

**THE
BIG ONE**

**HOLIDAY
GIFT GUIDE**

**jazz
& blues** report



SOME CRAZY GENRE JUMPING!



Jazz & Blues Report

32nd Annual Holiday Gift Guide

This year for the first time we are featuring this stand-alone Holiday Gift Guide on our website. While our regular issues will bring you the very latest additions, these pages also offer items reviewed over the past year which would make great gifts, as well as most of the reviews from the 2005 Holiday Gift Guide. This is by no means a best of jazz & blues for 2006. In fact, you'll find that a good number of entries here are not jazz or blues, but rather outstanding releases in other genres which certainly widens the scope of the gift guide to include friends and family members who don't necessarily share your particular musical interests, as well as anyone who has broad tastes in music themselves. You will find that while there are some single CDs included, most of the items here are multiple disc and boxed sets and live concert or documentary DVDs – all of which make perfect gifts. This stand-alone guide will continue to grow as we add the entries from the regular issues and continue to dig for gems from the past issues. Therefore, except for the fact that we have made sections for the years of release, there are no special sections for jazz, blues or anything else, nor are they in any order of "importance." We just keep plopping them down for you...happy hunting!

2005

2006 Entries Begin on Page 12

RAY CHARLES

Pure Genius

The Complete Atlantic Recordings (1952-1959)

RHINO/ATLANTIC BOX SET

Rhino Records has long been championing the cause and leading the pack for multi-disc reissues. This 7-CD/1-DVD set might be their most extravagant release to date.

Ray Charles recorded for Atlantic from '52 to '59. In all, there are 155 tracks on the CDs and nine more on the DVD. Beginning with a NYC session in September of '52, which is thought to include Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ) drummer Connie Kay (although he would not know that for 3 years), and ending with a session in the same city in June of '59, this set offers Charles in so many recording dates, with so many different musicians, playing so many tunes that it might just take the proud owner of the set so many hours to digest it all that the thought is a bit mind boggling. (Boy, I finally got out of that sentence!) Right at this very moment I am listening to a '57 session with Milt Jackson as they play "How Long Blues" - one of many cuts included here pairing Ray with the MJQ vibist. Oscar Pettiford is on Bass and Connie Kay is back on drums for this date, which includes a variety of other players on different tunes.

Almost all the sessions were produced by either Ahmet, or his brother Nesuhi, Ertegün, and most all of those were co-produced by Jerry Wexler. Many boxed sets offer reissues of the actual albums the way they were released. Sometimes that makes sense, but not in this case. Many of Ray's albums included tracks from a number of different sessions. This set is produced in strict chronological order by recording session. Not only does that make for better continuity and flow music wise, it also provides the listener with the best possible audio experience. You are not constantly jolted by the shift in sound characteristics which would be experienced by bouncing from one session to another. There were some albums

that were recorded in one session and released intact. One example is **Fathead/Ray Charles Presents David Newman**. It was recorded at a single session in late '58 which featured "Fathead" Newman on tenor and alto sax, Marcus Belgrave on trumpet and Hank Crawford on baritone sax, before he switched to alto—which became his instrument of choice. But the eight songs from that session, which included a sweet version of "Willow Weep For Me," are presented here not in the same order as on the original album, but rather *exactly* the way they were recorded - masters #1385-1392 all in strict order. Now that is what I call chronological. Rhino deserves big kudos for this.

The music in this set is in no way, shape or form a rehash the songs you heard in the movie. Sure, a lot of his hits are here, like "I've Got A Woman," "What'd I Say," "Hallelujah I Love Her So," "Drown In My Own Tears" and many more. But the real joys in this set are the tunes most people have never heard before...Ray playing jazz or blues, and often jazz *and* blues, with some first rate musicians on board.

As if the music isn't enough, there is the box and the book. Let's start with the box as it is so unique. It looks like one of those old fashioned light brown suitcases from the fifties. It has a carrying handle and a gold latch. When you open it you see an old turntable like I had as a kid. On the spindle is a 45 of Ray's Atlantic single "Mess Around," and it has one of those yellow plastic adapters in the hole so it can be played on a spindle meant for 33 rpm albums. The speed selector includes 78, 45 and 33. Of course 45 is selected. Don't try to play it though - it is a fake, a mighty good looking one...but still a fake. Above it, on the inside of the case, is a big label congratulating you on your purchase of the fine new high-fidelity instrument and a step by step explanation of how to use it.

Lifting the fake turntable exposes the 80-page hard cover 9x11 book. The semi-gloss pages offer all the discographical information you will ever need on this mu-

sic, many black and white (some color) pictures of Ray, full color reproductions of concert posters and the original Atlantic album covers, and text - a lot of text. There is a short forward by Ahmet Ertegun preceding a lengthy piece by David Ritz, who co-wrote *Brother Ray: Ray Charles' Own Story*, and wrote biographies on many other musicians. Then the original liner notes from Ray's Atlantic albums are reprinted, followed by notes on Ray Charles' compilations by Leonard Feather, Jerry Wexler and Nat Hentoff.

In addition to all his Atlantic output, close to an hour of previously unreleased performances are included. If all this is not enough, Disc 8 is a DVD of video footage shot at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival. The eight songs are mostly Ray's hits and all are previously unissued. The band includes David "Fathead" Newman and Hank Crawford, and the Raeletts add backing vocals to 5 songs. The DVD also includes an interview with Ahmet Ertegun.

In a nutshell...wow...what a package! You can't go wrong with this one for a Ray Charles fan. **Bill Wahl**

JOHN COLTRANE

One Down, One Up

Live At The Half Note

IMPULSE RECORDS 2-CD SET

What an absolute treat it is to hear previously unreleased recordings from the John Coltrane Quartet and Miles '70 band both in the same month. And just two months earlier, we were treated to the Monk & Coltrane recordings from Carnegie Hall.

Just released by Impulse Records, this 2-CD set captures Coltrane with McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones at New York City's Half Note in 1965. They had been playing together since 1960 (Garrison since '61) and were at this point about as well-oiled as a unit can get.

Originally recorded as a radio broadcast, the sound quality is actually quite good. Until now, many saxophonists had much lower fidelity copies of the Half Note broadcasts which they guarded with their lives. Coltrane was allowed to pretty much do what he wanted when playing the Half Note, so he could experiment with

new avenues coming up with some quite lengthy and intense music. That is most obvious with the 28-minute opening track on disc one - "One Down, One Up," which opens with Garrison on bass and quickly turns into a Coltrane tour-de-force improvisation, for a period backed only by Jones' drums. In fact, Elvin's bass drum pedal breaks partway through, but it doesn't hinder a thing - nothing could get in the way when Jones was in motion. This version definitely stands by itself, as it is nothing like the other two versions of the song Coltrane recorded. Next up on the first disc is a 13-minute run of the 'Trane classic "Afro Blue," for which he switches from tenor to soprano. Again, this is more intense than the earlier recordings of the song. Check out the incredible McCoy piano solo at the beginning of the journey.

Disc two opens with a song they would record in the studio ten days later for the album **John Coltrane Quartet Plays** (the liner notes say it was ten days earlier - one of us is wrong, but I guess it really doesn't matter, does it). He's back on tenor for this 20-minute journey that starts out like a hymn and goes somewhere beyond that, also very much unlike the studio version. Then, the 23-minute version of a 'Trane signature tune "My Favorite Things" finds him switching back to soprano again with another fine solo from Tyner, propelled by Elvin and all kept together by Garrison.

There are a couple of glitches here and there, and some fadeouts where the show's radio host, Allen Grant, would take over to make the closing announcement when the allotted time for the live broadcast ran out. Not a big deal!

The enclosed 20-page booklet features an essay from writer Ashley Kahn and Coltrane's son Ravi, who produced the set. As mentioned above, this is the first authorized release (there were some lousy sounding bootlegs) of this material from 1/4-inch stereo tapes, recently discovered in a Coltrane family closet, by a band which was reaching some fiery heights during this period. It would not be that long before Coltrane would hire a second drummer (Rashied Ali) which would lead to Elvin leaving the group less than a year from this re-

ording. Tyner left the band too, and Garrison would be the only member of the quartet to stay on.

But they all are here, and any fan of this classic Coltrane quartet should love this one. Grab one for yourself while you are at it. **Bill Wahl**

JOHN LEE HOOKER

Come See About Me/ The Definitive DVD

EAGLE EYE DVD

While most of the DVDs we review are relatively new releases, sometimes it is a while before we get our hands on certain titles. This is one of those, as it was released over a year ago, but it is so good we have to spread the word.

This DVD offers a mix of interview footage with John Lee and several others mixed with live performance footage recorded throughout the long career of the late great blues giant. It opens with a duet version of "Baby Please Don't Go" with Van Morrison in 1992 and is followed by some black & white footage from the 60s with a Hooker performance of "Maudie" with the Muddy Waters Band at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival, and solo videos featuring "Hobo Blues" and "It Serves Me Right To Suffer." Next is interview segments with Bonnie Raitt (one of many artists who contribute their thoughts throughout) and John Lee, followed by "Crawlin' Kingsnake" with Foghat and Paul Butterfield in 1978.

The remaining live footage in store is performances of "The Boogie" (1980), "Never Get Out Of These Blues Alive" (1981), "Worried Life Blues" (w/ Charlie Musselwhite, 1981), "Too Many Women" (w/ Ron Thompson & The Resistors, 1984), "Boom Boom" (w/ the Mark Naftalin Band, 1984), "I'm Bad Like Jesse James" (1986), "I'm In The Mood" (w/ Bonnie Raitt, 1990), "Bottle Up And Go" (w/ John Hammond at the Newport JVC Jazz Festival, 1991), "Tupelo Blues" (1993), "Hobo Blues" (w/ Ry Cooder, 1990), "The Healer" (w/ Carlos Santana, 1990), "Boogie Chillen'" (w/ Eric Clapton and the Rolling Stones, 1989) and "I Need Love So Bad" (1994).

While there are a lot of interview clips in between the songs on this DVD, it is not bothersome as it is with

some concert DVDs. This is a different type of presentation as it is a tribute to the life and music of John Lee with all the live footage coming from different sources rather than being a single concert. The clips offer very interesting and informative insights into the man himself. Some of the people who offer statements are John Lee's daughter Zakiya Hooker, Santana, Bonnie Raitt, Charlie Musselwhite, John Hammond and Ry Cooder.

The DVD's bonus material includes a performance of "Boogie Chillen'" with Roy Rogers from the Blues Against Blindness benefit concert in Berkeley in 1992, and an interesting 13-minute set of interview clips with Zakiya Hooker on her father's private and personal life, and growing up with Hooker as a father, his joking around, why he always wore sunglasses, describing him as "like a willow in the wind" - a kind and giving, non-confrontational person, that "he epitomizes 'cool'...and the like. There is also a short interview with John Lee and his discography.

I had the pleasure of booking John Lee Hooker into Peabody's Downunder in Cleveland a couple of times in the mid eighties. I'll never forget his performances and the times I got to chat one-on-one with him. I'll also never forget his rider. While many bands asked for so many ridiculous things with regard to sound, lights, band room accommodations, etc. - I remember his stage lighting section of the rider which read like this: "There should be a light on stage at all times. At no time should the stage be completely dark."

John Lee is missed, but he sure left us a wealth of recordings to remember him by. This DVD should be a real treat for any blues fan, period.

Bill Wahl

TOMMY DORSEY

The Sentimental Gentleman of Swing – The Centennial Collection BLUEBIRD/LEGACY BOX SET

This delightful Tommy Dorsey collection compiles 70 tracks on three CDs inside a hardcover 24-page book and includes trombonist Dorsey's sideman sessions as a studio player from 1928—34 and Dorsey as leader of his own band from 1935—55 as well

as air checks from 1939—56.

Born in Shenandoah, PA on November 19, 1905, Tommy Dorsey played in bands with his older brother Jimmy before moving to New York. Although he'd later become known for his beautiful trombone tone, Tommy occasionally doubled on trumpet in the 1920s. During the Depression, Tommy kept busy as a studio player until he agreed to co-lead the Dorsey Brothers Band in 1934. A blowup on stage in late 1935 led Tommy to form his own big band. Major hits ("Marie" and "Song of India") in 1937 boosted the band's popularity and top instrumentalists, singers and arrangers kept the band in the spotlight. Dorsey expanded the band with a string section in 1942, but by the end of World War II and the waning of the swing era, he dropped the strings and cut back a bit, taking a hiatus in 1946 until he reformed his orchestra in 1947. In 1953, Jimmy Dorsey agreed to join with his brother and the band, emphasizing nostalgic dance music, was renamed Dorsey Brothers Orchestra until Tommy's sudden death in November 1956.

Disc One contains earliest tracks gleaned from Tommy's recordings with the Golden Gate Orchestra (which also featured Jimmy) and bands led by Sam Lanin, Paul Whiteman, Ed Lang, Red Nichols, the Dorsey Brothers, and many others. Highlights include a nostalgic 1929 Dorsey Brothers Orchestra version of "Mean To Me," a hot, swinging version of "Bugle Call Rag" with Ed Lang and his Orchestra from the same year, an amusing small-band track ("Sentimental Gentleman From Georgia") with the Boswell Sisters, a rousing "Shoutin' In That Amen Corner" from 1933 featuring vocalist Mildred Bailey, and plenty of other gems.

Disc Two features recordings by Tommy Dorsey as leader of his own orchestra ("the band that made swing music good music"). It begins with a lilting version of "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" recorded in July 1937 and ends with a version of "Dippermouth Blues" recorded in New York in May 1955. There are plenty of melodious highlights in between, including a swinging version of "Marie" featuring vocalist Jack Leonard and a host of band soloists and a tidy uptempo take on "Song of India," both

featuring trumpet soloist Bunny Berigan. Also notable are a jumpin' arrangement of Pinetop Smith's "Boogie Woogie," a lindy-hoppin 1944 version of Tommy's hit tune "Opus #1, and other tunes that old-timers like me will find familiar-sounding and enjoyable.

