There have been numerous milestones as New York has slowly emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is not nearly over, things like relaxed mask mandates, Costco bringing back food samples and, most important to us, jazz club schedules back to where they were in February 2020 are signs of much-needed hope.

Another milestone comes with the return of the summer festival season, yet another victim of the last two years’ worth of isolation. There is the Jazz By The Water Festival on Governors Island, where percussionist Joe Chambers (On The Cover) will perform. The New York Klezmer Festival returns to Drom, featuring trumpeter Frank London (Interview). The Vision Festival comes back indoors and violinist Jason Kao Hwang (Artist Feature) will appear several times, including leading his 30-strong string ensemble. All that complements a full event calendar of shows both in the clubs and concert halls and in the city’s various open spaces, many presenting music we cover in our Album Reviews section, including more festivals like the Blue Note Jazz Festival at the club, Sony Hall, Town Hall and Central Park and Jazztopad Festival at venues across the city.

While we should still be vigilant, we as a city deserve a nice summer of music after what we have collectively experienced. So get out there and support live music.
JUNE 3–4
CAMILLE THURMAN AND THE DARRELL GREEN QUARTET
BURT BACHARACH REIMAGINED
Camille Thurman makes her debut as an Appel Room headliner in a new program of reimagined Burt Bacharach hits, including “The Look of Love,” “Going Out of My Head,” and “(They Long to Be) Close to You.”

JUNE 10–11
THE BEST OF DUKE ELLINGTON
The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis closes the season with an evening of all-Ellington masterpieces. Ellington’s timeless music uplifts, enlightens, and rewards first-time listeners and lifelong fans alike—and nobody plays it quite like the JLCO.

TECHUNG TIBETAN ENSEMBLE
Classical Music from Lhasa
KAUFMAN MUSIC CENTER
129 W 67TH STREET, MANHATTAN
SAT, JUNE 4, 8PM
Watching her YouTube videos only hints at what Bronxite Samara Joy brings to the stage. This point brought home when the young vocalist debuted at Apollo Theater’s upstairs café on a rainy Saturday night (May 14th) to a vociferous local crowd (mom and dad seated front and center), accompanied by guitarist Pasquale Grasso, bassist Neil Caine and drummer Keith Balla. Fresh out of SUNY Purchase, about to drop a second CD, Joy, just 21, brought to the stage a natural-born storyteller, using the bebop idiom to deliver engaging mercurial narratives interlaced with unusually timed and twisted threads, all recounted with unpretentious authority. Opening with “If You Never Fail in Love with Me” and “Can’t Get Out of This Mood”, both rendered in a lilte, suggestive style, by the end of “Stardust” Joy had escalated her delivery to a powerful coda, so powerful she almost seemed to embarrass herself, the crowd now firmly in her grasp. She sang original lyrics to Fats Navarro’s “Nostalgia”, took another amazing coda on “Guess Who I Saw Today” and sang “April in Paris” (which had one of many fine solos by Grasso) in French before pairing with Caine on Duke Ellington’s “Just Squeeze Me”, scatting over the outro vamp, handing her dad the mic for a cameo and finally enjoining the crowd to repeat her phrases, each half of the room competing with the other. A tough act to follow, but topped by Stevie Wonder’s “Overjoyed”, featuring a marvelous solo by Caine. —Tom Greenland

For the Love of Ron—Ron Carter and Friends: 85th Birthday Celebration was a joyous homage to the most-recorded jazz bassist in history (over 2,200 individual credits) at a packed Carnegie Hall (May 10th). Hosted economically by TV anchorman Lester Holt, with judiciously brief tributes, including an acknowledgment of Carter’s receipt of the Japanese government’s highest civilian award, The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, the focus was appropriately on Carter himself. Reflecting his six-decade career, he led three combinations of musicians: trio, quartet and octet, with many of the numbers Carter originals. The Golden Striker Trio had Donald Vega (piano) and Russell Malone (guitar); with piano largely in the background, the delight of the three selections was the blending and harmonizing of the string instruments. Among the four tunes offered by the Foursight Quartet of Jimmy Greene (tenor saxophone), Renee Rosnes (piano) and Payton Crossley (drums), the highlight was a thrilling and inspired Rosnes on “My Funny Valentine” (Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart). The Octet featured Carter on piccolo bass, four cellos (his first instrument), Vega, Crossley and Leon “Boots” Maileson on upright, all contributing wonderfully to six rousing pieces of “symphonic” jazz. Alone on stage, ending the concert, was Carter with “You Are My Sunshine”, fully demonstrating the range of techniques and virtuosic artistry that make him a bona fide living legend. —Marilyn Lester

In the 1920s, long before the Kings (B.B., Albert, Freddie), women like “Queen” Mamie Smith, “Mother” Ma Rainey and “Empress” Bessie Smith ruled the blues. Three reigning divas—Catherine Russell, Charenée Wade and Briantha Thomas—held court at On Stage at Kingsborough (May 7th), backed by a crack septet of reedplayer Evan Arntzen, trumpeter Jon-Erik Kellso, trombonist John Allred, pianist Mark Shane, guitarist Matt Munisteri, bassist Tal Ronen and drummer Kevin Dorn. After a slow but spunky instrumental from the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, “Tin Roof Blues”, Russel came on for a rousing take on her father Luisc’s 1931 “Goin’ to Town”. Thomas, still in her early 20s, sounded like a world-weary soul as she covered Billie Holiday, Victoria Spivey, Ida Cox and Ethel Waters to finish with Bessie Smith’s “I Ain’t Got Nobody”, showing remarkable range, taste and depth for her years. Wade, equally gifted but with more life experience to draw on, joined her for a slow C-blues, then sang songs by both Smiths, Waters and Alberta Hunter, including the risqué “Take Your Big Hands Off My Woman”, a cacophony of sound settling into a swing and thematic riffs laced into a wickerson of energizing creative ideas. Chris Potter (soprano saxophone) demonstrated exceptional speed and flexibility while Rosnes’ playing amounted to the sum being far greater than its parts. At her core, Rosnes is not only lyrical, but also one of those artists who are capable of making one instrument sound like an orchestra. Her “Mirror Image” was melodically bop-based, allowing Potter (now on tenor) to play dynamically up and down the instrument. Classical training was evident in Rosnes’ evocative “Kinds of Love”, especially with its extended solo intro. Potter is an economical player whose style was deftly reflected on “Now” (Bobby Hutcherson), a soulful ballad that had him mirroring Rosnes’ opening mournful solo, before opening up into the complexities of the piece. Bassist Peter Martin was equally potent in supporting Potter along all the way on “Now”, also demonstrating consistent sensitivity and synergy throughout the set. Similarly, drummer Carl Allen played perfect support. His call-and-response with Potter (tenor) during Rosnes’ “From Here to a Star” was a special treat. Playout was Joe Henderson’s “Isotopes”, confirming all members as gloriously in the pocket. (ML)
The fourth night (May 3rd) of his nine-day residency at Blue Note had 2022 NEA Jazz Master bassist Stanley Clarke leading an acoustic trio with two fellow recipients of the August award: pianist Kenny Barron and drummer Billy Hart. The band kicked off the second set with Clarke’s “3 Wrong Notes”, a boppish number at times reminiscent of Charlie Parker’s “Confirmation”. The band swung tough, Barron stretching out for a half-dozen choruses over steadfast walking bass and propulsive drums before Clarke stepped into the spotlight to deliver a taut, ringing solo, which gave way to a series of four bar piano-drums exchanges. The mood mellowed with a gently sweeping rendition of Clarke’s old boss Joe Henderson’s iconic waltz “Black Narcissus”, on which the well-known melody was played over a steadily booming bassline. Clarke joked that as a prolific composer he was eventually obliged to write a song for his wife, noting that the Spanish tinge of the beautiful ballad “La Canción De Sofia”, a showcase for his virtuoso arco and pizzicato techniques, reflected her Argentinean and Chilean heritage. Next he called for “500 Miles High”, the Chick Corea classic he played earlier in the week with Gonzalo Rubalcaba, but an unsuccessful search for the missing music resulted in a “change of plans…something we all know”, the Bronislaw Kaper warhorse “Invitation”, for unabashed straightahead swinging continuing through to the closer, Ellington’s “Take The Coltrane”. – Russ Musto

Guitarist Marco Cappelli, an Italian native who regularly tours the globe, has garnered a certain renown among New York musicians. His career has avoided the usual trappings, allowing focus on the concurrent performance tracks of acoustic classical guitar and solid-body electric, which embraces snarling distortion as needed. In each case, his unique repertoire is empowered by raw, masterful improvisations. Exciting, new, nor-lite space The Atlantic Bkln (May 16th) presented Italian Doc Remix, a closer-than-usual gaze into the Napolitano heart. IDR, founded in 2004, breeds a cross-section of history in its celebration of Italian heritage, from the strains of early music through the unclassifiable new. Co-led by Cappelli and celebrated downtown drummer Jim Pugliesi, the ensemble also had bassist Ken Filiano and clarinetist Doug Wieselman. Rounded out by trombonist Roberto Schiano, a soloist flown in from Naples, IDR was the model of high-performance standards. With rousing tenor Francesco Pellegrino, whose voice carries an engaging darkness within, the band painted a tapestry of new music, long sections of which were finely through-composed, threading Italian traditional song, pop, film scores and Renaissance music into Cappelli’s operatic melodies and rapturous orchestration. But even within this forum, his compositions bore the burn of indie rock and avant jazz, reveling through the room’s awe-inspiring sound system and oh-so-hip elegance. – John Pietaro

Gaworans was jubilant, the crowd at lbeem Brooklyn (May 9th) abuzz. Holding fort were three bands of improvisers under the rubric of Gauci Music (“Yes, I’m to blame,” Stephen Gauci blithely offered). The Symbiote Group of saxophonist Michael Eaton boasted downtown downtown fluteurs Cheryl Pyle, Kansas City guitarist Seth Davis, bassist Adam Minkoff, Itahca drummer Kevin Cheli and guest trumpeter Kyle Quass of Indiana. While the diversity of hometowns ranged widely, this lineup breathed together in a profound manner, raising memories of the legendary New York Eye and Ear Control soundtrack. From the downtown, Symbiote claimed the room, a whisper-going-roar. Eaton’s wide, bottomless sound shuted praise and angst and with Quass’ midrange long tones cutting through Davis’ battery of effects pedals, the sum was faultless. Minkoff, playing a Longhorn electric bass, was a force, while Cheli, a champion of dynamics, shading and subtlety. Next up, Gauci’s regular trio with monster bassist Adam Lane (who can single-handedly guide an orchestra) and drummer Andrew Chelia, a champion of dynamics, on the bass, Kalia Vandever. The seven-movement, finely through-composed, threading Italian traditional song, pop, film scores and Renaissance music into Cappelli’s operatic melodies and rapturous orchestration. But even within this forum, his compositions bore the burn of indie rock and avant jazz, reveling through the room’s awe-inspiring sound system and oh-so-hip elegance. – John Pietaro

WHAT’S NEW

55Bar, established in 1919 and hosting jazz since 1983, closed last month due to (what a shock) an inconsiderate landlord raising its rent to an unsustainable amount. Williamsburg’s cozy club, Arthur’s Tavern, opened in 1937, reopened last month after closure during the pandemic, revealing a stifling renovation. For more information, visit arthurtavern.nyc.

The latest round of funding from the Robert D. Bielecki Foundation includes $200K to Pat Thomas ‘in recognition of his incomparable artistry and contribution to improvised music’; $10K to Brandon Lopez for a quartet recording with Craig Taborn, Mat Maneri and Gerald Cleaver; $10K to Satoko Fujii for her 100th leader concert and album project in NYC on Sep. 20th; $10K for Arts For Art Oliver Lake Lifetime Achievement Award at Vision Festival 2022; $6,870 to composer Cassandra Miller for a choral work in 2023 in collaboration with Louth Contemporary Music Society, Ireland; $9K to Yam Wire Institute Summer 2022 and $3,500 to hugART for Albert Ayler Quintet recording Berlin and Helsinki 1966. For more information, visit rdf.org.

Winners of the 2022 Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Awards have been announced and include Musician of the Year Jon Batiste, an 8-time Grammy Award-Winning Musician of the Year Melba Etta Adams. Record of the Year Sounds from the Ancestors—Kennedy Garrett (Mack Avenue). Historical Record of the Year A Love Supreme (Live in Seattle)—John Coltrane (Impulse) and Record Label of the Year Mack Avenue. For more information, visit jazzjazzawards.org.

The Kitchen’s Annual Gala Benefit honoring Lorraine O’Grady and George Lewis (recently named Artistic Director of the International Contemporary Ensemble) will take place Jun. 8th with performances by Immanuel Wilkins/Kalia Vandever/Tyshawn Sorey/Johnathan Blake/Terri Lyne Carrington and more. For more information, visit thekitchen.org/event/the-kitchen-gala-benefit-honoring-lorraine-o-grady-george-lewis.

The Montreux Jazz Festival has entered in an exclusive partnership with OneOf for an NFT artwork collection featuring exclusive works from Montreux Jazz Festival artist alumni, Camille Walala and Greg Guillen. For more information, visit montreuxjazzfestival.com.

Jazz at Lincoln Center announced the three top-place high school jazz bands in the 27th Annual Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition: First Place: Oscoda County School for the Arts (Kissimmee, FL); Second Place: Foxboro High School (Foxboro, MA); and Third Place: Orange County School of the Arts (Santa Ana, CA). For more information, visit 2022.jazz.org/essentially-ellington.

As part of this month’s Vision Festival, Anthology Film Archives will present "The Lost Generation: Outside The Mainstream". The Man Ray Diary, directed by Robert D. Bielecki, on Jun. 19th at 7 pm. The film features On Ka’a Davis, Steve Swell, Ras Moshe, Ken Filiano, Larry Roland, Michael TA Thompson, Steve Dalachinsky, Hilliard Greene, Dick Griffing, JD Parran, Marco Cappelli, Edwards, Conte Candela, Andrew Chelia, Patricia Parkica, Michael DiForgo, Karen Borca, Ted Daniel, Warren Smith, Iconoclast, Jackson Krall, Mark Hennen, Craig Harris, Richard Kenner, Misahawaon Rozie and many more. For more information, visit anthologyfilmarchives.org.

2022 Recipients of the The Instant Award in Improvised Music are Roscoe Mitchell and the DKV Trio. For more information, visit corbethdempsey.com.

New Music USA has announced 112 awardees for the 2022 Creator Development Fund, totaling $335,000. Recipients include Alexis Cuadrado, Ami Elidellat, David Fucyszny, Friederieke Fried, Mary Allen, Jessica Alkmal, Noah Preminger, Odean Pope, Reima Hasumor, Sofia Rei, Svetlana Shmulyan and Yayoi Ikawa. For more information, visit newmusicusa.org.

New Jersey Performing Arts Center announced open registration for the 11th Annual Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. Entries will be accepted before Sep. 6th. For more information, visit sarahvaughancompetition.com.

MoonJune Records has moved its headquarters from New York to Toledo, Spain. For more information, visit moonjune.com.

Last month a ceremony took place to unveil "The Lost Generation: Outside The Mainstream" at Blue Note, 107932. For more information, visit corbettvsdempsey.com.
Frank London is a musical alchemist whose myriad projects have reinvigorated Jewish music. His seminal work with the Klezmer Conservatory Band, Grammy award-winning Klezmatikas, and Hasidic New Wave are only the tip of London’s integrative and boundary-smashing musical corpus. Culturally combinatorial releases, compositions for theater and dance, film scores, solo projects and operas are part of a far-reaching body of work in which London respects tradition but does so in unconventional ways.

The New York City Jazz Record: You once said that musically you try to take “A” and “B” and make “C”. Does that still describe what you do?

Frank London: That’s pretty good, but what’s important is who I’m with and what the circumstances are. To put it another way, when I make music I try to listen very hard and interact with people. I tend to divide my work into projects that each have their own focus and reality.

TNYCJR: How does the Klezmatics fit into that?

FL: The Klezmatics are a Klezmer band, a Yiddish music group. But a lot of what’s written about them is that we mix elements of this and that. That is just promotional hype. Every time a musician comes into a situation, that musician brings the totality of their experience, their knowledge and associations. If you’re on your way to a Klezmatikas recording session and you’re listening to the Duke Ellington Orchestra in your car, then Duke Ellington’s sound is going to influence what you do. It doesn’t mean you quote “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore” in a bulgar but it might impact your choice of timbre.

TNYCJR: Letters to Afar is a very different space for the Klezmatics, how would you describe it?

FL: We made it for an experimental film score with a Hungarian filmmaker, Péter Forgács. It’s Klezmer-derived but original and totally unlike anything we’ve ever done. It’s got a lot of ambient trance music and gradual process. It has got many different influences.

TNYCJR: Talk about the NY Klezmer Fest.

FL: I’ve been working with Drom since they started and this is their 20th anniversary. A joy of the Klezmer scene is the communal aspect. This is dance music and there is the joy of hundreds of people dancing in huge circles and people jamming. My greatest experiences are with a huge party and we’re drinking slivovitz, eating herring and I’ll jump up on the bandstand and play some songs and then jump down and dance in the circle. With COVID, we haven’t been able to do this. It’s summertime and hopefully the COVID numbers will be down. We’re starting with my Klezmer Brass All Stars, with a lot of great guests: clarinetist Margot Leverett, vocalists Lorin Sklamberg, Zhenya Lotapnik and Sarah Gordon, clarinetist Michael Winograd, trombonist Dan Blacksberg and drummer David Licht will be playing. Violinist Jake Shulman-Ment will have a huge fiddle kapelye. Steve Weintrob will be leading dancing. It’s going to be huge and festive.

TNYCJR: Who were some of your early influences?

FL: One important moment was at the end of high school. I was a DJ on our high school radio station and somehow we got on the Strata-East label mailing list. I had albums by Brother Ah [Robert Northern], Charles Tolliver and Pharoah Sanders. I had no idea what they were, but played them. There was a record by Brazilian percussionist Airto Moreira and over one of the tracks written on masking tape was “Do not play”. Of course, I took the LP home, lovingly took off the tape and cleaned it with cotton swabs and rubbing alcohol. It’s the most beautiful nine minutes of nature sounds and Northeastern Brazilian chanting. It’s gorgeous and one of my all-time favorites. I was always attracted to different intriguing sounds. Frank Zappa was a favorite and the liner notes of his albums would say, “Listen to Edgard Varèse”. I’m like, Who is Edgard Varèse? So, I went out and bought an Edgard Varèse album and good God! My first introduction to Eric Dolphy was because Zappa had a song called “The Eric Dolphy Memorial Barbecue”.

TNYCJR: Northern had a big early impact on you, right?

FL: Yes, Robert Northern was the teacher who changed my life and helped me on my road to becoming a musician. His class at Brown University was called “Sound Awareness”. His class, albums and concepts didn’t talk about jazz or classical music or genres. One definition is that music is sound organized in time, being aware of the sound and creating those organizational structures. Maybe we should just go back to Sound Awareness.

TNYCJR: But your horizons really expanded at New England Conservatory?

FL: There I was playing every kind of music in the world other than rock. I was introduced to Klezmer, Haitian, AfroCuban, Brazilian and Balkan music. So much so that I don’t know the popular music of the ’80s. My family laughs at me because an ABBA song will come on the radio and I go, “Oh, what is this?” My music is a mixture of what I’m interested in or what gig I get called for. If I get called to play a Nigerian gig, then I’m going to learn that music but if I get interested in Egyptian muqam then I learn that. It’s a mixture of internal and external factors that lead me to things.

TNYCJR: Early on, you played with Thomas Chapin. What was that like?

