue Notes and Brotherhood of Breath.

In the ‘80s, Dean’s pace slowed down, largely due to health issues; both Skidmore and saxophonist/bagpiper Paul Dunmall, who was one of his closer musical partners and friends, recall how “few could keep up with Elton’s drinking.” Toward the end of the decade, Dean reconnected with the Canterbury circle and joined Phil Miller’s In Cahoots and later Pip Pyle’s L’Equipe ‘Out, staying in both for more than a decade. In addition to his Unlimited Saxophone Company, he also reformed the EDQ, recording Silent Knowledge in 1995 with Domancich, Dunmall, bassist Paul Rogers and drummer Tony Levin, and established a new large jazz ensemble, Newsense. In keeping with his musical appetite, Dean also became a much sought-after player and composer on the international scene, participating in groups such as the Anglo-Italian Quartet and trumpeter Dennis Gonzalez’ Dallas-London sextet.

Most of these collaborations, including the ones with trombonist Roswell Rudd and Hopper, were maintained on an on-and-off basis as his health allowed. Starting in the late ‘90s, Dean eventually embraced his Soft Machine legacy through a number of groups—Soft Machine Legacy, Soft Works, Soft Bounds, Soft Mountain, Soft Heap—many of which featured former members such as Hopper, guitarist John Etheridge and drummer John Marshall, along with his old friend Tippett. Of note are Soft Works, which recorded Abracadabra in 2003, and Soft Bounds—Dean, Hopper, Domancich and drummer Simon Goubert—recording live at the Parisian club Le Triton in 2004. These were not, however, cover bands revisiting Soft Machine’s original material but rather attempts at picking up the musical evolution where Fourth and Fifth had left off. As Domancich recalls, “he never had nostalgia for the Soft Machine period.”

As his albums continue to be reissued and live recordings discovered, Dean will hopefully graduate from the ‘unsung hero’ category. As eloquently put in John Fordham’s obituary from The Guardian: “Dean’s playing sounded fresh and familiar at the same time. He could move easily between a muscular, song-based orthodoxy and unpremeditated improvisation and his bitter-sweet sound and twisting, eager melody lines broadened the emotions of every band he played in.” Dean lived his music intensely to the point of overlooking any commercial aspects. In one of his rare interviews, he stated that “the best way to experience jazz is in a live situation; to me it just doesn’t work as studio music.” Dunmall sums it up rather well: “Elton at heart was an improviser but had his ears open to all music…he always had his own sound and voice in whatever style of music, be it free improvised jazz or jazz rock you could always tell it was Elton.”

Recommended Listening:

- Elton Dean Quartet–They All Be On This Old Road (The Seven Dials Concert) (Ogun, 1976)
- Soft Heap–Eponymous (Charly, 1978)
- Dennis Gonzalez Dallas-London Sextet–Catechism (The Names We Are Known By) (DAAGNIM, 1987)
- Elton Dean, Paul Dunmall, Tony Levin, Paul Rogers, Roswell Rudd, Keith Tippett–Bladik (Cuneiform, 1996)
- Soft Works–Abracadabra In Osaka (MoonJune, 2003)
Tim Berne is, for most jazz fans, primarily thought of as a saxophonist, improviser and bandleader and only secondarily as a tunemist or composer. But the quality of his groups and records comes directly out of his composing and though that may be subsumed for a long time, listeners recognize it. In 2017, Matt Mitchell released FORAGE, piano interpretations of Berne’s themes, and now comes Gregg Belisle-Chi with the beautiful Koi, Berne played on solo guitar.

Stripped down and especially with the limited sustain of the guitar, it is easy to hear all the facets and sophistication in the pieces. Berne doesn’t produce song-like melodies as he crafts pithy, meaty phrases and sets them into chord changes and harmonic rhythms that outline both clear form and keep a strong tonal center. They are also full of details and quirks that set them apart from both standard song form and also the kind of liminal forms that often stand in for a highly improvisational concept of composition. Berne was an acolyte of Julius Hemphill, but his composing also reminds one of Wayne Shorter; not that Berne’s material follows Shorter, but in taking his own oblique pared-down path to making pieces that improvisers will play. “Reception”, for example, sounds at first like a response to two different Thelonious Monk tunes, then turns both inward structurally and outward harmonically. Berne’s music is like Doctor Who’s TARDIS, bigger on the inside.

To say that Belisle-Chi plays this stuff well is an understatement. His technique is excellent and it sounds like he is caressing the music. The recording quality is superb and meaningful in that the guitarist is solo but doesn’t sound alone, the space and reverberation around his instrument sounds like an accompaniment. Hearing Berne so stark yet glowing is frequently a moving experience.

Belisle-Chi has a concentrated gentleness that pairs superbly with the sister Mars. They are an oil and water mix and the guitarist brings out the depth of beauty and feeling in Berne’s more questing, agitated approach. He also does something strange to the tune names. Berne favors acerbic titles like “Rose Bowl Charade” and “Middle Seat Blues”; reading this primes the mind for one thing, but the searching emotional landscape in the playing delivers something else altogether, like the titles are a loss-leader for a substantial payoff. Berne sounds as velvety as he has ever been and that contrast with the picked guitar strings is ideal.

“Middle Seat Blues” and “Giant Squids” are heard across both albums. On Mars, the guitarist lays back for some relaxed, Ornette Coleman-ish blues from Berne while solo Belisle-Chi gives the music a Delta blues sound with some nice slide work. “Giant Squids” is far more skeletal and angular heard solo while as a duo it has the fascinating sound of musicians near to constructing the thing on the spot, negotiating what comes next and when. As the last track on Mars, they play the head then it all comes to an end. A nice encore to two sides of the same unique, impressive coin.

For more information, visit relatiecipethecharts.com and intaktrec.ch. Berne is at Downtown Music Gallery Feb. 1st. Belisle-Chi is at The Owl Music Parlour Feb. 4th. See Calendar.
Ballads: Into the Heart Of It
Steve Slagle (Panorama)
by Jim Motavalli

If you haven’t heard John Coltrane’s Ballads, you haven’t taken the man’s full measure. Let’s throw the record with Johnny Hartman in there too. Alto/soprano saxophonist Steve Slagle gets to the heart of these ballads. Ugonna Okegwo’s bass seems a little down in the mix but what one can hear sounds great and Jason Tiemann is a nicely understated drummer for the project.

A big plus is trumpeter Randy Brecker on three tracks. He is one of the most consistently satisfying soloists in jazz and even if he just dropped into the session for the day, he doubles the themes on his tracks as if he has been playing for years. His solos on Thelonious Monk’s “Reflections” and Slagle’s “Big Mac” alone will keep you coming back to this album.

But it is Slagle’s date and his playing makes one ask why—despite an extensive resume—he isn’t on more listeners’ radar. On Tadd Dameron’s “If You Could See Me Now”, he teaches a master class in expressive, heart-on-sleeve alto playing. Pianist Bruce Barth’s solo on this track is also outstanding.

On three tracks, Richard Sussman provides synth and drum programming and although Slagle is good with strings, even when they are artificial, the electronics fail to substitute effectively for an actual orchestra. The least-successful track is “My One and Only Love”, given a kind of almost jaunty hip-hop flavour. Hartman and Coltrane rump every ounce of pathos from it and that isn’t heard enough and Slagle is surpassingly lovely in an instrumental version of Duke Ellington’s “Le Sucrier Velours (The Queen’s Suite)”.

The programming on Coltrane rung every ounce of pathos from it and that would have been a good model. The programming on Miles Davis/Bill Evans’ “Blue in Green” works better.

But this is a minor quibble. There’s so much to savor. Duke Ellington’s “Le Sucrier Velours (The Queen’s Suite)” isn’t heard enough and Slagle is surpassingly lovely in an instrumental version of Duke Ellington’s “Le Sucrier Velours (The Queen’s Suite)”.

In the late 19th and early 20th Century, assimilation into an idealized America was the intention of many Eastern European Jewish immigrants. However, tension between culture and religion in the context of overt anti-Semitism fostered complex Jewish-American identities that continue to develop. The Borscht Belt, centered in Sullivan County, NY, was one significant cultural wasteland on this journey. Initially jokingly referred to as “Solomon County”, it included humble “kuchaleins” (cook alones) and massive resorts like Grossinger’s, the Commodore and the Concord. The Borscht Belt was ultimately destroyed by its own success as niche entertainers became conventional and succeeding generations favored other recreational pursuits. Iconic architectural markers were slowly demolished by neglect and their remains, along with the time period’s ethos, motivate clarinetist Sam Sadigursky’s The Solomon Diaries.

Sadigursky’s father is a klezmer clarinetist but the muse for this record’s cover is his son, Nathan’s, clarinet’s rubble as captured in photos by Marisa Scheinfeld for the book The Borscht Belt: Reviving the Remains of America’s Jewish Vacationland. Like Jamie Saft’s Borscht Belt Studies (Tzadik, 2010), Sadigursky and accordion player Martin Auer (former a flowingly touching ballad showcasing Sadigursky’s lovely tone on bass clarinet and the latter is an ethereal piano/accentuated with a harmonica and a small string section) swing jazz and klezmer, and “Flight of the Commodore” and “Nevele”, (previously the Delmar Hotel in Ellenville, NY, starts with an excerpt from Yiddish Singer Ruth Rubin’s up-tempo “Hot zikh mir di zep tseit”. Her refrain captures the joy of dancing during a traditional Jewish wedding but the song then devolves into a thoughtful duet that maintains the dance but places it in a gloomy setting. Rubin also appears on a bluegrass-tinged yet poignant “Pines Hora”, which features Koci on banjo as well as accordion. “Minette” (previously the Delmar Hotel in Liberty, NY) is a somewhat livelier folk dance while “Callicoom”, referring to the Callicoom Hills Resort that is still operating, features fierce and whirling scats Parker’s recorded solo. Guest tenor saxophonist Manu MVPoher then steps up, roaring through a long solo backed by band shouts and riffs introducing “Cherokee” phrases. A drum break dissolves into rubato strings as preface to Beasley’s piano solo followed by a saxophone section soli of more of Bird’s solo, leading into a reprise of “Cherokee” and “Koko” with Potter.

Beasley’s mashup arrangement of “Scrapbook from the Apple/Ah Leu Cha” features AfroLatin percussion from guests Pedrito Martinez and Munyungo Jackson, semi-rubato string interludes and solos from trumpeter Martin Auer and Lindgren on tenor. “Confirmation”, one of the five co-arrangements, aims toward a funky-contemporary vibe, enlivened by Beasley’s Fender Rhodes and Marc Godfroid’s trombone solos. The percussion guests return for an AfroLatin “Donna Lee”, propelled by bongos and congas, guest Miguel Zenón’s alto saxophone soaring on top.