Disc Three features air checks (1939—1956) spotlighting vocalists Frank Sinatra, Connie Haines, The Pied Pipers, Jo Stafford, Dick Haymes and, yes, Elvis Presley! Best about these tracks is improved sound quality, fine soloists, and drummer Buddy Rich who is featured on all but about five of the 21 tracks. Top tracks include a spicy "Rhumboogie," featuring Haines, and the Sinatra tracks, "Star Dust," "East of the Sun," "I'll Never Smile Again," "The Song Is You," and others. Duke Ellington sits in on piano for a 1946 version of "Take the A Train" with the Tommy Dorsey orchestra.

The arrangements and instrumental soloists are superb! With extensive liner notes by Richard Sudhalter, historic photos, and all the nostalgic swinging music, this attractively packaged set makes a great holiday gift for Dorsey fans or big band enthusiasts in general. *Nancy Ann Lee*

CREAM Royal Albert Hall RHINO DVD

Rhino has just released a 2-DVD set filmed at Cream's four night concert stint at London's Royal Albert Hall in May of this year. Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker formed Cream in 1966 and the group broke up just under three years later. In that time, they recorded three very successful albums - **Fresh Cream**, **Disraeli Gears** and **Wheels of Fire** (some live albums also came out after the breakup). Those three albums contained several big songs for the band, like "Spoonful," "I'm So Glad," "Badge," "Born Under A Bad Sign," "White Room," "Crossroads," "and "Sunshine Of Your Love." All those and many more are seen and heard on this set which includes 19 songs and three alternate takes. You'll also see interviews with Clapton, Bruce and Baker.

When I first heard of the release of this video, I must say I was very

curious. Clapton has remained in the limelight for all these years, but I'd not heard from Bruce in some time, and, quite frankly, I didn't even know if Baker was still alive. But they are all alive and well indeed, aged to be sure, but then we all are, aren't we? Not only that, they all appear to be in good shape! I'm glad to report that they also sound good, both instrumentally and vocally (they all sing some lead), and the filming is topnotch. Same goes for the sound quality - the DTS surround sound makes you feel like you're right there in front of them at Royal Albert Hall.

These concerts marked the first reunion of Cream in two decades.

This DVD should please even the casual Cream fan, and will really charge up their big time followers. Rhino has also released a 2-CD set of the music for those who care to go that way. A surprisingly enjoyable concert video.

Bill Wahl

MILES DAVIS

The Cellar Door Sessions 1970 COLUMBIA/LEGACY BOX SET

When this music was recorded at Washington DC's Cellar Door, Miles was in the early stages of a two year live recording stint. It had begun in March with the recordings at the Fillmore. In the fall of that year Miles changed the personnel somewhat, retaining Keith Jarrett/piano, Jack DeJohnette/drums and Airto/percussion; and adding Gary Bartz to replace Steve Grossman on sax and Michael Henderson to replace Dave Holland on bass. Chick Corea had also left the band, so Jarrett would have the piano chair all to himself. This stripped down unit was actually guided by the directions Jarrett and DeJohnette would decide to go in, as they created the framework for the solos of Miles and Bartz in each song. Still very much in the vein fusing jazz with rock, there are many fine moments to savor here, and sameness is not a word to be used to describe the musical events taking place throughout this 6-CD set.

Somewhere around 85 minutes of the total of roughly 350 minutes of music in this set was previously issued on the 2-LP set *Live Evil*, but it was chopped up and edited to the point that, in reality, all the music should be looked at as presented here for the first

time. At this point, Miles was introducing some different material. While the Fillmore recordings from earlier in the year featured several songs from *Bitches Brew*, the Cellar Door recordings here have only one - Wayne Shorter's "Sanctuary," and the 3 versions heard are all very short (no pun intended.) The other songs from the Fillmore recordings heard here are Joe Zawinul's "Directions" (5 versions) and Miles' "It's About That Time" (2 versions). The rest of the songs here are: 1 version of "Yesternow," 5 versions of "What I Say," 4 versions of "Inamorata," and 4 versions of Keith Jarrett Improvisations. Keith is wonderful to hear on the electric piano. For someone who considers electronic instruments to be toys, he can certainly make the Fender Rhodes sing like no one else. I don't recall ever actually enjoying solos in that instrument quite so much. And, as with his majestic acoustic work, be it solo or trio, he just keeps those fresh ideas constantly flowing....and flowing.

As much as I have always been a fan of Davis' previous saxophonist Steve Grossman, I have likewise enjoyed the playing of Bartz. He has a lot of fine moments throughout these 28, mostly extended cuts. Henderson does what he is supposed to do on bass to allow Jarrett and DeJohnette to share the driver's seat. Miles...well, he is Miles - what can I say? All the music here came from recordings done from Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday night performances on December 16-19. On the last night, guitarist John McLaughlin showed up for the second and third sets and added a whole new dimension to the music - Hendrixifying it as some have said (perhaps no one said it exactly like that - that word looks kinda funny, but I'll go with it). Airto didn't show on Wednesday night, so there are actually three different versions of this band over the four nights. But, like I said, there are four nights and several versions of some of the songs, but they all sound quite different. By the way, the songs, or parts thereof, used for the *Live Evil* album all came from the Saturday night sets with John McLaughlin. The others have never been released before in any fashion.

As has been the case for the premier Legacy Miles Davis box sets, this one is marvelously packaged with a

book containing essays by Airto, Gary Bartz, Jack DeJohnette, Michael Henderson, Keith Jarrett and John McLaughlin - all written earlier this year. They will certainly give you an insight into this band, the music, the experience and the main man himself. Another plus - the sound is actually quite good. This is especially true when you compare it to the Fillmore recordings.

A great gift for a fan of Miles' early 70s fusion period.

Bill Wahl

NORMAN GRANZ JAZZ AT MONTREUX SERIES EAGLE DVD

About a year ago, Eagle Rock Entertainment issued a series of DVDs featuring concert recordings from Montreux Jazz Festival performances from back in the '70s.

While I have only seen some of these, I'd like to relay the info that they are available should any of the artists in the series be of interest to you or someone you may be buying a gift for. I can vouch for the fact that the ones I have seen all offered very good sets of music and the audio and video were quite good, especially considering the fact that they were done 30 years ago.

They were typical of Norman Granz' first class productions, and I would presume they are all in keeping with the Granz tradition. The ones in the series I am have seen and can vouch for are:

Benny Carter '77, with Carter joined by Ray Bryant/piano, Niels Pedersen/bass and Jimmie Smith/drums for seven cuts, including "Body & Soul" "On Green Dolphin Street," "Wave," "In A Mellow Tone" and "Three Little Words."

Count Basie Jam '75, with the Count on piano, Niels Pedersen/bass and Louis Bellson/drums being the rhythm section for Roy Eldridge/trumpet, Johnny Griffin/tenor sax and Milt Jackson/vibes. Four songs are the jam fare - "Billie's Bounce," "Montreux Blues I," "Lester Leaps In" and "Montreux Blues II."

Roy Eldridge '77, with trumpeter Eldridge joined by Oscar Peterson/piano, Niels Pedersen/bass and Bobby Durham/drums. The set includes "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea," "I Surrender Dear," "Dale's Wail," "Bye Bye Blackbird" and

“Perdido.”

Oscar Peterson Trio '77 is a rather different type of trio, as the great pianist is joined by two bassists, Ray Brown and Niels Pedersen. Among the nine songs are “Old Folks,” “Indiana,” “There Is No Greater Love,” “Teach Me Tonight” and “Sweet Georgia Brown.”

Mary Lou Williams '78 is a solo piano concert, featuring Williams on eight songs, including the opening medley “The Lord Is Heavy/Fandangle/N.G. Blues/For The Figs/Baby Bear Boogie/Roll ‘Em,” plus “Over The Rainbow,” “Offertory Meditation,” “The Man I Love,” “Tea For Two,” “What’s Your Story Morning Glory” and “Honeysuckle Rose.”

The others in the series are **Ray Bryant '77, Milt Jackson & Ray Brown '77** and **Ella & Basie (The Perfect Match) '79**.

Then, in March of this year some more titles were issued in the series, including **Jazz at the Philharmonic '77, Dizzy Gillespie Sextet '77, Clark Terry Sextet '77, Eddie Lockjaw Davis '77, Tommy Flanagan Trio '77** and **Oscar Peterson Solo '75**. From what I have seen these all come with choices of stereo, DTS Surround Sound or Dolby 5.1.

For more information on the series, you can go to www.eaglerockent.com, and somehow from there you need to try to land on Norman Granz Jazz at the Philharmonic.

If no luck, try Amazon. *Bill Wahl*

GENUINE HOUSEROCKIN' CHRISTMAS

ALLIGATOR RECORDS
REPRINTED FROM OUR

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003 ISSUE

Trimming the tree, wrapping presents, a few friends over for some cheer, a full-blown Yuletide bash- what could enhance a blues lover’s holiday scene more than tracks from a tough roster of artists? Originals, for one thing. With a couple of exceptions, the fare on Genuine Houserockin’ Christmas is self-penned by the respective artists and reflects the character of each. It lays out like this- deep double-entendre from Little Ed & The Blues Imperials, innocently titled “Christmas Time”, sassy seduction from Shemekia Copeland, “Stay A Little Longer, Santa”, rocking harp courtesy

of Carey Bell’s “Christmas Train”, bayou variations courtesy of C.J. Chenier and Marcia Ball, moody swing by way of Roomful Of Blues. If you know the artists, you get the idea. The originality and the strength of the tunes make this a disc that can take over a Christmas playlist. Any Alligator artists not mentioned so far are most likely here too. Blues people, this is holiday cash well spent. *Duane Verh*

DIANA KRALL Christmas Songs VERVE JANE MONHEIT The Season EPIC

The two most universally popular female vocalists in jazz today have recently released their first Christmas albums.

Diana Krall actually released a 3-song EP in 1998 which came with a classy 1999 desk calendar. Those songs, “Jingle Bells,” “Christmas Time Is Here” and “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas” are reprised for this, her first full-length holiday CD. It is possible that at least two of those are the same recordings - but if so, they are mixed much better. The rest of the 12 favorites heard include “Let It Snow,” “I’ll Be Home For Christmas,” “White Christmas,” “Sleigh Ride,” “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town,” “Winter Wonderland,” “The Christmas Song” and one for the following week - “What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve.” The one somewhat lesser-known song included is her version of Irving Berlin’s “Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep.” Krall, accompanying herself on piano, is heard with either Anthony Williams or Russell Malone on guitar, either John Clayton or Ben Wolfe on bass and Jeff Hamilton on drums, plus the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra for most tracks.

Jane Monheit, who is now on a major label with Epic Records, has also released a sweet set of holiday songs. Other than “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas,” “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town” and “Sleigh Ride,” she picked a different set of songs for her offering. The better-known pieces include the above, plus “The Christmas Waltz,” “Moonlight In Vermont” and The Carpenters’ “Merry Christmas Darling.” She does several we don’t

hear too often, including “The Man With The Bag” (a hit for Kay Starr in the 50s), “I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day” and “My Grown Up List,” written by David Foster and Linda Thompson. Jane is accompanied by her regular working quartet with the addition of a 7-piece horn section, which includes Lew Soloff and Andy Snitzer on four cuts and a string section on three others. Vibist David Samuels adds his touch to “The Christmas Waltz.” This comes in both the standard CD and DualDisc versions.

Although both these albums are in a similar vein, the singers themselves are quite different in that Monheit sings with more drama than the naturally laid back Krall. They both handle these holiday chestnuts very well and the backing is top notch. If you are getting really sick of hearing Mannheim Steamroller or whatever when you go to the parents’, in-laws’ or grandparents’ homes for the holiday season, you might want to lay one or both of these on them to make your season brighter. I’m sure they will all like either one. I pretty much like them both about the same, hence the alphabetical order for the review.

For more info on these, go to www.ververecords.com for the Krall, or www.epicrecords.com for the Monheit.

Bill Wahl

HONEYBOY EDWARDS Honeyboy

FREE RANGE PICTURES DVD

This DVD chronicles the life and times of one of the last living great Delta bluesmen - David “Honeyboy” Edwards. It has been out a few years, but I just picked up a copy when I recently saw Honeyboy in an informal concert performance at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Throughout the movie Honeyboy recounts so many aspects of his past, the early days in Mississippi and stories of many other Delta bluesmen such as Robert Johnson, Big Joe Williams and others, that the viewer gets a big lesson in an important chapter in Blues history in 84 thoroughly-enjoyable minutes.

Some of what he covers includes playing a little guitar for Big Joe after which Williams said “I can learn you how to play.” Then he recalls how the two hooked up and hit the road together, but how Joe liked to “fight all

the time.”

He talks about things like gambling, hopping freight trains, playing on the street, laying with women and life in the deep south.

Both he and B.B. King have segments where they talk about life as a sharecropper - what a sharecropper actually was, how it all worked (the sharecroppers did all the work) and the like.

In addition to B.B., there are appearances by Willie Foster and Waymon Meeks who add more discourse and offer their own live performances.

Honeyboy traces his travels that eventually had him landing in Chicago, and he covers many aspects of Blues in Chicago and some of its players, such as Muddy Waters and Howlin Wolf, how much he missed Little Walter after he died in 1968, and then the same again after losing his wife. Now 90 and still living in Chicago, Honeyboy is still here, but all his old friends are gone.

He fondly speaks of Michael Frank of Earwig Records, who befriended him many years ago and has been his manager since 1975.

During the movie you'll also see some clips with interesting and informative input from Alligator Records founder and president Bruce Iglauer. Throughout the movie Honeyboy plays and sings, and it comes to your home with fantastic audio and video quality.

Honeyboy Edwards is a great storyteller, and he keeps you captivated throughout this DVD.

There have been many documentaries on the blues, but **Honeyboy**, released in 2002, may just be the best one I have seen.

A must have for anyone who is into the blues.

Bill Wahl

GERRY GARCIA Live At Shoreline RHINO DVD

Gerry Garcia fans will want to get their hands on this just-released concert DVD shot at Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountainview, California. The 1990 concert featured Garcia's band, which included Melvin Seals on Keyboards and Hammond organ, bassist John Kahn, drummer David Kemper and background singers Gloria Jones and Jackie LaBranch. The program is a mixed bag of cover material. Among

the 14 songs are two motown classics, "How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You" and "I Second That Emotion," Peter Tosh's "Stop That Train," the Beatles' "Dear Prudence," Van Morrison's "It Stoned Me," two from Bob Dylan, "Tangled Up In Blue" and "I Shall Be Released" and a version "That Lucky Old Sun," originally a hit for Frankie Laine in 1949, and the blues "Think."