FL: He is one of the people who I think about all the time along with my late teacher, bandleader, colleague and friend Lester Bowie. These two people really influenced my music. Thomas was the bridge between the traditional jazz world and the Downtown avant garde scene. He was in Lionel Hampton’s band, had creds and his music was straightahead and bebop. He had all of that and yet his trio was taking off from where Henry Threadgill was. He straddled all these worlds organically and on top of that, he had this incredible spirituality. Music was not just about genre, modes or technique—and he had all the technique in the world, that goes without saying—but it was music for...
While violinist Jason Kao Hwang may not be as prolific as some of his peers, his name on an album signals adventure and ambition, often spiced with an earthy swing, all realized through a symbiotic intertwining of composition and improvisation. His talents are well recognized and he has performed and recorded with Henry Threadgill, Anthony Braxton, William Parker, Billy Bang, Karl Berger and Ivo Perelman, in addition to leading groups such as Far East Side Band, Edge, Burning Bridge, Sing House, Human Rites Trio and Critical Response. Characteristically refusing to be defined by genre, he has also composed the acclaimed opera The Floating Box, string quartets and provided music for film, dance and stage.

Although Hwang came of age at the tail-end of the Loft jazz era in the late ’70s, its influence has subsequently loomed large. Two names from that time recur in conversation with Hwang. The first is Will Connell, Jr., a saxophonist who spent his early years on the West Coast with pianist Horace Tapscott before relocating to New York. Connell met an 18-year old Hwang, at that time a film student at NYU, at a jam session run by the Asian-American-arts-focused Basement Workshop, sensed promise in what he heard and introduced him to the scene and people like bassist Parker. It was a revelatory experience for Hwang: “When I first heard him [Parker] play I was just overwhelmed. I didn’t know about the uninhibited expressivity that was possible on an instrument. I was just so lucky to meet him and Will.” They combined in an outfit, which ultimately became the groundbreaking cooperative Commitment. As one of the first bands to unite Asian-American with African-American musicians, the quartet, comprising Hwang and drummer Zen Matsuura with Connell and Parker, was almost unprecedented and their blending of cultures unique.

The second important figure he met at that time was Butch Morris, who knew Connell from LA and who came to see Commitment play their first gig. “Butch at that time was still playing with David Murray and Frank Lowe, but he was just starting to move into conducting as his full-time vocation.” Hwang was to play in Morris’ groups for 12 years, before reconnecting again in the latter part of his life. It was a seminal encounter. “He asked me to play at Billy Bang’s memorial [in 2011] and I remember during the rehearsal I felt like, wow, every decision he made as far as flow and conducting and how he handled the ensemble, I thought that’s exactly what I would have done. Then I realized that he really did influence me, because I worked with him at a formative age and it got into my blood and I learned about musicality from him.”

Hwang has put that knowledge to good use. At the 2022 Vision Festival this month he will be conducting his piece Myths Of Origin. “It’s going to be about 25 musicians: violins, violas, cellos, guitars, bass and drums. The musicians come from a huge range of experiences, some jazz, some contemporary classical, some orchestra players. So to bring their energy together is really amazing. I have about ten scored passages, which can be cued in any order, and then there’s a lexicon of conducting gestures with which I can shape improvisations. And that’s what flows in between the written sections.”

As to the intent behind the piece, Hwang has this to say: “Because of the rise in anti-Asian violence, I have reconsidered my life as a musician who is often the only Asian-American on stage. For reasons of scarcity my presence is frequently perceived as a performance of ethnicity. Asian-American artists produce in a space where the power structure is largely white and with an enduring affection for Orientalist fantasies. Even for Asian-American works of genuine integrity, any popularity usually has links, however complex, to any number of Orientalist tropes that fuel the unconscious biases leading to anti-Asian violence, which has surged exponentially during the pandemic. To be true to who I am as an Asian-American, Myths Of Origin will be a music outside the expectations of ethnicity and genre.”

Since joining Hwang in Edge in 2005 bassist Ken Filiano and drummer Andrew Drury reside at the heart of much of his recent music. You only have to listen to their astounding interplay on the Human Rites Trio’s 2019 eponymous album to grasp how well attuned they are to one another. Both will be part of his orchestra at Vision. Hwang explains the attraction: “Andrew and Ken are good people and they are great players. When I say great, it’s not the skill but the imagination. There’s a thing in the music where you’re not just interpreting but you’re generating ideas from the music and that takes the music beyond my imagination. Our collaboration is now very easy and fluid.”

Hwang is also looking forward to appearing with pianist Matthew Shipp’s quartet at the Vision Festival. “Matthew has a beautiful flow and forms, organization of ideas. He just naturally shapes them from the piano.” And he will also be continuing a ten-year partnership with dancer and choreographer Yoshiko Chuma of whom he says: “She is great. She thinks out of the box all the time.”

Thereafter Hwang has no shortage of projects to see through, including documenting Myths Of Origin, recording his new band Critical Response with drummer Michael TA Thompson and guitarist Anders Nilsson, as well as finalizing for release music created with electronictist JA Deane, who died last year and was a fellow alumnus of Morris’ ensembles. For someone who hadn’t originally intended to become a musician, Hwang’s legacy will be formidable. “I just had the emotional need to find myself and to find out who I was. There was something I was reaching for that only the music could offer me. The music would give me fleeting glimpses of who I could be and it still does. We do the music to hear our potential and we keep striving to fulfill that.”

For more information, visit jasonkaochwang.com. Hwang is at Vision Festival Jun. 22nd with Matthew Shipp, Jun. 23rd with Yoshiko Chuma and Jun. 25th as a leader. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- Commitment—The Complete Recordings (NoBusiness, 1980/83)
- Jason Hwang—Unfolding Stone (Sound Aspects, 1988)
- Jason Kao Hwang/Francis Wong/Tatsu Aoki—Graphic Evidence (Asian Improv, 2000)
- Jason Kao Hwang/Edge—Crossroads Unseen (Euonymus, 2010)
- Jason Kao Hwang—Human Rites Trio (True Sound, 2019)
Drummer, vibraphonist, pianist and composer Joe Chambers is known for his versatility and tasteful mastery of all postbop idioms. He plays with a light touch and superb timing and dynamics. He prefers collaboration to front-man flash. Chambers attended the Philadelphia Conservatory for a year and gained a lifetime of experience playing with many of the biggest names in jazz, from Eric Dolphy and Charles Mingus to Wayne Shorter and Chick Corea to Freddie Hubbard and Bobby Hutcherson.

With an interest in all kinds of music, Chambers shares his knowledge as an educator. He has taught at the New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City and currently serves as a Distinguished Professor of Jazz at the University of North Carolina Wilmington’s Department of Music.

Chambers was born June 25th, 1942 in Chester, Pennsylvania. He worked around Washington, DC in his late teens and moved to New York in 1963, where he played with Dolphy, Hubbard, Jimmy Giuffre and Andrew Hill. In the mid ‘60s, Chambers played with a number of the more progressively inclined musicians associated with the Blue Note label, such as Hutcherson, Shorter, Joe Henderson and Sam Rivers.

In 1970, Chambers joined Max Roach’s percussion ensemble M’Boom as an original member. During the ‘70s, Chambers played with many of jazz’ most prominent elder statesmen, including Sonny Rollins, Art Farmer and Tommy Flanagan. With the latter and bassist Reggie Workman, Chambers formed the Super Jazz Trio. Chambers recorded with bands led by trumpeter Chet Baker and percussionist Ray Mantilla in the early ‘80s. He also maintained his association with Roach into the ‘90s.


His most recent album Samba de Maracatu (Blue Note, 2020) explores Brazilian rhythms. Maracatu is a contemporary rhythmic form coming out of the Bantuca, otherwise known as Samba, a percussive style, usually performed by an ensemble, known as a bateria. Bantuca is characterized by repetition and fast pace. Like Samba, Bantuca is a Brazilian musical expression with African roots and a connection to Candomblé, a religion based on African beliefs. Chambers says, “Latin music is really in my blood. When I was six living in Philadelphia, there was a station playing Latin music. Just like New York, there’s a big Latin community. I always liked that music. Joe Loco and Tito Puente, and grew up listening to Mambo and Rhumba. There was always a syncretism of cultures between Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Brazil, etc. I always liked those rhythms and jazz. So I wanted to do something to incorporate these sounds on this album.”

He cites Dizzy Gillespie as the originator of AfroCuban jazz. “From the jazz side it was Dizzy. From the Latin side it was Mario Bauzá, who in the ‘20s was connected with jazz. He was in the Duke Ellington Orchestra. So there’s always been that connection there. But it goes back to early New Orleans music where musicians connected with those AfroCuban forms and rhythms, what they call Salsa, which is really a stateside term. Cuban music is the basis of Latin music: Rhumba and Mambo. It all comes from Cuban Guaguancó,” he explains. Guaguancó is a subgroup of Cuban Rhumba, combining percussion, voices and dance with two main styles: Havana and Matanzas. It is played with clave 3-2. Though Chambers had never been to Brazil, he wants to and is planning on going to Cuba soon. Chambers wasn’t familiar with how to play authentic Latin rhythms until he went to New York and learned directly from percussionists Mantilla, Steve Berrios and Ray Armando, who all joined M’Boom. They presented Chambers with the authentic form of Cuban Guaguancó. Asked what he learned from them, Chambers says, “They taught me clave, which is a certain rhythmic pattern that forms the basis of Guaguancó, which could be Rhumba, Mambo or Pachanga. There are designated claves that set up a proper Guaguancó. You don’t know it until people can show you properly.”

When asked about career highlights and lessons learned from working with so many legends, Chambers says, “Nobody lectured or told me what to do. You learned by soundbites. I lived in Washington DC from 1960-63. We had a group called JKF and a six-nights-a-week job in a club called The Bohemian Caverns. We had to build a weekly repertoire. But I really didn’t know how to play. I found out how to swing and play hard when I came to New York. I worked with Freddie Hubbard and McCoy Tyner. McCoy was the driving force. In his prime, he was stronger than any drummer, including Elvin Jones. I had to keep up with him. He’d pull me along. His drive was way up top. I learned by playing with McCoy and Freddie.”

In addition to drumming, playing the vibraphone allows Chambers to express himself with melody. When asked about the difference between working in a supportive role and leading, Chambers says, “When you speak of drums in jazz and society, the foremost role is to accompany people, which is the basic premise. Then all the other things like drive, color, taste, occur after that. You have to learn how to follow and take orders when you work for people. Musicians will tell you, ‘give me a little more hi-hat or bass drum.’ You have to do that if you want to keep your job. Now, I have no desire to be an accompanist with anybody. Besides, all the people I’ve played with are dead and gone. It is a damn shame. I still like to play drums sometimes, there are big issues with it.”

Chambers published a paper titled “Enemy Drums?” in which he explains the role of drums in popular American music and its demonization as an instrument, something he traces back to how slaves imported from Africa were prohibited from expressing themselves and communicating via percussive instruments. “Drums are the enemy in this Eurocentric culture,” he says.

Regarding the current state of jazz, Chambers says, “Max Roach didn’t like the word jazz or the nicknames like bebop for the music we were making. He was right in the midst of it but never used those words because he didn’t like them. Neither did Miles. What do those words mean? They have become almost like the ‘N’ word. The problem with so-called jazz then and especially today is that it is disconnected from the source from which it came. Today specifically, there’s a disconnect between jazz and African-American people. Looking at the history of American music, all the segregation happened in the late ’40s into the ’50s. There was a time when jazz was a total entertainment commodity in the Big Band era. They played for ballrooms, dancing, it was like a complete variety show. The 30% surtax destroyed the big bands and opened up the small band era and indirectly caused the creation of rock ‘n’ roll.”

“The 30% surtax ushered in the Cabaret laws. It was not only mandated for music but also for sports events. It meant that the proprietors had to pay 30% above what they were paying in order to keep the dance policy. Places like Savoy couldn’t do it, so they folded. That’s what killed the big bands and ushered in the small groups playing in clubs with a no dance policy. You can find old pictures that say ‘No Dancing’. Even today they’ll sit you down because of a no-dance policy. That created the dissociation of jazz with dancing. When I was growing up as a kid, we danced to jazz. But you couldn’t today because of the Cabaret Law in addition to a Union Card. This is where all the separation came in American music and the creation of ‘Race Music’. That was what they later called R&B like Wynonie Harris, Amos Milburn and Louis Jordan. It was specifically designed for the Black community. Alan Freed spearheaded white artists covering that in a whole new idiom they called rock ‘n’ roll, which is really a cover of R&B music with artists like Elvis,” he adds.

With COVID, Chambers had to cancel tour dates but kept busy with recording projects and teaching students online. He is currently finishing an as-yet-untilled album (to be released by Blue Note in 2023) and is looking forward to playing the Jazz By The Water and Clifford Brown Jazz Festivals this month and European dates this fall. What keeps him going? “Music keeps me going. Without labels, the idea of music in itself,” he says.

For more information, visit josephchambers.com. Chambers is at Governors Island Jun. 4th as part of Jazz By The Water. See Calendar.

**Recommended Listening:**
- Bobby Hutcherson–Dialogue (Blue Note, 1965)
- Joe Chambers–The Almoravid (Muse, 1971-73)
- David Murray Trio–The Hill (Black Saint, 1986)
- M’Boom–Live at S.O.B.’s New York (Blue Moon, 1992)
- Joe Chambers–Lanecapes (Savant, 2015)
- Joe Chambers–Samba de Maracatu (Blue Note, 2020)
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Christian Wolff
by George Grella

The program for Christian Wolff’s concert at Roulette this month has both premieres and older works. The earliest, For 1, 2 or 3 People, dates from 1964, while another, Keyboard Miscellany, is both older and newer—a collection of short keyboard pieces Wolff began making in 1997 and has been accumulating since, adding some new parts that he will be playing. That is something of a snapshot of Wolff’s work, an ongoing exploration of activity, space, notation and improvisation, built on the idea of mixing them all. (The program, as Wolff detailed in conversation, differs from that on the event page at Roulette’s website: For 1, 2 or 3 People, Percussionist 5—in a duet version for drums and percussion—Look She Said for solo bass, solo percussion piece Exercise 32, Keyboard Miscellany and Roulette.)

That has been part of Wolff’s work for decades, a balance he approached in different ways. “If it’s strictly specified, then I have a pretty good idea of what I’m going to get. But even there, I still leave things a little vague about dynamics and articulation and stuff like that. I think of myself as notating the music the way old music is notated, you know, Baroque, Renaissance, where there’s a whole lot of stuff they don’t specify and they have a tradition of how it should be done. And so you don’t need to write it down.”

Wolff, one of the members of the New York School of composers (alongside John Cage, Morton Feldman and Earle Brown, essential to the development of 20th Century avant garde and experimental composition), points out that his own tradition is “a little skimpier,” one that in both concept and sound has a close association with free jazz and non-idiotic improvisation over the same 60 or so years on close parallel paths that still have had musicians crossing from one to the other but still in the process of creating a language that has yet to show that it could have a parallel paths that still have had musicians crossing from one to the other but still in the process of creating a language that has yet to show that it could have a common vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, unlike Baroque and Renaissance improvisation, or the song-based mainstream jazz traditions. But that’s “one end of the spectrum,” for Wolff. “The other one is a completely open one. When we were studying indeterminacy, this way back in the ’60s, this idea was new to music. And there were various ways of doing it. Cage decided to go with chance operations, which produce actually quite precise notations, which he then had to play. So the chance element was in the composition, not in the performance. And I got the notion at the time of doing it the other way around, that the composition I would take responsibility for, but the performance would be where an open-ended character would happen.”

That is still in the context of a composed piece, a framework that can provide both materials and mood, not least through the fundamental activity of playing music and listening to others in an ensemble.

“Partly, the indeterminacy that I give to the performers is meant to produce a certain kind of sound. For instance, if you’re waiting to hear somebody and you have to come in immediately after, but you don’t know when that’s going to happen, that’s going to definitely color the way you make your sound. It’s going to give the music both a sound and also a rhythm, a feeling, which is not like any other that I know and I don’t know of any other way of achieving it then by these indeterminate notations.”

If that is not jazz, it is certainly extremely close to modern jazz concepts and the concert will feature a well-known jazz musician in drummer Joey Baron. He has been playing Wolff’s music for quite some time now, and his partner, percussionist Robyn Schulkowsky, who herself has been playing Wolff’s music even longer.

“Over 20 years,” Wolff says about his association with Baron. Of Schulkowsky, he says, “She is one of my favorite all-time musicians. She is just amazing. Joey is pretty great, too. When he joined, I was really, very, very happy. What happened is that she would bring him along to concerts of my music or he would just come when she was playing. And he seemed interested in the music. So one day, I finally said, how about joining us. And he thought about it: yeah, why not? And that’s how it started. He is an improviser and he doesn’t read music. So this is a big step for him...but he seems all in, all together.”

Wolff makes it clear this is still composition and he is a composer. “I myself improvise. But when I do that, that’s a totally different experience from composing. And I think of the two as having absolutely nothing to do with each other. When I’m composing, I’m sitting at a table with a piece of paper and a pencil. And I’m maybe writing things that are open and free, but I’m very clear as to what I’m doing. And I’m not improvising, I don’t go to the piano. Whereas when I’m improvising, I can just do it. If you’ve made a mistake, or if you’ve done something you don’t like, well, you know, you have got to move on. Don’t try to fix it. Just keep going. And do the best you can. In that way, these two experiences are, for me, very different.”

Still, these two approaches come together in music that seamlessly mixes the two. And the process of Keyboard Miscellany, if not improvised, seems close: “it’s a collection that’s been going on for years. And I add new stuff to it all the time. It’s going to be a mix of older music and stuff that’s never been played before. I guess part of it is a world premiere!” The other musician will be bassist Robert Black and the full ensemble will play the world premiere of Roulette. In that piece, Wolff says “there’s a patch where each of us does independent material, but we’re all doing it simultaneously. And the pauses between the phrases are free, so you can kind of adjust a little bit as you’re going along. And it comes at a different point for each player.” He has played earlier versions of this piece in another context and said “I have been amazed in the experience of playing...I can’t tell that people are improvising.” He adds that the other musicians “don’t seem to be able to tell either, because you’re surrounded by written music and that obviously affects what you’re doing. But it also frees you up a moment and maybe it goes on for a quarter of a minute, half a minute. That’s the other extreme, from very precise, to completely open. All within the same piece. It is quite mysterious, actually, how the music suddenly shapes what is improvised.”

For more information, visit emusic.dartmouth.edu/~wolff. Wolff is at Roulette Jun. 18th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
• Christian Wolff–For Piano I / For Pianist / Burdocks (WERGO, 1971)
• Christian Wolff–For Ruth Crawford (hatART, 1993)
• Christian Wolff–Burdocks (Tzadik, 2000-1)
• Christian Wolff–Ten Exercises (New World, 2005)
• Christian Wolff–Angelica Music (I Disci Di Angelica, 2013)
• Christian Wolff/Eddie Prévost– Uncertain Outcomes (Matchless, 2015-16)

Phil Schaap
by Kurt Gottschalk

“No, it is a way,” Phil Schaap was saying on the radio, “Monk’s band had lunch between takes two and three of ‘Bye-Ya’. That’s right, on this particular record date, between takes two and three of ‘Bye-Ya’ Thelonious Monk’s band sat down to lunch and I invite you listeners out there to discern such difference as you can between takes two and three, because Thelonious Monk’s great band sent out for sandwiches and had lunch right there in the studio, between takes two and three. Of ‘Bye-Ya’. That’s right, we’re listening to the music of Thelonious Monk today.”

Those words were never actually spoken by the WKCR broadcaster of legend, but for any regular listener to his show, it is impossible to read them without hearing Schaap’s familiar voice. He was a jazz obsessive to put jazz obsessions to shame, a fan for whom “encyclopedic knowledge” would be no mere hyperbole. For 50 years, he kept jazz history alive, sometimes exhaustively so, on the Columbia University radio station’s airwaves.

That fictitious Monk monologue appeared in Rafi Zabor’s wondrous 1997 novel The Bear Comes Home, in which the author also incisively imagines scenes with Lester Bowie, Ornette Coleman, Charlie Haden and other jazz luminaries, as well as the titular talking, saxophone-playing bear. The Monk luncheon discussion carries on with frustration but more so admiration for the famously longwinded radio host.

“Of course I was a fan and basically loved the guy, even including periodic bouts of exasperation, and appreciated the depth and thoroughness of his love for and information on the greats of the era, looking them up in the telephone book, walking to their homes and knocking on their doors, thus beginning at an early age a long career as a collector of oral histories.”