Of the three ballads, Beasley’s chart on “I’ll Remember April” is the one that conjures up Charlie Parker with Strings memories. A showcase for guest Joe Lovano’s tenor saxophone, it succeeds as both feature and tribute. “Laura”, a co-arrangement heavily influenced by cinematic music (the song was a movie theme originally), is atmospheric with drama, lessening the impact of guest Charlie McPherson’s alto saxophone lead and solo. “Summertime”, another co-arrangement, is a disappointment, stuck somewhere between pop-jazz and smooth jazz.

For more information, visit adylagaroparounds.com. This project is at Barbes Feb. 6th. See Calendar.
Although some have suggested three is the magic number for spontaneous musical interactions, paring down to two improvisers raises the stakes, calling for more robust contributions from each. When said duos unfold in real time, without safety netting, the stage is primed for creativity unlimited.

Tenor saxophonist Birker Goldberg and drummer Moses Boyd are pivotal figures in the burgeoning London scene that delivers jazz with the intensity and immediacy of rock music. Escape The Flames captures the duo’s launch party for its sophomore disc Journey To The Mountain Of Forever at London’s Total Refreshment Center, reprising all the studio tracks in extended versions, led by the energy of an encircling crowd. Akin to Cream or the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the pair come on like a ‘power duo’, encircling crowd. Akin to Cream or the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the pair come on like a ‘power duo’, encircling crowd.

The late producer Orrin Keepnews once argued that, “There is no substitute for the excitement of spontaneity.” That statement is as true today as it ever was; no jazz experience can top the thrill of true spontaneity. Although some have suggested three is the magic number for spontaneous musical interactions, paring down to two improvisers raises the stakes, calling for more robust contributions from each. When said duos unfold in real time, without safety netting, the stage is primed for creativity unlimited.

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Over July and September 2020, tenor saxophonist Stephen Gauci embarked on 19 encounters under the title *Pandemic Duets* where he paired his utterly personal mix of judderings overtones, sinuous upper register screeches and crusty overflowing with a wide range of partners, some already well-established, others more up-and-coming. The two download-only releases considered here fall under the latter banner.

Gauci’s duet with bassist Kenneth Jimenez, originally from Costa Rica, is the fifth in the series with a bassist, following hookups with Michael Bisio, Adam Lane, Ken Filiano and Lisa Hoppe. Often in nimble counterpoint, Jimenez’ clearly articulated pizzicato clearly relates to the jazz tradition, albeit through an abstract lens, and as such he also seems to bring Gauci closer to convention in terms of syntax, if not language. That is audibly the case on “#4,” which comes on like a deconstructed standard, with Gauci approaching the suburbs of lyricism, although never heading downtown. On this set Gauci often tempers his amalgam of angular altissimo phrases, briefly sluttered motifs and guttural bellows by residing in the midrange. At other times he toggles an almost boppishly zigzagged line with a yelping falsetto where he reverts to some of his most favored intervals. By contrast Jimenez rarely employs extended techniques, but when he does it is in the form of a squealing arco or glacial harmonics and abrasive scrapes. Overt responsiveness manifests most obviously when Jimenez wields his bow to fashion abrasive scrapes. Overt responsiveness manifests most obviously when Jimenez wields his bow to fashion slippery wavering cries, which Gauci answers with keening ululations. Throughout the dialogue features recurring pauses, as if both are taking stock, with Jimenez paying great attention to sound placement, over the course of ten unfettered tracks.

A brief glance at the catalogue shows that Gauci also has a thing for drummers. His date with Brooklyn-based Belgian Raf Vertessen stands in a lineage, which also includes Gerald Cleaver, Vijay Anderson, Jeff Davis, Kevin Shea and Colin Hinton. Vertessen supplies loose-limbed pulsation, assembled without recourse beyond the standard kit. In one mode Vertessen weaves a continuous rhythmic carpet bearing up Gauci’s idiosyncratic outpourings. While the opener is the sort of conversational interaction you would anticipate from two free jazz spirits, as Vertessen punctuates his affable rumble with mini-avalanches when Gauci veers into the stratosphere, elsewhere he avoids generating momentum. Then the discourse seems much more between instrumental equals rather than fulfilling preset roles. As an example, on “#3” Gauci’s teetering howl breaks on percussive waves, before edging into frayed distortion in a jagged stop-start exchange. Such judicious suspensions promote something akin to call and response, although the distinction is never quite so clear-cut as the rejoinders ultimately blur together. On “#2” Gauci intersperses his gruff howl with silence in an unaccompanied introduction before Vertessen adds his happy two cents’ worth in a reined-in outing, which is the opposite of what may be imagined from a drum/saxophone duet, indicative of how the album both confirms and upends expectation.

Gauci, Jimenez and Vertessen are at Downtown Music Gallery Feb. 12th. See Calendar.

For more information, visit gaucimusic.bandcamp.com.

Billy Higgins, in what photographer Chester Higgins would call a soul moment, graces the cover of James Gordon Williams’ *Crossing Bar Lines: The Politics and Practices of Black Musical Space*. The title itself packs a punch, suggesting bars on the musical page; physical spaces for presenting this music; and the many barriers Black musicians have had to face in carrying themselves with dignity.

Williams explores these themes of transcendence and resistance as he examines the lives and music of drummers Higgins and Terri Lynne Carrington and trumpeters Terence Blanchard and Ambrose Akinmusire. As historian, academic and author of *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original* Robin D.G. Kelley states in his brilliant foreword, “Williams discovered in Black musical space a powerful force against catastrophe.”

Williams straddles several spaces himself as a professor in African American Studies and pianist/composer working in many interdisciplinary collaborations with various artists. Despite a clear academic focus, Williams is at pains to point out that “readers will be able to gain insight on these improvisers’ cultural work.”

The introduction is a tour de force, Williams setting out his terrain and carefully examining the concepts he wishes to explore: Black music spatiality and respatialization; improvisation; the revamped hermeneutic of crossing the bar line; twin axes of social life and death; and inclusivity. There is much to unpack, question and ponder. Williams’ epigraph is three quotes about Black music and space, including one by the recently deceased Bell Hooks: “Space can be real or imagined. Spaces can tell stories and untold histories. Spaces can be interrupted, appropriated, transformed through artistic and literary practice.”

Among the questions Williams seeks to answer is “How do these five African American Improvisers use their improvisation to do the cultural work of addressing social inequalities while affirming their humanity.” His reason for choosing them is “that their musical work demonstrates complex relationships within notions of Blackness, gender and a Black sense of place.” Thankfully—for this is a dense book to be digested slowly and thoughtfully—Williams provides us with an excellent summary of the work that he will do in subsequent chapters to close the introduction.

While the arguments made for the existence in the music selected for this study of transcending spaces that are at once resistant to white supremacy and celebratory of “quotation black life” are not entirely convincing, readers will certainly be drawn to listen again to the music that Williams selects and to learn more of the overt, inverted and more complex political work of these musicians.

For more information, visit upress.state.ms.us

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**IN PRINT**

*Pandemic Duets*  
Kenneth Jimenez/Stephen Gauci (Gaucimusic)  
*Raf Vertessen/Stephen Gauci (Gaucimusic)*  
by John Sharpe

*Crossing Bar Lines: The Politics and Practices of Black Musical Space*  
James Gordon Williams  
(University Press of Mississippi)  
by Monique Ngozi Nri

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When a talented young jazz singer begins her very first CD with “Stardust,” it is a certain good sign for the music. Just 21, Samara Joy gained attention when she won the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition in 2019. Her debut recording will certainly result in her becoming much better known.

Joy has a beautiful voice with a wide range, displays the influence of Vaughan (particularly on “Lover Man” and “Jim”) without directly copying her inspiration and sounds remarkably relaxed and comfortable, even on uptempo material. Unusual for her age is that she takes her time in getting her message across rather than letting everything out in the first chorus.

For this intimate set, the singer is joined by the superb guitarist Pasquale Grasso, bassist Ari Roland and drummer Kenny Washington. “Stardust” is a memorable treatment with Joy opening with its verse while accompanied solely by Grasso. The guitarist weaves inventive lines around the singer throughout the concise one-verse, one-chorus version. Another particularly special performance is the closer, “But Beautiful”, taken as a five minute voice-guitar duet. The use of space, with every note counting, coupled with the richness of Joy’s voice, make this a highpoint.

While all dozen selections receive favorable treatments: “Everything Happens To Me” is ironically taken uptempo (showing that the singer does not take her problems overly seriously); “Let’s Dream In The Moonlight” features her sounding perfectly fine at a racetrack tempo; there is plenty of warmth in “It Only Happens Once”; and “Moonglow” is happily boppish. “Jim” (which is about a good-for-nothing boyfriend) is a little too upbeat but the revival of “The Trouble With Me Is You” easily compensates.

Tenor saxophonist Ayumi Ishito first came to the attention of this writer several years ago at the debut performance of Attitude!, prior to that band actually having a proper name, but the Japanese-born Berklee grad has been residing in New York for nearly a dozen years. Tutelage with George Garzone and mentorship from Daniel Carter has seen her working with a wide range of like-minded spirits and leading her own ensembles, remaining vital and garnering due attention.

Open Question is one of those projects Carter has thrived in to these many years: equal parts young and older, east and west, blue, cool, hip and caustic. His multiple woodwinds and brass along with Ishito’s tenor soars through four works recorded in a Brooklyn studio late in 2020. The band demonstrates a damn amazing ability to play utterly free over varying arrangements and dynamics as if reading charts of through-composed music. Things start with “Blues,” in which the frontline wraps itself around a wildly expanded blues form. “Dimly-lit Platform” is flute-driven, reeking of mystery and noir, not simply film noir but the still earlier novels—think Dashiell Hammett and Cornell Woolrich. Ishito’s tradition-haunted tenor, reedy and dark, bores new tonalities through Carter’s floating melodic “Confidential BBQ”, the next cut, seems more dark, bores new tonalities through Carter’s floating melody. “Flames with No Names” and Ishito’s spiritual horn seem to arise from this. And the fiery propulsion of “8 Steps/7 O’Clock”, with Ishito’s sinewy, ’80s-inspired head, let alone the “Conversation” (nearly 25 minutes in length), are so steeped in the Fire Music tradition listeners may assume these to be lost cuts by John Zorn or Alice Coltrane, respectively. Not bad company.
German Martin Wind was a busy bassist as a young man, but his first visit to New York convinced him that he would soon call it home. To celebrate his 25th anniversary of moving, he recruited pianist Bill Mays, multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson and drummer Matt Wilson, all of whom have worked with him over the years. The sessions were recorded at Maggie’s Farm after a gig at the nearby Deer Head Inn in Pennsylvania.