The band is in good form mixing R&B, blues and rock with a gospel tinge delivered by the singers. The quality of the video is good, especially when focused on closeups of Garcia either singing or playing - which is what you will see most of the time. The audio quality in Dolby 5.1 is very clean, but I found the recording level low compared with other DVDs. Crank it up and boost the bass a bit.

The DVD extras include a Blair Jackson interview with Robert Hunter, a mini-documentary, interviews with band members and photo galleries.

Bill Wahl

GERRY GARCIA The Gerry Garcia Collection Vol. 1

LEGION OF MARY RHINO CD SET

In 1974 Grateful Dead guitarist/vocalist Gerry Garcia formed a band known as Legion of Mary for a seven month concert tour. He had Merl Saunders/keyboards, Martin Fierro/sax and flute, John Kahn/bass and Ron Tutt/drums on board for this jazzy/bluesy voyage which produced the 14 songs on this 2-CD set. Most of the songs were recorded at Great American Music Hall in San Francisco and Keystone Berkeley, which was near the UC Berkeley campus. Opening with Bob Dylan's "Tough Mama" and closing with the Holland/Dozier/Holland soul classic "How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You," the band covers blues and soul/R&B songs in between such as "I Second That Emotion," "Mystery Train" and "Neighbor, Neighbor." They also do Robbie Robertson's (The Band) "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," Ray Charles' "Talkin' About You" and Chuck Berry's "Let It Rock," plus an instrumental jam version of Smokey Robinson's "Since I Lost My Baby." Garcia was undoubtedly having fun here with tunes he liked written by oth-

ers.

There are some audio glitches here and there, but as far as I know this music has never been released other than bootleg recordings, so Garcia fans will welcome this rare set, regardless.

Bill Wahl

BILL EVANS The Complete Village Vanguard Recordings, 1961

RIVERSIDE RECORDS BOX SET

One of the greatest jazz trios of all time recorded just two studio albums, both for the Riverside label, and this live set at New York's Village Vanguard. It was a magic Sunday as piano great Bill Evans, bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian played a total of 22 songs between the two afternoon matinee sets and the two evening shows. The sheer melodic beauty, creative sensitivity and interplay between these three musicians set them apart from any other piano trios of the time.

As good as their studio albums were, those being **Portrait In Jazz** (1959) and **Explorations** (1961), these live Vanguard recordings to my ears are even better. It is often the case with jazz, especially when you have a group that works so well together, as the audience and the nightclub atmosphere spurs creativity much better than the more sterile and empty confines of a recording studio. The original release of some of these cuts, **Sunday At The Village Vanguard**, is long out of print, but Fantasy/Riverside did reissue most of this music on the CD version of that album and **Waltz for Debby**. What makes this set stand out, in addition to the improved sound, is the fact that the music is presented in the exact order as it was recorded. The tapes kept rolling between songs and you hear it all here, such as the final audience reaction- no breaks, no fadeouts. You even hear the "Few Final Bars" at the end of disc 3. They also restored the original room sound and ambience as originally recorded, and included the original take of Gloria's Step," the first song of the day which was flawed by a short power outage. It is the first U.S. release of that take. But we get a full 5:41 of the song before it happened.

Some of the songs are repeated in different sets. So what you hear are

anywhere from one to three versions of "Gloria's Step," "Alice in Wonderland," "My Foolish Heart," "All of You," "My Romance," "Some Other Time," "Solar," "My Man's Gone Now," "Detour Ahead," "Waltz For Debby," "Porgy (I Loves You Porgy)," and "Milestones." This set sounds fantastic due to the remastering in analog utilizing 20-bit K2 Super Coding System.

A tragic car accident just 10 days after this music was recorded took the life of Scott LaFaro, one of the finest bassists jazz has ever known. This excellent set will be a welcome addition to the collection of any Bill Evans fan, particularly those who loved this magnificent under-recorded, short-lived trio with La Faro and Motian. *Bill Wahl*

LIZZ WRIGHT

Dreaming Wide Awake

VERVE FORECAST

As good as vocalist Lizz Wright's first album, **Salt** (also on Verve Forecast), was, her second effort is several notches better.

Albums like this don't come around very often. I'll give you an example. As you can imagine, we receive a ton of CDs to review. I take many road trips, and I always take a box of 30 recent releases for the drive. On a recent trip from Cleveland to Buffalo I popped this one in after ejecting five others partway through. It was about halfway into the 4-hour drive. I didn't take it out until I returned home three days later, and my CD player is never off or turned down. It is that good. I'm not sure how many times it played over and over, but I can tell you that it started out sounding really good...and it just got better each time.

Wright's rich, smooth alto voice is a joy all unto itself. Add her choice of material, the arrangements, her majestic delivery and the variety of genres she travels in and out of and the result is an album that transcends all musical barriers and stereotypes. She can not be pigeonholed. Opening with a delta blues version of "Taste Of Honey," she continues on delving into jazz, R&B, gospel, and folk with seamless ease. She even voyages into bluegrass with a version of Neil Young's "Old Man."

One thing I noticed after a while is that while her band contains keyboards, guitar, bass and drums – and she has several guest musicians in-

cluding guitarist Bill Frisell – there are no solos on the album. When she is not singing, only comping is heard. Talk about space! Another song she covers is the '60s anthem "Get Together" (you know...come on people now...) recorded by a few bands and made famous by The Youngbloods. She wrote three songs and does others contributed by Marc Anthony Thompson and Jesse Harris (who wrote four songs for Norah Jones' first album - including "Don't Know Why").

There are a dozen songs on **Dreaming Wide Awake** and 12 of them are absolute standouts. If everyone who bought Norah Jones' first album bought this one, Lizz Wright would get just what she deserves. And she certainly deserves some Grammys for this as well. Unless you are an absolute jazz or blues purist, think about this disc not only for yourself, but as a gift for close friends as well. Oh yes...and crank it up...it is even better that way.

Bill Wahl

MILES DAVIS

'Round About Midnight:

Legacy Edition

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Within one day of Miles' signing with Columbia Records in 1955, the sessions for his first album, **'Round About Midnight** began. The personnel in the quintet are all hierarchy in the history of jazz - Miles, John Coltrane, Red Garland, Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones. Miles' first Columbia album would begin a long and prolific recording career with the label, which in recent years has been releasing a slew of excellent reissues and boxed sets for Davis through its Legacy division utilizing up-to-the-minute improvements in sound technology.

The original album contained six songs taken from three recording sessions in New York in '55 and '56: the title track, "Ah-Leu-Cha," "All of You," "Bye Bye Blackbird," "Tadd's Delight" and "Dear Old Stockholm." This new release in the Legacy Edition series of expanded releases in 2-CD sets offers four more tunes from the same three sessions which were not on the original album, but were on the 2001 CD version and were also released on other compilation albums.

Disc two brings us nine more gems - and all of them are live in concert.

The opening version of "Round Midnight" features Miles with Zoot Sims, Gerry Mulligan, Thelonious Monk, Percy Heath and Connie Kay at the '55 Newport Jazz Festival, and it was previously released on a Newport tribute album. The remaining eight feature the same personnel as on the **Round Midnight** album (Cotrone and all mentioned above), and are previously unreleased. All were recorded in 1956 in California at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, and it is a smokin' set to say the least. Included are "Walkin'," "Woody 'N You," "Salt Peanuts," "Chance It" (aka Max Is Making Wax) and a very short version of "The Theme." Then there is the gorgeous version of the ballad "It Never Entered My Mind." Simply put, this quintet with Coltrane was one hell of a band! All of the music on disc two was recently restored by noted sound master Malcolm Cecil.

So, if you already have the **'Round Midnight** album on CD, you might want to consider an upgrade. With the Legacy Edition you get all the songs from the original album, plus an extra CD, 40 more minutes of music (most of which is previously unreleased), all with great sound quality and a color booklet with rare photos, George Avakian's original 1957 liner notes and more notes from Bob Blumenthal penned for the 2001 CD release and this set.

A great gift for any Miles Davis fan, yourself included if you fit that category. Watch for more Legacy Editions in the future. Congrats go out again to the folks at Legacy for their fine re-issue productions. *Bill Wahl*

CAT STEVENS

Majikat

EAGLE VISION DVD

Here is another one for all the baby boomers out there. I must admit, I am one of them. I first became aware of Cat Stevens when he opened as a solo act for a Moody Blues concert in Buffalo many, many years ago. Though unknown in the U.S., he pretty much had the entire audience enthralled for his entire set, and I believe they (we) demanded an encore. The rest is history. Stevens had 14 Top 40 singles, and 7 Top 10 albums between 1971 and 1977. This is the first ever concert DVD of one of the most successful solo performers of all time. Re-

corded on his Majikat tour in 1976, it captures the pop-folk artist in top form in Williamsburg, Virginia. He is backed by a 7-piece band and background singers as he plays both acoustic guitar and grand piano. It would be just a year and a half later that he would change his name to Yusuf Islam and leave the music business completely.

He sings many of his hits, including "Moonshadow," "Where Do The Children Play," "Hard Headed Woman," "Miles From Nowhere," "Lady D' Arbanville," "Tuesday's Dead," "Oh Very Young," "Sad Lisa," "Father & Son," "Peace Train" and many more.

The bonus material includes five more live songs, three of which are from 1971, and a recent 35-minute interview during which he answers many questions explaining why he walked away from an incredible career and what he is doing today, a "Father & Son" Island Records promo video and more. Both the video and audio quality are very good, and the Dolby 5.1 and DTS sound mixes are warm and full.

There is no question that this would more than please anyone who was ever a fan of Cat Stevens, and there are many millions of them (us) out there.

Bill Wahl

DUKE ELLINGTON

Love You Madly

A Concert Of Sacred Music at Grace Cathedral

EAGLE ROCK DVD

Any Duke Ellington fan out there will want to get their hands on this just-released DVD of prime Duke from two programs presented by Ralph J. Gleason in the mid '60s. The first is **I Love You Madly**, a documentary exploring the life and legacy of the Duke, chock full of performances and interview clips. We see him as he prepares for the Concert of Sacred Music as well as footage of his band at Basin Street West in San Francisco and the Monterey Jazz Festival, plus clips from actual recording sessions. You even see how he tries to get some rest in the dressing room during a break between sets at a live gig. A fantastic look into the Duke's life at the time.

Part 2 of the DVD presents the historic **Concert of Sacred Music performed live at Grace Cathedral** in San

Francisco. It was the first of a series of sacred concerts Ellington would perform in various churches in different cities. The concert combines jazz with classical music, spirituals, gospel, blues and dance, and the orchestra is joined by several guests, including Jon Hendricks, Esther Marrow, the Herman McCoy Choir and tap dancer Bunny Briggs. The closing piece, "David Danced Before The Lord," is a showcase for Briggs and Hendricks.

These programs are of great historical importance and have never been previously available on DVD.

Presented in the original black and white format, the audio choices are mono and Dolby Digital Stereo. The quality of both audio and video is quite good. You really can't go wrong with this for any fan of the Duke.

Bill Wahl

TRAFFIC

The Last Great Traffic Jam EPIC RECORDS DVD

This one is a baby boomer's delight. I first became a fan of Stevie Winwood through his work with the Spencer Davis Group (remember "Gimme Some Lovin'") and continued to be from the first Traffic album in '67 until their jazzy "Low Spark of High Heel Boys" era. Unfortunately, Winwood's post-Traffic work did little for me, but the 1994 Traffic reunion tour again sparked my interest. Since I was not able to see them in a concert on that tour, this recent release of the DVD from the tour grabbed my attention once again.

At the time of this tour, Chris Wood (saxes, flute and keyboards) had passed away. Dave Mason was long gone as he left the band early on to pursue a solo career. But two of the original members, Winwood and drummer Jim Capaldi, were on hand; and although Wood is missed, Randall Bramlett does a fine job on saxes, flutes and keyboards, and the band is rounded out by guitarist Mike McEvoy and drummer/percussionist Walfredo Reyes Jr. Winwood plays Hammond B3 organ, Yamaha grand piano, guitar, and sings lead on all but "Light Up Or Leave Me Alone," which is sung by Capaldi. The bottom line here is....they sound fantastic. Often when you see reunions like this, the result is disappointing, or worse. Winwood seems to be having a great time returning to the

roots, so to speak, after too many years in a more pop vein where his musical talents as an instrumentalist were all but lost. He and Capaldi spark the new members and the result is every bit as satisfying as the recent Cream reunion (see our November '05 issue), and perhaps even more so for those who were heavily into Traffic.

While the songs are heard in full, sometimes the video shifts to crowd scenes from the concert, or from the '60s, or people laying in a puddle of mud, or sometimes psychedelic patterns, black and white closeups, bus scenes or other assorted odd things. It is not bothersome at all, as it could have been if not done right. The only fault I can find is that as Winwood builds on his piano solo on "Glad," and he is well into it, the song just stops and segues to a dressing room scene. Since the same thing happens on the audio CD side of the DualDisc version (except that on the DD the piano solo is faded-out), I'd have to think some kind of technical problem caused them to make the cut. Although I do believe that footage from several different concerts were used here, perhaps that was the best footage of the song...who knows? But, Winwood gets into more great solos, such as on the rock-turns-to-jazz "Low Spark of High Heel Boys" One extra treat is the appearance of Gerry Garcia on guitar when he played "Dear Mr. Fantasy" at the San Francisco concert. Another treat is the comic antics of Capaldi scattered throughout. Sadly, He passed away in January of this year before he could see the worldwide release of this video.

Some of the other songs heard are "Pearly Queen," "Medicated Goo," "Mozambique" (a jazzy/Santana-ish excursion), "Light Up Or Leave Me Alone," "40,000 Headmen." and "John Barleycorn (Must Die)," which is a trio with Winwood on acoustic guitar, Bramlett on flute and Capaldi on tambourine/second vocals. The closing song is the above-mentioned "Gimme Some Lovin." Both the audio and video is fantastic, with sound choices in stereo or Dolby 5.1 surround. You also get a 3-song CD recorded in 1994 which sounds like a practice session with only Winwood and Capaldi. It says on the back that you can use the CD to unlock bonus video footage by going to www.stevewinwood.com. I'm not sure what they are talking about, but

if you go there you can view a few clips from the video if you want to check it out. Look for them in the news section to the left.