He began working in radio as a student at Columbia in the ‘70s while launching a daily swing concert series at the nearby West End Café and taking over management of Basie alumni band The Countsmen, and stuck with the Countsmen and the West End Café to the 90s. He went on to win six Grammys for producing reissues of jazz sets and lecture at Princeton, Columbia, Manhattan School of Music and Juilliard. In 2021, Schaap was named a Jazz Master by the National Endowment for the Arts. But he will be best remembered for the dedication he showed in his morning show, Bird Flight and Saturday evening evening (CONTINUED ON PAGE 39)
RED RECORDS
BY MARCO CANGIANO

It was allegedly Joe Henderson who named Red Records “the European Blue Note”, a moniker that has stuck over the last few decades through the recent relaunching. But let us proceed in order. Red was the brainchild of Sandro Vesci and Alberto Alberti, who founded the label in 1976. The former was a young jazz aficionado with a passion for left-oriented politics, organizing concerts at the State University of Milan (featuring Max Roach, Mal Waldron and Don Cherry) on behalf of the Student Movement, while the latter was a well-established music promoter who relinquished the label ownership early on but continued to collaborate until his 2008 passing. Given the context, the name Red could also have had a political connotation, but actually means “Registrazioni Edizioni Discografiche”, a brand to which the Crepuscule musical editions were soon added. The label virtually stopped operations in 2014 but was never formally closed and was eventually purchased in 2019 by Marco Pennisi, its former Art Director, who has relaunched it while remaining faithful to its history and purpose and most notably his own motto to record what I like to listen to.

The beginnings, as often the case, were not easy but driven by sheer passion combined with a sort of irrational ambition as some of the biggest names of the jazz universe were approached and recorded. The maiden recording was The Quest by the Sam Rivers Trio with Dave Holland and Barry Altschul, which overall sold more than 50,000 copies, including rights to the Fratelli Fabbrini Editori for its series I grandi del jazz (The Great Names of Jazz). The first wave of recordings featured established jazz names such as David Murray, Julius Hemphill, Steve Lacy and Paul Bley but also up-and-coming talents such as Abdul Wadud and Anthony Davis. It is worth though stressing how Red was not alone in its attempt to provide a space to American musicians who had found it increasingly difficult to record at home. All the main independent labels such as Blue Note itself, Impulse, Prestige and Verve had been progressively absorbed by major labels, resulting in a clear curtailment of their jazz catalogues and de facto closure to more experimental offerings. It is thus not by chance that Red emerged in parallel with such other Italian labels as Horo in 1972 and Black Saint in 1975 and its subsequent sister label Soul Note in 1979. Other labels followed such as Dire in 1977, Splasc(h) in 1982 and Philology in 1987.

After the somewhat heterogeneous first wave of artists, Red slowed emerging as a powerhouse for modern hardbop. From the early ’80s the label contributed to the reemergence of Henderson, Cedar Walton, Woody Shaw, Bobby Watson, Steve Grossman, Jim Snidero, Victor Lewis, Jerry Bergonzi and Sphere (Charlie Rouse, Kenny Barron, Buster Williams and Ben Riley). These artists were given the opportunity to record original material with no interference whatsoever by the label (one of Vesci’s strong convictions), contrary to standard U.S. labels’ practices. Further, Red turned out to be the initial stepping stone for now-celebrated artists such as JD Allen, Dave Binney and Steve Nelson. Finally, the catalogue dedicated space to old masters such as Chet Baker and Phil Woods, issuing Chet Baker at Capitone and Woods’ bands featuring young trumpeter Tom Harrell on Integrity followed by Edge and Tour Live. In all this, Red was characterized by a direct-live sound contrary, for instance, to ECM celebrated reverb, and stylish covers from Pennisi.

Red was also instrumental in promoting Italian jazz, from the free jazz movement of the mid-’70s, which had in Mario Schiano a sort of a father figure, to rising stars such as Franco D’Andrea, Piero Bassini and the late Massimo Urbani. Also long is the list of Italian artists who had their breakthrough with Red, including Giovanni Tommaso, Flavia Bolto, Salvatore Bonafede, Mario Rusca, Roberto Ottaviano, Maurizio Giammarco, Fabrizio Bosso, Fabio Morgera, Salvatore Tranchini, Piero Odorici, Carlo Atti and Pietro Condorelli. Last but not least, Red was among the most consistent labels in recording artists from across the globe. From the 1981 Ethnic Heritage Ensemble’s Impressions the list grew rapidly to include Argentine guitarist of Polish origin Pablo Bobrowick, Cuban-Brazilian trio Mani Padme, Venezuelan pianist Edward Simon, Albanian pianist Markelian Kapedani, percussionists Nana Vasconcelos (Brazil) and Norberto Minichillo (Argentina) and Argentine saxophonist Costita Bisignani.

Since Pennisi took over in 2019, the objective has been to rely on reissues—pressed on 180-gram vinyl with state-of-the-art remastering from the original analog tapes for about 75 percent of the output while leaving 25 percent to new albums such as Isaiah J. Thompson’s Composed in Color. Among the recently reissued titles are Blues for Red, a Bley solo recording (CONTINUED ON PAGE 39).
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IN MEMORIAM

JOHN BARNES (May 15th, 1932 - Apr. 18th, 2022) The English saxophonist, clarinetist and flutist came up with the trad-jazz band Zenith Six in 1955 and went on to a long association with Alex Welsh and then Humphrey Lyttelton as well as working with visiting Americans like Bud Freeman, Earl Hines, Will Bill Davison, Ruby Braff, Pee Wee Russell and others and releasing a handful of albums for Gold Star, Cadillac, Calligraph, Black Lion and Lake. Barnes died Apr. 18th at 89.

ALLEN BLAIRMAN (Aug. 13th, 1940 - Apr. 29th, 2022) The drummer, long a resident of Germany, was part of the Charles Bell Contemporary Jazz Quintet in the early ’60s, then made his name in Europe with credits under Albert Ayler (the legendary Nuits De La Fondation Maeght two-LP set), Albert Mangelsdorff, Karl Berger, Joe Haider, Mal Waldron, Biréli Lagrène and others, as part of bands like Opening and Trio Variety and two new millennium releases for Rodenstein. Blairman died Apr. 29th at 81.

JOSE LUIS CORTÉS (Oct. 5th, 1951 - Apr. 18th, 2022) The Cuban flutist was best known as part of Irakere in the ’80s-90s as well as founding The New Generation Cuban All Stars, NG La Banda and Todos Estrellas, those groups releasing albums on El Inspector De La Salsa, Caribe Productions, O.K., Promusic and Bis and working with Chucho Valdés, David Murray, Pedrito Calvon, Jose Miguel Crego and others. Cortés died Apr. 18th at 70.

ROBERTO MASOTTI (1947 - Apr. 25th, 2022) The Italian photographer’s images could be found on releases by Amadeus, Ampersand, Bla Bla, Cramps, Dischi Della Quericia, Elektra, EMI, Emanem, Enja, FMP, Ictus, Improvising Artists, Incus, Intakt, Leo, Musica Jazz, NoBusiness, Nonesuch, PDU, Red, Ring, Saravah, Setola Di Maiale, Splasc(H), WATT, Wergo, We Insist!, a/1/1 and, most prolifically, ECM with nearly 200 albums. Masotti died Apr. 25th at 75.

CHARNETT MOFFETT (Jun. 10th, 1967 - Apr. 11th, 2022) The bassist first recorded as a child alongside his many musical siblings in the band of his drummer father Charles and, by the ’80s, was one of the most-in-demand players of his generation, with credits under Donald Brown, Ornette Coleman, Kenny Drew, Jr. and Garrett, Kevin Eubanks, Stanley Jordan, Branford, Delfeayo and Wynton Marsalis, Mulgrew Miller, Courtney Pine, Wallace Roney, David Sanchez, Sonny Sharrock, McCoy Tyner and Tony Williams, over two dozen albums both as part of the Manhattan Jazz Quintet and under his own name, most recently for Motéma Music. Moffett died Apr. 11th at 54.

ADELHARD ROIJDINGER (Nov. 28th, 1941 - Apr. 22nd, 2022) The Austrian bassist had several leader or co-led releases since the ’70s and worked with Hans Koller, Akira Sakata, New Jazz Ensemble, Karin Krog, Youku Yamashita, Heinz Sauer, Urs Leimgruber and the European Jazz Ensemble. Roidinger died Apr. 22nd at 80.


KLAUS SCHULZE (Aug. 4th, 1947 - Apr. 26th, 2022) The composer and keyboard player (initially a drummer with various electronic bands in his native Germany) released dozens of albums on Ambient World, Brain, Cosmic Music, Inteam GmbH, MIG, PDU, Rainhorse, Revisited, Synthetic Symphony, Venture, Mysymph and other labels and was a founding member of Stomu Yamashta’s Go in the ’70s. Schulze died Apr. 26th at 74.

DONALD SMITH (Sep. 4th, 1943 - Apr. 9th, 2022) The pianist (and younger brother of Lonnie Liston Smith) was active from the late ’60s well into the new millennium, recording one album as a leader in 1976 for Whynot and appearing on albums by his brother, Hamiet Bluiett, Lester Bowie, Tulivu-Donna Cumberbatch, Andrew Cyrille, Craig Harris, Bobby Hutcherson, Dick Griffen, Oliver Lake, Sahib Shihab, Leon Thomas, James Jabbo Ware, Salim Washington and others. Smith died Apr. 9th at 78.
The first ever LONG PLAY festival, held on the Can’s marathon concerts, aims to bridge the gap between new, jazz and world musics. Established in 1987, Bang On A Can reflects founders Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe and David Lang’s roots in post-minimalist contemporary classical music. As composition professors (the former two at NYU, latter at Yale) they have mentored generations of grad students and many of the five dozen concerts over a long weekend (Apr. 29th-May 1st) featured current or former students interpreting works of the new music canon, supplemented by rock/pop/EDM and jazz composers while artists from Cuba, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Puerto Rico and Trinidad represented global cultures.

Your correspondent attended parts or all of 31 sets totaling 26.5 hours. The proximity of The Center for Fiction bookstore, Mark Morris Dance Center, BAM Opera House, outdoor plaza at 300 Ashland Place, BAM’s Adam Café (all within a half block of each other) and Roulette (two blocks away) minimized transit time between sets while the two outlier venues, Public Records and Littlefield in southwest Gowanus, were only minutes away by bike. What follows is a play-by-play tour through three days-into-nights of concert-going.

Friday started at 5 pm with Ekmeles’ nearly continuous, hour-plus vocalization of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s Stimmung, melding all manner of human clucks, overtones and spoken words (in German and English) in complex tessellated layers. At Roulette, M.C. Schmidt humorously intoned the words to Robert Ashley’s The Backyard over partner Drew Daniel’s tabla-trombone, which combined on-screen imagery of street maps with on-screen imagery. At Littlefield, Craig Harris played an array of bells, cymbals, and gongs through a reverberant system. Back at Littlefield, Craig Harris played an array of bells, cymbals, and gongs through a reverberant system. At the opera house, the librettist of the opera, Terry Riley’s seminal In C was magnificently rendered by the Bang on a Can All-Stars acoustic/electric octet to accompany Sasha Waltz’ choreography featuring a 14-member troupe dressed in sleeveless shirts and shorts in contrasting pastel colors.

At Roulette, guitarist Gary Lucas and Labelle vocalist Nona Hendryx’ tribute to Captain Beefheart included a slideshow of his artwork, personal anecdotes and blues-rock covers of his tunes. At BAM Café, Ivefwo Gnaoua’s hypnotic sound, featuring Ma’alem Hassan Ben Jaafar’s passionate voice and pulsing sinitir, stirred first one, then a crowd of dancers. At Littlefield, electric guitar quartet Dither premiered Nate Wooley’s “Three Anthems for Abandoned Cities”, beginning and ending with clean tone interweaven into chorale textures, swirling, buzzing skronk in the middle, followed by a grungy Radiohead-esque piece by Aeryn Santillan. Julia Wolfe’s String Quartets, as played by Ethel, combined 16th-note hootnanny fiddling with phasing cross-accents, slow glissandi, siren-like microtones, simultaneous sung/bowed harmonies and syncopated foot-stomps. Friday’s final performance was a DJ set at Littlefield by Mattmos (M.C. Schmidt and Drew Daniels once again) spinning electronic music throughout the afternoon.

Saturday began at the bookstore, where cellist Zoë Keating and bassist Brandon Lopez discussed racism, hierarchical structures, economic imperatives, artist-audience relations and other aspects of presenting new art. At Roulette, the festival’s ambitious milestone Music for Airports was rendered by the Bang on a Can All-Stars decet and 12-voice Choir of Trinity of Wall Street, lulling incessantly until no one listening would have worried about a missed flight.

The strongest set of the festival was pianist Kris Davis and bassist Holland’s duo at Littlefield, a seemingly modest affair that began with a cover of Eric Dolphy’s “Les” followed by a medley of five originals, the music moving through hard/post/treebop played in quick union into rambling soliloquies, convoluted and five minute-long passages overlapping phrases and floating interludes, coalescing into thematic clusters even as the pair pursued individual musical pathways: Davis improvising with impeccable clarity and graceful passion; Holland, in an unusually expansive mood, working extended and feature-rich improvisations on pieces like “Flail”, and long-tones of the low winds embodying the pompous anthem rock. Nois Saxophone Quartet’s set morphing from dirgy, minor-key ruminations into long-tones of the low winds embodying the pulsing perpetual torrent of sound with trills, triplet flourishes, high-register leads and ‘bent’ notes. Second set: At Roulette, the trio for 6 percussionists, each playing a wooden 2x4 plank of varying length with contact mics mounted on a sawhorse, all arranged in a hexagon so drummers faced one another.

Sunday began in the murky interior of Public Records, where TAK Ensemble (voice, viola, flute, clarinet, percussion) essayed compositions by Tyshawn Sorey, David Byrne and others. The festival’s newest generation was represented by Brooklyn Youth Chorus, a precociously professional aggregate of three dozen high-schoolers singing (from memory) Philip Glass’ “Let Them Not Say” and Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”, marvelously resonant sonorities from the hall’s big speaker system. Back at Littlefield, Craig Harris played ensemble with a large phalanx of percussionists, including partner Drew Daniel’s tabla-drums, which combined on-screen imagery of street maps with on-screen imagery. At one point a woman in the next room, troubled by the strange emanations, called out, “Are you okay?” to which Rojas, after finishing his musical number, “Love in Outer Space”, the whole hall—packed crowd didn’t mind, especially when the pianist got off to a late start (needing time after sound-check) and long-tones of the low winds embodying the enduring endurance victims require to weather such harassment. The finale, held in the opera house, featured Ornette Coleman’s 1959 album The Shape of Jazz to Come, joining jazz sextet—leader/drummer Denardo Coleman (Ornette’s son), guitarist James “Blood” Ulmer and bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma (veterans of Coleman’s “free-funk” period), trumpeter Wallace Roney, Jr. and alto saxophonist Lee Odom and versatile pianist Jason Moran—with 20-piece orchestra in an attempt to bridge that problematic gap mentioned in the first paragraph of this review. The results were mixed. For one, the formality of the venue and physical isolation of the orchestra musicians impeded the intimacy and interaction requisite for successful free improvisation. Indeed, a few stalwart free jazz fans could be observed leaving early. On the other hand, Coleman’s promethean themes proved nourishing and inspiring, instructive and accessible. Most notably, the final set was magnificently rendered by Dunston, Harris, Mitchell, Carman Moore, David Sanford and Pamela Z, infusing these crafty orchestral passages with undeniable spirit. And more than a few fans could be overheard humming “Lonely Woman” as they squeezed out of the Opera House exit doors.

For more information, visit bangonacan.org/long-play-2022
Thinness, Miles Okazaki's Trickster's fourth album since a 2016 eponymous debut (all on Pi Recordings), reunites the guitarist/composer with electric bassist Anthony Tidd and drummer Sean Rickman, all alumni of Steve Coleman's Five Elements, plus Matt Mitchell, who has filled the piano/keyboards chair since the second album. It represents a post-quarantine return to live interaction for the band (Trickster’s Dream), the third album, was a collaboration in cyberspace with an added emphasis on flow, breaking down boundaries—playing off the grid, so to speak, of Okazaki’s methodical compositions. The four song titles, taken from a Sun Ra poem in the liner notes of Monorails and Satellites—“In some far off place”, “years in space”, “I’ll build a world”, “and wait for you”—underline this fluidity of form, where separate modules of a song can transition in nonlinear fashion. The rigid, non-swinging M-Base-style funk is patent in the machine-like precision of Rickman and Tidd’s beats, but Okazaki and Mitchell take full liberty to float over and around these cycles, sometimes in counterpoint or in a seemingly parallel but non-intersecting universe. For example, on “years in space”, Rickman opens with a 7-beat cycle, Tidd a 9-beat cycle (such that they hit the same downbeat every 35 beats), wah-wah guitar accenting every 21 beats before changing it up, later phrasing in 6 while keyboards dart and dive in less predictable ways. It is all on a grid somewhere, but the boundaries aren’t always clear.

Most interesting is when the group moves between compositional modules, heard especially on “wait for you”. It is in the transitions between sections—each musician crossing these musical interzones at different times, on their own initiative, eventually coalescing on a new grid—when the most flow-infested, transcendental moments occur. Here, in the cracks of the grid, in those liminal spaces at the edge of conscious perception, we find the “thinness” promised by the title.

For more information, visit pirecordings.com. Peyroux is at Sony Hall Jun. 2nd as part of Blue Note Jazz Festival. See Calendar.

Careless Love
Madeleine Peyroux (Rounder-Craft)
by George Kranizer

This vinyl reissue of singer Madeleine Peyroux’ breakthrough (now Platinum) 2004 album Careless Love (Rounder) comes in a tri-fold sleeve, with not only the original album, but also two discs of a live set at the 2005 Festival de Jazz de Vitoria-Gasteiz in Spain. There she was accompanied by a trio of Kevin Hays (piano and Fender Rhodes), Matt Penman (bass) and Scott Amendola (drums). The performance reprised all the songs on the 2004 album as well as the live material.

Careless Love was a carefully crafted studio album, featuring first-call Los Angeles studio musicians, including guitarist Dean Parks and keyboard player Larry Goldings. Peyroux’ voice and tone are remarkably consistent, bratty and languorous, as if she is communing conspiratorially with the mic. The record moves seamlessly from song to song, as if all of one piece. Peyroux’ tone, almost laconic, never wavers, nor does that of the album. It still, was groundbreaking in its mixed repertoire, ranging from classics from the Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday to songs from contemporaries like Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan.

But things are different live. While the album band is a careful amalgam of jazz, folk, R&B and country, the quartet projects a more straightahead jazz group. And her vocals, delivered on the studio album with an almost monotonous consistency, are much varied, even adventurous, in concert. She is more animated and rhythmically flexible on songs such as Smith’s “Don’t Cry Baby” and the title track. The bonus songs find her in a jaunty mood: Alan Block-Donn Hecht’s “Walking' After Midnight”, popularized by Patsy Cline, is all country lope; she accelerates and decelerates tempi on Burton Lane-Frank Loesser’s “I Hear Music” and attempts a too-fast tempo on Marvin Fisher-Roy Alfred’s “Destination Moon”.

For more information, visit pirecordings.com. Peyroux is at Sony Hall Jun. 2nd as part of Blue Note Jazz Festival. See Calendar.

Thinness
Miles Okazaki Trickster (Pi)
by Tom Greenland

Live at the Village Vanguard Volume II (MDW NTR)
Steve Coleman & Five Elements (Pi)
by Jason Gross

For more information, visit pi-recordings.com. Coleman is at the Atlantic BKLN Jun. 2nd-3rd. See Calendar.