One of the things apparent about Wind is his lack of ego. He may only take a single chorus as a soloist, so focused is he on what the song needs, it may surprise some listeners that this is the bassist’s album. Since Mays, Wind and Wilson work often as a trio, their abilities seem almost telepathic as they anticipate which direction things are heading.

Each song has a special significance, beginning with Thad Jones’ “Mean What You Say”; Wind played Jones’ music when he has guested with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. This strong opener features Robinson on both muted trumpet and tenor saxophone. “Solitude” is not the Ellington ballad but a moody original the bassist wrote in the midst of the COVID lockdown. This gem comes to life through melancholy clarinet and shimmering piano. Mays’ warm ballad “Peace Waltz” is a duet with Wind, introduced by his matchless arco. Wind’s lush title waltz is a tribute to his wife and her former apartment in Queens. The loping, lyrical tune has a spacious, relaxed arrangement, with a quirky tag by Robinson that fits his eclectic personality. It is clear how much fun these musicians have every time they get together and Wilson’s sensitive percussion backing Wind’s virtuoso solo treatment of the old warhorse “New York, New York” ends the session with humor.

For more information, visit laika-records.com. Wind is at Dizzy’s Club Feb. 17th-20th with Ann Hampton Callaway and Birdland Feb. 24th-26th with Dena DeRose. See Calendar.

Pianist Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol makes fine art through the integration of traditional Turkish music and jazz. On his previous release—2019-20’s The Rise Up—he did so with a grand-scale gathering, painting engrossing scenes featuring a large ensemble that surrounded and supported guest soloist Dave Liebman’s soprano saxophone. Now he achieves something equally remarkable by scaling things back to a coterie of three. Recalibrating the piano trio format, Sanlıkol assembles his work around an imagined systemic binary of the Mevlevi Ayin—the Sufi whirling dervish ritual—and John Coltrane’s A Love Supreme. In designing original music that eyes those models, he creates something at once respectful and revolutionary. An Elegant Ritual remains cognizant of the distinctive aspects of its guiding forces—the asal (rhythmic cycles) and maqam (mode) with regard to Turkish music, improvisation in the case of jazz—and expands the trio matrix by incorporating the leader’s hypnotic vocals and ney (end-blown flute) and drummer George Lernis’ gongs and bendir (frame drum).

There are points where this outfit hews to more typical trio aesthetics—lone standard “Invitation”, at journey’s end, being the clearest—but those occurrences are rare. By and large, this album is a mystical brew that moves well beyond established boundaries. Just look at the title track, introduced with a blend of ney and bassist James Heazlewood-Dale’s natural harmonics. Enhanced by the metallic resonance of Lernis’ Javanese gamelan-influenced gongs, evolving into something more spiritual with added percussive weight and nearing a state of transcendence with pianistic profundities that give way to the gentler sight of return, the piece leaves no doubt as to Sanlıkol’s abilities to harness the power of the infinite reaches. Surrounding most of his larger pieces with miniatures—a prelude, three interludes and a postlude spread across the set—Sanlıkol nods to certain structural realities connected to his inspiration while demonstrating real smarts in the programming and pacing departments. And with everything captured live he impresses both in terms of musical multi-tasking and honorable intention(s). Whether leading a cast of dozens or teaming up with two other serious talents, Sanlıkol manages to leverage customs and conventions to create something magical that is all its own.

For more information, visit dunyainc.org. This project is at Joe’s Pub Feb. 18th. See Calendar.
On The Town (Malinverni Plays Leonard Bernstein)
Pete Malinverni (Planet Arts)
by Thomas Conrad

Pianist Pete Malinverni does so many things well that it is hard to get a fix on him. Perhaps that is why he is not more famous. His body of work includes solo projects, trios, small groups, big bands and gospel choirs. He has played tangos in a duet with a classical violinist and has accompanied singers.

But he has never before made a record dedicated to the work of a single composer. It is one more thing he does well. His intent on his new album is to create fresh encounters with Leonard Bernstein songs while still celebrating the composer’s achievement. He succeeds because, even with all the new content in his jazz interpretations—harmonies, rhythms, connecting notes, countermelodies, digressions, modulations, reshaped phrasing—Bernstein’s tunes are always instantly recognizable and Malinverni makes you delight in hearing them again.

The dominant vibe here is joy. Joy is already inherent in many Bernstein songs. Malinverni intensifies it. “New York New York” is a passionate announcement that sweeps you up in its euphoria. “I Feel Pretty” is a jubilant jazz waltz.

If There Were No Opposites
Nick Fraser Quartet (hatHUT/Ezz-thetics)
by Marc Medwin

In his typically perceptive liner notes, Bill Meyer refers to the improvisation/composition duality at the heart of jazz discourse as being “what flint and steel are to campfires”. Indeed, the fourth album from drummer Nick Fraser’s superb quartet demonstrates and dispels similar dualities on multiple levels, nowhere more convincingly than when dissolving the false boundaries separating jazz from chamber music. As much sonic as compositional, those constructs govern the trajectories of both composed and improvised passages even as differences dissolve in the service of music that is both rawly immediate and charmingly inaccessible.

Dig into the opening bars of “Sketch #50” to catch an ethereal aural glimpse of the band at work dissolving those wavy lines even as they are drawn. The Ornette Coleman-esque head redresses and dups under the more than capable guidance of cellist Andrew Downing and saxophonist Tony Malaby before Fraser and bassist Rob Clutton’s arco turn a rhythmic trick or two. Both string players bow with the incisive brilliance of those steeped in the elastically conjoined worlds Meyer cites while Malaby’s affinity with Albert Ayler is blazingly obvious. As head and solo converge, the intrigue of Fraser’s delicate but penetrating repetitions serve as bond and liberator. While the piece morphs in timbral rather than dynamic terms, “The Fashion Show” elucidates another side of the band’s complex historical grappling. Initially cut from similar New Thing cloth, Fraser’s polyrhythms guide volume gently downward, brushed toms and cymbals opening the gate for an exquisite melody shockingly reminiscent of those early ‘50s Chet Baker and Gerry Mulligan sides. Again, the strings swing in gorgeous symbiosis, but it is Fraser’s constantly shifting groove that keeps the music moving along its relatively gentle course. Despite this cohesion, there is always room for the puckish pointillism in which the strings and saxophones regularly engage, drums eventually joining in the fun.

As scintillating as the group interplay can be, it relies on solo contributions, all of which are stellar. They shine most bright in the two improvisations, initially connected, that bookend the disc. Those two halves could not be more different, perhaps the most fascinating duality on display. The drone governing much of the first is rife with overtone and peacefully dark, a power nexus in full effect as surrounding events coagulate in its orbit. The second finds the group in a different sort of research-and-development mode as various combinations are foregrounded. Most beautiful is the way string and reed ultimately ebb, a perfect end to an album replete with the discoveries that render boundary considerations obsolete even as new ones are erected. The recording is just dry enough, just vivid enough, to be startlingly natural. The room becomes both instrument and witness to the events on ever-evolving display.

For more information, visit astralspritsrecords.com. Nicole Mitchell is at Zankel Hall Feb. 24th. See Calendar.

That disc featured many compositions from storied AACM figures like Anthony Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell, Fred Anderson and Muhal Richard Abrams. The new effort combines that idea with original material from each member of the trio.

Reed’s “Pleasure Palace” opens the proceedings. Right off the bat, Mitchell shoots for the stratosphere and in no time at all the proposition that she could well be the finest fluter player of her generation doesn’t leave much room for argument. Reed is no stranger to the kind of rhythmic ecstasy generated by fellow Chicago drum masters like Jack DeJohnette and Thurman Barker and his playing is consistently rewarding throughout this session. Speaking of Chicago drum masters, the trio dedicates “A.F.”, a group improvisation, to the memory of the late Alvin Fielder.

Which brings us to Tomeka Reid, who has been blazing her own trail in creative music for at least the last decade. One of her compositions, “In Response To”, conjures Charles Mingus by way of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, pummeling a vamp that locks in with the drums and propels Mitchell into a growling, sputtering expository.

She also shines on “Song For Helena”, with a simply gorgeous arco line that engages Mitchell into a soaring unison. Suddenly, she shifts into a deft pizzicato to dance alongside Reed’s feathery brushstrokes. Her sense of groove is impeccable.

The album is gloriously well-paced. Each selection seems to end too soon and leaves the listener anxious to embrace the next. Oftentimes, the big names of an allstar cast fail to deliver. This is not one of those times.

For more information, visit planetarts.org. This project is at The Django Feb. 8th. See Calendar.

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**Standards and My Songs**

*Ron Jackson (Roni Music)*

by Anna Steegmann

Guitarist Ron Jackson, born in 1964, began playing at 9 and first performed at 15. At first, his idols were rock guitarists, but once he fell under the spell of Wes Montgomery, George Benson and Pat Metheny, he never turned back. Jackson has made a name as a player, composer, producer, arranger and instructor.

**Standards and My Songs,** his ninth album as a leader, is a sequel to 2019’s **Standards and Other Songs.** He adapts standards, pop, soul and R&B tunes to jazz and is joined by Ben Wolfe (bass), Willie Jones III (drums) and for two tracks by Brian Ho (organ) and one by Clark Gayton (trombone). The cover shows him, a big smile on his face, and boldly states, “7 STRING JAZZ GUITAR.” He demonstrates why he has become one of the instrument’s major champions.

The album opens with an upbeat, joyous, jazzy take on the 1972 Long Glass hit “Brandy (You’re a Fine Girl),” striking for its gorgeous tone and great group interplay, followed by “Walk Fast,” full of postbop liveliness. Jackson calls “From Dust to Dawn,” at seven minutes the longest track on the recording, a feature for the stirringly commanding vocal of Luna Manzaneres on a bifturcated outing: it begins as a plaintive boleto then segues into a dancing mambo. “Anda Vén Y Muevete” has David Blanco and Michel Herrera in the spotlight, exclamating listener to “come on and move”. Quartet and Bárbaro Torres’ lute beautifully open “Todo Se Acabo” with Teresa Yanet’s vocal paying a personal tribute to Formell.