This DVD has been dedicated to Chris Wood, Gerry Garcia, former Traffic percussionist Reebop Kwaku Baah and, in Winwood's words, "To the man without whom Traffic could never be: my lifelong friend Jim Capaldi."

In closing...if you are over 50 or so, I'd advise against the possible temptation to track down a tab of acid or whatever to enjoy the experience. The occasional psychedelic patterns and things swirling about might make you toss your cookies. Actually, that would probably be the least of your problems. Trust me, this is thoroughly enjoyable without any outside help whatsoever.

Bill Wahl

Traffic: DualDisc Version

Epic Records has also issued a DualDisc of the music from the Traffic video if you only care about the audio. It is a two disc set - Disc 1, a CD, contains the first 6 songs from the video; Disc 2 - the 2-sided DualDisc, contains the remaining 5 on the CD side. The DVD side of the DualDisc contains all 11 songs in enhanced stereo, a traffic interview with Winwood and Capaldi and rare archival footage and photos. The DVD video reviewed above does not contain the interview, photos or archival footage - it is just the concert.

-BW

STEVE WINWOOD

About Time

EPIC RECORDS DUALDISC

Steve Winwood's 1993 CD *About Time*, which was released on his own label Wincraft Records, has been released by Epic Records as a 2-disc CD/Dualdisc set. I had no idea this album ever existed until I came across this DD version last month. The music here is primo Winwood - the kind of stuff he was known for with Spencer Davis and Traffic, but better. Here he covers jazz, rock, funk, R&B and latin, as well as Afro, Jamaican and Caribbean Island styles and rhythms. There is absolutely nothing pop about any of the music here. What a treat!

Apparently after his 1997 album (*Junction Seven*) he got fed up with feeding into the hit parade and decided to go back to the roots - something his

longtime fans have been yearning for. He built this album on the foundation of an organ trio - Hammond B3 with guitar and drums. There is no bass player - he "kicks bass" like the old organ masters such as Jimmy Smith, Jack McDuff and others (or he may be doing the bass with his left hand), who were obviously his early influences. Applying this kind of trio to the styles and rhythms mentioned above results in some outstanding music. Speaking of kicking, I'm kicking myself for missing his recent House of Blues concert. But since I had no idea this album existed, I presumed he was going to be doing his pop stuff. Oh well, hindsight is still always 20/20.

He's joined here by guitarist Jose Pires de Almeida Neto and drummer Walfredo Reyes Jr., who also plays additional percussion on some tracks. If his name sounds familiar, you just read it in the review of the Traffic concert DVD above. There is also a conga player on 6 of the 11 tracks, a timbale player on the same 6, and a saxophonist/flautist who plays on 4. All the songs were written or co-written by Winwood, except for Timmy Thomas' R&B gem "Why Can't We Live Together," which was also done by Sade. There is no question that those into the "real" Stevie Winwood would love this album, as well as Santana fans and a host of others into rhythmically creative music.

This DualDisc version contains the original 11 songs on Disc 1 (a CD) of the 2-disc set. The second disc, the DualDisc, contains 3 bonus tracks - live versions of his band playing Traffic's "Dear Mr. Fantasy," "Why Can't We Live Together" and Jimi Hendrix' "Voodoo Chile" on the CD side. The DVD side contains the entire album and the bonus tracks in enhanced stereo, plus live concert videos of the band - one at the Austin City Limits Festival in Austin Texas and two at the Sanoma Jazz Festival in California. Great stuff here, and for a list price of 18.99 you sure get a lot of bang for your buck. The DualDisc is in fact only 2 bucks and a penny more than the original straight CD version. You can sample it at www.stevewinwood.com. Navigate yourself to the solo albums and via *discography* click on this one.

A first rate gift. Grab one for yourself too! If you don't like it, you can email me and tell me I'm a moron.

Bill Wahl

FRANK SINATRA The Essential Frank Sinatra & Tommy Dorsey Orchestra BLUEBIRD/LEGACY CD SET

Part of a series of Legacy's "Essential" recordings, this two-disc set spotlights 44 tunes originally recorded for RCA Victor by Frank Sinatra during the short time he was with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra during 1940-1942.

Sinatra left the floundering Harry James band in 1940 to become the new male vocalist for Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra. This set culls the very best of their recordings during a time when 25-year old Sinatra began learning the essence of vocal phrasing.

As he sings Disc One gems such as "I'll Be Seeing You," "Stardust," "I'll Never Smile Again" and other songs, Sinatra doesn't take many chances or improvise his vocals as that may have interfered with the precision of the charts. Ditto for Disc Two where you'll enjoy highlights such as "Everything Happens To Me," "Blue Skies," "Street of Dreams, and 18 other tunes.

This isn't the best Sinatra collection available but it offers samples of the singer at the beginning of his more than five-decade career and nicely documents his collaboration with the Dorsey band, featuring charts (some during Dorsey's brief flirtation with a string section) that make this 2-CD set a true listening treasure. A 12-page liner booklet contains historic photos, a written intro by Sinatra's daughter, Nancy, and notes by Sinatra historian Charles L. Granata.

Nancy Ann Lee

CANDY DULFER Live At Montreux 2002 EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

Smooth jazz and funk fans should enjoy this brand new concert video from Dutch alto saxophonist Candy Dulfer. While I have not much from her own albums (she has seven) I have been impressed with her work with others - especially on one of Van Morrison's albums - his 1993 double live set *A Night In San Francisco*. She's also opened for Madonna, played with Pink Floyd, Aretha, Blondie and Prince among others. This concert at the 2002 Montreux Jazz Festival features Dulfer on lead vocals and alto sax with a second front line singer, Monique Baker, and a tight, very funky band made up, I would

guess, mostly of Europeans...that's judging by their names. The instrumentation, besides Dulfer, is sax, trumpet, guitar, bass guitar, two keyboard players and drums.

Her 2002 set here includes originals covering ballads, funk and smooth jazz. The bonus tracks from the 1998 Montreux are just as funky as she mixes originals with her smooth jazz version of the Isley Brothers' "For The Love Of You" and Bonnie Raitt's "I Can't Make You Love Me," which she does instrumentally first, then hints at George Michael's version as she adds a second vocal part to that of Roger Happel (one of her keyboard players). A very nice job - I'm sure Bonnie approved.

A well rounded set from Candy Dulfer offering much more than I expected. She can be quite soulful for a very cute, blonde white girl from Holland. And yes...I've got to throw this in...she is by no means hard to look at!

The sound and video quality is superb throughout. The audio choices include Stereo, Dolby Surround 5.1 and DTS.

Bill Wahl

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Festival! The Newport Folk Festival film (1963-1966) EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

Eagle Rock has just released this documentary film released in 1967 featuring highlights from the 1963-1966 Newport Folk Festivals. While much of the focus is on folk music and bluegrass, there are several blues performances from the likes of Howlin' Wolf, Mississippi John Hurt, Son House, Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee, Fred McDowell, Mike Bloomfield and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band.

The list of the other musicians seen performing here reads like a who's who of the 60s folk and country music scene - such as Bob Dylan, Peter, Paul & Mary, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Judy Collins, Donovan, Johnny Cash, Jim Kweskin & the Jug Band, Odetta and many others. Then there are some other treats like the Ed Young Fife and Drum Corps, the Sacred Harp Singers, the Staple Singers and others.

Keep in mind that this is a documentary, so you don't see full songs as you were watching a concert. Rather

you'll see parts of songs, mostly while viewing the performer, but sometimes the music is over shots of the festival-goers watching the shows, milling about or waking up squinting to the morning sun in their sleeping bags. You'll also get some chatter from people about the meaning of folk music, the issues of the time and the like. And you'll get some words from some of the performers, like Son House and Mike Bloomfield on playing the blues. House says "The blues don't call for no jumpin'". If it goes to jumpin', that ain't the blues." There are many notable blues clips here, including Howlin' Wolf doing "Howlin' For My Darlin'," after which it thunders and pours rain.

A very interesting documentary, shot in B&W of course, but good quality videos and decent sound considering the timeframe. A good choice for anyone into the 60s folk & blues scene.

Bill Wahl

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

Music Festival 2004 RHINO DVD SET

If diversity fits the musical tastes of someone on your gift list, think about this live concert 2-DVD set shot at the 2004 Austin City Limits Music Festival. Several quite listenable and very diverse indie rock bands are heard along with The Neville Brothers, Rosanne Cash, Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Shelby Lynne, Sheryl Crow, Ben Harper, Los Lonely Boys and many others. The Blind Boys, Neville Brothers and Ben Harper are among my favorites, along with Anastasio's power jazz-funk performance with a hot band which includes a horn section. There are also a number of people I've never heard of that I'd like to hear more from. Two of these are Howie Day, a solo guitarist/singer from Maine who, as the song progresses, becomes a one man band via his percussive guitar slapping and creative use of a slew of foot pedals. Then there is the sultry pianist/singer Rachael Yamagata, and also a band known as Calexico, who I could only describe as flamenco rock. Both the audio and video quality are very good, with stereo and Dolby 5.1 audio choices.

The 2004 Austin City Limits Festival was the fourth annual event, and it drew over 70,000 people listening to over 130 bands performing on eight

stages in Austin Texas - a city which has over the years become one hell of a live music mecca. Rhino has also released a single CD companion to the video, but it is a paired down version with 16 songs to the video version's 24. Yes...diversity is definitely the key word for this one.

Bill Wahl

THE 60S ROCK EXPERIENCE

Shout! Factory Box Set

This 3-CD set packaged in a digibook longbox offers 59 hits from the 60s (a few are early 70s) that will bring back some memories for those old enough to remember them. Names such as Lovin' Spoonful, The Kinks, Steppenwolf, The Mamas & The Papas, The Turtles, Van Morrison, Percy Sledge, The Supremes, Canned Heat, Paul Revere & The Raiders, Procol Harum, The Byrds, Grateful Dead, The Chambers Brothers, Edwin Starr, The Animals, The Temptations and many more are represented. All the songs were bonafide charted pop hits - most in the Top Ten, so you won't find some people you might think of when the 60s come to mind - such as Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix. But the top pop stuff is certainly well covered. The attached 36-page color booklet offers a retrospective on the era, some band pictures, festival crowd scenes and the song listings as well as chart ranking for each song. I believe this set was originally a PBS pledge drive item. A great nostalgia trip for baby boomers.

Bill Wahl

ERIC CLAPTON/ DAVID SANBORN/ MARCUS MILLER/ JOE SAMPLE/STEVE GADD

Legends Live At Montreux '97 EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

So what happens when you mix a blues/rock guitar star with four stars of the light jazz genre? Well, you get a little bit of everything.

Putting these five guys with heavy credentials together gives you some blues, some acoustic jazz, some funk and some light jazz - all in one show. There is even some ragtime with Sample going solo on the Steinway grand for a version of "Shreveport Stomp." There is no doubt that all these guys can play, and they play very well.

Those into Clapton will get to hear him stretch out like rarely before.

MILES DAVIS QUINTET The Legendary Prestige Quintet Sessions

PRESTIGE/CONCORD BOXED SET

More years ago than I'd care to count at this point, back when I was first building a jazz LP collection, I stumbled upon two Miles Davis records at a garage sale. They were the original Prestige pressings of the albums "Relaxin' With The Miles Davis Quintet" and "Cookin' With The Miles Davis Quintet." What great stuff...had to pick up the other two in the series, "Workin'..." and "Steamin'..." asap. The albums caused me to get heavily into both Miles and Coltrane at the very same time...and then go on to spend a lot of money as a result.

This 4 CD set brings together all the music from those four albums, plus "The New Miles Davis Quintet" all in one package. All five albums were recorded in three long, coffee-filled sessions in late '55 and '56 - just before Miles moved over to Columbia Records. This was Miles' great quintet (well, one of them) which included Coltrane on tenor sax with the majestic rhythm section of Red Garland/piano, Paul Chambers/bass and Philly Joe Jones/drums. They more or less merged bop with cool jazz and came up with cool bop (I don't think that is a legal term, but let's use it anyway—just don't call the cops).

Only a handful of the songs were penned by Miles...three versions of "The Theme" plus "Four," "Half Nelson" and "Tune Up." Coltrane wrote one, "Trane's Slow Blues." Other than that, the rest are covers, such as "My Funny Valentine," "Oleo," "If I Were a Bell," "Round Midnight," "Salt Peanuts," "There Is No Greater Love," "Woody'N You," "Well You Needn't" and more...much more. All 32 songs from those sessions were recorded by Rudy Van Gelder at his New Jersey studio and are sounding better than ever in this latest CD incarnation. In fact, they might just be as good as pristine vinyl versions, though I'm sure some serious audiophiles will probably disagree. I've not heard gold versions, if they exist.

Disc 4 contains four tracks recorded live on the Tonight Show with Steve Allen in '55; two more recorded live at

When he does solo, rather than trying to sound like a jazz guitarist, he just plays like Clapton...but better. And Sanborn gets down when he's playing the blues, as we all know he's capable of. In short, these guys have no producers or pencil pushers telling them what to do, or how to play. Clapton does sing several too.

A major highlight is the medley beginning with Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood," played by Marcus Miller on bass clarinet, Sample on the grand and Sanborn...then Miller's bass clarinet gently segues into Clapton's "Layla," which is one that Clapton sings as he plays acoustic guitar with Sample on the grand again, plus Sanborn and Gadd. After that, the show closes with a jazz/blues version of "Every Day I Have The Blues," with another Clapton vocal.

In Short - a very different kind of show played by 5 guys who have no trouble pulling it off. The video is good, the sound is very good and the music is even better. Sound offerings are stereo, Dolby 5.1 and DTS. A good gift for a variety of people. **Bill Wahl**

NOISEBUSTER NOISE CANCELLING HEADPHONES

How often do you fly? Have you noticed that the headphones you can rent from the airline don't do anything to diminish that annoying sucking noise from the jet engines? It doesn't have to be that way.

Even though I find flying to be a real rush, I don't really do it that often. So it was some time after I got a set of NoiseBuster noise cancelling headphones before I got a chance to use them. But when I did....man - what a difference!