Live at the Village Vanguard Volume II (MDW NTR)
Steve Coleman & Five Elements (Pi)
by Jason Gross

For more information, visit pi-recordings.com. Coleman is at the Atlantic BKLN Jun. 2nd-3rd. See Calendar.
BronX BandA is an eclectic ensemble assembled by keyboard player Arturo O’Farrill reflecting his one-world, genre-merging artistic vision, born of a collaboration with Bronx-based Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education through a grant intended to bring jazz to New York’s Latino-majority borough. The oddly configured nonet comprises the wide-ranging talents of mezzo-soprano Kayla Faccilongo, rapper Baba Israel, trombonist Clark Gayton, violinist/violist Leonor Falcón, guitarist Juanna Trujillo, bassist Leo Traversa, drummer Juan Carlos Polo and percussionist Annette Aguilar. The date opens with Trujillo’s wildly celebratory “Festejo”, combining the ambience of a North African bazaar and Caribbean island carnival, swirling organ and violin setting contrasting moods as the band raucously shouts and claps before parading trombone takes things out. Falcón and Trujillo’s “Ain’t I A Woman?” begins with Faccilongo’s prayerful solo canto. Then the mood shifts with her exhorting the drammatis of a Brecht-Weill production and soaring-sighing violin and wailing guitar creating a West Side Story-like atmosphere, concluding with climactic rapping. Polo’s “Nuyoriptian Part 1” is an easy-grooving, Eastern-tinged excursion showcasing violin, trombone and vocals. Falcón’s “Parima” has piano in a Mexican mode underpinning dancing violin lines and a soliloquy by Israel, who then raps a Bronx tale on Trujillo’s funky “Nuyoriptian Part 2: Two Weeks in ’71”. O’Farrill-Polo’s “Juanita’s Hope” blends Faccilongo operatics and Israel freestyling, mixing the pair with narrative musical flair. “Carnival” by Gayton is a pretty samba featuring Faccilongo’s airy wordless vocalizing, along with other solos, over percolating drums and percussion. O’Farrill’s “Nuyoriptian Part 3: En Foco” is a multifaceted effort traversing a variety of contrasting stylistic influences. Traversa’s compositional acumen is highlighted on three consecutive tracks: “Pasos”, a bouncy Latin jazz affair with swinging trombone, Fender Rhodes and violin solos; “Song For Elena”, with a relaxed fusion-y opening, prayerful Faccilongo interlude and dancing AfroCuban finale; and “Bertha’s Beat”, Israel rapping in homage to pianist Bertha Hope over a samba rhythm. The date ends with Aguilar’s “Wizard’s Move”, a heady brew of Latin, jazz, rap and R&B echoing the sounds of the South Bronx.

For more information, visit castamaria.org. This project is at Father Gigante Plaza Jun. 5th. See Calendar.

Johan Hörlen (alto) underpinning by Stefan Rey’s resolute walking bassline. Mintzer plays EWI and Karolina Strassmayer plays an excellent alto solo on “Montuno”, another Latin-flavored tune with a percussive groove “New Look”, the only ballad and, at 9:29 minutes, the longest of the tracks, captivates with its lush bossa-nova groove and lyricism, Mintzer’s tenor accompanied by reeds and flugelhorns. On “Combination”, Mintzer and the brilliant WDR Big Band all stand out as soloists but together achieve a remarkably ingenious coherence. For more information, visit mcgjazz.org. Mintzer is at Birdland Jun. 7th-11th with the Yellowjackets. See Calendar.

This is an ear-opening album from British percussionist Tony Oxley (who turns 84 this month). He is one of the great improvising drummers, with a unique sound palette and way of thinking built on patience to leave space for his own listening and quickness to fill the right moment. There is a clattering quality to his playing that is unmistakable and sounds like what Kenny Clarke may have played like if he came up with Cecil Taylor. One hears that here on occasional plangent whorps of sound, but the pieces—selected from his personal archives—are examples of his organizational thinking for ensemble. Call it composing if you want, but neither without knowledge of the preparation that went into these original recordings nor the editing—sometimes decades after the fact—that was a part of producing the album, one hears this as Oxley organizing and influencing the other musicians. Influence is not just compositional, guiding traffic, but using electronics to process the sounds. On the final track, 2016’s “Combination”, that is all Oxley does; it is a duet with Stefan Hoeker playing acoustic percussion. Larger ensemble pieces, like “The Embrace” and the two parts of “The Ensemble” (both from 1974), are not far from Evan Parker’s Electro-Acoustic Ensemble. Oxley’s sound is spikier, with musicians like trumpeter Dave Holdsworth, trombonist Paul Rutherford and pianist Howard Riley. The electronics are just one more instrument or embellishment, a crunch-like sound as percussion, an extended timbre on Barry Guy’s bass.

This is music that is very much in the moment, with no long-term and little short-term memory, free music not trying to build a larger form or any kind of dramatic direction, instead forgetting about anything that had come before and remaking itself every instant. That makes it sound far less like anything in the broad category of free jazz than a most sophisticated classical music, something from Vladimir Ussachevsky, Karlheinz Stockhausen or Mario Davidovsky. It is a powerfully satisfying thing to hear improvised music that sounds like it connects to such a larger and older context. For more information, visit discus-music.co.uk

Soundscapes

Bob Mintzer/WDR Big Band Cologne (MCG Jazz)
by Anna Steegmann

Saxophonist Bob Mintzer has written over 500 big band arrangements, orchestral and chamber works and can be heard on over 1,000 recordings. As the chief conductor of the WDR Big Band in Cologne, Germany for the past six years, he was asked to create a project of his own, a tradition at the WDR Big Band. For Soundscapes Mintzer states that there is “no particular theme, no singular message, other than to highlight the great artistry of the band and use composition to create a soundscape of color, texture and sparkle, with the primary focus being teamwork, empathy and celebration.” Mintzer plays tenor and EWI (electronic wind instrument) and his orchestrations allow all of the 17-strong WDR Big Band to express themselves musically in their unique way, creating a warm multi-faceted sound often interlocking in rhythmical counterpoint.

“Combination”, the first of ten tracks, is upbeat and swinging with a Latin feel and features EWI and a powerful tenor solo by Paul Heller. “The Conversation” combines AfroCuban, funk and various African rhythms, horns and percussion (Marcio Doctor) engaging in a rousing call and response and Andy Hunter (trombone) and Billy Test (piano) delivering magnificent solos. The fiery “Stay Up” features solos from Mintzer (tenor) and

For more information, visit discus-music.co.uk
GLOBE UNITY

Spacelab & Strings
Nikolaj Hess (Sunnyside)
Metamorphosis
Jacob Arvedt (Stunt)
What Is There To Say?

Cory Weeds With Strings (Cellar Live)
by Tom Greenland

Except upright bass, most members of the string family aren’t as prevalent in jazz, perhaps because they don’t lend themselves to long lines of internally accented 8th notes. But when arrangers write to their strengths, as heard on the albums reviewed here, strings enhance jazz projects in wondrous ways.

Spacelab & Strings joins Danish pianist Nikolaj Hess’ trio of bassist Anders AC Christensen and drummer/brother Mikkel Hess with violinists Carcile Balling and Christian Ellegaard, violist Jakup tüzen and cellist Josephine Opsahl to play a baker’s dozen of his compositions and an adaptation of the second movement of Maurice Ravel’s String Quartet in F Major. Bilingual in classical and jazz, Hess moves in both cultures with confidence, so the project is not just jazz-with-strings-tacked-on (or vice versa) but an organic hybrid. Though the strings don’t solo they are used as an autonomous voice, providing chromatically embellished melodies, ‘rubbing dissonances (caused by different chord tones), canons, chorales and jousting countermelodies. The leader threads it all together, ripping through the colorful arrangements with a gorgeous feathery effervescent touch, equal parts Murray Perahia and Bill Evans.

Danish guitarist Jacob Arvedt’s Metamorphosis is another successful jazz/classical hybrid presenting reworked repertoire by Claude Debussy, Francis Poulenc, Sergei Prokofiev, Maurice Ravel and Pyotr Tschaikovskiy. The ensemble is jazz quartet (Arvedt, pianist Ben Besiakov, bassist Felix Moseholm, drummer Cornelia Nilsson), oboe (Artved’s brother Max) and strings (violinst Kirstine Schneider, violinist Stine Hasbirk Brandt, cellist Joel Laakso), with percussionist Eliel Lazo on one track. The leader, flaunting a beautiful tone and touch in the Grant Green tradition and an affinity for lissome chord melodies, plays most of the solos (Besiakov the rest) plus interludes connecting small-group workouts to orchestral passages. Pristine oboe, vibrant without histronics, often functions as the fourth string/first violin, furnishing a melodic focal point for the string-dominated sections.

Vancouver saxophonist/bandleader/producer/label head/former jazz club owner Cory Weeds has to be one of the hardest working people in jazz biz. What Is There to Say?“is Weeds’ response to the seminal Charlie Parker with Strings, not a jazz/classical hybrid so much as a showcase for tenor saxophone backed by piano trio and 13 strings (8 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 bass) adroitly arranged by saxophonist Phil Dwyer. This isn’t new terrain, as Weeds paddles midstream in the jazz mainstream and Dwyer’s cinematic arrangements harken back to Hollywood’s Golden Age, but the pair’s craftsmanship is impeccable. Weeds, accompanied by bassist John Lee and drummer John Wu, is a tasteful, inventive melodist, but Dwyer’s melodramatic strings almost steal the show, especially on the finale, the Gershwin’s “There’s a Boat Leaving Soon for New York”.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com, sundance.dk and cellarlive.com

Steve Davis has been a major jazz trombonist since he joined Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers in 1990. He has stuck throughout his career to the straightahead trombone tradition pioneered by J.J. Johnson, developing his own musical personality without finding any need to alter the style. Since the music is timeless, why change? Davis has led at least 20 albums, with Bluesthetic his fourth for the Smoke Sessions label. For this outing of ten of his originals, he gathered together a sextet of musical friends to form quite an allstar group: guitarist Peter Bernstein, vibraphonist Steve Nelson, pianist Geoffrey Keezer, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Willie Jones III.

The individual improvisations are pretty concise, with virtually every selection containing trombone, guitar, vibraphone and piano solos and several also having statements from bass and drums. Among the highlights are the catchy boogaloos “Silver At Sundown” (a tribute to Horace Silver), “Bedford Strole” (partly recalling Benny Golson’s “Blues March”), quiet jazz waltz “Faraway Dream”, driving “They Wore 44” (dedicated to several sports heroes who wore the number 44 plus 44th U.S. President Barack Obama) and Davis’ warm playing on “Indigo To Azure”.

All of the music could have been written and performed in this fashion for a Blue Note or Riverside session circa 1962. Few surprises occur and, since the solos are consistently brief, specific highpoints are difficult to remember. With this much talent, it would have made sense to have showcased a few of the musicians more extensively. However, the tunes are pleasing, the group’s spirit joyful and each musician plays at his usual high level. Classic hardbop fans will be pleased with Bluesthetic.

For more information, visit smokesessionsrecords.com. Davis is at The Django Jun. 9th. See Calendar.

Steve Davis (Smoke Sessions) by Scott Yanow

We just lost the stellar pianist Jessica Williams, who made many outstanding trio dates without ever getting the attention she deserved (sexism lives). If you’re missing her, you could give France-born Jean-Michel Pilc original and teaches at Montréal’s McGill) a try. The art of the trio is always worth exploring and Pilc sounds closely bonded to his mates, bassist Rémi- Jean LeBlanc and drummer Jim Doss, Openner “Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise” (Sigmund Romberg-Oscar Hammerstein II) will get you hooked. Over more than 14 minutes, the trio never loses sight of the melody and it swings like mad even as it goes through a host of changes. LeBlanc has a memorable interlude that toys with the tune, the trio meditates at length, then walks briskly back into swing tempo. This is an obvious signature tune for the band. “11 Sharp” is, along with the title track, a Pilc original. It has that Thelonious Monk-ish combination of jagged edges and irresistible melody line. “Nardis” and “All Blues” are out of the Miles Davis playbook. The former opens with a moody Pilc/LeBlanc duet and stays in a somewhat melancholy, late-night groove when Doxas joins in, tension building at the end. The band likes long workouts and exploring dynamics; “All Blues” dances around the melody (though it is obliquely stated by the bass) in a punchy way that is a credit to Doxas. It edges on the outside before coming back in and firmly closing the gate.

LeBlanc’s contribution to this and the rest of the album cannot be overstated. An absorbing bass solo opens the title track, with piano finally making an entrance, gentle and shimmering, after two minutes and 30 seconds. With the rumble of drums, momentum is slowly gained. These guys really listen to one another. Not much meat, but plenty of great gravy.

In contrast to the drama that has gone before, the relatively short and bouncy take of The Beatles’ “Eleanor Rigby” is a light palate cleanser, shorn of the song’s inherent pathos. As far as this reviewer can tell, that track is on the press version but not the CD. Justin Time makes the whole second set available for download, including not only “Eleanor Rigby” but also “Someday My Prince Will Come” (Frank Churchill-Larry Morey), “Freedom Jazz Dance” (Eddie Harris), “My Funny Valentine” (Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart), “All the Things You Are” and “My Romance” (Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II) and “Mr. P.C.” (John Coltrane).

For more information, visit justin-time.com. Pilc is at Small’s Jun. 9th-10th. See Calendar.

Bluesthetic

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For more information, visit justin-time.com. Pilc is at Small’s Jun. 9th-10th. See Calendar.

Alive (Live at Dièse Onze, Montréal)
Jean-Michel Pilc (Justin Time)
by Jim Motavalli

We just lost the stellar pianist Jessica Williams, who made many outstanding trio dates without ever getting the attention she deserved (sexism lives). If you’re missing her, you could give France-born Jean-Michel Pilc now and teaching at Montréal’s McGill) a try. The art of the trio is always worth exploring and Pilc sounds closely bonded to his mates, bassist Rémi- Jean LeBlanc and drummer Jim Doss, Openner “Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise” (Sigmund Romberg-Oscar Hammerstein II) will get you hooked. Over more than 14 minutes, the trio never loses sight of the melody and it swings like mad even as it goes through a host of changes. LeBlanc has a memorable interlude that toys with the tune, the trio meditates at length, then walks
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FREE ADMISSION!
John Zorn is a master of clichés. This is high praise—the vast majority of music we hear is built on clichés and has been since before Bach. Even free music has clichés. Everything from a perfect cadence to a saxophonist’s altissimo scream has multiple meanings already built into it and the player who chooses those is deliberately wielding those meanings, in part or in all.

What sets Zorn apart is not only how much he loves clichés—the details that make a movie soundtrack or a hardbop tune work—but how good he is at making new material and then transforming that into a new set of clichés he can mine repeatedly. His Masada project has been the ne plus ultra of this and now comes the New Masada Quartet to build new rooms into an already vast and impressive house.

Upfront, another consistent Zorn quality: the first iteration of a new concept is usually the most exciting and the followups consolidate that first thought into a new body of work. That was the case for Naked City, Painkiller and certainly the first Masada album, one of his very finest.

The new quartet doesn’t have the invigorating edge of that Alef album, but does have more of a loping groove with the horizontal flow of bassist Jorge Wollesen and drummer Kenny Wollesen. Guitarist Julian Lage’s strong swing sounds fantastic with Zorn, always a swinging player. If Masada was bebop, this is hardbop.

Speaking of clichés, the explicit Jewish music style of Masada is built on some of the most common expressive techniques in music: harmonic minor scales and pentatonic patterns. With these, Zorn has crafted a handful of his finest themes, especially the gorgeous, midtempo ballad “Rigal”. Sometimes the album goes one cliché too far, with Ornette Coleman-isms like “Hath Arob”, which have the band riffing heavily. These tracks aren’t bad but the melodies and ensemble playing is so good elsewhere one wants more of that.

For more information, visit tzadik.com. This band is at The Sultan Room Jun. 10th. See Calendar.

Ari’s Fun-House
Ben Markley Big Band (with Ari Hoenig) (OA2)
by Dan Bilawsky

After learning some of Ari Hoenig’s music for a show with the drummer in 2019, pianist Ben Markley was so smitten he had the idea of building a big band recording around it. After receiving Hoenig’s blessing, Markley took a deep dive into Hoenig’s world, transcribing solos, playing along with recordings, staying in contact to pick his brain about his writing, channeling it into the seven arrangements of Ari’s Funhouse and bringing his inspirational source aboard to play on the project.

Opening with the energetic “Birdless”, a tight and soaring statement spotlighting high-caliber players (e.g., himself, saxophonist Wil Swindler), Markley showcases his well-oiled machine of a band. Then the beauty of daybreak emerges through “Lyric”. With an ear-worn of a line, standout contributions from tenor saxophonist John Gunther and guitarist Steve Kovalcheck, strength where it counts and a mixture of grace and groove (courtesy of Hoenig in more ways than one), the number proves to be a high point in a set filled with many.

“Lines of Oppression”, presenting with serpentine splendor(s) and open vistas, welcomes tenor painting and pugilism from Gunther and Peter Sommer. Hoenig’s perspective-twisting stick work and trumpeter Dan Jonas’ warm weaving, Strutting and swelling centerpiece “Bert’s Playground” offers welcome space for Swindler, bassist Evan Gregor and trombonist Paul Rick. “For Tracy”, which captivates with quietude and gives trumpeter Greg Gisbert his only feature, stands in contrast to the anxiety-inducing intricacies and drive of “Arrows and Loops”. And “Green Chimneys” – a contrafact of Thelonious Monk’s “Green Chimneys” – celebrates the raunchy and funky sides of life with rockin’ and raving ambitions. Markley has seriously outdone himself, crafting expansive yet loyal arrangements expertly executed by a stellar ensemble.

Brandon Seabrook is among the most original guitarists currently working, demarcating his territory as a nexus of jazz, noise, bluegrass and string band (ideally with each preceded by “post-” and with “banjoist” added to “most original”). What was the Brandon Seabrook Trio in the past and here described as Brandon Seabrook with Cooper-Moore and Gerald Cleaver is an optimum expression of his art, stretching its rich historical associations. It is an unusual band, with Cooper-Moore, a major pianist, restricting himself to diddley-bow, a traditional one-string instrument he plays with two drumsticks (though often using fingers to fret and pluck as well), taking on the role of an electric bass with a compound rhythmic complexity and melodic detail that stretch the diddley-bow’s possibilities to levels unlikely for a bassist. Cleaver provides a dense figuration uniting and driving the forays, with Cooper-Moore sometimes anchoring himself so far into the drums that he sounds like part of the kit.

The opening title track presents Seabrook on tenor banjo, though there is substantial crossover between the ways he plays banjo and guitar, sometimes using a capo to turn his guitar into an octave guitar, its sound as pinched as a banjo or mandolin: as with his guitar, there may be rapid flurries of muffled or cut-off notes, then sudden stabbing, isolated tones, a solo at times a series of disconnected fractures and convulsions welded together by their fury. But there is far more here than Seabrook’s blistering attack. “Subliminal Gaucherries”, the first guitar piece, takes an opposite tack, almost a drone with high, sustained, reverberant notes. “Vibrancy Yourself”, with a strong bass groove, is mostly inflamed chording, a distant descendant of a certain kind of surf guitar, one of Seabrook’s crucial sources.

At times it seems to be recapitulating the history of American plectrum instruments, from sudden micro jolts of chord melody in the manner of Eddie Lang or Carl Kress, Dick Dale speed picking (sped up) or Earl Scruggs “three-finger” to a certain kind of densely electric grunge in the midst of Cleaver and Cooper-Moore’s rhythmic precision. “Crepuscule of Cleaver” is free improvisation with a thick processed guitar sound channeling an arcade game or sonar blips. “Adrenaline Charters” (possibly a reference to Samuel Charters, author of The Country Blues) begins with bowed guitar, suggesting violin, before Cleaver enters with a slow backbeat and Cooper-Moore with a foundational bass. Seabrook switches to banjo, later alternating the two before ending on isolated banjo, emphasizing the group’s invocation of its 19th Century roots. “Seething Excitations” has Seabrook navigating between the timbral extremes of grunge and sleighbells.

With the first six tracks ranging from 5:10 to 6:03, the final episodes break the mold. “Aghastitudine” is an expansive dialogue stretching to over ten minutes with Cooper-Moore coming fully to the fore, providing complex melodic dialogue as well as sonic anchor. Closing “Of the Swarm”, just a minute long, is dense insistence with promissory lyrical instants inserted, a fittingly mysterious coda to music plucked (or picked) from the oddments of past, present and future.