A carnival-esque atmosphere prevails on “Deja La Bobería,” with Mandy Cantero’s commanding vocal conveying an energetic invitation to forget foolishness and join in the festivities. Los Van Van’s longtime soñero Mayito Rivera duets passionately with Arlenys Rodríguez on “Si No Quieres Tu” and shares duties with Cubana rapper Telmary Diaz on the rollicking “Marlín.” Los Van Van’s Mandy Cantero and Azucar Negra’s Haila Mompié mix vocals and González stretches out “El Guáraye De Pastora” while The Buena Vista Social Club theme “Chan Chan” is given an epic treatment with Los Van Van vocalist Abdel Raslaps (Lele) joining forces with Rivera, Díaz, González and percussion ensemble Rumba Pelladito.

The date closes solemnly with “Orun A Formell,” Brenda Navarrete intoning a Spanish language prayer and Yoruban chant celebrating Formell.

For more information, visit dayramirgonzalez.com. González is at Chelsea Table & Stage Feb. 25th. See Calendar.

**Evidence Based**

*Clauvia Quintet (Flexatonic)*

by Brian Charette

In the album notes for the new Claudia Quintet album from enigmatic interviewer and poet Jason Crane, we learn that the album addresses the interaction of arts and politics. The track titles come from words the Centers for Disease Control discouraged from use in 2017. Poet Eileen Myles adds spoken word to the right place to anchor the group. The track coalesces under the lyrical melodies of vibraphonist Matt Moran, with tenor saxophonist Chris Speed on before a terrific bass solo over dissonant chords that fade in and out. A repeated figure gives Hollenbeck great support for his most active solo on the date.

**50-minute title suite is in five parts:**

- **“Red Sky In The Morning”**, **“Clear Moon”**, **“Halo Round The Sun”**, **“Red Sky At Night”** and **“Mackerel Sky”**, all colorful expressions for meteorological phenomena. The first part is a light fusion of rock rhythms and soaring horn lines, mellowing out for solos from Beckett and Speight. “Clear Moon” is quiet, atmospheric, acting as connective tissue for the next movement, which brings back the feel of the opening section but at a busier pace. The closing two movements are quite a contrast: **“Red Sky At Night”** is slow, sparse and highly abstract, segueing into **“Mackerel Sky”** via a bass duet of Riedel (acoustic) and Stefan Brolund (electric). Speight takes a solo over chunky rhythm, which leads to a drum solo quieting almost to silence before introducing a tight swing feel. The whole band reenters with what sounds like a different song, a perky foundation for Beckett to fly over the changes.

For more information, visit myonlydesirerecords.com

**THE NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD | FEBRUARY 2022**
Field of Action / contraposition
Eric Wubbels (Out Of Your Head)
by Kurt Gottschalk

For a composer as endlessly fascinating as he is, Eric Wubbels is woefully under-recorded. Field of Action / contraposition continues Wubbels’ series of piano duos though the term “duet” seems a bit off the mark; the amount of voices (human and instrumental) and sonic manipulation suggest things more encompassing than two people with tools.

The album begins with a 5 1/2 minute blast well designed to weed out the weak, the first of the six parts that comprise “Field of Action”, a variegated suite performed with vocalist/electronicist Charmaine Lee. The pair discover a surprising breadth of sonic possibilities, some disarmingly delicate. It is not an easy listen (Lee’s work rarely is) but with her use of multiple microphones to capture her voice and breath—both projected and from within her throat—and Wubbels employing both piano and synthesizer, the music is fascinatingly nuanced and textured.

“contraposition” was also created in conjunction with its co-performer, trombonist Weston Olencki. It gives the impression of a more noted piece, but such speculation does little to aid in absorbing the four dense sections. It also includes more of Wubbels’ stunning piano technique, from careful application of string preparations to artful tears executed with Conlon Nancarrow-like precision. But those passages seem somehow like halls in a museum, getting us to the next discovery, the next gallery of trombone overtones and foundation-threatening piano resonance.

The final section of “Contraposition”, “NEGATIVE”, builds to some shockingly loud multiphonics from Olencki, reverberating (it seems) from within the piano case. Field of Action / contraposition doesn’t just reward multiple listens, it demands them.

For more information, visit outofyourheadrecords.com.
These projects are at Roulette Feb. 28th. See Calendar.
Grand sweeping musical vistas and elegantly focused nuance are no problem for guitarist Gene Pritsker. He is a film soundtrack orchestrator and composer and his credits include the recently released The Matrix Resurrections (WaterTower Music). At the crossroads of symphonic jazz, world music and Leonard Bernstein he and conductor Kristjan Järvi founded the classically informed Absolute Ensemble and his Sound Liberation project is an urban adventure where all genres are welcome. On top of all this, Pritsker is a prodigious guitarist and on Trio he unapologetically shows off his chops in the context of his other abilities.

The music is primarily guitar driven fusion and on opener “Elements” a thoughtful arrangement and quick changing tempos highlight Pritsker’s style. Joining the Vienna-based session are electric bassist Clemens Rofner and drummer Simon Springer. Like Pritsker, both are multifaceted players and Rofner’s melodicism with Springer’s crisp cymbal work shine on this very accurately detailed recording. Pritsker puts the three instruments together like puzzle pieces seamlessly fitting in myriad ways. The result is a voice that is much bigger than one would expect from a trio.

On both “Born Free” and angular “Encomium” Pritsker kills it with searing yet melodic playing before he turns it over to Rofner and Springer, who carry the song in new directions. “Bach’s Blues” is a reimagining of the composer in a scorching bluesy setting while “Granite” is a funky rhythmical triumph, Pritsker effortlessly moving from soloing to comping. “Difficult to Imagine Nothingness” features Dave Taylor’s bass trombone in a beautifully flowing milieu and closer “Cold as I Am” is a wonderfully misterioso vehicle for vocalist Stefanie Egger, who artfully straddles jazz and pop until Pritsker comes in with a surprisingly intense rap to steer the tune to an anemic ending.

For more information, visit genepritsker.com. Pritsker is at Chelsea Table & Stage Feb. 11th and 27th. See Calendar.
Although collaborators for a long time, Reels is the first duet between pianist Matthew Shipp and drummer Whit Dickey. And in spite of Shipp’s copious output, it is only his third duet with a drummer following encounters with Guillermo E. Brown in 2008 and Bobby Kapp in 2016. Still, he has copped the sequence with a corkscrew. On a studio session comprising ten improvisations, the pair demonstrate the benefits of a shared backstory, which takes in Dickey’s extended sojourn in the pianist’s trio as well as both men’s tenure in esteemed saxophonist David S. Ware’s classic quartet from 1992-96.

Shipp remains one of the most distinctive players active today. Paradoxically he slants more consistently rhythmic with Dickey than he does when solo for instance, as if spurred to give vent to something primal with it. Of the pianist’s other originals, the thoughtful introductive opener “Lattice”, Shipp’s lyrical rippling variations establishing the foundations, over which Dickey explores increasingly complex yet transparent patterns, or the final “Icing”, where they work in tandem to maintain a spacey somber mood. It is a fine addition to both men’s discographies, showing that in the most productive exchanges, each tempers their expression to what the other is doing in pursuit of the greater good.

For more information, visit burningambulancemusic.bandcamp.com. Dickey is at Scholes Street Studio Feb. 19th. See Calendar.

It has long been true that high-quality jazz performers exist all over the globe. Jeremy Monteiro, a pianist from Singapore, has a swinging modern mainstream style that is in the tradition of Oscar Peterson and Monty Alexander while not being a copy of either. In his career he has led over 40 albums, recording not only in Singapore but also in Thailand, Switzerland, Florida and Los Angeles and he has been a sideman on dates by Ernie Watts, Eden Atwood and Ernest Ranglin.

Most often, Monteiro has been featured with trios. On his most recent CD (No Black Tie is the name of a popular venue in Singapore), which was recorded in 2018, he teams up with two Americans: bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Lewis Nash. The set is four standards and five originals, including tributes to James Moody and the team of Eldee Young and Redd Holt.

Monteiro’s solid sense of swing, occasional bits of wit and ability to make familiar songs sound fresh are very much in evidence on Dave Brubeck’s “In Your Own Sweet Way”, a hard-swinging “Just In Time” and a tender “Prelude To A Kiss”. Although his “Mode For Love” does not necessarily sound like a James Moody tune, one could imagine Moody having a good time with it. Of the pianist’s other originals, the thoughtful ballad “Josefina” is a contrast to the soulful midtempo “Mount Olive”. The latter recalls Monteiro’s earlier recordings with bassist Young and drummer Holt, former members of the Ramsey Lewis Trio. After his introspective ballad “Life Goes On”, the set concludes with the modal piece “Monk In The Mountain” (Monteiro hinting at McCoy Tyner) and an infectious rendition of “Watermelon Man”.

Anderson and Lewis both get opportunities to take solos along the way but the main focus is on the pianist. Monteiro shows throughout this CD that he deserves much greater recognition and that he can hold his own with his American counterparts.

For more information, visit jeremymonteiro.onuniverse.com. Jay Anderson is at Roulette Feb. 20th with Jay Clayton. See Calendar.
Jazz is a unique combination of modernist and popular music, but the history of it has been lopsided, with a far more extensive incorporation—and subsequent elevation—of popular music than of the developments of Western art music. The latter has been almost predominantly confined to pulling in ideas from the early 20th century Western art music modernism of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Bartók and Debussy.

But there is another modernist path that runs though Varèse, Xenakis, Cage, Feldman and the like, full of ideas that seem worthwhile for jazz. Borderlands Trio—pianist Kris Davis, bassist Stephan Crump and drummer Eric McPherson—work with some of these ideas in a jazz context. That makes them important and the quality of their second album, Wandersphere, makes them musically fantastic.

The trio plays around with timbre and space within a recognizable jazz idiom. Significantly, Davis plays a great deal of prepared piano. The sound alone opens up the imagination to the world of Cage’s Sonatas and Interludes to Part’s Tabula Rasa and beyond. The music is improvised and these players are masters of finding their way to repeatable rhythmic and harmonic patterns balancing form against freedom. An essential part of that is, the listener feels, is the musicians giving space for the altered timbres of the piano to sound, listening and working precisely in clearly circumscribed niches and moments. As with Varèse, timbre becomes a structural and formal element and it is profoundly exciting to hear jazz musicians wield this concept as an organizational means.