You may have heard of headphones with this technology. Here's how it works - NoiseBuster uses a microphone inside and outside the earcup to listen to the offending noise coming into the ear. Using electronics, the system takes the information from the microphone and uses it to create a noise wave that is identical to, but directly opposite of, the one coming into the ear. This "anti-noise" wave is output through a speaker, also located in the earcup. When the two waves (the offending noise wave and the anti-noise wave) meet, the

noise is significantly reduced. That's pretty much the idea in a nutshell, and all I really need to know.

My first flight with these things was on a plane that had no music or headphone jacks. What a bummer. But I put them on anyway and turned them on to see if they reduced the jetnoise. They sure did, and a lot. The next flight did have music. I put on the included airline adapter that plugs right in to the armrest jacks and low and behold...the music sounded fantastic, while the jet noise was so far in the background it was not bothersome at all. Yup...they really work.

Of course, you can use these things in places other than a jet airliner. You can use them with exercise equipment, mowing the lawn, ob rapid transit commutes - perhaps even the next time you need to drive a tractor.

There are many other companies that make noise-cancelling headphones, but these are the only ones I've had the experience of actually using. I've seen some pretty steep prices for these things, but I don't need \$300 audiophile headphone quality at 30,000 feet. Perhaps some of the pricey ones might sound better, but the fact that these drastically reduce the outside noise and the music sounds good is all I need. Their specs are decent, with a frequency range of 20 - 20,000 HZ. They come with the 3.5mm stereo adapter plug as mentioned and a AAA battery. You have to turn the power on to get the noise cancelling effect. The earcups are comfortable, and achieve a good seal without completely enclosing the ear (which can cause some sweat). They are also lightweight and fold up very small into the included pouch. One note...these are not meant to be your everyday set of headphones at home, but they still sound decent as long as they are turned on.

When I got these, they sold for \$69.95 - a decent price. Now I understand you can get them directly from the company for \$50, but only online at www.noisebuster.net. After December 31, they are supposed to go back to the regular price. You can also buy them at Amazon and other online retailers and at stores at many airports, but you'll probably pay the full price.

A great holiday gift for a traveler.

Bill Wahl

the Blue Note in Philly in '56; and three more recorded live at the Café Bohemia in New York in '58, with Bill Evans replacing Garland at the piano. All ten cuts are previously unreleased and actually sound decent considering the sources. The enhanced portion of Disc 4 contains transcriptions of four of Miles' trumpet solos.

The longbox holding the CDs also contains a 42 page book loaded with photos, plus an essay from Bob Blumenthal and all the recording info you should need. All the music here is presented as it was recorded, session by session, rather than the way it appeared on the five albums as previously released. This set would be a fantastic treat for any Miles Davis fan...anywhere...anytime. **Bill Wahl**

FATS WALLER

If You Have to Ask,

You Ain't Got It

BLUEBIRD/LEGACY 3-CD SET

Thomas "Fats" Waller was one of the iconic figures of the first quarter century of Jazz and has been heavily reissued over the years. As a result of the Sony/BMG merger, Bluebird/Legacy is releasing a three CD retrospective eponymously titled after the famed singer-pianist-composer. Each disc has twenty-two selections and is thematically organized.

A good many of the performances are by Fats Waller and Rhythm, a celebrated sextet whose personnel included (over the years) guitarist Al Casey, clarinetist Gene Sedric, Bill Coleman and more celebrated Herman Autrey on trumpet, Cedrick Wallace on bass and Yank Porter, Slick Jones and Arthur Trappier on drums. Many of the selections on these discs are in this format with Waller featured singing and on piano and the various horn players getting short solo space; and while a bit formula-based, Waller's ebullient vocals and dazzling piano playing sustain the listener's interest. There are a number of selections from the forties that have Waller in a big and setting and some solo instrumentals as well.

The first of the three discs is devoted to songs that Waller composed, often in the company of Andy Razaf or others. When going through the titles one is struck by the fact that he not only gave us such well known songs associated with him such as *Honeysuckle Rose* and

Ain't Misbehavin', but also such classics as *Our Love Was Meant to Be*, *Squeeze Me* (with Clarence Williams), *The Joint is Jumpin'* (with J.C. Johnson), *Bessie Bessie Bessie*, *Cash for Your Trash* and *Up Jumped You With Love*. Waller brings wit, humor and tenderness to these with his vocals while the numbers swing with considerable Élan.

The Second Disc is all instrumental, opening with a solo pipe organ instrumental rendition of *St. Louis Blues* along with a couple other numbers on the pipe organ. The next ten performances are features that display his considerable mastery of the stride piano including such dazzling Waller originals as *Numb Fingers*, *Smashing Thirds*, and *African Ripples*, along with renditions of Hoagy Carmichael's *Star Dust* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, concluding with a stunning rendition of James P. Johnson's classic stride composition, *Carolina Shout*. After several group instrumentals, Waller then is heard on electric organ on a couple of originals, including *Jitterbug Waltz*, which show his reflective side as a composer. The instrumental disc concludes with an all star group swinging on *Honeysuckle Rose*.

The final disc is devoted to Waller's performances of songs from Tin Pan Alley. Waller was celebrated for his ability to take some of the most dreadful songs and make musical magic, all the while mocking the material, but not everything he recorded from Tin Pan Alley would be dross in the hands of others. So while some of these tunes may be remembered solely because of Waller, such as *Hold Tight (Want Some Seafood, Mama)*, many of the tunes here are pretty well known including (*I'll Be Glad When You're Dead*) *You Rascal You* (an All Star performance with Waller on piano behind Jack Teagarden), *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter*, *Dinah*, *Christopher Columbus*, *Darktown Strutters Ball*, *Your Feet's Too Big*, and *T'aint Nobody's Biz-Ness If I Do*. Waller attacks these with his usual mix of ebullient vocals, buoyant stride piano with the strong swing backing of his Rhythm and the other supporting musicians.

Although I worked off an advance copy of the discs to get this done in time, the actual release (set for 9/26/06) will also include a 100-page booklet with extensive liner notes penned by Dan

Morganstern and scanned reproductions of photographs from the collection of Waller's last manager, Ed Kirkeby. The three discs in this set provide a solid overview of a legendary jazz performer and will serve as a basic Waller release for a well-rounded jazz collection.

Ron Weinstock

OTIS RUSH & FRIENDS

Live At Montroux 1986

EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

& EAGLE RECORDS CD

There is no question about it, Otis Rush is one bluesman I can never get enough of.

To quote our own Ron Weinstock in a recent review of a Rush reissue on Delmark first time..."One of many blues artists in the post-B.B. King style....Rush, a Mississippi native, moved to Chicago and became part of the West Side Chicago blues scene playing some blistering guitar and singing with great fervor." Right, while some blues artists are obviously more gifted in either their guitar or vocal work, Rush is equally adept at both. This mix adds up to a performer who is on top of his game both in the studio or in a live club or concert setting. He's influenced many other bluesmen, and also many big blues-rock names such as Eric Clapton (in a big way) Peter Green, Jeff Beck, Mike Bloomfield, Stevie Ray Vaughan and many others.

Apparently Clapton was instrumental in setting up this Rush appearance at Montroux. Rush and his band play a driving, spirited set including "You Don't Love Me," Otis originals "Tops," and "Right Place, Wrong Time," Albert King's "Natural Ball," and T-Bone Walker's "Mean Old World." Then there is more fun in store as Clapton joins Rush and company for "Crosscut Saw" and two more Rush originals, "Double Trouble" and "All Your Love (I Miss Loving)." Then it all steps up a notch as Luther Allison joins Rush and Clapton for a version of "Every Day I Have The Blues."

That's the CD version. Now if you'd rather listen and watch as well, you can pick up the DVD version of this live concert, which offers excellent video and sound in either stereo, Dolby 5.1 Surround or DTS. The program is different too. All the songs from the CD are here, but four additional tracks are added, including the Rush original that closes the set, "If I

Had Any Sense, I'd Go Back Home."

So choose your weapon, but whether it is the CD or DVD version of this show in Switzerland twenty years ago, you'll be in for one fine experience.

Bill Wahl

HERBIE HANCOCK

The Essential Herbie Hancock COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Pianist Herbie Hancock, certainly one of the "household names" in jazz, is well represented in this recent two-CD set from Columbia Legacy.

His early years with Blue Note are covered on 3 of the first 4 tracks - all Hancock classics, "Watermelon Man," "Cantaloupe Island" and "Maiden Voyage." A version of "Round Midnight" from a '64 Sonny Rollins RCA recording is also in there, as they try, for the moment, to stay in chronological order. Then there is one tune with Miles' quintet, "Circle" followed by a later Hancock Blue Note cut from '68 - "The Sorcerer."

Hancock then moved to Warner Bros. and we get one track from **Fat Albert Rotunda**, but none from **Mwandishi** or **Crossings**. The Mwandishi band, however, is represented on "Hidden Shadows" from their **Sextant** album, now on Columbia. The remaining songs on Disc One are "Chameleon" from the **Headhunters** album and "Joanna's Theme" from the **Death Wish** movie soundtrack.

Disc Two opens with "Butterfly" from the Headhunters band's **Thrust** album, followed by two tracks from 1980's **Mr. Hands**, featuring a band that included Jaco Pastorius. In between there is a trio version of "Milestones" with Ron Carter and Tony Williams recorded in 1977. How'd it get in that spot?

Then we get one song from his commercial period from '78 before a wonderful track from a Sony-Japan V.S.O.P studio album (with Hubbard, Shorter, Carter and Williams) titled "Finger Painting." Closing out the proceedings are two more cuts from his commercial funk albums from '80 and '83, "St. Louis Blues" with Stevie Wonder from the CD **Gershwin's World** on Verve (2000), and a solo piano version of Hancock's original "Manhattan" from his 2005 Verve disc **The New Standard**.

Though many could probably do

without the few commercial tracks with vocals and the like, the vast majority of the music here is first rate stuff with many of his most important songs.

Thus, the set serves very well as a Hancock retrospective. *Bill Wahl*

CHICAGO BLUES REUNION

Buried Alive In The Blues OUT OF THE BOX DVD/CD

Simultaneously, while Dylan was electrifying folk music and The Dead and the Airplane were trippin', out San Francisco way, a pack of young white musicians from around Chicago were unknowingly starting a revolution of their own. Braving the rough and ready ghetto bars of the city's South and West Sides, they came to learn the blues from masters still in their prime.

As solid as the set played by keyboardist Barry Goldberg, lead guitarist Harvey Mandel, harmonica ace Corky Siegel and vocalists Nick Gravenites, Tracy Nelson and Sam Lay is on the CD half of this package (and solid it is), the DVD interviews with these same folks plus B.B. King and Buddy Guy are even a greater draw.

The reminiscing is mixed with vintage footage of these cats plus the likes of Muddy Waters, Mike Bloomfield, Paul Butterfield and others working hard onstage and cutting up offstage. The film captures this very special time in the history of modern blues in a rich, warm and informative manner.

The white blues bands that proliferated in the '70s and beyond owe much to this crew who showed that it could be done for real. Few releases rate the tag of "must have" like this one.

Duane Verh

COUNT BASIE BIG BAND '77

Norman Granz' Jazz in Montreux Eagle Rock Entertainment DVD

William "Count" Basie (1904—1984) was one of the greatest bandleaders in the history of jazz. His legendary band is captured on this color DVD in a July 15, 1977 performance (about 55 minutes) at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Basie leads from the piano and many of the band's fine musicians are spotlighted, including trombonist Al Grey, rhythm guitarist Freddie Green, trumpeter Waymon Reed and tenor saxophonist Jimmy Forrest, and drum-

mer Butch Miles.

Among the 12 tunes (arranged by Basie, Nestico, Hefti and others) are Basie classics "Li'l Darlin'," "Jumpin' At the Woodside," "One O'Clock Jump," as well as treats such as "The Heat's On," "Splanky," "A Night In Tunisia," "Things Ain't What They Used To Be," "I Needs to Be Bee'd With," and "Fantail." Best solos come from Forrest on his ballad, "Bag of Dreams" and Grey on "The More I See You."

The concert tape has been restored and remastered and sound is perfect. Some minor technical flaws prevent you from navigating through DVD menus with your remote. And, it would have been helpful to have the names of the soloists listed on the screen as they were performing, or by adding credits at the end, or in the DVD liner notes by Nat Henthoff, because Basie doesn't always announce the soloists.

This Basie Orchestra performance also appears on the Original Jazz Classics CD, "Montreux '77," with one added tune. At a cost of \$11.98, the DVD is a great bargain and a viewing delight of lasting value.

Nancy Ann Lee

CANNED HEAT

Live at Montreux 1973 EAGLE VISION DVD

Eagle just keeps these Montreux DVDs flowing right along, and most of them are real gems. This Canned Heat concert from 33 years ago is no exception. This being their first and only Montreux appearance, the Heat had quickly risen to stardom with their Monterey Pop Festival appearance six years earlier. Formed in 1965, Canned Heat was led by high-voiced, introvert Alan "Blind Owl" Wilson and low, gravelly-voiced extrovert Bob "The Bear" Hite. These qualities made for quite the contrast both on record and on stage. Make no mistake...Canned Heat was an authentic blues band, and their recordings with John Lee Hooker remain treasures today.

By the time of the Montreux appearance the band had already played Woodstock two years after Monterey. But sadly Alan Wilson died in 1970 and Hite had to take over the band on his own. By the time Montreux rolled around he was in the groove and the band did a memorable performance. The jazz audience was sedate when they began with "On The Road Again" (with Hite doing

Wilson's vocal), but by the time they finished up with a 14 minute boogie, "Shake 'N Boogie," the crowd was nuts.

The affinity that many black blues masters had for the Heat is no secret. For this show they were joined by the late-great Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown on the second through fifth songs, including "Worried Life Blues" and "Please Mr. Nixon," where he sings "Please Mr. Nixon, don't cut off that welfare line...I want you to give up a whole lot more money so we can live good in this country all the time." Gatemouth, who sang and played guitar, fiddle and harp, was actually responsible for waking that crowd up. After Gatemouth left the stage, the Heat were back on their own for five more songs, including an acoustic slide feature for James Shane on "Lookin' For My Rainbow" and closing with the above-mentioned extended boogie, where drummer Fito De La Parra, guitarist Henry Vestine, pianist Ed Beyer and bassist Richard Hite (The Bear's brother) all got room to do their stuff.