For more information, visit astralspirits.bandcamp.com. This project is at Public Records Jun. 14th. See Calendar.
Avant garde jazz has a long history of incorporating political topics. Argentinean tenor saxophonist Camila Nebbia, who now lives in Europe, brings a Latin American perspective to her politically charged new album. The long title roughly translates to The River of Memory Flows Through the Earth, Leaving Traces of Some Footprint That Is a Number Today. Nebbia’s liner notes describe this recording as a “reaction to all the gender violence and different forms of violence and social oppression” in the world.

Plenty of angst comes through the 37-minute piece “Corre el Río de la Memoria” as well as the two shorter pieces that follow, four-minute “Resuenan los Ecos de Sus Voces en Mi Voz” and five-minute “Coordenada Indefinida”, yet this is not the type of avant garde jazz that is blistering dense from start to finish. Nebbia brings plenty of nuance with the help of Barbara Togander (vocals and turntables), Violeta García (cello) and Paula Shocron (acoustic piano, vocals and percussion). The more intense and angry parts build up. More often than not, this album sounds reflective, contemplative and spacy.

Togander’s Spanish-language vocals aren’t really singing but more a combination of chanting and spoken word. And, despite the use of electronics and turntables, the music doesn’t sound high-tech, electronics a side-dish rather than the main course. Ultimately, it is tenor saxophone, acoustic piano and cello played in real time that do the most to give the music its personality. Decades from now, the early 2020s will no doubt be remembered as a time of great unrest and upheaval. Nebbia and her associates capture some of that angst on this engaging release.

For more information, visit ramblerecords.com. Nebbia is at Downtown Music Gallery Jun. 14th. See Calendar.

Bassist Billy Mohler’s résumé is wide and deep, ranging from pop-oriented collaborations to hardcore jazz groups like the one on this album. Among his many accomplishments, Mohler is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music and attended the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, studying with, among others, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. Anatomy is the welcome sophomore release of his pianoless quartet of Chris Speed (tenor saxophone), Shane Endesly (trumpet) and childhood friend Nate Wood (drums), the latter pair also part of Kneebody.

The references range from Ornette Coleman’s legendary quartet to Gerry Mulligan’s various pianoless outfits, with the former a much more direct influence while preserving the elegance of the latter. Mohler and his partners seem to take off where Coleman left off in the early ‘60s while proposing a less adventurous but more rhythmic approach, with bass clearly at the center of the project. Mohler does not shy away from providing rock-solid walking lines and repeated patterns always with a big round sound. He and Wood constitute a formidable rhythmic duo, providing a tight and swinging platform, allowing Speed and Endesly to solo unconstrained. The former in particular sounds extremely comfortable and confident within this context.

All the material was written shortly after Mohler’s first album, thus showing great consistency. Compared to its predecessor, Anatomy comes across as more evocative and personal while showing increasing cohesion within the quartet’s freedom. Most of the tunes share an essentiality that seems to enhance each partner’s contribution. Mohler states that in most cases the rehearsal take turned out to be the final take and there was hardly any discussion on the arrangements.

One of the pluses of this date is a fuller showcase of Mohler’s considerable prowess via the three “Abstract” improvised solo interludes, the first of which, with tasteful addition of overdubbing, sets the scene for the whole album. Like many of the pieces, “Fight Song” relies on a bass cycle around which supple drumming dialogues quite freely with the horns. Also of note are funk-ish “Nightfall”, meandering “Equals”, dirge-sounding “Exit” (with gorgeous solos by Speed and Endesly) and the haunting “Moonglow” to close.

For more information, visit contagiousmusic.net. This project is at Bar Lunático Jun. 15th and Nublu 151 Jun. 16th. See Calendar.
Throughout John Zorn’s considerable career, the saxophonist composes works for other instrumentalists, as is the case for Meditations on the Tarot. Based on the 1967 book Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism, the music evokes “a community of spirits” based as much on early non-verbal language, an outgrowth of 2018’s The Hierophant for the guitar-laden rock quartet fronted by Julian Lage. Here, the score is for a trio of pianist Brian Marsella, bassist Trevor Dunn and drummer Kenny Wollesen, the latter two locking musical horns with Zorn over some 40 albums.

13 pieces balancing expansive jazz and contemporary concert music are nothing short of magical. With a touch reminiscent of Chick Corea (as well as much of ECM’s keyboard catalogue), Marsella pokes over these selections, celebrating both independent discipline and liberty. Dunn’s dramatic lines fill in every crevice left open and Wollesen, a master at directing from behind, colors, shades and speaks to every shift of meter and tonality with command. Opener “The Sun” begins as a modal, contemplative piece of flowing arpeggios before shifting into a rollicking, largely tonal foray. It is followed by the “Star”, which bridges a multi-meter head and a fiery improvisational section. While free expression is welcome in such quarters, on the other hand, the effects of rather sedate, pensive emotion also establish meaningful inspiration for both composer and performers, as heard on “The Emperor”. This piece holds a strangely familiar quality in its melody and shifting harmonies, which at once complements and deters. But as is the pattern Zorn built into this collection, it alternates with an explosion of fire music, “The Fool”, poised over wonderfully cacoustic riffs. Marsella reflects a near-century of the music. His technique, strikingly clean at every tempo, finds no fault in turns of thunderous paths.

For more information, visit tzadik.com. Dunn and Wollesen are at Nublu 151 Jun. 16th. See Calendar.

Red List (Music Dedicated To The Presentation of Our Endangered Species) Brian Landrus (Palmetto)
by Thomas Conrad

Red List is a concept album with a cause. The subtitle is “Music Dedicated to the Preservation of Our Endangered Species”. Brian Landrus composed songs inspired by animals like the mountain gorilla and African elephant, magnificent creatures we are in danger of losing forever. He brought together 11 musicians who were all completely invested in the project. At the recording sessions he made sure they understood the sense of urgency he wanted the music to embody.

Landrus is a specialist in the low woodwinds (baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, bass flute, etc.). He gives himself the most solo space on Red List and he fills it beautifully. But his primary role is composer, arranger, bandleader and auteur. His portrayals of specific animals are vivid and moving. “Tigris”, for the Malayan tiger, is all speed, strength and grace. “Javan Rhino” suggests the awe of finding oneself in such a creature’s living presence. “Vaquita”, for a small porpoise found only in the Sea of Cortez, is continuous darting movement; the song’s sadness comes from knowing that the life behind that movement may soon cease. Other parts of Landrus’ rich, varied, far-reaching suite apply themselves not to individual species, but instead to overarching themes. “Canopy of Trees” and “Nocturnal Flight” combine dynamism and impressionism. The sweep of this music, its complex harmonic colors, its authentic drama, make you think of Gil Evans and Maria Schneider.

There is another quality of Red List found in the work of the best arrangers. The orchestrations provide inspirational settings for improvisers. A few examples: Landrus’ dark, haunting streams of consciousness of alto and bass flutes on “The Distant Deeps”, the two riveting saxophone solos by Landrus (baritone) and Jaleel Shaw (alto) on “Tigris”; the creative evocations of a particular mysterious world on “Congo Basin” by guitarist Nir Felder and trombonist Ryan Keberle; the bright strokes of piano notes woven through “Upriver” by Geoffrey Keezer.

All the profits and 20% of the proceeds from Red List will go to Save the Elephants, an organization working to ensure a future for African elephants.

For more information, visit palmetto-records.com. This project is at Nublu 151 Jun. 17th. See Calendar.
Multi-faceted bassist Max Johnson helms a terrific trio on *Orbit Of Sound*. Although also active in bluegrass and contemporary classical arenas, this set forefronts Johnson’s jazz chops as composer and improviser with Anna Webber (tenor saxophone and flute) and Michael Sarin (drums).

The opening “A Quick One” shows the album title to be aptly descriptive of the sort of relentless momentum Johnson initiates, as bass and drums circle intricate boppish tenor in interlocking patterns. Here and elsewhere, evidence of Johnson’s composer’s ear surfaces in how cannily he extracts maximum impact from the three voices. But the same cut also exemplifies another of the program’s traits: sudden mood changes. The braided interplay abruptly drops away, replaced by a lighter airier section, which launches Webber on a path veering from staccato pure tones to expressive slurs. A subsequent drum solo constitutes one of the highlights of the piece, as Sarin places different elements of his kit into intersecting orbits too, a taut logic emerging from his crisp timbral command. It is always fascinating to witness how the group meets the challenge of making its way back to the theme following one of the precipitous about-faces.

On “The Professor” the combination of droning arco bass and precisely controlled bubbling saxophone multiphonics take the piece into very rarefied atmosphere, eventually retrieved by a somber unison and increasingly coherent cymbal and plucked bass accents. They also explore a similarly extreme soundworld at the outset of “Over / Under”, built from creaking bow work, scraped percussion and tenor susurrations and whistled overtones, incrementally moving towards a written line not blossoming until the very end. They come closest to overt melody on the solemn and valedictory “Shepherd’s Morning”, but even here breathy tenor is accompanied by Sarin’s crumpling and rustling noises, which undercut any sentimentality, emblematic of a release that constantly defies expectations.

For more information, visit maxjohnson.bandcamp.com. Johnson is at Roulette Jun. 20th. See Calendar.

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**Intakt Records**

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**Quiet Passion**

Yuko Fujiyama: Piano, Voice
Graham Haynes: Cornet, Electronics
Ikue Mori: Electronics

**Polish Composers of the 20th Century**

Marek Pospieszalski (Clean Feed)

by Kurt Gottschalk.

To the little extent that jazz in Poland has gained notice in the United States, it has been primarily under the name of Tomasz Stańko. The trumpeter, who died in Warsaw in 2018 at the age of 78, was the country’s primary jazz export, having worked with Chico Freeman, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette and David Murray, to name just a few. Stańko was a savvy artist who could deliver a fiery solo in one of Cecil Taylor’s large ensembles just as easily as a somber (and more generally palatable) album for ECM. Most significantly, his comparatively staid music was never light; there were always little complexities and curiosities below the surface.

It is that propensity for layering that is at the heart of the younger trumpeter Tomasz Dąbrowski’s dedication to Stańko. Dąbrowski and his Individual Beings don’t play Stańko’s music on the album—the compositions are all credited to the leader—but they do play an approachable and digestible program that often has more going on than meets the ear. That, of course, has much to do with the sensitive playing of Dąbrowski’s six bandmates, but it also has to do with a sparing use of electronics. Dąbrowski and saxophonist Irek Wojtczak make use of electronic effects and Jan Emíl Mlynský, one of two percussionists in the ensemble, plays both electric and acoustic drums. That is a lot of added sound, but they do it just enough to set scenes and heighten moods. The pieces themselves move at an easy pace, which allows them to be engaging, posing small challenges without getting weighed down in density.

Dąbrowski also plays in an octet saxophonist Marek Pospieszalski assembled to play arrangements of a dozen compositions by as many Polish composers of the 20th Century, providing him with a succinct and serviceable title for a striking collection less ordinary than the title could suggest. It is a weightier album to be certain and there is no Zbigniew Preisner or Witold Lutosławski or Krzysztof Penderecki present to light the path. One suspects Pospieszalski could have some fun with Krzysztof Komeda’s film scores—his previous album was a dedication to music associated with Frank Sinatra—but it is not that kind of affair. Instead, Pospieszalski presents a program of composers lesser known outside their homeland across two CDs assembled into a suite-like arc ready, no doubt, for concert presentation. The set begins at a slow and prolonged pace with “Krauze”, “Kotoński” and “Baird” (the tracks are all titled for the sourced composers) before the multiply metered “Rudziński” kicks in, keeping in some of the ceremony of fanfare of the openers. Dąbrowski here keeps to his horn but Pospieszalski does make use of some extra-musical ornamentation with tapes, electronic percussion and some fine, noisy electric guitar courtesy of Szymon Mika. The album is available for download and streaming in full online (as is Dąbrowski’s) and could be just the start of much further exploration.

For more information, visit apriletrecs.bandcamp.com and cleanfeed-records.com. Dąbrowski is at Barbès Jun. 19th, Dizzy’s Club Jun. 21st-22nd and Soup & Sound Jun. 23 with Kamil Piotrowicz, all as part of Jazztopad Festival. See Calendar.
Whit Dickey is one of the most Zen spirits in contemporary out jazz. A kind, friendly and gentle man, he first came to prominence in the David S. Ware Quartet, playing on Third Ear Recitation, Oblations and Blessings, Earthquation, Cryptology and Dao, as well as pianist Matthew Shipp’s Circular Temple and Prion. After making a few albums of his own, he kept a low profile, reemerging in the late 2000s and in the last decade or so has been on a creative tear, working extensively with Shipp and saxophonist Ivo Perelman, whom he first recorded way back in 1994, on Shipp’s Expanding Light guitarist Joe Morris. Lopez is the newcomer; Brown goes back to 1992’s quartet album Whirl Winds, playing on a gentle nudge here, an approving percussive comment there, shaping the cloud of sound like a potter.

For more information, visit taofoms.com. This project is at Vision Festival Jun. 22nd. See Calendar.
During the pandemic, pianist Matthew Shipp made three albums, each in a different setting from solo to trio, at Brooklyn’s Park West Studios, released on two labels for which he had recorded previously (ESP-Disk’ and TAO Forms) and one new imprint (Poland’s Fundacja Słuchaj). All have a great live room vibe capturing the nuances of the performances.

World Construct features Shipp’s trio of five years with bassist Michael Bisio and drummer Newman Taylor Baker. Opener “Tangible” is anti-boogaloo with an abstract melody that ends in upward-planning chords. Shipp has gorgeous melodies over dense low clusters as Bisio surprises with a divebomb detuning. Baker gets lots of cymbal colors with his minimal blast stick accompaniment. The group’s interplay is meditative and always in control; check Shipp’s reach-up-and-stop string fugue. “Jazz Posture” gives nod to the elitism and snobbery in jazz—very funny. The rhythm section has an almost Jimi Hendrix Experience rawness at times. “Beyond Understanding” creeps with cymbal scrapes, piano dirges and arco slides. The title track has cool foot stomps and gentle chord clouds in the upper register. Eighth note wood tapping turns into sneaky bass as Taylor stirs the soup with brushes and Shipp’s counterpoint takes a break just for a stuck bluesy riff. Codebreaker, a solo piano recital, has lovely poems by Mia Hafsard serving as liner notes for each track. “Letter From the Galaxy’s” chords shift quickly from open fourths and dense jazz extensions to austere cadences. A sleight melody rides atop the fray, disrupted only by a start-and-stop muck and timidly arpeggios. “Raygun” snaps with darting lines and just a tease of a blues cliché. “Mystic Motion” grows from the low end, with power chords supporting melodies getting more cerebral as they climb. “The Tunnel” is brooding with slow suspensions and regal 16th notes with an Aaron Copland-like optimism, stalling on a cliffhanger chord.

Flow of Everything is a duo recording with Bisio and Shipp. “Flow” has plucky bass and stonv piano chords that go from long to short duration. They swing as bass starts to walk. Shipp’s octaves break the time as does a triplets feint. “Bow of Everything” meditates with upper register bass that resonates then slides back down as staccato piano deconstructs the opening. “Of Everything” has a blues form à la Thelonious Monk or Herbie Nichols, bass strolling then speeding up. A little “buzzard is two faced” quote from Shipp quickens then slows into altered chord stabs and low bass bombs. On “Pockets”, Shipp leaps from low to high registers with tight cells of angular lines spooling out and reeling back in. “Panel” starts with short shapes supported by free bass notes that occasionally land and sustain. Double-stop cries from Bisio inspire low rumblings from Shipp, who sustains a note or two just to put a pin in the ground. On the languid coda, we can hear the pianist’s gentle mutterings amid the cool chords and esoteric fade out. These albums are great showcases for Shipp’s artistry, which breathes in such interesting ways in different contexts.

For more information, visit espdisk.com, taofoms.com and firecords.net. Shipp is at Vision Festival Jun. 22nd. See Calendar.
Carla Bley is an icon. Like other creative geniuses, the pianist, composer, arranger, bandleader, organizer and activist has continually reinvented herself and her musical output. In 2015 she was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master and, in 2021, Bley entered the DownBeat Hall of Fame. Writing about her at the time, Suzanne Lorge noted, “the serendipity of Bley’s career is the stuff of movie plots: freakishly talented composer-cum-cigarette-girl meets a rising-star pianist at a Manhattan nightclub frequented by Hollywood glitterati.” The rising star was Paul Bley, who first recorded her compositions, and over the next four decades, the list of musicians that she worked with is impressive. She went on to found the Jazz Composer’s Orchestra Association and the New Music Distribution Service, which was to bring an eclectic group of musicians to the fore in the ’70s, while composing and leading and arranging for big bands. In more recent years, Bley has worked in smaller settings as well as continuing to write for large ensembles.

Guitarist Steve Cardenas played with Bley in Charlie Haden’s Liberation Music Orchestra throughout the new millennium and subsequently in the quintet of her partner, bassist Steve Swallow, in 2011. This trio with tenor/soprano saxophonist and clarinetist Ted Nash and bassist Ben Allison recorded an album, Quiet Revolution, in 2015, exploring the music of guitarist Jim Hall and clarinetist Jimmy Giuifre, the latter having many Bley compositions in his repertoire. After recording Somewhere Else: Westside Story Songs, a tribute to Leonard Bernstein’s music in his 2018 centennial year, the trio turned to the music of Carla Bley.

The nine selections include several well-known songs, such as “Ida Lupino”, “Lawn” and “Donkey” and some that are less covered. The former was written for the great Sonny Rollins and a piece that preceded it but the impact of the playing and choice of music throughout the album does have the effect of what the name implies. Carla herself apparently of what the name implies. Carla herself apparently endorsed that sentiment with the words “That’s me” upon hearing the recording.

Aforementioned “Lawn” is also a classic, sparingly beautiful Bley melody. “Ictus” is more atonal and avant garde than most of the other tracks while “King Korn” was originally penned for the great Sonny Rollins and Nash does it justice.

The closing title track is less entrancing than what precedes it but the impact of the playing and choice of music throughout the album does have the effect of what the name implies. Carla herself apparently endorsed that sentiment with the words “That’s me” upon hearing the recording.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. Cardenas and Allison are at Soupbox Gallery Jun. 25th. Nash is at Chelsea Table & Stage Jan. 15th and Rose Theater Jun. 10th-11th with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. See Calendar.
This, from Danilo Pérez’ website, sheds some light on this unclassifiable musical project: “Pianist, composer, humanitarian and activist Danilo Pérez believes that a united global perspective for the arts and social justice are the keys to moving humanity forward in harmony. With Criatalida, Pérez has convened his Global Messengers—several gifted Berklee Global Jazz Institute graduates mentored by Danilo hailing from Palestine, Greece and Jordan—to contribute their respective cultural learnings and personal experiences with the goal of building community through music, without borders.”

A far cry from the jazz that animates Pérez’ trio outings and work with Wayne Shorter and Roy Haynes, this project, consisting of two four-part suites, is pan-ethnic, pan-global fusion. The Global Messengers basic lineup features his piano along with Farayi Malek’s voice, singing and/or reciting. Vassilis Kostas’ eight-string lute-like laouto, Layth Sidiq’s violin and voice, Naseem Alatrash’s cello and the percussion arsenal of Tareq Rantisi. Faris Ishaq’s (Turkish) ney flute adds to the Near East flavor of “Rise from Love”, the opening track of La Muralla (Glass Walls) Suite.

Chanting, often wordless, vocals are prominent throughout the two suites. The laouto, in tandem with violin and cello, brings an exotic feel to the proceedings, especially in the first suite, whose highlight is the final movement, “Munopotás”, explained as “a human condition characterized by the desire to make impermeable walls”. It rides on gypsy-like Latin rhythms and a sweeping theme from laouto, strings and piano, Pérez breaking out in an impassioned solo.