“The listening is almost palpable, each empty space grips the ear as it waits for someone to outline a small part of it with a sound. The concentration means that there are moments that are breathtaking, like the transition from timbres to grooves in “Super-Organism” or locked-in rhythm that we create together, on the spot, in “Possible Futures”. This is some of the finest improvising across all genres one will hear and one of the more important jazz releases of the 21st Century.

For more information, visit intaktrec.ch. This project is at The Jazz Gallery Feb. 4th-5th. See Calendar.

Borderlands Trio (Intakt)

Wandersphere

by George Grella

The Law Years: The Music of Ornette Coleman

Miguel Zenón (Miel Music)

by George Kanzler

We had never heard anything like it when Ornette Coleman brought his white plastic alto saxophone and quartet with Don Cherry playing what looked like a toy trumpet to The Five Spot back in 1959. It was Coleman’s album, The Shape of Jazz to Come, come to life. The two horns played over churning, pulsating rhythms from bass and drums, with no anchoring chords from a silent, playerless piano, quirky fast lines with catchy melodic hooks, or slow, mournful ones like choral dirges. Their solos, unmoored from chord changes, resembled bebop runs and yet did not. It was mysterious yet evocative, impossible not to hear as something new and unique.

The extended dozen years dating from that Five Spot engagement continue to fascinate musicians. The music from that time was explored by many, including Old and New Dreams, a two horns-bass-and-drums quartet featuring alumni of Coleman’s early bands. And now alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón has released his own take on Coleman’s music from that period. The date was recorded live at the Bird’s Eye Jazz Club in Basel, Switzerland in May 2019. The band, which had never played together before (although individually with Zenón), was internationally Hispanic. Zenón is Puerto Rican, tenor saxophonist Ariel Bringuex is Cuban, bassist Demian Cabaud is Argentine and drummer Jordi Rossy is a Catalan from Spain. Except for “Free”, a track based on one of the fanfares from the double-quartet album Free Jazz (1960), the music consists of tunes from Coleman’s early acoustic bands, from trio and quartet to sextet. The four delve into the tunes with alacrity and verve, parsing the distinctive melodies and improvising with élan and spirit. Those tunes remain inimitable and distinctive after half a century, from the jingle-like “Dee Dee” and brightly singing title track to the knifty “Giggin’” and hauntingly mostful “Broken Shadows”. This album shows how much Coleman’s musical ideas have been assimilated into what is now a truly international jazz community.

For more information, visit miguelzenon.com. Zenón is at Miller Theatre Feb. 12th. See Calendar.

Borderlands Trio (Intakt)

Byrd in Paris

Parisian Thoroughfare (Byrd in Paris, Volume 2)

Donald Byrd Quintet (feat. Bobby Jaspar) (Brunswick-Sam)

by Duck Baker

In early July of 1958, trumpeter Donald Byrd traveled to Europe with an all-star caliber quintet of young hardboppers. The 29-year-old Byrd was already a seasoned veteran in jazz terms, having appeared on some 70 record sessions over the past 3 years, including dozens of real classics.

The group hit the ground running, performing from the Black Forest in Germany to the north of Belgium to the French Riviera during their first week and seems to have kept busy all the way until the end of October while Byrd studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. It is surprising that their concert at the Olympia on Oct. 22nd seems to have been their first performance in the City of Light, but that is how the event is described in the enjoyably breathless liner notes on these beautifully produced LP reissues.

Certainly the band was in perfect sync by this time and we will soon be able to compare how they sounded at the beginning of this sojourn, as Sam Records is set to release a previously unheard recording of the quintet’s concert at Cannes on Jul. 11th. The liners note that only Bobby Jaspar (Feb. 20th, 1926 – Feb. 28th, 1963) was known to the Parisians, since the Belgian tenor saxophonist/flutist had lived in the city from 1950-56. That Jaspar was a world-class player had already been demonstrated and his soloing on both axes here is consistently rewarding. On tenor he can evoke Sonny Rollins one minute or Zoot Sims the next, but he was always his own man.

Byrd, on the other hand was always a Clifford Brown disciple, though not a mere mimic; he found a way to tell his own stories using the master’s language, much as Barry Harris did with Bud Powell. One could argue that pianist Walter Davis, Jr. had the most original solo voice here and his contributions as an accompanist are invaluable (he does get repetitive on some of his longer solos, a tendency he would leave far behind in his later years). Of bassist Doug Watkins and drummer Art Taylor little need be said, except that they play up to their usual high standards.

Byrd seems to have tailored the program to suit the European audiences, focusing on intelligent arrangements of modern jazz standards fans would recognize like “52nd Street Theme”, “The Blues Walk”, “Two Bass Hit”, “Salt Peanuts” and inevitably “Parisian Thoroughfare”, which gets an elaborate, humorous treatment. The trumpeter also programmed three originals: Jaspar’s autodescriptive “Flute Blues”, his own minor-key burner “At This Time” and “Formidable”, Davis’ tasty contrafact on “There Will Never Be Another You”. One can certainly see how exciting this music was at the time and it all holds up very well, though given Byrd’s extensive discography we can’t really call it essential. Vinyl buffs will definitely want these anyway; they look and sound great.

For more information, visit samrecords.fr
Chicago Standard Time (featuring Jodie Christian)  
Diane Delin (Blujazz)  
by Alex Henderson

A decade this month has passed since the death of pianist Jodie Christian at 80. A fixture on the Chicago jazz scene for many years, Christian, a founding member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, had no problem playing avant garde jazz but focused heavily on hardbop and postbop. This previously unreleased CD, recorded in 1991, finds him in a quartet led by Chicago-based violinist Diane Delin; rounding out the lineup are bassist Kelly Sill and drummer Steve Davis.

The only track that isn’t a standard is the opener “For the Moment”, a vibrant Delin original with a strong Brazilian flavor. The four selections that follow are Don Redman’s “Gee Baby, Ain’t I Good to You”, Frank Foster’s “Simone”, Billie Holiday’s “God Bless the Child” and George Gershwin’s “They Can’t Take That Away From Me”. It is an interesting combination of songs, a mix of standards from the pre-bop era to the early ’70s modal gem “Simone”.

Delin and Christian are highly compatible, swinging yet highly lyrical on “Simone”. The combination of acoustic piano and violin puts a fresh spin on the familiar “God Bless the Child”. And while it wouldn’t have been surprising if Delin had emulated Stu Smith or Stéphane Grappelli on the Redman or Gershwin tunes she takes the songs into postbop.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Delin was going through some old tapes when she came across this recording and decided that it needed to be released; Blujazz, thankfully, was interested. It is great to have this music available after so many years.

For more information, visit blujazz.com

Henry Threadgill Zooid (Pi)  
by Stuart Broomer

Together for 20 years, Zooid is among the longest-lived bands in current jazz, a stellar chamber group that matches Henry Threadgill (alto saxophone, flute and bass flute) with Liberty Ellman (acoustic guitar), Jose Davila (tuba and trombone), Christopher Hoffman (cello) and Elliott Humberto Kavee (drums). Its last album, In for a Penny, In for a Pound, had the extraordinary distinction of winning the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in music, placing Threadgill (who turns 78 this month), and Zooid, both as concept and ensemble, in very rare air for any improvising ensemble. Poof is its equal in matters of refinement, complexity and soul, yes, soul, for as much as Threadgill has created it be a kind of ideal amalgam of chamber music textures with a brilliant integration of composition and improvisation, his alto sound is a raw emissary from the worlds of Ornette Coleman and the blues, recalling Threadgill’s longstanding rank as master of a kind of hyperkinetic free funk.

Opener “Come and Go” begins with a scattering of lines, immediately introducing the unlikely timbral combination of tuba, cello and acoustic guitar in music at once tightly coordinated and seemingly random, an anti-pattern sustained even with the entry of alto as an intense central focus. The mixture of composed and improvised elements used to achieve that effect is a constant here, arising as well in “Poof on Street Called Straight”, a brooding dirge centered on a poignant alto wail, with empathetic lowest-register blasts from tuba and a keening solo contribution from cello.

Davila on trombone is the central voice on “Beneath the Bottom” as it moves through plunger-muted complaint to gently exuberant open play, accompanied by the closely related sounds of guitar and plucked cello. “Happenstance” emphasizes the light piquancy of flute and a quiet interlude of metallic percussion, which gradually becomes a drum solo of remarkable subtlety, in turn complemented by dancing guitar lines. Closer “Now and then” emphasizes tuba and guitar, each developing a kind of delicate, round sound.

Part of what is remarkable about the ensemble is the effect of a band that has sustained itself for decades with such unusual instrumentation. Each is a distinct voice and as likely to be lead as accompanist. The almost indistinguishable mix of composed and improvised elements combines with evanescent structures and unusual timbres to create dream-like textures that continue to dance in memory.

For more information, visit jojorecords.com
Thanks to being rejected by the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia—to become, in her words, “the first great black classical pianist”—Nina Simone, who was born 89 years ago this month, became one of the most important non-classical musicians of the mid-20th Century.

Coming up as a jazz pianist-songwriter in the late ’50s, first in Atlantic City and Philadelphia, Simone had, by the early ’60s, become highly eclectic, incorporating current pop music, rather than just the American Songbook standards, into her programs. That eclecticism reached a peak around the same timeframe as the Summer of Love (1967) and summer of Woodstock (1969), when she performed at the Harlem Cultural Festival recently celebrated in the Questlove documentary Summer of Soul.

The second CD of The Montreux Years is a complete set by Simone’s then-quartet of guitarist Henry Young, bassist Gene Taylor and drummer Buck Clarke, recorded in June 1968 and it reflects her unabashed eclecticism and embrace of the rock zeitgeist of the times. Not only does she revisit two tunes made popular during the decade by The Animals (she had recorded both years before): “Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood” and “The House of the Rising Sun”, she also sings two Bee Gees songs, “Please Read Me” and “To Love Somebody”, even having her brother, Sam Waymon, sing harmony with her on the chorus of the latter. She also follows the former with a song from the then-current hit Galt MacDermot-Gerome Ragni-James Rado Broadway musical, Hair: “Ain’t Got No, I Got Life”.