As with most of the Montreux series on Eagle, the sound and video is first rate. It is quite the treat to hear Canned Heat with a choice of clean stereo, DTS or Dolby 5.1 surround sound. Mix that with the inspired performances and you get a winner. Ready to boogie?

Bill Wahl

CHICK COREA & GARY BURTON

Live at Montreux 1997

EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT

Appearing together at the Montreux Jazz Festival for the first time in 1997, pianist Chick Corea and vibraphonist Gary Burton deliver a scintillating seven-tune duo set. Performing mostly tunes from their new album, *Native Sense*, released three months after their Montreux collaboration, they prove how compatible they are as musician-improvisers.

There's not a dull moment on this DVD, partly because of the excellent camera work and effective use of video techniques, partly because both piano and vibes are melody instruments, but primarily because these two musicians had begun performing occasionally together in 1972 with the release of their ECM album, *Crystal Silence* and would work together on many future recording projects such as *Duet* (1978); *In*

Zurich, 1979; *The Lyric Suite for Sextet* (1982) and other albums.

As they weave their way through lively numbers such as "Love Castle," "Native Sense," "Rhumbata," and others, they prove how well they anticipate and pick up on the other's lines and improvisations and, together, keep each tune moving along at an invigorating pace. Close-up camera angles capture Burton's four-mallet work and Corea's fingerings.

Thoroughly enjoyable, this DVD documents one of the best live-recorded jazz concerts and it's as fresh today as it was nearly 10 years ago. The varied fare includes a couple of Latin pieces, a Monk composition ("Four In One") as well as Corea's compositions. Liner notes by Michael Heatley put everything into proper context. This is the only known Corea/Burton DVD and it's a treasure!
Nancy Ann Lee

BUDDY GUY

Can't Quit The Blues

SILVERTONE/LEGACY BOXED SET

Buddy Guy's 3-disc-plus-DVD retrospective will almost surely not square with *purists'* notions of an anthology. Perhaps unsurprisingly, *Can't Quit The Blues* is heavily stacked in favor of Guy's contemporary work. Few blues players, even the most widely celebrated, have netted the commercial success Guy has over such an extended period of time. His 90's smash *Damn Right I've Got The Blues* rates as a bona-fide rock sensation in terms of sales. He brought in the new millennium with the critically praised retro hit *Sweet Tea*. The primary message of this collection remains Guy's enduring energy and still very serious chops.

Buddy Guy always had more than great guitar and vocal talent. The man had "star power". During Chicago blues' 50's-60's glory days the commercially-savvy Chess label specialized in focusing on blues talents that were also strong, marketable personalities. Tracks from those times present on this set make the case that Guy had that special edge. A couple of tracks from Junior Wells' classic *Hoodoo Man Blues*, on which the harp man's good friend Buddy backed him up, were a nice inclusion on this collection.

Buddy tells his own story on an excellent bio-documentary DVD that completes the set. The photos included in

the piece are choice and selected stage performances showcase Guy both with band and solo. There are also 11 full length live performances (2 with Wells) spanning 30 years, mostly from the Montreux Jazz Festival. Inside there is a 40-page book with black & white and color photos along with recording information on all the tracks.

Hopefully the older stuff on Disc One will encourage Guy's latter-day fans to do some exploring. The remaining tracks show how much he's got left in the tank.
Duane Verh

THELONIOUS MONK WITH JOHN COLTRANE

The Complete

Riverside Recordings

RIVERSIDE/CONCORD 2CD SET

The pairing of Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane one of the most notorious unions in jazz history. Oddly enough, their actual quartet lasted less than six months back in 1957 – until Coltrane began recording as a leader for Prestige Records.

Monk and Trane recorded some tracks for Riverside Records in April as a trio with bassist Wilbur Ware, and in June with a septet including Ware, Ray Copeland, Gig Gryce, Coleman Hawkins and Art Blakey. Then, as a working band, the Monk-Coltrane Quartet spent July through December playing its now famous gig at New York's Five Spot, as well as making a trip to the studio to record three songs for Riverside in July. The entire body of work recorded at all these sessions is now available all together in this 2-CD set.

Orrin Keepnews, who produced the recordings, also produced this release and wrote quite an interesting essay included in the booklet. All of the songs here are Monk compositions, except for 1800's composer William Henry Monk's wonderful hymn "Abide With Me," played by the septet horns only. The first song, "Monk's Mood," is played as a false start and a full version by Monk, Coltrane and Ware. The next 15 are done by the septet and include some short versions, break-downs and re-takes; and the last three, "Ruby My Dear," "Nuttty," and "Trinkle Tinkle" are performed by the original Five Spot quartet with Monk, Trane, Ware and drummer Shadow Wilson.

Great stuff...all of it!

This historically important collection of recordings would make a most welcome addition to any serious jazz listener's CD collection. *Bill Wahl*

BONNIE RAITT **Live At Montreux 1977** **EAGLE VISION DVD**

For those who have only caught Ms. Raitt's act on disc lately, this very solid set from the Montreux Jazz Festival will make for a great reminder that, in addition to her great singing, what a hot guitarist she can be. About midway through the show, Muddy Waters' harmonica man Jerry Portnoy shows up to join Raitt's five-piece outfit for a two-song guest stint. Raitt responds with some hot, savvy Muddy-style counterpoint. Portnoy exits but the star continues with some vintage slide work that would cause Muddy to smile, had he not been sampling the champagne backstage.

The set is stocked with Raitt favorites including "Love Me Like A Man" and "Sugar Mama." This is video so kudos should extend to the director's excellent on-stage shot selection that, literally and figuratively, places the star in most appealing light. *Duane Verh*

NEW ORLEANS OWN **DUKES OF DIXIELAND** **Timeless: The Classic Collection** **LEISURE JAZZ**

As the oldest, continuing traditional/Dixieland jazz band, The Dukes of Dixieland celebrate three decades music with this four-disc box set beginning that includes tunes from 1975's version of "At Duke's Place" and to 2006's "Go To The Mardi Gras." An informative 16-page liner booklet tells about the band, the original records and the assembled tunes.

Compiling previously recorded, remastered tunes from 16 of the band's albums, the four discs convey plenty of New Orleans jazz expressions that will have you tapping your feet. Band personnel changes over the years but their music remains solid and lively. Disc 1 contains 17 tracks, including "Darktown Strutters Ball," "Muskrat Ramble," "Big Butter and Egg Man," "Up A Lazy River," and more. Disc 2 features 12 more classics such as "When the Saints Go Marching In," "When It's Sleepy Time

Down South," "Tiger Rag," and others. The 14 tunes on Disc 3 include "Me and My Shadow," "Struttin' With Some Barbeque," "Candy," "I Found A New Baby," and other gems. The 15-tune fare on Disc 4 launches with "Royal Garden Blues," and includes stalwarts such as "Amazing Grace," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Sweet Georgia Brown, and "Black Bottom Stomp." A number of singers make guest appearances on the discs.

The band now consists of drums, bass, piano, trumpet, trombone and clarinet and frequently features an array of guests. Initially led by Conrad Jones and now led by drummer Richard Taylor, the band began in the summer of 1974 with an appearance at Chicago's Grant Park and by December, the band began a nightclub engagement at Duke's Place atop New Orleans' Monteleone Hotel that last nearly ten years. They delivered another decade of music at Lulu White's Mahogany Hall and, since the early 1990s, they've been aboard Steamboat Natchez, traveling up and down the Mississippi River. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, the boat sailed to Baton Rouge for safety but the six band members scattered around the country. They've gotten together since for tours and fundraisers and continue to tour globally.

To learn more about their itinerary, activities and products, check their website at www.dukesofdixieland.com.

Featuring stomps, rags, barnburners and more, this set is a treasure. Brassy, bold and full of rousing beats, their music begs for a New Orleans style party.

Just cook up some jambalaya, black beans and rice, invite in some buddies, and crank up your CD player. What fun! *Nancy Ann Lee*

THE JEFF HEALEY BAND **Live At Montreux 1999**

EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD/CD SET

Blues-rock guitar phenom Jeff Healey leads another musical life, which this publication will deal with in the near future. But in the meantime this live set from the 1999 Montreux Jazz Festival will be good news for the many fans of this Toronto-based axe-meister. Packed with solid on-stage renditions of Healey favorites, including his debut smash "Angel Eyes," *Live At Montreux* is the sort of straightforward no-frills perfor-

mance set this label has consistently turned out. For those who've never eyeballed this blind guitarist's unique "lap" style, the close-ups provide a perspective on Healey's remarkable technique that's bound to impress. Then there's his unexpected active stage presence that pushes aside preconceptions of what some folks can do.

Healey's singing and playing are in fine form and his band delivers solid support. Bonus tracks from 1997 reveal a longer-haired Healey and some equally strong performances. *Live In Montreux* is an excellent package and a must-have for Healey fans.

We reviewed this DVD before, but it has been re-released in an expanded version. Now, for five bucks more than the DVD-only version, you can get the double disc package with a CD containing 12 of the 14 songs from the DVD – 10 from 1999 and two from 1997. You get it all for \$19.95 list. What a deal.

Duane Verh

ELLA FITZGERALD WITH **THE TOMMY FLANAGAN** **TRIO '77**

Norman Granz' Jazz In Montreux **EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT DVD**

Known for her recognizable supple voice and scat singing, Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996) excels on this DVD of 10-tunes performed with pianist Tommy Flanagan, bassist Keeter Betts and drummer Bobby Durham.

Recorded in live performance at the 1977 Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, Fitzgerald sings gems such as "Too Close For Comfort," "My Man," "Come Rain or Come Shine," "I Let A Song Go Out of My Heart" and more. Among the best tracks are her rousing treatment of the Duke Ellington tune "I Ain't Got Nothin' But the Blues" and her uptempo reinvention of "Day By Day." Scatting with passion in about a four-octave range, she totally remakes the standards "One Note Samba" and "Billie's Bounce." After a standing ovation from the audience, Fitzgerald returns to the stage for an encore, singing and injecting quotes into "You Are the Sunshine of My Life."

Fitzgerald is allowed to stretch out more with the trio than with a big band and she offers a splendid mixed set of swingers, blues and ballads. Flanagan is known for his melodiousness and sensitive accompaniment behind singers

and this trio is first-rate.

The DVD delivers a keepsake performance of the one and only Ella and holds appeal to satisfy viewers again and again. To see these legends in performance is a real treat. And excellent camera work adds to the intimacy of their classy performance.

Nancy Ann Lee

THE ROBERT CRAY BAND

Live From Across The Pond

NOZZLE RECORDS 2-CD SET

Prior to the release of Robert Cray's breakout recording, **Strong Persuader**, I happened to listen and record off the radio a live broadcast of the 1982 Long Beach Blues Festival among whose highlights was a young Robert Cray. One could hear a definite Albert Collins influence even if Cray's guitar playing didn't quite have Collins' fretful sound. Yet Cray's serpentine guitar playing had its own charms.

Over two decades later, Cray remains one of the few blues acts to break through and reach a pop audience in that period. After many studio albums, Cray and his Band have just issued this live 2-CD set from shows at Royal Albert Hall where he was opening for Eric Clapton.

He perhaps has left behind the Jesse Fortune number *Too Many Cooks*, but still performs *Phone Booth*, and several songs from **Strong Persuader**, including *Right Next Door (Because of Me)*, *I Guess I Showed Her* and *Bad Influence*; along with other numbers that he has added over the intervening years such as *Poor Johnny*, and his anti-Iraq War number *Twenty* from his recent studio recordings. Perhaps because of his success, Cray has been criticized by some for the clean sound. Some would accuse his music of being antiseptic, although the performances here belie that claim as Cray invests quite a bit of passion into his performances. Cray's clean, urbane delivery of songs and his guitar playing should be viewed as more of style than relating to the substance of his performances. This music comes off much more successfully than the heavy metal sound of some blues rockers and is a good summing up of what he has meant musically for over two decades.

A very nice release that will please his fans...and even some who have shied away from his more recent work.

Ron Weinstock

PAT METHENY GROUP

The Way Up - Live

EAGLE VISION DVD

Guitarist Pat Metheny has been releasing albums for just about the same number of years as this magazine has been publishing issues. Over the course of those three decades, I've seen more Metheny concerts than probably any one single artist. There is an uplifting quality about his music which is just plain good for the spirit. In short...it makes you feel great! On top of that, there can be no question that the musicianship in his band is always top shelf, and the production, mix and overall sound is about as good as it gets.

That said, this brand new DVD was shot at a concert in Seoul, South Korea in 2005 as the group was touring in support of its latest album, **The Way Up**. Metheny won his 17th Grammy award for that 2005 release on None-such Records. As with the CD, the concert featured what was actually one long song. Though split into four parts, there are no breaks in the music...making it more like a suite as things constantly change over the 68 minutes. The band consists of Metheny on (many) guitars, Lyle Mays/keyboards, Steve Rodby/bass, Antonio Sanchez/drums, Cong Vu/trumpet, percussion & vocals, Gregoire Maret/harmonica, guitar, percussion & vocals & percussion. Together, these seven guys create some great music, loaded with gifted soloing, uplifting melodies and brilliant dynamics.

This is best experienced with no outside interruptions, like phones, people talking...or worse...asking stupid questions, or whatever to best enjoy the intricacies of the music and the quiet passages, subtle nuances and the many changes.

The music was written by the long-time team of Metheny and Mays, who have been writing and performing together for thirty years. It shows.

On top of the music, the filming is among the best I've seen for a concert DVD, and the sound, available in DTS, Dolby 5.1 and digital stereo is on the same level as well. A 22 minute interview with Pat is the single bonus feature...as if we really need a bonus.

This one is most certainly a no-brainer for any Metheny fan out there.

Bill Wahl

JANIS JOPLIN

Box of Pearls

SONY/LEGACY BOXED SET

This 5-disc set brings together all four of Janis Joplin's albums in one box, along with a bonus CD of rare, previously unissued tracks. While I believe it was first issued in 1999, it was again reissued in August of 2005. I doubt if there are many, if any, differences between the two - but there are many differences between this box and the 1993 3-CD set titled **Janis**.