Slick
Nick Hemptons’ new album, Triple Distilled

Nick Hemptons, born and raised in Australia, largely taught himself how to play jazz, sitting in at jam sessions and learning on the bandstand. Equally skilled on tenor and alto saxophones, he has been a fixture in New York since 2004. His sixth album, 2018’s Night Owl, was a quartet with guitarist Peter Bernstein, organ player Kyle Koehler and drummer Fukushi Tainaka. He enjoyed the experience so much that he brought the same group into the studio to record Slick on Jan. 9, 2020, just before the COVID pandemic.

The group performs six of his melodic originals and four vintage standards. While the music is always somewhat bluesy and some of the pieces, such as the catchy “Snake Oil”, groove in a soul jazz manner, much of the playing is closer to swinging hardbop and even bebop than to soul jazz. This is particularly true on “Short Shift” (which utilizes “Strike Up The Band” chord changes and is taken at a racehorse tempo) and the Sonny Stitt-ish alto playing on “People Will Say We’re In Love”.

While Stitt is clearly an influence (particularly on a boppish reading of “The Gypsy”) and the jump tune “Fryin’ With Fergus”), Hempton also infuses the music with his own ideas. He not only keeps the tradition alive but also clearly has a great time playing at the cooking tempos. Bernstein, who seems incapable of playing an unworthy solo, is up to his usual level. Koehler displays his own forceful and passionate sound while Tainaka never lets the music stop swinging.

While things slow down a bit for a warm version of “Born To Be Blue” and “Liar’s Dice” has the feel of a calypso (although with more complex chord changes), the music on Slick mostly swings hard in an exhilarating manner. Not too many players these days are inspired by Stitt, making this date a rare treat.

For more information, visit nickhemptonband.com. This project is at The Django Jun. 25th. See Calendar.

Parables
Bill Frisell/Gyan Riley/Fabian Almazan

This is some beautiful, challenging acoustic guitar music. All the compositions are by downtown avatar John Zorn, who draws upon Sufic, Hebrew and secular traditions to celebrate storytelling as a spiritual lesson, and the players are masters: Bill Frisell, Julian Lage and Gyan Riley.

The guitarists interweave and support each other in ways you probably haven’t heard before. It is collective improvisation, but without the chaos that sometimes engenders. Through titles like “The Broken Window”, “A Perfumed Scorpion”, “The Boiling Cauldron” and “Secret of the Locked Room” we are on a polytheistic quest for enlightenment.

This could imply a New Age bliss-out, music for the morning yoga class at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur. Though the music is pretty, it is not like that at all. Zorn offers this quote from Sanai, the Sufi master and teacher of Rumi: “Man is wrapping his net around himself. A Lion (Man of the Way) bursts his cage asunder.” So there is some tension there—quests aren’t easily achieved!

The trio achieves a fusion and unity of purpose. Although they each have highly distinctive playing styles, that is not so evident here. As on “The Crossroads”, one guitarist leads it in, a second embellishes and soon an intricate weave emerges. On “Cauldron”, the playing rises to a furious boil. “Light Weaving” has a very life-affirming warmth to it.

If parallels are needed, think of guitarist John McLaughlin with Shakti, though Parables is less self-consciously virtuosic. It is not necessary to say more about this music, which was recorded circa 2020 in New York. It doesn’t need to be academically dissected; it needs to be savored.

For more information, visit tzadik.com. Lage is at The Sultan Room Jun. 10th and The Stone at The New School Jun. 15th-18th. See Calendar.
Off-Killer

John Yao’s Triceratops (See Tao Music)
by Dan Bilawsky

This three-horned beast of a band first came to notice with 2019’s How We Do, a dynamic, boundary-pushing date built on a balance of compositional complexity and improv-fueled intrigue. New, reconvening for a second go-round, trombonist John Yao looks past the perimeter of this chordless quintet’s debut to deliver a program using firmly flexible architecture to encourage audacious exploration.

With a frontline completed by alto saxophonist Billy Drewes and tenor saxophonist Jon Irabagon and a rhythm core built around Robert Sabin’s bold bass and Mark Ferber’s rumbling and ruddering drums, the possibilities in this gathering are practically limitless. That is made clear right off the bat with Drewes’ delightfully disorienting “Below the High Rise”. A wild ride marrying structural sophistication to jump-cut logic, it features intricate ensemble writing, weighted grooves, a fracas focused on saxophones and one tough-minded beauty of a trombone solo.

There is clearly no settling in here, as the music is daring and forceful from the first. And the six unabbreviated offerings and two interludes that follow, which are all drawn from Yao’s pliable pen, further the attitude and spirit displayed in the opener. “Labyrinth” presents something different with every turn in the maze, including but not limited to an opening where punctuated thoughts surrounds energized free drumming, a straight course with smart-and-sinister horn lines, anamped-up episode in togetherness and drumming, a straight course with smart-and-sinister horn lines, anamped-up episode in togetherness and drumming, a straight course with smart-and-sinister horn lines, anamped-up episode in togetherness and drumming, a straight course with smart-and-sinister horn lines, anamped-up episode in togetherness and drumming, a straight course with smart-and-sinister horn lines, anamped-up episode in togetherness and drumming. 

For more information, visit johnyao.com. This project is at Culture Lab LIC Jun. 12th. See Calendar.

Justice: The Vocal Works of Oliver Lake
Sonic Liberation Front and
The Sonic Liberation Singers (High Two)
by John Pietaro

Oliver Lake is an icon. Birthed by St. Louis’ revolutionary Black Artists Group, transplanted into New York’s radical Loft community and on to the stage and into the studio with a plethora of artists—from the World Saxophone Quartet to Jump Up! to Trio 3 to Lou Reed, Anthony Braxton, Mos Def, Björk and an array of others. Never one to shy away from socio-political matters, Lake has been a strong voice for racial equality and social change, particularly through his compositions, but also via his extensively published poetry and his visual art. The latter should be of no surprise as this man’s roots lay in a time of vital cross-pollination.

For this compelling album, his vocal works are, at long last, the feature. Philadelphia’s Sonic Liberation Front (SLF) has enjoyed a relationship with the saxophonist’s brand of pathos (and recorded with him in 2015 for the High Two release Bombogenic) and here, in the company of vocal quartet Sonic Liberation Singers—Shanon Chua, Chaela Harris, Ravi Seenarine, Michael Ford—the ensemble has produced a truly vital piece of the jazz/new music canon.

Founded by drummer/percussionist Kevin Diehl, SLF is comprised of tenor saxophone stalwart Elliott Levin (also a noted poet), violinist Veronica Jurkiewicz, flutist Jamae Gordon and upright bassist Matt Engle. The ensemble well grasps the tradition that Lake helped to forge: that sweet spot where progressive jazz claps hands with contemporary classical music and African traditions, but here the newly branded vocal group holds something special in reserve. While The Swingle Singers may have set the tempo, its members’ mastery of advanced harmonies was indisputable. The harmonic blocks of the Sonic Liberation Singers take this concept steps beyond. Heard alongside the 11th and 13th chords within the instrumentation, the effect is lovingly, hypnotically dissonant.

From album opener “What”, the one-world music of Lake becomes evident in the ensemble’s transportive vocalizations over the instruments and truly gripping solos by Levin and Jurkiewicz. The former, as always, provides an expedition into the far reaches only hinting at a definitive destination, the latter wrestling within her own higher calling and a quiet nod toStuff Smith. By “Ain’t Nothin’ Real BUT Love”, Lake’s poetic voice is not simply felt, but heard. His reading, warm and assured, affirms that, “love speaks out for justice...it’s a state of being.” Lake is not heard again until “ Lucky One (Where U Is, Where U At)”, which closes the set. His utterly engaging orchestra in both the instrumental and vocal ensembles frames his spoken word performance.

In between, Justice plays like a well-defined suite, its title piece a haunting foray through time, place and struggle. Engle is on fire, his line a pummeling, soaring statement surrounded by the Singers’ modern harmonies of classic “doohs” and “ahhs”, elevated by the frontline of flute, tenor saxophone and violin. Lake’s composition, ascending in a most vexing manner, is an immediate draw to the ear and one on which the vocalists and instrumentalists continually thrive. Listen too for the lush movement within “Clouds”, wherein the harmonies are thick with wet, embracing the atmosphere, and Jurkiewicz and Engle, con arco, set forth a shower of sparks. The bassist then takes center stage with a pizzicato solo recalling David Izenzon before the full ensemble returns, Levin forging new ground through a half-century of the avant garde.

So, save the date: Jun. 26th will be a gala celebration of Lake as the Vision Festival presents Lake with the Sonic Liberation Front in a full performance of Justice, and also the renowned World Saxophone Quartet and an all-star band led by JD Parran. And watch for the duo of master drummer Andrew Cyrille with Lake as performance poet. Talk about bright moments!

For more information, visit hightwo.bandcamp.com. Oliver Lake receives a Lifetime Achievement Award at Vision Festival Jun. 26th, where this project will appear. See Calendar.
Reedplayer Chad Fowler’s raw sound is only enhanced by his choice of strich (a straight alto saxophone) and saxello (a dark-toned soprano with a kink), both beloved by Rasaan Roland Kirk. His emotion-drenched vibrato betrays R&B roots and serves him well, whether in impassioned incantation or freeform explosions. From his Arkansas base, the Mahakala label boss reaches out to like-minded Downtown mainstays on the two double albums here.

Fowler appears alongside NYC-based Japanese pianist Eri Yamamoto, bassist William Parker and drummer Steve Hisch as part of an egotarian blowing quartet on the nearly 90-minute Sparks. Yamamoto, with her soulful blues-infused figures, proves a perfect foil for Fowler. Equally at home with the avant crowd or subtly stretching the modern mainstream, she effortlessly straddles the inside/outside boundary. Parker is tailor made for this situation, rock solid yet endlessly supple, bringing an insouciant swing to the unfettered communion, while Hisch lays out an enabling rhythmic carpet with minimum fuss. Simple, largely extemporized, motifs furnish the genesis for each of the five long pieces, the exception being Parker’s propulsive riff powering “Bob’s Pink Cadillac”. What are one of Yamamoto’s mother’s favorite songs, “You Are My Sunshine”, which lead to a beguiling John Coltrane- inflected conclusion. Although they pass opportunities of night.

There are three names that need to be known regarding David Murray’s new trio, other than his, and two of them are on the cover. Murray, the possessor of one of the most immediately recognizable voices in all of jazz, has maintained an impossible recording pace for closing in on 50 years; even devoted fans would be excused for waiting for a choice project (Latin songs of Nat King Cole, for example) or playing partner (Calvin S. Rez, a duo with pianist Aki Takase from a few years back was quite memorable) to catch their eye. His Brave New World Trio with bassist Brad Jones and drummer Hamid Drake happily lives up to every bit of promise the lineup would suggest.

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In the five years since releasing her solo debut, *Fly Or Die*, trumpeter Jaimie Branch has become one of the most vital and interesting musicians on the current jazz scene. In addition to a sequel and a live companion to that album, she joined saxophonist James Brandon Lewis for a powerful quintet album and recorded as part of Rob Mazurek’s Exploding Star Orchestra. Her piercing tone and wild, fanfare-like lines sound like no one else and she blends the melodic freedom and groove few players can match. She is thrilling to watch and to hear.

In addition to her main bands— *Fly Or Die* and a trio that has yet to record —Branch is half of Antelope, a duo with drummer Jason Nazary focusing on electronics, mostly analog synth that burble and zap; their debut, *Kodu*, was released in 2018, followed by a four-track EP, *Tour Beats Vol. 1*, a year later. On *Pink Dolphins*, some new elements have been added to their core sound, most notably Branch’s vocals (she started singing/reciting poetry on *Fly Or Die II: Bird Dogs Of Paradise*). When she plays trumpet, it is often mixed into the background, warming its way through the Expereter-like electronics and hazy, lethargic beats. Nearly half the album is taken up by its closing track, the 15-minute “One Living Genus”, a soundtrack to lucid dreams, which sounds like starting up at the sun from the bottom of a freshly cleaned pool.

In 2020, Swiss guitarist Dave Gisler invited Branch to guest at a concert in Zürich; the resulting live album is a studio recording and this time Branch isn’t the only leader. For more information, visit store.acousticsounds.com.

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When Contemporary released *Art Pepper Meets The Rhythm Section in 1957* (with Red Garland, Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones), it solidified Pepper’s reputation as one of the best modern alto players on the scene. Owing largely to the chaotic nature of Pepper’s personal life it was another couple of years before the label could record a followup and this time the idea was to present him in a different context, basically a two-horn quintet. In the mid-50s Pepper was the brilliant trumpeter Jack Sheldon, who is in fantastic form—with six horns added (drawn from a pool of Peter Candoli, Al Porcino, trumpets; Dick Nash, trombone; Bob Enevoldsen, trombone, tenor saxophone; Vince de Rosa, French horn; Herb Celler, Charlie Kennedy, Bud Shank, alto saxophones; Richie Kamuca, Bill Perkins, tenor saxophones; Md Flory, baritone saxophone) and a rhythm section of Russ Freeman, Joe Mondragon and Mel Lewis to play streamlined big band charts. Almost no one else ever solos and the performances all clock in between three to four minutes. Arrangements were provided by Marty Paich who, like Pepper, came up in the late ‘40s in southern California. Their shared history included several mid ‘50s recording dates and during 1959 they were practically joined at the hip. In addition to the record under consideration, Pepper worked on no less than eight other records for which Paich did the arrangements that year. Busy though he may have been, the charts Paich fashioned here were anything but slapdash.

The tunes are all jazz classics and many had already been recorded in medium to large-group situations. Paich sometimes references the original recordings, as he does at the beginning of the opener, *Denzel Best’s “Move”*. The intro and A sections are close to what John Lewis wrote for the *Birth Of The Cool* sessions, but the bridge is different, drummers more prominent and tempo more relaxed. Pepper solos on tenor here, perhaps as a salute to Lester Young, who influenced him nearly as much as Charlie Parker. Next up is “Groovin’ High” and the 1946 recording by Dizzy Gillespie and Parker is invoked in high style as the saxophone section plays a harmonized version of Parker’s solo right after the head, much in the same vein Supersax would mine in the early ’70s. Sheldon follows with a nifty muted solo before Pepper takes two inspired boppish choruses. Another Gillespie/Parker classic, “Shaw Nuff”, demonstrates the sharp teeth these supposedly laid-back West Coasters had. It is played at an even faster tempo than the original and worth several listens just to savor the almost explosive statement of the theme by the lead horns, as well as their stratospheric solos. In addition to playing tenor on a couple of tracks, Pepper is on clarinet for *Anthology*, making one wish he had done this much more often. The rest of the set is uniformly strong and the chance to hear all the detail on this beautifully produced 180-gram vinyl LP will delight audio buffs who only know the music from lower-fidelity releases.

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In preparing for this album, this reviewer immersed herself in the music and life experience of master tenor saxophonist/flutist and consummate human being Charles Lloyd. His start in the music was auspicious. He won a local competition in his hometown of Memphis at nine. He was observed by the 16-year-old local genius pianist Phineas Newborn, Jr. Informing Lloyd that he needed lessons badly, Newborn delivered him to the two of them to the Mitchell Hotel on Beale Street to begin his musical apprenticeship with local saxophonist Irvin L. Reason. Lloyd’s account of the milieu in which he grew up—a mother who hosted the likes of Duke Ellington’s band when they came to town because of segregation and a best friend in trumpeter Booker Little—sounds like fertile land in which to grow his skills. Newborn later took Lloyd into his band.

Lloyd’s trajectory from there took him to Los Angeles, where he studied classical music at USC during the day while hanging with avant-garde musicians such as Ornette Coleman and Billy Higgins at night. Following a move to New York at 22, Lloyd’s work with Chico Hamilton and Cannonball Adderley is well cataloged. He had subsequent commercial success with his own bands, including the famed *Forest Flower*. Lloyd is credited with bringing other cultures to his own music long before it was trendy, including collaborations with Greek singer Maria Farantouri and Brazilian vocalist Gilberto Gil. He left the jazz scene for a decade, then returned in the ’80s and continued building ever more inspired projects. His latest offering is *Trios: Chapel*, the first of three planned trios with different musicians in different settings. It is yet another masterpiece. Emphasizing collaboration and support between the musicians, this trios features Lance Coates Chapel, Southwest School of Art in San Antonio, TX takes a bare-bones approach to the melodies.

The liner notes begin with a quote from Lloyd: “From the beginning, meaning has been assigned to numbers—3, the number of creation, of life, of the universe, mystical, spiritual... For Pythagoras, 3 was considered the perfect number, the number of harmony, wisdom and understanding. It was also the number of time—past, present, future; birth, life, death; beginning, middle, end — it was the number of the divine.”

The five tracks vary in length from 7:14 (Cuban song “*Ay Amor*”) to 12:16 (“*Dorothéa’s Studio*”, dedicated to the studio of his creative partner, filmmaker/painter Dorothy Darr). Darr has a number of credits on the recording: co-producer, cover art, photos, design and management for the Forest Farm Music and Art. Truly a collaborative team!

Billy Strayhorn wrote the first song, “Blood Count”, in the hospital before his May 1967 death. Lloydingers on the plaintive melody, ably supported by bassist Thomas Morgan and Friisell before Lloyd enters. The song was included on the 1964 album *Cannonball Adderley Live*, in which Lloyd took part. “Ay Amor” was written by the multilingual, black, gay, Cuban pianist and singer Villa Fernández Ignacio Jacinto, also known as Bola de Nieve. The melody is distinctly Caribbean and Lloyd infuses his playing with this sentiment in an acknowledgment of his global impulses. “Beyond Darkness” and “Dorothéa’s Studio” are also Lloyd originals. The former features Lloyd on flute while the latter evokes the spirit of his partner and soulmate, opening with solo guitar before Lloyd brings the piece to a climax. A fitting end to a beautiful concert.

In 2015 a new review with Darr following a screening of her film about him, *Arrows into Infinity*, Lloyd stated simply, “I am in service to be a music maker. That has always interested me more than the marketplace.” He has once again demonstrated that simple but powerful truth.

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The *Art Pepper Meets The Rhythm Section* album is available from store.acousticsounds.com.

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**For more information, visit intlanthem.com and intaktrec.ch.**

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**For more information, visit store.acousticsounds.com.**
Burton Lane’s, with Alan Jay Lerner’s lyrics, “On A Clear Day” is not exactly a big favorite among standards for jazz musicians. Yet Neal Kirkwood leads off this short, delightful piano recital of eight standards with it and the results are truly memorable. For Kirkwood, a composer and bandleader (his Octet had a weekly residency at the midtown Savoy Club in the ‘90s), this album is a rare excursion into repertoire.

The track begins with a romantic, sumptuously two-handed rubato prelude suggesting a stormy maelstrom, subsiding as treble tinkles sparingly imply the familiar “on a clear day” refrain notes of the song. It is full-blown impressionism, continuing as the rest of the melody emerges in the middle register while the “clear day” tinkling continues. A full rendition of the song gives way to a midtempo improvisation straight out of the modern mainstream era before receding to a finale of the spare melody. Lane’s “How About You” follows in a short take that stylistically echoes the “On A Clear Day” improvised section. Kirkwood luxuriates in an impressionist manner on two other ballads. The Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke title track presents the refrain unadorned, then sprinkles on chords in a more developed reprise. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein’s “Some Enchanted Evening” title track presents the refrain unadorned, then sprinkles on chords in a more developed reprise. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein’s “Some Enchanted Evening”

For more information, visit nealkirkwood.com. This project is at Soapbox Gallery Jun. 22nd. See Calendar.

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Piano, Vocals
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The “her” of the song probably refers—at least overtly—contemporary jazz ballad and Deman’s singing is lovely. But “If I’m in Church More Often Now” is cast as a common with Gregorian chant than anything like jazz. A mix. Some of the singing is fairly atonal and has more in late 14th Century-early 15th Century and Marvin Gaye! Christine de Pizan who served the French court in the Latin Mass, the Psalms, the Italian-born writer (guitar, lute, electronics), Tomeka Reid (cello) and (piano, prepared piano, pump organ), Frederik Leroux Berlinde Deman (tuba, voice, serpent), Marta Warelis between May 2020-August 2021—by Douglas, is pandemic music—recorded separately/remotely so the music celebrates its sexacentennial. As played, it write and arrange the music on by Handelsbeurs Concert Hall in Ghent, Belgium to P Deman intones many of the texts, rather low in the van Ecks’ work behind them.