Simone was at the height of her vocal artistry in 1968, able to bend and shape her voice from mellifluous pop to guttural blues. Her rendition of the one American standard at the concert is unforgettable. She masterfully renders Julie Styne-Betty Comden-Adolph Green’s “Just in Time” initially at a deliberate midtempo, returning after her piano solo, her voice on a different, more ethereal plane embodying the lyric “change me”. She also indulges in some mysteriously ecstatic “singing in tongues” scatting on the dour folk song, “When I Was A Young Girl”. The set lacks any of her own Civil Rights songs like “Mississippi Goddam”, but includes a blistering “Backlash Blues” from the pen of Langston Hughes, and her rousing version of Billy Taylor’s “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”.

The first CD begins with a nod to Simone’s obsession with classical music, a piano instrumental of the Gershwin’s “Someone to Watch Over Me” more Bach than Richard Rodgers. The CD mixes tracks from her other four appearances at Montreux (1976, 1981, 1987, 1990). It jumps between years, the curating making thematic connections, as when she ends Janis Ian’s “Stars” ad libbing about how “Billie Holiday told it better”, followed by Simone’s rendition of the Holiday-associated Harry & M. Woods tune “What A Little Moonlight Can Do”.

Simone does Jacques Brel’s “Me Ne Quisste Pas” on both CDs and Ledisi expands it to include Rod McKuen’s English lyrics too on Ledisi Sings Nina, the latest in a number of Simone tributes the R&B singer has done in the last decade plus. Ledisi also enlists three other singers – Lizzi Wright, Alice Smith and Lisa Fischer—one for each section of Simone’s “Four Women”, also in a 1990 version on Montreux. Ledisi’s voice is conventionally richer than Simone, but her celebration of the iconic singer would best serve as an introduction and gateway leading listeners to explore Simone’s incredibly indelible discography.

For more information, visit bmg.com and ledisi.com
Cuban Butterflies features a tight Latin jazz band... La Banda Ramirez balances the Afro-Cuban rhythms with consistently strong jazz soloing. The music, while always danceable, also rewards close listening and the result is a set of performances that are both accessible and creative. Cuban Butterflies is easily recommended.
– Scott Yanow, September 2021
labandaramirez.hearnow.com | metrotang.com

MEHMET ALI SANLIKOL

“A FASCINATING FUSION OF TURKISH MUSIC WITH CONTEMPORARY JAZZ LANGUAGE” - JAZZIZ

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British saxophonist Elton Dean, perhaps still best known for his tenure in early Soft Machine, died unexpectedly 16 years ago this month while his longtime comrade pianist Keith Tippett passed away in June 2020. The reissue of They All Be On This Old Road, a 1976 live recording by Dean’s quartet from London’s Seven Dials pub is dedicated to the memory of both men. It is not just a rehash of the LP as new material doubles the length of the album to over 79 minutes, giving yet more evidence of the pair’s chemistry, as well as added exposure to the accomplished team of bassist Chris Laurence and drummer Louis Moholo-Moholo.

The program, which encompasses originals as well as standards and a cover, contains ample testimony to the eclectic backgrounds of the group members. Dean’s postbop “Edelpurk” quickly loosens its moorings when his slippery alto saxophone wail, informed equally by Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman, worries at a corkscrewed phrase over Moholo-Moholo’s machine gun rat-a-tat and Tippett’s battered keys. Things go even further left field when Tippett moves into the spotlight, his Morse code piano tapping out a cipher in the bottom end, which combines percussive minimalism and orrery improv, though still reassuringly seasoned with the occasional outburst of lush arpeggios. But then after yet more twists and turns, as if to show their widescreen range, they seamlessly slip into a tender rendition of “Here’s That Rainy Day”.

That is just one of four ballads on the set, each taken fairly straight and that is not counting a heart-on-sleeve 20-minute version of Coltrane’s “Naima”, which includes a beautifully impassioned solo from the leader, more wayward piano, spiky drum clatter – demonstrating that you don’t have to overpower to transport – and richly melodic lines from Laurence stretching beyond counterpoint into free agency. What it means is that no matter where the ear’s attention settles, there is something of interest happening. But, however far they stray from the themes, the intermittent references show that they know exactly what they are doing. It is a warm-hearted and generous set, which makes the loss of two of the principals ever more poignant.

For more information, visit ogunrecording.co.uk

The Last Call
Larry Coryell & Philip Catherine (with Jazz at Berlin Philharmonic XI) (ACT Music)

Larry Coryell and Philippe Catherine had a long and simpatico association since the mid ‘70s. The guitarist toured with Coryell’s Eleventh House and recorded as a duo, producing the highly praised 1976 album Twin House followed two years later by Splendid, both produced by Siggi Loch for Elektra. In the context of the Art of Duo event curated by Loch at the Philharmonie Berlin, Coryell and Catherine shared the stage for what turned out to be Coryell’s last recorded effort as he passed away only a few weeks later five years ago this month. The Last Call has the four pieces Coryell and Catherine performed that evening, as well as duos between Catherine and pianist Ian Lundgren and Coryell and bassist Lars Danielsson before everyone joined together to round off the evening with the addition of trumpeter Paolo Fresu.

The concert lacks a bit of the coherence of previous encounters. The contrast between Coryell and Catherine’s approach is evident, with the latter, on electric, having a more linear and introspective phrasing grounded in a tradition still reminiscent of Django Reinhardt whereas the former, on acoustic and less exuberant than usual, displays an almost encyclopedic approach, ranging from ragtime to bluegrass and postbop. At the same time, the two blend very well in pieces such as Coryell’s bluesy “Jemin-Eye’n” and Catherine’s heartfelt yet complex “Homecomings”. Their empathy also emerges in “Manha De Carnaval” and the opener “Ms. Julie”, which was also featured in the aforementioned Twin House.

For more information, visit actmusic.com
For more than three decades, percussionist, producer and organizer Andrea Centazzo has done a marvelous job documenting his work with a plethora of outstanding international musicians exploring various free improvisational strategies. His label Ictus Records has studiously catalogued these recordings, which form an impressive collection.

*Orbits* is a trio of Centazzo with Finnish soprano saxophonist Harri Sjöström (who turns 70 this month) and vibraphonist Sergio Armaroli, with Centazzo’s longtime collaborator, trombonist Giancarlo Schiaffini, added on *Orbits*.

*Orbits* is a largely static, though powerful work. According to Evan Parker’s liner notes, one player begins improvising on each track and the others join in “…one by one, until the cycle or ‘orbit’ is completed.” The American-educated Sjöström has performed extensively in Europe and is probably best known as a sideman with Cecil Taylor on live recordings with small groups and larger ensembles. While Sjöström’s work with Taylor received mixed reviews, the pianist’s embrace enhanced the saxophonist’s reputation and brought him to the attention of a wider audience. The participation of Schiaffini on *Orbits* is solid, though disappointingly limited. On the opening “Orbits #1”, loosely muted trombone joins gingerly, in an atmospheric setting, in which vibraphone seems to reign supreme. This is followed by a feature for Armaroli, who sports impressive chops on “Orbits #2”. Centazzo is a facilitator throughout, a role he plays well, and his mysterious bells on “Orbits #4” and elsewhere mesh well with the mesmerizing sounds of the soprano, with its slowly trilling lines and whooshes of air, while Schiaffini quietly and sporadically punches through with tastefully subdued runs. Sjöström never really breaks out in any substantial way, though he contributes substantially to the collective sound. Overall, the atmospherics prevail and there is a sense of wandering, gently but relentlessly.

*Steps* gives a bit more time to the trio. Sjöström seems more emboldened and Armaroli revels in the moment with beautiful lines and tone. Sometimes, as on “Steps #2”, there are slower moments, but on “Steps #5”, for example, the tempo picks up and Sjöström is more aggressive, sporting shimmering beauty. On “Steps #6”, He display some of his best work, his lines snaking all over the horn. The tracks work best when they are liveliest and when all members of the trio are fully engaged, such as on “Steps #7”. Centazzo is always solidly in support, pushing forward as an equal member and driving force.

For more information, visit ictusrecords.com
In a 2021 packed with extraordinary and important archival jazz releases, this boxed set stands among the very finest. This is trumpeter Lee Morgan’s complete run with his quintet at The Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach, California, seven-and-a-half hours (more than four hours never before released) across 12 sets and 3 nights in mid July 1970. This 8-CD or 12-LP package includes a booklet with photos of Morgan—many of him at the beach in California—and historical and analytical essays, responses on the music from trumpeters like Nicholas Payton and Charles Tolliver and interviews with and remembrances of the musicians who were on The Lighthouse bandstand.

This is a working group, with Bennie Maupin (tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, flute), Harold Mabern (piano), Jymie Merritt (bass) and Mickey Roker (drums, with Jack DeJohnette sitting in for the final tune of the last set on opening night). As such, they play a concentrated core of material repeated throughout the sets—there are seven different versions of “Speedball”, although that tune’s main purpose is as a vamp as Morgan introduces the band as they are about to take a break for “salt tablets and wine”—while mixing in a variety of other tunes, like the atmospheric “Neophilia” and one performance of “The Sidewinder” during the third set of opening night. That single classic track from Morgan’s ’60s Blue Note period is a salient point from which to hear this tidal wave of music. It cooks as expected and Roker’s playing has some tasty rock ‘n’ roll updates on the original soul-jazz rhythms. It is tremendous fun and the musicians sure have a blast, but it also sounds like they are taking a break from the main proceedings.

The Lighthouse set is a panorama of the great Morgan (who would be murdered onstage 50 years ago this month). In July 1970, he was playing with the same virtuosic thinking as always. A Morgan solo from his teenage years up through this collection is a model for how always to sound like you are playing what you mean; not that there is a specific meaning to each of his improvisations, but Morgan was always incredibly coherent, with a purpose and point behind every note. Never one to just smear or wail a line for effect, even his trills are purposeful, coming as moments of high drama in the middle of a longer line. From set to set, Morgan is brilliant. He is also modern, in his own way. The music is post hardbop modern jazz, with more rock and more modal playing. “Peyote” would fit onto any of his studio Blue Note sides, but “Absolutions” is a newer sound for Morgan. At times, though not predictably, his playing takes him above the chords, stacking polytonal harmonic ideas on the changes running past him below. Morgan’s intent is fascinating but not clear—is he stretching his harmonic palette, responding to the moment, testing out something new to see if it will work? The music and recording are so vivid that one responds as if in the club: “What’s he doing? Did you hear that?”