This set features the four albums in their entirety - **Big Brother & The Holding Company**, **Cheap Thrills**, **I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama!** and **Pearl**. Each also has four bonus (one has three) tracks of live recordings from the band represented on the album, and each comes in a mini LP cover replica with the original artwork front and back. The fifth CD contains two outtakes from the **Cheap Thrills** studio sessions and three live tracks from the Kozmic Blues Band recorded in Amsterdam and San Francisco in '69. These cuts are said to be available only in this set.

Where this box differs from the 1993 **Janis** set is that the complete albums were not represented in that version. That was a bit of a bummer for anyone hoping at the time to replace their Joplin vinyl with all her CDs in one sweep. Instead, two important songs from **Cheap Thrills** were replaced with much weaker versions - "Summertime" with an alternate take, and "Ball & Chain" with a live version.

Not only does **Box of Pearls** contain all Janis' albums in their original glory, the sound quality has been greatly improved - not just from the original CD versions (which probably didn't sound as good as the LPs), but from the 1993 box. These are the cleanest sounding Joplin recordings money can buy as we break open 2006.

Also enclosed in this longbox is a 36 page booklet with each album represented with its own section, all the recording and track information and rare photos. An essay is also included for each album, the first written by Sam Andrew (Big Brother and Kozmic Blues guitarist) and Jud Cost; and the other three by John Byrne Cooke (Joplin's road manager from '67-'70). Very interesting reading. The psychedelic artwork on the box appears to be patterned after Janis' Porsche, which was on display for some time at the Rock &

Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

If you prefer to buy single CDs, each of the Expanded Edition reissues of her four albums are also available, each with the same bonus tracks as are included on the four main CDs in the box. In either case, each album has been digitally mastered from the original source tapes for superb sound quality. The production of each album was overseen by Bob Irwin, the mastering Vic Anesini at Sony Music Studios in NYC, and the entire project was completed with the consultation and full approval of the Joplin estate. But, if you want to pick up all four albums, this set is pretty much a no-brainer. Throw in the book, the fifth CD, and you have one fine Janis Joplin collection.

Once again, the hats go off to the folks at Legacy Recordings for another excellent boxed set of reissued classics.

Bill Wahl

JOE PASS '75

Norman Granz' Jazz in Montreux EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT (DVD)

Norman Granz signed Joe Pass (b. 1927—d. 1994) to Pablo records in 1973 and for the next two decades would continue to record and nurture the guitar legend to international fame.

This new DVD captures two nights of solo performances and the Montreux Jazz Festival in France by the then 48-year-old Pass.

Recorded on July 17 and 18, 1975, these are enthralling performances to absorb, in spite of some minor restoration glitches. Pass plays 16 tunes (about 79 minutes). The first night's concert includes the pensive ballad "More Than You Know"; a swinging uptempo version of "It's A Wonderful World" (where you can really appreciate his picking/strumming technique); a gentle take on the Brazilian jazz classic, "Mahna De Carnaval"; a brisk "Joe's Blues"; a lovely well-constructed ballad reading of "I'm Glad There Is You," and more.

By popular demand, Pass was brought back for a second night. He plays an imaginative version of "Summertime" featuring single note lines, slides, and chords. His take on "Li'l Darlin'" is delightfully light and cheery. Other tunes include "The Very Thought Of You," "You Are the Sunshine Of My Life," "How Long Has This Been Going On," and others.

From all angles, the camera work

is excellent especially the zoom shots that show Pass' fingering and strumming. Some sound glitches on the first night (on only a couple of tunes) are worked out by technicians before Pass continues and do not reoccur the second night.

Joe Pass was such an inventive player. His improvisations remain as fresh today as they were 31 years ago. This DVD invites you to fall in love with the jazz guitarist and his formidable talents, whether you've heard him before or not.

Nancy Ann Lee

NINA SIMONE Live At Montreux 1976 EAGLE EYE DVD

Nina Simone, known as the "High Priestess of Soul," was one of the great singers in the history of American music and was also an accomplished pianist. Nina, born Eunice Waymon in 1933, first began singing gospel in church and later dreamed of one day being America's first black classical pianist. Though she studied at Juilliard for a time, she was unable to continue for financial reasons and began performing in nightclubs where she turned to jazz and blues. She changed her name to Nina (Spanish for little girl) Simone (after French actress Simone Signoret) and the rest is American music history.

As the years went on, Nina also mixed R&B, soul, classical, show tunes, world, pop music and more into her repertoire as she shied away from classifications. She was a majestic woman with a commanding presence and a deep, breathy voice. When she was on stage...she *owned* it.

This just-released DVD captures her in concert mostly at her 1976 Montreux Jazz Festival appearance, just after she had been living in Africa. Elegantly dressed in black, she enters to thunderous applause, then stands tall and stares at the audience until the room is quiet before she sits at the piano and begins to play. No matter what the song, this concert was magnificent throughout. Her version of "Little Girl Blue" is simply outstanding, and she can even make the pop song of the time "Feelings" sound good.

The video aspect of this DVD is extremely well done. I am told by a friend who knows some stuff about the subject that "it was probably filmed on U-matic video, the standard of the time &

a real dog of a media, and it is breathlessly transferred to 2006 digital media." It is all Greek to me, but Greek is good because the camera work is clear, focused and often offers closeups of her face and hands at the piano. What else do we need?

After the seven songs (two are a medley) from 1976, there are six more bonus tracks – two from her Montreux performance in 1987 and four from her final appearance at the Swiss Festival in 1990. No question, they are very good as well, but it is the 1976 concert that makes this DVD a must-have for Nina's fans. Nina Simone retired in France after performing into the 90s. She passed away in 2003 at the age of 70.

Bill Wahl

NINA SIMONE Remixed & Reimagined RCA/LEGACY

Too cool! Many of these 21st Century dance remixes of jazz artists coming out fall short of the mark, which is why you don't read about them in this publication. However, this brand new remix of Nina Simone is right on the money...and then some.

Nina had a knack for igniting her audience, touching their souls and setting them in motion, so what better a subject for a dance remix set. Though not as much as Grace Jones – whose voice was of a similar timbre – Nina's music was no stranger to the disco and post-disco dance scene, especially in Europe, some 20-30 years ago, and this set will bring her back to today's action. Several top DJs were on hand for this project, making the results constantly changing and always intriguing.

It may start off rather ordinary, but picks up with the second track, and then, after the horn-laden version of "Ain't Got No/I Got Life" (from Hair), things get *very* interesting and stay that way until the end. The Crosscut remix of "Save Me" backs Nina's deep vocals with vocal samplings and programmed drums, percussion and piano. Then, "Turn Me On" continues with the percussion and sampled synth goodies, slowly building...adding repetitive bass lines, guitar, more percussion and cymbal crashes. It, like many of the tracks, has a trancelike quality that makes you want to move and groove. Get it? Good, because rather than describe all of the music tune by tune, I'll quit here and

simply recommend this to anyone who wants to hear something *really* modern and different.

Some of the other songs here, all from Nina's RCA period ('67-'74) are "Go To Hell," "O-o-oh Child," "Obeah Woman," "The Look Of Love," George Harrison's "Here Comes The Sun" and The Bee Gees' "To Love Somebody." I'm glad to say these guys didn't mess with her lead vocal track on these songs...they just had their fun everywhere else — a big plus. I think Nina would have loved this!

It is too bad winter is coming, as I am looking forward to sliding this into that horizontal slot in the dashboard, cranking it up and taking a long drive.

Bill Wahl

MILES DAVIS

Cool & Collected

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

This brand new compilation from Columbia/Legacy would be a fantastic introduction for anyone who is only somewhat familiar with the late, great Miles Davis. Those who have perhaps only heard his name associated with the term "jazz giant," or have maybe only heard his version of Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time" on a smooth jazz station can get an insight into who Miles really was, musically speaking, all contained on one tidy CD.

Starting off with the classic "So What" from the likewise classic **Kind Of Blue** album, the listener is taken on a somewhat career-spanning journey, culminating with a brand new remix of "It's About That Time," originally from **In A Silent Way**. The remix, though a short 3:40, features new recorded parts by Carlos Santana, and others. In between there are eleven more songs, including several with John Coltrane and Cannonball Adderley. There is one, "E.S.P.," with the Shorter/Hancock/Carter/Williams quintet, and one, "Summertime," with an orchestra arranged and conducted by Gil Evans. Two of Miles' 80s crossover recordings, the above-mentioned "Time After Time" and the Michael Jackson hit "Human Nature" are included as well, filling in some of the later years. Some of the earlier songs on the set include "Milestones," "Stella By Starlight," "Round Midnight," "Bye Bye Blackbird," "Fran Dance" and "Seven Steps To Heaven."

Indeed, this is a very cool and very listenable set of music from Miles. It is

obviously aimed at both the jazz and non-jazz markets, hence it is understandable why certain periods were omitted altogether — as including them would have defeated the purpose. Again, this would make a great, inexpensive gift for someone you might want to introduce to Miles. *Bill Wahl*

JOE LOVANO

Streams of Expression

BLUE NOTE

Saxophonist Joe Lovano leads a large ensemble (expanded from his Nonet) for two suites that encapsulate 1950s Cool and 1960s avant-garde.

The Birth of the Cool Suite, a three-part suite conducted by Gunther Schuller (who also plays French horn), flirts with Fifties Cool and showcases tightly arranged horns. It begins with the languid "Prelude/Moon Dreams." Part 2 includes two interludes continuing on a similar theme but picks up the tempo, and Part 3, "Boplicity/Postlude," swings lightly and spotlights fine soloists.

The more adventurous five-part Streams of Expression Suite demonstrates the collective spontaneity and ideas that can flow within an ensemble. The suite was written for Lovano's ensemble and commissioned by the 2001 Monterey Jazz Festival to honor Miles Davis' 75th birthday, but due to 9/11, the ensemble was unable to perform at Monterey.

Not part of the suites, three other varied pieces — "Blue Sketches," "Buckeyes," and "Big Ben" — admirably showcase Lovano and friends.

At his expressive best, Lovano sizzles on the front line, supported by colleagues Tim Hagans and Barry Ries (trumpet), Larry Farrell (trombone), Charles Russo (clarinet, bass clarinet), Steve Slagel (soprano & alto sax, flute), Michael Parloff (flute), George Garzone (tenor sax), Ralph Lalama (tenor sax, clarinet), Gary Smulyan (bari sax, bass clarinet), James Weidman and John Hicks (piano), Dennis Irwin (bass) and Lewis Nash (drums). On some parts, Lovano uses a specially designed double soprano saxophone, an Aulochrome which sounds like two soprano saxes playing simultaneously. It was designed specifically for him by famed instrument maker Francois Louis.

Lovano shows the full range of his skills on this CD and encourages stellar

contributions from his talented musicians. Full of color and harmony, there are plenty of surprises in store for the listener on this enticing addition to Lovano's discography. *Nancy Ann Lee*

OTIS RUSH

All Your Love I Miss Loving DELMARK

News of a previously unissued live recording of Otis Rush from the mid-seventies created much excitement among blues enthusiasts. Rush, a Mississippi native, moved to Chicago and became part of the West Side Chicago blues scene playing some blistering guitar and singing with great fervor.

One of many blues artists in the post-B.B. King style, Rush's first recording for the Cobra label, *I Cant Quit You Baby*, charted on the R&B charts, and was followed by early recordings including *All Your Love (I Miss Loving)*, *My Love Will Never Die*, and *Three Times a Fool*. After the Cobra label folded, he briefly was on Chess and then Don Robey signed him but only issued one single, *Homework*. Many of these songs have become part of the modern blues repertoire and covered by such blues-rock acts as John Mayall, Led Zeppelin and J. Geils. He was one of the artists featured on the legendary **Chicago, The Blues Today** series and has had a number of albums issued over the past three decades.

Delmark issued **Cold Day in Hell** in the mid-1970s and it had received a fair amount of airplay on rock station WXRT which led to WXRT recording and broadcasting Rush in performance from Chicago's Wise Fools Pub in January 1976. Now about three decades later, this performance is available for all blues lovers on this new Delmark CD. Featuring his superb band of the time with Bob Levis on second guitar, Bob Stroger on bass, Jesse Green on drums and Alberto Gianquinto (ex-James Cotton, ex-Santana) on piano, Rush is in superb form. He opens with B.B. Kings *Please Love Me* and redoes his own *All Your Love* and *It Takes Time* as well other songs from King, T-Bone Walker and Chuck Willis. To hear Rush, one of the most intense guitarists in the blues, laying out his soul singing *You're Breaking My Heart*, or rearranging T-Bone Walkers *Mean Old World* to the melody of *I Cant Quit You Baby*, one is treated to a performance that will reaffirm for many

of us why we love the blues...to paraphrase Steve Tomashefsky's liner notes.

Few blues artists put as much soul into their performances and reach the level that Rush at his best achieved, and he was at his best that January 1976 night at the Wise Fools Pub.

Ron Weinstock

PAT MARTINO

Remember

A Tribute to Wes Montgomery

BLUE NOTE

Going way back to his years with Prestige, Cobblestone and Muse – the release of a new Pat Martino album was always a sure treat. After his brain aneurism brought the news that he forgot how to play guitar, the jazz world feared his music would no longer be created. Incredibly, he relearned how to play – mostly from his own records – in the very same style he was famous for, and returned to the scene in the '90s with releases on Muse and Evidence before signing to Blue Note. **Remember** is the fifth Pat Martino album on Blue Note Records.

Martino was influenced by the great Wes Montgomery, and it is said that he also listened to Wes' recordings while relearning after the amnesia. While you can certainly hear a bit of Wes in Pat's style, he does not try to emulate Montgomery in any way in this 10-song homage. Martino's trademark rapid fire, angular staccato style – and his sound (heavy on bass and low on treble) – are in control throughout. He picked tracks recorded by Wes, mostly from his Riverside years. Some of the Montgomery-penned classics here are "Four On Six," "Full House," "Road Song" and "West Coast Blues." Then there are others that Wes recorded fine versions of, such as Milt Jackson's "S.K.J.," the Cannonball Adderley favorite written by Sam Jones "Unit 7," and Carl Perkins' "Groove Yard." His band, David Kinkoski/piano, John Patitucci/bass, Scott Allan Robinson/drums and Daniel Sadownick/percussion, are all in good form throughout. There are highlights everywhere - check out Martino's lightning fast runs in "S.K.J." for just one.