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. Douglas is at The Stone at The New School Jun. 22nd. See Calendar.

Feeling Good: Her Greatest Hits & Remixes Nina Simone (UMe/Verve)
by John Pietaro

Midway to the turn of another year, the casual listener could wonder why there is room for another repackaging of Nina Simone hits. We in the know, particularly after the biopic and documentary features on the High Priestess of Soul, can revel in this two-CD celebration. Perhaps it is just the packaging, but these iconic songs seem fortified by renewed reach, brandishing a sonorous brilliance and warmth and carrying an awareness of the story and relevance of Simone. And the album credits offer insight into these sessions, even if the mystery of who played the tenor solo on “I Put a Spell on You” sadly continues (King sessions, even if the mystery of who played the tenor

For more information, visit ververerecords.com. A Simone tribute with the Harlem Gospel Choir is at Sony Hall Jun. 29th as part of Blue Note Jazz Festival. See Calendar.
Illusion

Julie Tippetts/Martin Archer (Discus-Music)

by John Sharpe

Pianist Keith Tippett, who died two years ago this month at 72, cast a multifaceted light across the UK jazz scene as a bandleader, improvisor and composer of both jazz and contemporary music.

A format that he revisited on several occasions was the piano duo, with his first venture being a 1976 encounter with celebrated UK elder Stan Tracey, followed in 1981 by a pairing with peer Howard Riley. His last foray into the configuration was with Matthew Bourne, 30 years his junior, yielding Illusion, a double album comprising live and studio sessions from 2019. In spite of the generational differences, they constitute an empathetic combination, in which concordance rules, as they change tack in tandem, one finishing the other’s lines. It often sounds like a dialogue taking place where there are no words, most things. That is particularly marked on the studio duets. But it doesn’t equate to anodyne listening, as the trade in rolling figures, clipped gestures, unconventional textures, music box sonorities and more arrives complete with departures into the unexpected, as when Tippett’s clanking modifications insert a dose of magic or Bourne’s sudden staccato motifs break up the flow. The first disc finishes with a beautiful elegiac torch song extemporized by Tippett alone who, when someone in the studio asks what that was, replies self-deprecatingly with what became the title: Oh just “Something I Made Up”. While on the studio date the references that come to mind are as often classical—minimalism, Satie, Beethoven, Cage—as jazz, on the single 38-minute concert track they are more jazz adjacent, angular and rhythmic, touching on country blues, bop and folk. It is a mesmerizing double act.

On Mahogany Rain, a reissue from 2005, Tippett is part of an unfettered foursome who embark on an hour-long, largely introspective, journey: wife/vocalist Julie Tippett (he dropped the final ’s’ from his birth name for performance); reed player Paul Dunmall, his partner in the freewheeling quartet Mujicand; and another regular associate in guitarist Philip Gibbs. Like the others, Tippett puts himself at the service of an egalitarian group ethos that is variously playful, intimate, with based bases, complementary parts, but generally eschew steady rhythms, often in multiple guises at the same time. That is particularly the case on the first CD, the titular suite, which contains three layers: Tippett’s frequently overdubbed vocal arrangements, which range from abstract to soulful to sublime (“‘Bare Back Rider’”); the accompanying ensemble, which embraces a squad of young UK talent including guitarist Anton Hunter, trumpeter Charlotte Keefe and vibraphonist Corey Mwamba; and an electronic foundation, assembled by Archer from separate soundscapes resulting from chance procedures by four different players. So although Tippett’s vocals most grab the attention, they sit atop a dizzying kaleidoscope of sound. Although much smaller permutations drawn from the ensemble with guests are responsible for the 13 tracks on the second CD, Circle Of Whispers, the outcomes are often still densely woven backdrops to Tippett’s shapeshifting voice and the songs remain primarily vehicles for the words, rather than solo fireworks. Nonetheless, anyone with open ears will find much to savor.

For more information, visit discus-music.co.uk and 57records.com

Julie Tippetts/Martin Archer (Discus-Music)

by John Sharpe

Juno Jones seems like such a pedestrian name for a trio of decidedly revolutionary dimensions but these players manage to transcend. Saxophone trios are nothing new in the music, dating back to the ’50s, but when one combines Larry Ochs (tenor and soprano saxophones), Mark Dresser (bass) and Vladimir Tarasov (drums), the outcome is a fresh take on history. This collectively improvised album was recorded on Jan. 12th, 2020 at Studio B on the campus of UC-San Diego, where Dresser is a professor, just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pedigree of each member of Jones Jones is quite impressive: Ochs is the O in the ROVA Saxophone Quartet; Dresser came to fame as a 10-year member of the Anthony Braxton Quartet; and Tarasov is best known as a member of the Ganelin Trio.

The album begins with an almost orchestral vibration, courtesy of deep drum tones. Dresser attacks his instrument from every direction other than what is expected and Ochs steals the fire with a garrulous bellcility. Dresser sets up “Bali Hai Jones” with a rough-sawn arco that could leave splinters, as Ochs pitches and yaws over the defiantly non-metronomic pulse of the drums. Many of these tracks are seamlessly performed, which would almost seem like the form is running out of steam. On “Call Of The Jones”, the bassist heralds a hair-raising dissonant drone with the bow, virtually daring Tarasov into a hailstorm of activity, reminiscent of Rashed Ali’s expansive contributions to John Coltrane’s Interstellar Space, especially when Ochs launches into a series of screaming, squalling multophonics. The bassist and drummer conjure up a sensational groove with pizzicato pluck and feathery brushes on “Jones Free Jones”, enabling Ochs to warble in a joyously gruff exploration bringing to mind prime Archie Shepp (think On This Night, for reference). Tarasov opens “RBG Jones” by tattooing an infectious beat on snare as Dresser injects bi-tonal tapping and Ochs swings for the fences with a blistering catarwaul. The penultimate selection, “Further Adventures Of Ms. Microtonal Jones”, highlights the almost impossibly rich sound of arco bass in contrast to shimmering cymbals and soaring soprano commentary.

Anyone who loves the work of a truly exploratory saxophone trio that extrapolates the revolutionary templates of the ’60s would be wise to seek this out.

For more information, visit esp-disk.com

Dolphyology (Complete Eric Dolphy for Solo Guitar)

Samo Salamon (Samo)

by Tom Greenland

Slovenian guitarist Samo Salamon, inspired by Miles Okazaki’s WORK, the complete compositions of Thelonious Monk for solo guitar, transcribed and recorded Eric Dolphy’s entire oeuvre (except “Out There”, co-credited to Charles Mingus), employing a variety of approaches on acoustic guitar. All tracks are live, with no dubbing or digital ‘scrubbing’, so you can hear him sniffling and exhalating, a chair squeaking, cat meowing, string noises, even small ‘mistakes’ — what you would notice sitting in a room listening to him — all of which lends intimacy and immediacy.

Like Dolphy (Jun. 20th, 1928-Jun. 29th, 1964), Salamon is essentially a formalist, using musical structures as points of departure to create improvisations, which, though they can sound random or ‘out’, nevertheless adhere to strict logic, serving as alternate pathways to the same endpoint. He carefully nurtures ideas but is also extremely adaptive, not averse to branching these ideas in tangential directions like dendrites on a neuron. He is not trying to orchestrate the songs for guitar à la Joe Pass, though tracks like “Springtime” show a nice balance of complementary parts, but generally eschew steady basslines and repeated vamps in favor of unhindered single-note runs punctuated by small but suggestive chord clusters, harmonics and low-string punches, giving him flexibility to pursue longer phrases.

Sometimes, like early country blues musicians, he contracts or extends the form according to whim. On “Springtime” and “Hat and Beard”, for example, he is so immersed in his solo that he temporarily abandons form and groove. Not as articulate a technician as Dolphy, he renders his fastest passages with legato hammer-ons, generating considerable excitement in the unusual shape of his lines, which mix rhythms, often contain internal rhymes and zigzag or leap unexpectedly. There is a hint of blues and more than a dollop of swing. Even his most abstract and complex ideas, delivered with trembling urgency, almost tripping over themselves, still retain rhythmic bounce. 5 of the Microtonal Jone’s 12-string acoustic guitar, I on mandolin, but the predominant instrument is 6-string acoustic, making the double-CD set a long listen for a single sitting. However, the tracks are generally short and Salamon’s eclectic approach to each song and his pervading creativity ensure time well spent.

For more information, visit samosalamon.com
The Chicago Symphonies
Wadada Leo Smith’s Great Lakes Quartet (TUM)

The Chicago Symphonies is a tome. This is not surprising for trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith, whose history spans seven decades. He has never constrained the ambitious scope of his output yet. The Chicago Symphonies is a four-disc set reflecting the almost maniacal pace at which Smith is presently releasing material, almost as if racing against time to give form to the seemingly endless fount of creative spirit churning in his mind.

Performed by Smith, John Lindberg (bass), Henry Threadgill (alto saxophone, flute and bass flute), Jack DeJohnette (drums) and Jonathan Haffner (saxophones), the four symphonies, Gold, Diamond, Pearl and Sapphire: The Presidents and Their Vision for America, revolve around the influence of significant Chicago-based composers, from early progenitors such as Louis Armstrong and Lil Hardin to present-day masters. Each is filled with light, grace, density, etherealness and rhythmic alteration, all articulated by Smith’s unique language of sound-rhythm units. These function as key building blocks for dynamically fluid, psycho-emotional musical constructions.

Approaching the evolutionary timeline of Chicago’s creative music, the set is roughly three hours. “Creative Music: West End Blues and the Sonic Weather Bird: Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, Lil Hardin and Baby Dodds” utilizes pared-down sections, drum beats evocative of horse hooves and a constantly shifting focus on each player’s tonal voice to delve into the confluence of influences and individuals that birthed jazz proper in the 1920s. Smith addresses another turning point in creative music’s evolution, the genesis of which he was a part, through the especially textural “Muhul Richard Abrams: Levels and Degrees of the Light Spectrum; A New Culture: The Association for the Advancement of Creative Music”. Sonorous flute, the subtlest of swings; the notes tinged blue and then clarion clear.

It is impossible not to notice some repetition sneaking into Smith’s oeuvre. This may be inevitable considering the volume of Smith’s recent output, but also shows a consistency of trajectory extending over many decades. Smith’s art demands vigilant observation to discern the subtle shifts and swells that live within the superstructures of each composition, let alone across an entire project.

For more information, visit tumrecords.com. Smith receives a Lifetime Achievement Award and will appear at Vision Festival Jun. 21st. See Calendar.
**Wednesday, June 1**

- **Highline: Alyssa Venero, Emily Goggins, Mark Farnum, Lindsay Gordon, Jared Gravely**
  The Atlantic: 8:30 pm | $20
- **Adam O’Farrill**
  Bar 93: 8:30 pm | $20
- **Blackout: Lucan Bari/Abraham Burton**
  The Cutting Room: 7 pm | $20
- **David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Earring Band**
  Birdland: 8:30 pm | $30
- **Randi Brecker, Dave Liebman, Marc Copland, Drew Gress, Joey Baron**
  The Cutting Room: 9 pm | $25
- **Frank Vigorito’s Guitar Night with John Diggins**
  Zinck Bar: 8 pm | $25
- **37x39**
  Smith Ballendine: 8 pm | $20
- **Martha Kato, Shirazette Tinnin**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 8 pm | $20
- **Randy Brecker, Dave Liebman, Marc Copland, Drew Gress, Joey Baron**
  The Mini Q’s: Luke Carlos O’Reilly, Ben Jorgensen, Adam Copeland, Alex Clesability
  Birdland: 5:30 pm | $30
- **Gil Gutierrez Trio**
  The Django: 7:30, 10:30 pm
- **Grace Kelly**
  The Cutting Room: 7:30 pm | $25
- **Miki Yamanaka**
  Bar Bayeux: 8 pm | $25
- **John Danks with Steve Earle & Mario Perazzo**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 8 pm | $20
- **Emiliya Breeden with IvanHail, Mishka Griswold, Dalton Butler, Curtis Newsow**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 8 pm | $20
- **Jazzmobile: TJK with Santtu Mehren and Arsenio Bermeo**
  Blue Note: 8 pm | $35
- **Eddie Pannier Saito Orchestra**
  Shrine Big Band: 8 pm | $15
- **Maria Sanchez Quartet with Gernot Mauer, Trevor Tweeten, Tom Rainey**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Alfredo Núñez**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Jorge Rossano**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Peter Brainin and Friends**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Mike Ossae’s Trickster with Matt Mitchell, Anthony Tidd, Sean Rickman**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Sam Dinko**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Cathy Segal-Garcia, Jim Ridl, Dean Johnson, Tim Horner**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Rossano Sportiello/Harry Allen**
  Blue Note: 12:30, 2:30 pm | $15
- **Colin Heshmat/Yuma Takagi**
  Blue Note: 12:30, 2:30 pm | $15

**Saturday, June 4**

- **Burt Bacharach Reimagined: Cameron Thurman with and the Darrell Green Quartet with Michael Wolf, Romano Lubiano, Buster Williams**
  Dizzy’s Club: 7:30, 9:30 pm | $35
- **Celia Zinn-Wistrich**
  Birdland: 7, 9:30 pm | $30
- **Alissy Garvie, Cezar Alaviz, Joel Jones**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Dave Gibson Organ Quartet; Matt Martinez Quartet**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Mike Ossae’s Trickster with Matt Mitchell, Anthony Tidd, Sean Rickman**
  The Owl Music Parlor: 7 pm | $20
- **Cathy Segal-Garcia, Jim Ridl, Dean Johnson, Tim Horner**
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**Sunday, June 5**

- **Stephanie Wrenbel**
  Birdland: 7 pm | $40
- **John Driskill, Ryan Goulart**
  Blue Note Jazz Festival: Madeleine Peyroux
  Blue Note: 5:30 pm | $30
- **Randy Brecker, Dave Liebman, Marc Copland, Drew Gress, Joey Baron**
  Blue Note Jazz Festival: Madeleine Peyroux
  Blue Note: 5:30 pm | $30
- **Gil Gutierrez Trio**
  Blue Note Jazz Festival: Madeleine Peyroux
  Blue Note: 5:30 pm | $30
- **Krista Keller**
  Blue Note Jazz Festival: Madeleine Peyroux
  Blue Note: 5:30 pm | $30
- **Lucy MacKinnon**
  Blue Note Jazz Festival: Madeleine Peyroux
  Blue Note: 5:30 pm | $30
- **Mike Ossae’s Trickster with Matt Mitchell, Anthony Tidd, Sean Rickman**
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- **Colin Heshmat/Yuma Takagi**
  Blue Note: 12:30, 2:30 pm | $15

**Monday, June 6**

- **Nicole Zurzolo**
  Birdland: 7 pm | $30
- **Oziy Keynes Afro-Latin Experience**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Geoffrey Goo Re-Ballad Ensemble**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Marc Dinev, Michelle Fugi, Takaya Takagi**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Nathan Farrell; Carlos Abadie**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Will Bernard Pond Life with Tim Berne, Chris Lightcap, Ches Smith**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Jeremy Manasia**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Anais Mavel’s Before & After**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Aleks Czudnowski’s Silent Film Scores for Social Justice with Linda Brinckman**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Earring Band**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Patricia Burke with Brian Wise, Douglas McRae, Skylar Laine, Ed Cherry, Martha Kata, Shizune Tren**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Nina Minaya**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Donald Vega**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Phil Young and The Harlem Hip Hop**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Celia Chubay, Warner Chappell**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Marc Morrisroe, Kenny Wesley and guest**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Randy Brecker, Dave Liebman, Marc Copland, Drew Gress, Joey Baron**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Gil Gutierrez Trio**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Katie McGary**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Nuovo Jazz Festival: Madeleine Peyroux**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Eugene Chadbourne, David Licht**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Sophie Wegman**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Ellen McRae, Gary Versace, Carlos Henriquez, Obed Calvare**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Grant Stewart Quartet; Miki Yamanaka Quartet**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Cary Price, Eddie Henderson, Joe Lovano, Sherman Irby, Grant Stewart**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Miles Okazaki’s Trickster with Matt Mitchell, Anthony Tidd, Sean Rickman**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **George Coleman**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
- **Linday May Hahn-Oh’s The Glass Hours with Mark Turner, Fabian Almazan, Sara Serpa, Chris Lightcap, Ches Smith**
  Birdland: 8 pm | $30
The New York City Jazz Record

Friday, June 10

- Arts Lindsay
  The Atlantic 8:30 pm $30 to $40
- Peter Wiatrous
  Bar Bower 5:30
- Tomoko Omura, Glenn Zabel, Patrick Refa
  Bar Bower 8:30, 10:30 pm $30 to $40
- Big Band, Birdland
  Birdland 7:30, 9:30 pm $30 to $40
- Yellowjackets: Russell Ferrante, Bob Minkin, Dave Anderson, Will Kennedy
  Birdland 8:30, 10:30 pm $30 to $40
- Al Di Meola
  Blue Note 8:30, 10:30 pm $30 to $40
- Claude Martin
  Drom 7 pm $20
- Dion Vonpoo & 21st Century Band with Ron Blake, Melvin Jones, Carlton Holmes, Russ Miller
  Drom 8:30 pm $35
- Ian Hunter and More
  Drom 10:30 pm $25
- Ron Jackson, Kyle Koehler, Russell Carter
  Drom 11:30 pm $25

Saturday, June 11

- The Octet with Sambura Joy
  The Mart 8:30 pm $30 to $40
- Jason Jackson + Nick Graham
  Birdland 7:30, 9:30 pm $35 to $40
- Russ Lloyd/Adler Bar
  Birdland 8:30 pm $30 to $40
- Elias Niskanen Quartet with Matt Wilson, Becca Stevens, Russ Neill
  Birdland 9:30 pm $30 to $40
- Yellowjackets: Russell Ferrante, Bob Minkin, Dave Anderson, Will Kennedy
  Birdland 10:30 pm $30 to $40
- Todd Wright
  Drom 7:30 pm $20
- Arturo O’Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra
  Drom 9 pm $25 to $30

Monday, June 13

- Bobbi Turrent, Danilo Piazzolla, Rupa Manjrekar
  Drom 7:30 pm $20
- Carla D’Antonio and Guests
  Birdland 8:30 pm $30 to $40
- Miles Okazaki’s Trickster with Matt Mitchell, Anthony Tidd, Sean Rickman
  Drom 9:30 pm $30 to $40
- The Cecil Taylor Unit
  Ibeam Brooklyn 7 pm $20
- Gilberto Gil
  The Stone 8:30 pm $20
- Nat Adderley Jr. Quintet
  The Stone 10 pm $20
- Julian Lage/Jorge Roeder
  The Stone 11:30 pm $20

Tuesday, June 14

- Stacey Dillard, Rob Dugay, Diego Lorci
  Bar Bower 8 pm $25
- Frank Catalano Quartet
  Birdland 9 pm $20
- Gabrielle Garo, Ben Sutin and guests Janis Siegel, Antoinette Montague, Peter Brainin, Jeff Lederer, Danny Rivera, Max Darché, Shareef Clayton, Mike Sailors
  Birdland 10:30 pm $20
- Miles Okazaki’s Trickster with Matt Mitchell, Anthony Tidd, Sean Rickman
  Birdland 11:30 pm $20
- John Yao’s Triceratops with Billy Drewes, Mitch Marcus, Robert Sabin, Mark Ferber; Bill Frisell/Luke Bergman; Gyan Riley
  Bar Bayeux 5 pm
- Bill Frisell/Luke Bergman; Gyan Riley
  Bar Bayeux 9 pm $20

Wednesday, June 15

- The Adventures of Prince20:01
  Birdland 9 pm $20
- Jordan Joseph
  Birdland 10:30 pm $20
- Mathias Knecht, Christian Grimm, Reinhard Mey
  Bar Bower 10 pm $20
- David Greenvelt
  Bar Bower 11 pm $20
- Danilo Pérez and His Global Messengers
  Birdland 12:30 pm $20
- Charles Tolliver’s Revolutionary People
  Birdland 2 pm $20
- Yellowjackets: Russell Ferrante, Bob Minkin, Dave Anderson, Will Kennedy
  Birdland 5 pm $20
- Tina Turner
  Birdland 8 pm $20
- Birdland 10 pm $20
- Birdland 11:30 pm $20