The other ear-opening feature of this set is the prominence of Maupin. It has always been easy to hear him in bits and snatches as part of Bitches Brew and a member of Herbie Hancock’s bands. He is a valuable sideman there, but a sideman, enhancing the music with color, commentary and brief solo statements. At The Lighthouse, Morgan almost always gives Maupin the first solo opportunity and regardless he gets the time and space to play whatever he needs to play. And he is fantastic, spinning out rich, exuberant, even brawny solos on all three of his instruments. In duration alone, this is a massive update to his discography and his playing shows that he is a musician of the highest order.

This is a massive amount of music without a dull moment. It is astonishing how the producers of the original, partial release were able to decide that four hours of this were not worth pressing. But extended listening can be overwhelming—the audience was just hearing one or two sets at a time, after all, and for them, a 20-minute excursion of “Neophilia” or “Absolutions” was the capstone of an evening, not just a single track among a few dozen that play for hours. But to be overwhelmed by hours and hours of masterful, thrilling live jazz like this is no criticism whatsoever.
Tuesday, February 1

- Gallièvre Strazzell/Tim Armatost with Art Hingham, Pat O’Lary, Eric Halvorson
- John Pizzarelli Swing Seven
- John Scofield’s Yanko Go Home with Jon Cowherd, Vicente Archer, Josh Dixon
- Vincent Gigard and the Nightingales
- Peter Brannin and Talking Drum with Luis Peralta, Boris Koslov, Vicente Cherico
- Chet Dossias/Michala Lavrin, Vinnie Speranza/Tim Berne
- Jeremiah Cymerman, Charlie Libidinsky, Mats Platen, Robert Roberts
- Fred Dobis/Lilburn; Greg Skaff, Alvin Howard
- Ken Sunny Quart with Max Light, Matt Tischler, Matt Honor
- Taj Alexander
- Tyshawn Sorey, Joe Lovano, Bill Frissell

Wednesday, February 2

- Ethan Silverman with Sullivan Fortner, Simon Willson, Joe Farnsworth
- Gilli Love, Vinicius Gomes, Rogerio Boccato
- John Pizzarelli Swing Seven
- David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band
- Tyshawn Sorey, Joe Lovano, Bill Frissell

Thursday, February 3

- John Elice and Double Wide
- Evan Arron and Friends
- John Pizzarelli Swing Seven
- Troy Roberts Quartet
- John Scofield’s Yanko Go Home with Jon Cowherd, Vicente Archer, Josh Dixon
- Mike LaCarrone Quartet
- La Reserve 5th Anniversary with Iñigo Gilbert, Carlos Delgadillo, Vanessa Goulid, Marta Dalboka, Bryan Carter, Benny Benack III, Charles Owens, Mike Beno, Stephen Felix, Charles Gould
- Petrito Martinez
- Adventures in Duke, Monk, and Shuggie
- Randy ingram
- House of Jade Jam Session: Yuyo Sotobala, Jenn Jada, Benny Benack II, Irwin Hall, Mathis Picard, Russell Hall, Bryan Carter
- Steve Kirby
- Ravi Coltrane Duos with James Cammack and Bohyun Kim
- Tyshawn Sorey, Joe Lovano, Bill Frissell

Friday, February 4

- Birdland Big Band
- John Pizzarelli Swing Seven
- Troy Roberts Quartet
- John Scofield’s Yanko Go Home with Jon Cowherd, Vicente Archer, Josh Dixon
- Blood Brothers, Carol Morgan Quartet
- Eva Cortes Quartet
- JC Mallari with Thierry Arpino, Lisa Fischer, Sofia Rei
- Trio 3 Final Concerts: Oliver Lake, Chava Maggioni, Andrew Cyrille and guest Bruce Williams
- Ken Fowser Quintet; Dave Schnitter with a tribute to Jesus Addis, Josua Davis, John DiMillo, Apollo Ayala, Mauricio Herrera, Tranzer Shank
- Get Happy—That Nelson Riddle Sound: The New York Pops with guests Tony DeSare, Christine Ebersole, and special guests
- Bordershades Trio: Kris Davis, Stephen Cope, Eric McPherson
- Vincent Gigard and the Nightingales
- Nick Salo, Norio Stanley, Sam Zygryz, Fin Van Hemmen, Jonathan Moltz, Sean Alt; Stephen Charles and Adam Luna, Ayumi Kita, Mu Muto, Remi Hase, Sean Conty, TJ Bonfort, Nick Neuburg, Drew Wesley
- Rico Jones, David Kivoke, Joe Martin, Eric Hanson
- Bird, Duke, Monk, and Chick: John Scofield’s Yanko Go Home with Jon Cowherd, Vicente Archer, Josh Dixon
- Mingus Big Band: The Django with Al Cohn and Buddy Williams
- Playfield: Aron Namenwirth, Luisa Muhr, Daniel Carter, Eric Plaks, Yutaka Takahashi, Zac Swanson, Jon Parkefors; Astral Hot; Sana Nagahara, Sam Nagahara, Sam Day Harmet, Catz Swanson
- Art Hoenig
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra

Saturday, February 5

- Misho Patapkazyan/Bebak Mendes
- Alheide/Juliovert Monteiro
- John Pizzarelli Swing Seven
- Tony Roberts Quartet
- John Scofield’s Yanko Go Home with Jon Cowherd, Vicente Archer, Josh Dixon
- Wayne Tucker Quartet; Simona Premazzi Quartet
- Tito/Francois/C_la Rossolventino/John Goldberg
- Charles Turrentar
- Julio Rodriguez
- Joe Morrison, Sam Newsome, Adam Lane, Michael Wember
- Jovian/Oral/Don Byrant/John Goldberg
- Robert Dick/Don Blake

Sunday, February 6

- Claim Dickinson’s Starlight with Linda McCurren, Lesley Mok
- The Solomon Diaries: Sam Sadigursky/Heather Cumpston
- Stephanie Wendel
- SUNY Purchase Latin Jazz Orchestra
- Arturo Sandoval and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra
- John Pizzarelli Swing Seven
- Bruce Harris Trio
- Alphonso Horne and The Gotham Kings
- Tom Fleischman/Stanley Blanding/Jeffrey Gortler
- Bruce Williams
- Steve Misetic, Ron Jackson, Jerome Harris, Carlos Maldonado, Buddy Williams
- Ken Fowser Quintet; Simona Premazzi Quartet
- John Scofield’s Yanko Go Home with Jon Cowherd, Vicente Archer, Josh Dixon
- Bruce Harris Trio
- Alphonso Horne and The Gotham Kings
- La Reserve 5th Anniversary with Iñigo Gilbert, Carlos Delgadillo, Vanessa Goulid, Marta Dalboka, Bryan Carter, Benny Benack III, Charles Owens, Mike Beno, Stephen Felix, Charles Gould
- Petrito Martinez
- Adventures in Duke, Monk, and Shuggie
- Randy ingram
- House of Jade Jam Session: Yuyo Sotobala, Jenn Jada, Benny Benack II, Irwin Hall, Mathis Picard, Russell Hall, Bryan Carter
- Steve Kirby
- Ravi Coltrane Duos with James Cammack and Bohyun Kim
- Tyshawn Sorey, Joe Lovano, Bill Frissell

Friday, February 7

- Greg Abate Quartet
- Richard Cortez Quartet
- Christian Sands
- Vincent Gigard and the Nightingales
- Nick Salo, Norio Stanley, Sam Zygryz, Fin Van Hemmen, Jonathan Moltz, Sean Alt; Stephen Charles and Adam Luna, Ayumi Kita, Mu Muto, Remi Hase, Sean Conty, TJ Bonfort, Nick Neuburg, Drew Wesley
- Rico Jones, David Kivoke, Joe Martin, Eric Hanson
- Bird, Duke, Monk, and Chick: John Scofield’s Yanko Go Home with Jon Cowherd, Vicente Archer, Josh Dixon
- Mingus Big Band: The Django with Al Cohn and Buddy Williams
- Playfield: Aron Namenwirth, Luisa Muhr, Daniel Carter, Eric Plaks, Yutaka Takahashi, Zac Swanson, Jon Parkefors; Astral Hot; Sana Nagahara, Sam Nagahara, Sam Day Harmet, Catz Swanson
- Art Hoenig
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra

Saturday, February 8

- Duckula Da Fonseca Quartet Universal
- Tribute to George Shearing: John Pizzarelli Trio
- Christian Sands
- Vincent Gigard and the Nightingales
- Pete Malinowski’s On The Town with ELEW Trio: John Davis, Andrew Cranberry, Victor sloan, Planter’s Rock
- Kevin Sun Quartet with Dan Sircy, Andrew Cranberry, Victor sloan, Planter’s Rock
- Justin Robinson
- Paul Joel Quartet
- Mark Guillaum Quartet with Jason Kemper, Shaukeef Morris, Chris Monroe
- David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band

Wednesday, February 9

- Patricia Brennan with John Coates, Mauricio Herrera
- Javier Arredondo and Friends
- Paul Joel Quartet
- Mark Guillaum Quartet with Jason Kemper, Shaukeef Morris, Chris Monroe
- David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band
Sunday, February 13

- Jason Lindner / Nate Wood
- Stephanie Wrenzel
- David Lee’s Big Band
- Arturo O’Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra
- Mike Kanam Trio
- Kim Nalley with Tammy Hall, Greg Staff, Adam Johnson, Jr., and guest Houston Person
- Ryo Comi Trio with Bruce Barth, Paul Gill
- Galen Young
- Willard Jenkins / Mike Zuckerman

Monday, February 14

- Dana Lyn, Charlie Burnham, Marika Hughes
- Catherine Russell’s Valentine’s with The Lovers with Matt Munisteri, Mark Shane, Tal Ronen, Mark McNicoll, Jon-Erik Kellso, John Allan, Evan Arntzen
- Ashley Pepperbinti Trio
- Vincent Giordano and The Nightcrawlers

Tuesday, February 15

- Arthur Kell Quartet with Brad Sheek, Nate Rodley, Alan McPherson
- Max Johnson / Sam Newcomb
- Catherine Russell’s Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras Party with Matt Munisteri, Mark Shane, Tal Ronen, Mark McNicoll, Jon-Erik Kellso, John Allan, Evan Arntzen
- Terrace Martin and Friends
- Vincent Giordano and The Nightcrawlers
- Anwar Marshall, Mark Kelley
- Joe McPeek, Henry Fraser, Ralph Peterson
- Minton’s 7, 9 pm $20
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra

Wednesday, February 16

- Adam Kolker Quartet with Bruce Barth, Ugoeno Odegow, Billy Hart
- Adam Kolker Quartet with Brad Sheek, Nate Rodley, Alan McPherson
- Catherine Russell’s The Donatella’s Valentine’s with Carolyn Leonhart, LaTanya Hall, Matt Munisteri, Mark Shane, Tal Ronen, Mark McNicoll, Jon-Erik Kellso, John Allan, Evan Arntzen
- David Ostrow’s Louis Armstrong All Stars
- Frank Vignola’s Guitar Night with Billy Childs, Ken Smith, Horrie, S, Vic Chencho and guest Denis Pali
- Terrace Martin and Friends
- Champian Fulton Trio
- Lucy Yuzpeyama Group with Group Steward, Josiah Vassarino with Victor Gould, Alex Claffy, Domo Brandt
- Jazzmoblle: Leslie Harrison
- Noam Rosen, Alfredo Colon, Kobi Alabaster, Mathias Jenner
- Cana Elisce
- Harlem Jazz Session hosted by Peter Brainin
- Wayne Shorter & The Bad Mother
- Terry Wacht’s Gotham City

Thursday, February 17

- Sami Stevens and Kazemde George with Nick Mueller, Sam Webber, Joy Sawyer
- O’Brian Quartet with Savannah DeBoer, Jeremy O’Brien, Corey, Gorden Louis
- Evan Arntzen and Friends
- Catherine Russell’s An Intimate Valentine’s with Matt Munisteri, Mark Shane, Tal Ronen, Mark McNicoll
- Terrace Martin and Friends
- John Harper Quartet
- Ann Hampton Calloway with Ted Rosenthal, Martin Wind, Tim Horner
- Calvin Johnson’s Notes of a Native Son with Andrew McCowan, Nori Nakazuka, Dominique Douglas, Jeffrey Miller Quintet
- Vincent Giordano and The Nightcrawlers

Friday, February 18

- Nick Black’s Five For One Quartet
- Miss Maybelle and The Jazz Age Artists with Charlie Judkins, Brian Natekka
- Birdland Big Band
- Catherine Russell’s Send For Me with Matt Munisteri, Mark Shane, Tal Ronen, Mark McNicoll, Jon-Erik Kellso, John Allan, Evan Arntzen
- Saasha Dobson Band
- Terrace Martin and Friends
- Ann Hampton Calloway with Ted Rosenthal, Martin Wind, Tim Horner
- Kevin Kowert’s Quartet, Hudson Horns
- Mark Mclean, John Allred, Evan Arntzen
- Tal Ronen, Mark Mclean, Jon-Erik Kellso, John Allan, Evan Arntzen
- Ashley Pepperbinti Trio
- Vincent Giordano and The Nightcrawlers

Saturday, February 19

- Matt Chiarla
- Catherine Russell’s Send For Me with Matt Munisteri, Mark Shane, Tal Ronen, Mark McNicoll, Jon-Erik Kellso, John Allan, Evan Arntzen
- Saasha Dobson Band
- Terrace Martin and Friends
- Richard Clements Quartet, Ari Robboud Quartet
- Chura Sari
- Ann Hampton Calloway with Ted Rosenthal, Martin Wind, Tim Horner
- Mingus Dynasty, JasonIClothier with Luther Allison, Hank Allen-Barfield
- Bass-ics: Kouta Watanabe, Dan Taylor, Tony Renner, Jr.
- Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with guest Arusavo Sansanilo
- Sharp-Rayado solo
- Miki Yamanaka
- Matt Darriau
- Les liliana Band
- Ed Cory
- Jon Bethke’s Social Music

Sunday, February 20

- David Benkman Trio with Tony Scher, Adam Claucher
- Stephanie Wrenzel
- Ryan Koter’s All Ear’s Orchestra
- Arturo O’Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra
- Miss Maybelle and The Jazz Age Artists with Charlie Judkins, Brian Natekka
- Alyssa Allgood Quartet
- Terrace Martin and Friends
- Saul Rubin Trio
- Ann Hampton Calloway with Ted Rosenthal, Martin Wind, Tim Horner
- Mingus Big Band
- Wilfred Goetler Quartet
- Adam O’Farrill Quartet
- Ryo Comi Trio with Jim Rall, John Menegon
- Cellar Dog 7, 11:30 pm $10
- Sarah Hanahan
- Les liliana Band
- Ed Cory

Monday, February 21

- Peter Bernstein’s Steve Cardenas Quartet
- David Finck Quintet
- Gordon Patrick
- Vincent Giordano and The Nightcrawlers
- James Paul Nadien, Brendan Rey, Cosimo Galliano, Nick Fraser, Michael Atias, Darren Johnston, Michael Bates, Stephen Gau, Alan Lade, Cole Horton, Cole Tolston, Todd Neufeld, Christopher Hoffman, Chris Tordil, Asher Herzog, Kevin Eichenberger, Nick Sall
- Pojo Simpson, Blase, Bobo, Gabe, and Novely, Juliart Jazz Ensembles
- Luke Stewart
- John Farell
- Ian Carr
- Village Jazz Orchestra

Tuesday, February 22

- Peter Brainin & “Talking Drum”
- Chamolian Fulton
- Johnny O’Neal
- La Clapps
- Joe Fishman Project
- Bar Lunàtic
- Bar Bayeux

Wednesday, February 23

- Alphonso Horne & Gotham Kings
- Willerm Delisfort Project
- Svetlana’s Big Band
- Jason Lindner/Nate Wood
1. in love with the moon I
1. c’è un luogo (A. Braida) 3:58
Alberto Braida  Giancarlo Nino Locatelli
Liner notes by Alberto Braida and Giancarlo Locatelli
Music by Alberto Braida and Giancarlo Locatelli
7. lucius (G. Locatelli) 4:14
6. once it was the color of saying (A. Braida) 4:17

Liner notes by Giancarlo Nino Locatelli
Recorded at Salotto in Prova, Milan by Jacopo Malusardi

10. Noto (Part 2)
04 Absence (T. Raworth) 3:55

from here from there
Quando mia figlia Maddalena era molto piccola fece un vuoto, tra il verde e l’azzurro sul foglio bianco. Le chiesi cosa rappresentasse e lei mi disse: un uomo che vola.

E’ da tempo che lavoro (ri)cercando di unire e miscelare vari linguaggi, non a caso questo tempo mi consente di guardare avanti elaborando un mio stile personale.

The lubok was a type of popular Russian print widely spread in the 1800s that was hand-printed. After seeing some of these prints, I was deeply moved. The powerful contrast between the pure bright color and the simplicity – although often refined – of the print, and the fact that sound games resonating on the walls of the cave.

One this way, the other that way. In the middle the same river.

dbb clarinet, Alto clarinet on 7 and 8

Andrea Grossi Blend 3
Gianmaria Aprile - guitar, guqin, effects
luca tilli - cello, percussion
sebastiano tramontana trombone, percussion

Records
weinsistrecords.com

Mixing at Argo Lab by Gianmaria Aprile and Giancarlo Locatelli.

Inside photo by P. G. R. - Akita, Japan, 17.12.2017
Inside photo by P. G. R. - Hsinchu, Taiwan, 10th January 2020
Inside photo by P. G. R. - Taipei, Taiwan, 14th January 2020

CLUB DIRECTORY

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Kings Theatre 1027 Flatbush Avenue (800-745-3000) Subway: 2, 3 to Beverly Road www.kingstheatre.com

Lang Hall, Hunter College E. 68th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues (212-772-4448) Subway: 6 to 68th Street www.hunter.cuny.edu

Le Poisson Rouge 158 Bleecker Street Subway: A, C, E, F, V to 4th Street www.lepoissonrouge.com

Lowlands 53rd Third Avenue, Brooklyn (347-403-9458) Subway: R to Prospect Avenue www.lowlandsbar.com

Manhattan School of Music Neifeld/Karpali Hall Broadway and 122nd Street (212-749-2822, ext 4428) Subway: 1 to 116th Street www.msmnyc.edu

Mezzrow 163 W. 10th Street (646-478-4334) Subway: 1 to 6th Street www.mezzrow.com

Miller Theatre 2690 Broadway and 116th Street (212-854-7789) Subway: 1 to 116th Street-Columbia University

Minton’s 206 W. 118th Street (212-243-2222) Subway: B, C to 116th Street www.mintonsharlem.com

National Sawdust 50 N. 6th Street (646-779-4845) Subway: L to Bedford Avenue www.nationalsawdust.org

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Nublu 191 1st Avenue C Subway: L to First Avenue www.nublu.net

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Room 82 at Harlem 271 W. 115th Street (212-280-2246) Subway: C, E to 116th Street www.bzh2.nl

Rose Theater Broadway at 68th Street, 5th floor (212-255-9800) Subway: 1, A, C, E, B, D to Columbus Circle www.jazz.org

Roulette 523 Atlantic Avenue (212-219-8242) Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, N, Q, R to Atlantic Avenue www.roulette.org

Saint Peter’s Church 619 Lexington Avenue at 45th Street (212-655-2200) Subway: 6 to 51st Street www.saintpeters.org

Scholaes Studio 375 Lorimer Street (718-984-8767) Subway: L to Lorimer Street www.scholesstudios.com

Sistas Place 456 Nostrand Avenue at Jefferson Avenue, Brooklyn (718-388-1766) Subway: A to Nostrand Avenue www.sistasplace.org

Smalls 153 W 10th Street at Seventh Avenue (212-252-5911) Subway: 1 to Christopher Street www.smallsjazzclub.com

Soxobay Gallery 616 Dean Street Subway: 2, 3 to Bergen Street www.soxobaygallery.com


Symphony Space Leonard Nimoy Thalia, Peter Jay Sharp Theatre and Bar Thalia 2353 Broadway at 89th Street (212-884-5400) Subway: 1, 2, 3 to 96th Street www.symphonyspace.org

Terra 40-10 Gleane Street (718-803-9602) Subway: 7 to 82nd Street www.terra27.com

Triad Theater 158 W. 72nd Street, 2nd floor (212-362-2950) Subway: 1, 2, 3 to 72nd Street www.briandyc.com

Village Vanguard 178 Seventh Avenue South at 11th Street www.villagevanguard.com

Wild Birds 651 Dean Street (347-896-5056) Subway: A, C to Franklin Avenue www.wildbirdskdh.com

Zankel Hall 881 Seventh Avenue at 57th Street (212-247-7800) Subway: N, R, Q to 7th Street www.carnegiehall.org


Zürcher 33 Bleecker Street (212-777-0780) Subway: 6 to Bleeker Street; B, D, F to Broadway/Lafayette www.galeriezurcher.com
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