Thursday, June 16

- Marc Ribot solo
  Birdland 8:30 pm $20
- Momu Schep
  Bar Bower 10 pm $20
- Adam Kolmer/Stratton and guest Isaac Wilson
  Birdland 10:30 pm $20
- Denizcito and His Global Messengers
  Birdland 11:30 pm $20

Friday, June 17

- Peter Watrous
  Bar Bower 5 pm
- Eddie Calle, girls, Noah Gambarino, Mark Ferber, Bob Mintzer
  Bar Bower 8 pm $20
- Pedro Ginzo Tango-Quartet
  Birdland 7 pm $20
- Birdland Big Band
  Birdland 9 pm $20
- Giulio Cesare Baldin
  Birdland 10:30 pm $20
- João Luiz Ferreira
  Birdland 11:30 pm $20
- The Kurtis album
  Birdland 12:30 pm $20
- James Carter with Jamieal Okum, Bobby Watson, Ron Blake, Melissa Aldana
  Birdland 2 pm $20
- James Carter with Jamieal Okum, Bobby Watson, Ron Blake, Melissa Aldana
  Birdland 9 pm $20
- Nat Adderley Jr. Quintet
  Birdland 10:30 pm $20
- Abigail Washburn
  Birdland 11:30 pm $20
- Birdland 12:30 pm $20
- Funkとても
  Birdland 2 pm $20
Saturday, June 18

- Aaron Goldberg/Adam Kolker
- Amara Marshall
- Daniel Pere and His Global Messengers
- Geoff Keezer
- Jon Kilbourn Trio
- James Burton; Devis Nicholas
- Joby Talavera and Guadalupe Rangel
- Krista辨
- Krakow Jazz Orchestra
- Michael Rapoport with Anthony Davis
- Terri Lyne Carrington, Val Jeanty
- The Cookers: Billy Harper, Donald Harrison, Eddie Henderson, David Weiss, George Cables, Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with Johnathan Blake
- Welf Dorr, Elias Meister, Dmitry Ishenko
- Dan Aran Trio
- Waking Vision: Martin Valihora, John Shannon, Peter Slavov
- Richard Cohen and Gail Granoff

Sunday, June 19

- Tannenzapf's Jam Session with Lafayette Harris Jr., Jennifer Vincent, Herman Hemmings
- Darrin Vona and the Attraction
- John Zorn's COIL
- Steve Lacy's OM Trio
- Christian Wolff with Joey Baron, Robyn Schulkowsky, Robert Black
- Stephen Gauzel
- Mike Choukalos Triest with Matt Mitchell, Anthony Davis, Sean Rieckman
- Mike Ladd's "O" with John Walter
- Dave Shehan's "The New York Jazz Orchestra"
- Bruce Lee Gallanter Birthday Bash
- Ari Hoenig Trio with Ged Luft, Ben Haim
- Albert Marquet
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra

Tuesday, June 21

- Mike Flyhite
- Steve Cardenas, Ugumogu Okwego
- Diego Voggio
- Santiago Torres
- Donny Terner
- Gabriel Streibel Trio
- Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks
- Combi Chimbal, Red Barast
- Magnetic Field
- Jazztopaz: James Branch Lewis/Lutosławski Quartet: Szymon Krzeszowiec, Marcin Markowicz, Artur Rozmyslowicz, Maciej Mlodawski
- Stéphane Wrembel
- Andrew McIntosh - viola, Walters; Wadada Leo Smith/Pheeroan akLaff
- Patricia Nicholson, Jason Jordan, Miriam Parker, Davalois Fearon, Amir Bey; with Gwendolyn Laster, Kelvyn Bell, Bill Lowe, Hilliard Greene, Gene Lake, Michael Thompson and guest Dave Burrell; Monique Ngozi Nri/Ahmed Abdullah; with Yusef Lateef, Lou Girod

Wednesday, June 22

- The Jazz Passengers
- Emilie Wartelle
- Nikara Warren Group
- Daniel Laycock
- Alfredo Rodriguez Quintet with Shabaka Hutchings, Miguel Zenón, Adam Seelig, Brad Solis
- Stacey Kent
- Frank Vigil's Guitar Night with John DiMaggio, M.anni Mazzanoppi, Vince Cherico and guest John Dailing
- Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with John Blake
- Charlie Judkins
- Jon Wurster's Bohemian Rhapsody
- Jazztopaz: James Branch Lewis/Lutosławski Quartet: Szymon Krzeszowiec, Marcin Markowicz, Artur Rozmyslowicz, Maciej Mlodawski
- Stacey Kent
- Jon Wurster's Bohemian Rhapsody
- Forward Motion: Leo Chang, Chris Williams, Lester St. Louis, Miriam Parker; Andrew Dow; Danny Fox Triowith Chris van Voort van Beest, Max Goldman
- Kevin Chock, Sandy Ienber; Jenner Ruthkranum Anna Wielawa
- Bruce Harris
- Jim Ridl Trio
- Emilio Valdes Trio
- Richard Lotter

Thursday, June 23

- Mirta Sanchez
- Adam Cohen/Denny Strazynski and the Tony Argento Trio
- Allison Miller/Carmen Staaf's Neighbors with guest Angel Cohon
- Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with John Blake
- Charlie Judkins
- Jonathan Finlayson Trio with Anthony Tidd, Tim Angulo
- Jim Ridl Trio
- Stéphane Wrembel
- Richard Cortez

Friday, June 24

- Drin Embrey/Tommy James with Alex DeJohn/Boptron/Dave Carney
- George Gershon and The Fringe
- The Cookers
- Alphonso Horne/Michael Dease Quintet
- Frank Foster and His Orchestra
- Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with John Blake
- Joe Magnarelli Quintet with Robert Edwards, Anthony Wonsey, Clovis Nicolas, Joe Magnarelli, John Blake
- Sterling Cozza/Mikey Migliore
- Liam Sutcliffe Quartet; Jenn Jade 5tet

Saturday, June 25

- Orin Evans/Tommy Termaine with Alex Bongtongfa, Lugosi Clarence, Pennard Lagettoge
- Sebastien Amorant/Makali Kolker and Friends
- Rogiero Boccato Trio with Vincenzo Gomes, Julian Shore
- Miles Tucker
- Jazztopaz: Michael Bates's Accent with Marty Elzer, Nezzi Aught, Steve Seabrook, Brian Landeau; with Yusef Lateef, Luis Montalvo, Robert Glasper, Treasure Roberts, Javon Jackson, Takuya Kuroda, Andrew Berra
- Andrew McIntosh - viola, Walters; Wadada Leo Smith/Pheeroan akLaff
- Gabriel O'Reilly
- Barcelona Jazz Orchestra: Jason Cooper
- Pocket Jazz: Sean Maida
- Ethan Smith and the gobal horn band; with Yusef Lateef, Luis Montalvo, Robert Glasper, Treasure Roberts, Javon Jackson, Takuya Kuroda, Andrew Berra
- Sunna Gunnlaugs Trio with Tag Jonsson, Scott McLemore
- JP Schlegelmilch, Adam Schneit, Max Goldman, Kenny Warren, Myk Freedman, Behn Gilece
- Jazz Composers' Showcase Vol. 16: Stephen Harvey, Courtney Wright and Jonathan Finlayson
- Jim Ridl Trio
- Michael Thompson and guest Dave Burrell; Monique Ngozi Nri/Ahmed Abdullah; with Yusef Lateef, Lou Girod

Sunday, June 26

- Oran Äʹ Alan Butler
- Arturo O'Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra
- Allison Miller/Carmen Staaf's Neighbors
- Johne Hwato Trio
- Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with John Blake
- Nick Gudziol
- Carmen Staaf's Neighbors
- Steve Lacy's OM Trio
- Joe Magnarelli Quintet with Robert Edwards, Anthony Wonsey, Clovis Nicolas, Joe Magnarelli, John Blake
- Steve Lacy's OM Trio
- Barry Shiffman
- Richard Cortez

Monday, June 27

- Mirta Sanchez
- Adam Cohen/Denny Strazynski and the Tony Argento Trio
- Allison Miller/Carmen Staaf's Neighbors with guest Angel Cohon
- Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with John Blake
- Charlie Judkins
- Jonathan Finlayson Trio with Anthony Tidd, Tim Angulo
- Jim Ridl Trio
- Stéphane Wrembel
- Richard Cortez

Tuesday, June 28

- Allison Miller/Carmen Staaf's Neighbors
- Johne Hwato Trio
- Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with John Blake
- Nick Gudziol
- Carmen Staaf's Neighbors
- Steve Lacy's OM Trio
- Joe Magnarelli Quintet with Robert Edwards, Anthony Wonsey, Clovis Nicolas, Joe Magnarelli, John Blake
- Steve Lacy's OM Trio
- Barry Shiffman
- Richard Cortez

Wednesday, June 29

- Mirta Sanchez
- Adam Cohen/Denny Strazynski and the Tony Argento Trio
- Allison Miller/Carmen Staaf's Neighbors with guest Angel Cohon
- Dave Holland/Kenny Barron Trio with John Blake
- Charlie Judkins
- Jonathan Finlayson Trio with Anthony Tidd, Tim Angulo
- Jim Ridl Trio
- Stéphane Wrembel
- Richard Cortez
**Wednesday, June 29**

- Eric Wyatt/Christina Camuccini 5:30-7:30 pm $25-

- Ken Fowser Quintet with Jeremy Pelt; Ian Hendrickson-Smith 8:30 pm $35-

- Pablo Bencid, Bobby Sanabria; Maria Raquel with Itai Kriss, Gabriel Chakarji, David Alastre, Josué Collazo 8:30 pm $15-

- Joie Lee, Henry Threadgill’s Air At Five, Steve Coleman, Ken Vandermark, Peter Brötzmann 9:30 pm $75-

- George Gee Make-Believe Band 10:30 pm $20-

**Thursday, June 30**

- George Gee Make-Believe Band 10:30 pm $20-

**Friday, July 1**

- Pablo Bencid, Bobby Sanabria; Maria Raquel with Itai Kriss, Gabriel Chakarji, David Alastre, Josué Collazo 8:30 pm $15-

- Joie Lee, Henry Threadgill’s Air At Five, Steve Coleman, Ken Vandermark, Peter Brötzmann 9:30 pm $75-

- George Gee Make-Believe Band 10:30 pm $20-

**Weekend, July 2-3**

- **Saturday, July 2**

  - Ken Fowser Quintet with Jeremy Pelt; Ian Hendrickson-Smith 8:30 pm $35-

  - Pablo Bencid, Bobby Sanabria; Maria Raquel with Itai Kriss, Gabriel Chakarji, David Alastre, Josué Collazo 8:30 pm $15-

  - Joie Lee, Henry Threadgill’s Air At Five, Steve Coleman, Ken Vandermark, Peter Brötzmann 9:30 pm $75-

  - George Gee Make-Believe Band 10:30 pm $20-

- **Sunday, July 3**

  - Ken Fowser Quintet with Jeremy Pelt; Ian Hendrickson-Smith 8:30 pm $35-

  - Pablo Bencid, Bobby Sanabria; Maria Raquel with Itai Kriss, Gabriel Chakarji, David Alastre, Josué Collazo 8:30 pm $15-

  - Joie Lee, Henry Threadgill’s Air At Five, Steve Coleman, Ken Vandermark, Peter Brötzmann 9:30 pm $75-

  - George Gee Make-Believe Band 10:30 pm $20-
a higher purpose. I included him on one recording, Shekhtina Big Band, and I’m so happy that I did because it’s something that lasts. Thomas played bass flute, alto and baritone saxophones and was ill but had this beauty and joy that he brought to everything he did.

TYNCR: Last month you premiered “No Pasarán” with drummer Michael Sarin who also played with Chapin.

FL: With José Davila on trombone and Marcus Rojas on tuba. I hope to do a lot more of brass trio plus percussion. I look back to the days of Salsa meets jazz nights at the Village Gate. About a year and a half into the pandemic, to try to reopen safely, I suggested a mini version with two solo artists who represent different traditions and Ellen said, why don’t you curate it? They’ve now extended it to the end of 2022 and I’ll have programmed like 18 different concerts.

TYNCR: How do you answer people who accuse you of cultural appropriation?

FL: No one has ever accused me of cultural appropriation, at least not to my face. Maybe it is because they know that if they did, they would be critically challenged for their assumptions? It is very good to think about and discuss this issue and it is all in the details. For instance, I had absolutely no experience of Yiddish culture directly in my youth; coming from the economically dominant popular music culture—American rock ‘n’ roll, soul music, etc.—not from the oppressed, denigrated Yiddish language and music. I’ve been lucky enough to have been able to learn about the Holocaust and post-war Israeli pro-Heroic policies. So, interestingly, if there is a culture that I am guilty of appropriating it could be Jewish and Yiddish culture. But, I would counter that everything that I know about Jewish and Yiddish culture and music came through my rigorous studies as an adult, which is equally true of my knowledge of all other musics that I have worked in for 45 years. Furthermore, just because I am an Ashkenazic Jew doesn’t mean that I cannot engage in cultural appropriation of Yiddish culture. That betrays an essentialist thinking shockingly similar to Nazi-esque ideology; like ‘Jews can’t play Beethoven, everything a Jew does is Jewish’. This type of thinking can be used to justify eliminatory, for example, African-Americans and anyone who is not white, Christian, European and perhaps male from performing in orchestras. So, yes, after study and respectful interaction, the dominant me—white, male, English-speaking—took “Yiddish music and culture” from an oppressed minority culture—Jewish, Yiddish-speaking, non-white—is the time and place of its creation—something that was not ‘mine’ except by strict literal essentialist thinking, for my own profit and benefit. There is much more to say about this and with limited space, perhaps it should become the basis of a larger discussion.

TYNCR: Ghetto Songs is another recent project.

FL: It was commissioned by the Jewish community of Venice, in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the opening of the Venice ghetto, where the term was first applied to the Jewish sector. I put together an incredible group of musicians, including guitarist/vocalist Brandon Ross, the amazing Karim Sulayman, who won the Grammy for best classical vocal performance, cantors Svetlana Kudish and Yaakov Lemmer, percussionist Kenny Wollesen, cellist Marika Hughes, bassist Gregg August and multi-instrumentalist Ilya Shneyveys. We explore music from ghettos, including everything from medieval Italian music to the band War’s ‘The World is a Ghetto’. It is a medley of Mark Rothko paintings with the Ukrainian flag, because of the simple color blocks. Conceptually, it’s about abstract art and abstract music versus representational art and the same thing with music. It’s a meditation on vocal recital of great vocal music from around the world. Why do we only think of the Western European classical tradition as vocal recital music?

TYNCR: You just premiered a multimedia piece, “Prayer for Ukraine”, at Barbes. Can you speak to that?

FL: During the pandemic I learned how to do home recording and very elementary video. On “Prayer for Ukraine” I was thinking about the Ukrainian flag and the two colors and it led my mind to Mark Rothko. It is a medley of Mark Rothko paintings with the Ukrainian flag, because of the simple color blocks. Conceptually, it’s about abstract art and abstract music versus representational art and the same thing with music. It’s a meditation on vocal recital of great vocal music from around the world. Why do we only think of the Western European classical tradition as vocal recital music?

TYNCR: Another pandemic release is Adeena Karasick’s long poem Salome: Woman of Valor.

FL: I’ve known Adeena for about 10 years and we said let’s do this project together. I love poetry, music and improvisation, like Mingus’ Scenes in the City. In a lot of my explorations of Jewish music, I’m particularly about using the traditional modes. Other people just throw together a bunch of notes, because they sort of sound exotic and say, ‘listen, it’s like Jewish music’ and I hate that. But to liberate myself for Salome I use these syractenic modal scales that have elements of Jewish, Ethiopian, Indian and Arabic modes.

TYNCR: In closing, what’s in the works?

FL: I’m preparing a huge piece for the end of 2022 as part of New York Town Hall’s 100th anniversary, a new musical theater piece called Desparately Seeking Nellie. It is an homage to the Town Hall of the early ’80s, when 42nd Street was at its most wild and crazy. They were doing Yiddish theater revivals at Town Hall every year. In this original story, a Hasidic girl runs away from home and ends up in Times Square in 1980, with all the associations of that, to audition for Nellie Casman’s Yiddish theater piece The Show Girl, which actually played at Town Hall in 1982. She runs into her old Hasidic best friend neighbor, who’s now come out as a drag performer in Times Square. I’m writing this with Michael Wex and Eleanor Reissa.

FL: Traditions in Swing programs. (Like all WKCR programmers—including, for the sake of disclosure, this author—Schaap worked at the station without pay.) The Queens native and lifelong resident will be remembered this month in a concert by the Queens Jazz Orchestra led by saxophonist Antonio Hart, Professor of Jazz Studies in the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College City University of New York. He acknowledged that he only met Schaap a few times, but was an avid listener to Bird Flight. “It was nice to wake up to hearing Charlie Parker every morning,” he said, adding that Schaap was “quite brilliant, he was like a computer in terms of his retention...He was important to the music. He kept Charlie Parker’s music alive to generations that probably wouldn’t have heard it.”

One person who did know Schaap both on and off the air was his fellow WKCR jazz programmer Sid Gribetz, who recalled fondly his friend’s devotion to the cause. “He presented the jazz musicians, great and small, as living treasures with something to say, worth reverence and a place in our ongoing heritage and not just relics of nostalgia,” Gribetz said. Gribetz and Schaap were classmates when WKCR’s jazz department was brought into being and was there when Schaap launched the first Charlie Parker festival on the air and extended the practice into a station tradition of birthday broadcasts/mini-marathons for the greats of American music. He acknowledged that the obsessive spirit that led to programming one artist for 24 hours could also lead to some pontification on the subject, part of Schaap’s uniqueness as a broadcaster. “While I wouldn’t deny that he was lengthy and verbose in his commentary, the speeches were always intelligent and interesting,” Gribetz said. “Those who criticized him are the ones to hold at fault. They lacked the patience to hear a whole story and the imagination and intellectual curiosity to find joy in the interesting things said. As I heard Phil put it several times, ‘If you don’t find it interesting that Coleman Hawkins’ grandmother ran a hotel in Missouri that gave shelter to Jesse James, then the problem’s with you.’

For more information, visit philipchaapjazz.com. A tribute to Schaap by the Queens Jazz Orchestra led by Antonio Hart is at Flushing Town Hall Jun. 17th. See Calendar.

(LABEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

the making of which, Pennisi recalls, required a round of cappuccinos after each tune, for a total of 18! Moreover, there is a wealth of tapes that have been in the vault for almost 40 years waiting to be issued, such as Baker’s precious 1987 live recording Intimacy. The covers remain very stylish, confirming once again Pennisi’s taste and craftsmanship. Red is distributed in the U.S. through Stateside and can also be found on most streaming platforms, although there is no substitute for the vinyl sound.

For more information, visit redrecords.it. Artists performing this month include Kenny Barron at Blue Note Jun. 21st-26th; Dave Liebman at Birdland through Jun. 4th; The Jazz Gallery Jun. 9th and Nublu 151 Jun. 30th; Fred Hersch at Village Vanguard Jun. 21st-26th; Dave Liebman at Birdland through Jun. 4th. The Jazz Gallery Jun. 9th and Nublu 151 Jun. 30th; Steve Nelson at Smalls Jun. 29th; Dick Oatts at Village Vanguard Mondays with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; and Saul Rubin at LIC Arts Days 1st, Bar Lunatico Jun. 3rd and The Django Jun. 4th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:
- Klezmer Conservatory Band–Yiddishre Renaissance (Tzadik, 2020)
- Les Misérables Brass Band–Mutic Traditions (Northeastern, 1988)
- The Klezmatics–Rhythm and Jews (Piranha, 1990)
- Frank London–Ghetto Songs (Felmay, 2020)
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