This is a fitting tribute to Wes indeed. But more than that, it is another tasty treat from the hands of Pat Martino. It sure would be nice to see this guy performing live somewhere...will have to mark that thought on the "To Do List."

Bill Wahl

CASSANDRA WILSON

Thunderbird

BLUE NOTE

Singer Cassandra Wilson has been blending jazz with folk and rock for several years now. That mix has brought some rave reviews from the mainstream press, and also some jeers from the jazz purist brigade. While hoards and hoards of singers have been putting out cookie-cutter-like CDs with versions of songs from the Great American Songbook, Wilson, with her very low and smokey voice, has created very unique and musically stimulating discs with originals and songs from other arenas that demand a response...one way or another. She has also paved the way for the likes of Norah Jones and Lizz Wright (and others), both of whom have brought their own unique blends of music genres into the Universe. Let's face it – without singers like these three, and instrumental players in similar realms, jazz just might meet an untimely death. Someone needs to go well beyond the old standards to keep things fresh and attract new and/or younger ears. Hey...didn't Miles and Coltrane do something like that?

That said, Cassandra has hired noted producer T-Bone Burnett to bring things into a new gear. Now you can add hip hop rhythms into the mix for some songs, and a much bigger dose of the blues for others. So how many genres is she mixing now? Haven't really counted...but it works, and that's all that matters. In fact, it works extremely well.

With her originals such as "Go To Mexico," "It Would Be So Easy," "Poet" and "Tarot" mixed with covers like Blind Lemon Jefferson's "Easy Rider Blues" (here titled just "Easy Rider"), Willie Dixon's "I Want To Be Loved" and the traditional fur trader and cowboy song "Red River Valley" (done delta style as a vocal/guitar duet) – things flow along quite nicely, and she never comes close to hitting a rut. She also does Jakob Dylan's (Mr. Bob's Son) pensive ballad "Closer To You" – one of the songs given the hip hop treatment.

Instrumentally, the set is quite guitar heavy – nothing wrong with that. Wilson plays some acoustic, and she also has guitarists Colin Linden and Marc Ribot on board, plus Keb Mo on the Dixon track only. Noted rock studio drummer Jim Keltner is heard on much of the disc, probably one of T-Bone's ideas.

Thunderbird is a very enjoyable listening experience from Cassandra Wilson. Highly recommended for anyone with diverse musical tastes. It will be interesting to see the reviews on this one!

Bill Wahl

DEREK TRUCKS BAND

Songlines

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Usually by March or April a contender for best album of the year shows itself and we've not been denied in '06. Guitarist Trucks is possessed of one of the sweetest, richest tones in slide guitar history and has placed it, as well as his conventional style, in the service of one of the freshest fusions of roots music ever laid down. Furthermore, Trucks has surrounded himself with a most distinctive group sound, sharing the front line with flute and keyboards, that draws in jaded ears and is welcomed by established fans.

And both those fans and newbies should be duly impressed with Trucks & Co.'s. continued inventive cross-breeding of jazz, blues, soul and Eastern forms. Whether referencing Rahsaan Roland Kirk ("Volunteered Slavery") or Nina Simone ("I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Free"); taking on vintage Memphis r&b or navigating trance-like modal scapes, this line-up consistently cooks up strong and engaging grooves. Keyboardist/flautist Kofi Burbridge inserts his woodwind sparingly and strategically, much like the late Traffic reedman Chris Wood did, vocalist Mike Mattison is a suitably soulful frontman and Trucks' standout slide sound, a sublime mix of liquidity and bite, headlines one of this year's very best offerings to date. Worth the money! *Duane Verh*

GARY BURTON AND MAKOTO OZONE

Live at Montreux 2002

EAGLE EYE DVD

In one of a series of DVDs documenting Montreux Jazz Festival performances, vibraphonist Gary Burton and pianist Makoto Ozone deliver a scintillating and visually engaging 71-minute, 11-tune set in 2002.

Throughout, Burton announces tunes, initially explaining that the vibraphone was invented as recently as 1930 and, two years before this performance, all the important players were still liv-

ing. Citing his four favorite vibists, Burton launches a lively, entertaining “history of jazz” segment, featuring gems by Cal Tjader (“Afro Blue”), Milt Jackson (“Bags’ Groove”), Red Norvo (“Hole In the Wall”) and Lionel Hampton (“Opus Half”).

Superb filming by six cameras captures Burton’s flowing four-mallet style, as well as Ozone’s two-handed keyboard attack as he improvises in ragtime, stride, boogie-woogie and other piano styles. Both of these artists are talented leaders who have performed and recorded on their own as well as collaborating occasionally since first meeting in 1983 at Berklee College of Music. They are well-attuned to each other; their interactions are comfortable, seamless and reactive, making this a benchmark duo session and a more exciting performance than Burton’s 1997 Montreux performance with Chick Corea.

The next segment of the Burton-Ozone performance features tunes from their 2002 recording project, *Virtuosi*, featuring their improvisations on suitable Classical tunes by Maurice Ravel, Domenico Scarlatti, Samuel Barber and others. Both instrumentalists are equally up to the task and these pieces, as well as a tango, a Gershwin concerto spotlighting Ozone, and the encore, round out their extremely satisfying stage performance.

This is a marvelous concert in Montreux history, one to be long-treasured and the informative liner notes add nicely to the package.

Nancy Ann Lee

ROCKIN’ BONES **1950’s Punk & Rockabilly**

RHINO

Rockabilly may not be held in high regard by some “serious” blues fans, but a roots music it is. And if one takes the time to check out this primal rock-and-rhythm strain, its claim on partial blues parentage is undeniable, and this exquisitely appointed mega-dose of rockabilly gems is one great place to jump in and get wet.

The one hundred-plus-one tracks on four “45” lookalike discs are comprised of dozens of chart-toppers, obscure gems, and curiosities usually cast in the classic mold of bare-bones guitar, string bass and drums that defines the sound. Hit tracks by “names” such as Gene Vincent and Carl Perkins bump

up against rarities by other stars- Buddy Holly’s earthier pre-Crickets “Down The Line” or Elvis’s too-sexy-for-50’s-America predecessor to “One Night With You” (“One Night Of Sin”). The number of one-hit wonders present on *Rockin’ Bones* is too great to elaborate here but the excellent 65-page guide included provides the facts and completes this world-class survey course on the music that served as the soundtrack to the nation’s first rock rebellion. Hip (pulp novel styled) packaging by Rhino is a foregone conclusion and the audio trailers from teenage exploitation flicks that show up periodically between tracks make this set a fun proposition. That said, this is still real roots music.

Duane Verh

FRANK SINATRA

Sinatra: Vegas

RHINO ENTERTAINMENT

Frank Sinatra helped put Las Vegas on the entertainment map and this four-CD, one-DVD set captures the essence of the late singer’s performances there. The set contains previously unreleased American Songbook favorites (from Reprise Records) live-recorded in 1961, 1966, 1982 and 1987. The engrossing DVD captures Sinatra onstage and backstage at Caesars Palace in May 1978.

Disc One was recorded at The Sands in November 1961 and features 17 familiar gems such as “Moonlight In Vermont,” “Don’t Cry Joe,” “Here’s That Rainy Day,” “You Make Me Feel So Young,” “The Lady Is A Tramp,” “Young At Heart,” and more. Sinatra swings and croons in his indelible style, with stellar strings backing by Antonio Morelli & His Orchestra.

Recorded in January-February 1966, Disc Two finds Sinatra performing 14 songs with Count Basie & His Orchestra, conducted by Quincy Jones. Gems such as “Come Fly With Me,” “I’ve Got You Under My Skin,” “Fly Me to the Moon,” “It Was A Very Good Year,” “My Kind of Town,” and others.

Sixteen years later (1982), Sinatra is captured at Caesar’s Palace during a two-week gig at the Circus Maximus. Nancy Sinatra joins her father on Disc Three, singing “Somethin’ Stupid.” Included are “I Can’t Get Started,” “All Or Nothing At All,” and nine more tunes.

Disc Four features Sinatra in a late-period (April 1987) performance at The Golden Nugget. The change in his voice

over the 25 years is noticeable in his swoops from high to low notes and there’s just a little more gravel in his voice. Yet, his performance of such classics as “Witchcraft,” “For Once In My Life,” “I Get Along Without You Very Well,” “Pennies From Heaven,” and nine other tunes will satisfy listeners.

Seeing Sinatra onstage is a real treat and the DVD captures the essence of his dynamic and fun live performances as he segues from monologues and announcements into some of his best tunes. Ol’ Blue Eyes oozes charm and passion as he delivers songs such as “All Of Me,” “Someone to Watch Over Me,” “My Way,” and more.

Sinatra’s monologues add atmosphere and reveal the consummate entertainer he was. Bonus tracks on the CDs include “Sinatra Speaks on Segregation in Nevada” and “Sinatra Speaks on Working With Count Basie,” as well as his kidding around with the audience on both CDs and DVD. Packaged in a metallic foil clamshell box, the set includes a 64-page book containing celebrity commentary, essays by notable Sinatraphiles, rare photos, and reproductions of Vegas memorabilia. This sterling set should satisfy Sinatra fans with hours of repeat enjoyment.

Nancy Ann Lee

MARVIN GAYE

The Real Thing

In Performance 1964-1981

MOTOWN/UNIVERSAL DVD

Video footage of Marvin Gaye is rare, and this DVD offering 16 performances should tickle the fancy of the late singer’s many fans. With over 70 minutes of full-length performances (rather than clips seen on some other DVDs), you can see his transition from a fresh new talent in 1964 to being self-assured and on top of his game in 1981.

Many of the earlier songs are from black & white TV shows, such as *American Bandstand* and *Hollywood A-GoGo*; and some of those are actually a bit corny – which, looking back – those shows really were. By video 6 we get full color and things start to get much better. “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough” with Tammi Terrell is a fine treat. Then it gets even better with performances from ’69 and ’72 of “I Heard It Through The Grapevine,” “What’s Going On” and “What’s Happening Brother.” Some of the others seen are “Let’s Get It On” and

"Distant Lover" before "Heavy Love Affair" in 1981 brings it all to an end.

Interspersed between some of the performances are interview clips from shows such as *Dinah And Friends* giving you a bit of an insight into Marvin from a personal standpoint. The sound is quite good throughout and has been made available in stereo, Dolby Digital and 5.1 Surround. In short...very nice!

Bill Wahl

CLASSIC MUSICALS FROM THE DREAM FACTORY

WARNER HOME VIDEO 5 DVD SET

Making their debut on DVD, this five-DVD box set contains newly remastered films from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's golden era of the Hollywood musical. Each film runs about 100 minutes or so and each disc contains special features such as interviews about the making of the film, classic cartoons, theatrical trailers and more.

It's Always Fair Weather (1955) features Gene Kelly, Dan Dailey and Michael Kidd as three World War II buddies who, reunited 10 years later, find they strongly dislike each other. Mix in a little romance, attempts at reconciliation and an effort to exploit their reunion on television and you have the plot. Highlights include the threesome's "trash-can lid" dance and Gene Kelly's solo dance on roller skates. But, although the music by Andre Previn is great, there are no memorable songs.

Summer Stock (1950) features Judy Garland as Jane Falbury, a young country gal struggling to run the family farm by herself. Gloria DeHaven stars as Jane's sister who returns home with a theatrical troupe that plans to stage a musical in the barn. Highlights include Garland's performance of the Harold Arlen-Ted Koehler number "Get Happy," Gene Kelly's "shuffle-squeak" dance routine using a sheet of newspaper and a loose floorboard, and Phil Silvers and Gene Kelly doing a country bumpkin dance.

Three Little Words (1950) is one of the best in the pack. The story takes place in 1919 and is about the Tin Pan Alley songwriting team of Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby. The film features their songs but takes some liberties with their adventures. Stars Fred Astaire (as Kalmar), Red Skelton (as Ruby), Vera-Ellen, Arlene Dahl, and Debbie Reynolds. Among the most familiar songs featured are "Who's Sorry Now,"

"Three Little Words," and "Nevertheless."

Ziegfeld Follies (1946) features Fred Astaire, Lucille Ball, Lucille Bremer, Fanny Brice, Judy Garland, Kathryn Grayson, Lena Horne, Gene Kelly, Red Skelton, Esther Williams, William Powell (as Ziegfeld) and others in a revue format of comedy sketches and musical production numbers with no real story line. High points are Lena Horne's singing of "Love," the song & dance team of Fred Astaire and Lucille Bremer doing "Limehouse Blues" on an elaborate Chinatown set, and a hilarious comedy sketch ("A Sweepstakes Ticket") starring Fanny Bryce and Hume Cronyn. Songs are by Harry Warren and Arthur Freed; George and Ira Gershwin; Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin; and Kay Thompson and Roger Edens

Till the Clouds Roll By (1946) tells about the music and life of composer Jerome Kern and features about 25 stars, including Judy Garland, Lena Horne, Van Johnson, Tony Martin, Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra and Robert Walker (as Kern). Songs include "A Fine Romance," "Yesterdays," "All the Things You Are," "Long Ago and Far Away," "Why Was I Born," "Ol' Man River," and more. Horne triumphs with her version of "Can't Help Loving That Man" and Sinatra closes with a rendering of "Ol' Man River."

These are entertaining films for viewers inclined to reminisce. Films are in color and offer subtitles in English, French and Spanish. The special features are equally entertaining and informative. A minor drawback is the lack of any liner or jacket notes listing the songs and composers. Suggested retail price for the set is about \$60; individual titles, \$19.97.

Nancy Ann Lee

VARIOUS ARTISTS That's Entertainment! The Ultimate Anthology of M-G-M Musicals

TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES/ RHINO MOVIE MUSIC

Turner Classic Movies Music and Rhino Movie Music revisit the centerpiece of their longstanding collaboration with this expanded and upgraded version of their 1995 five-disc collection from the golden age of M-G-M studio musicals. This new six-CD set includes songs from the earlier set, plus music

never before released.

Documenting the three patchwork "That's Entertainment" musical films (released in 1974, 1976 and 1994), this collection provides nearly eight hours of listening pleasure, 135 tracks collected from original M-G-M musicals released between 1929 and 1957. Included are unforgettable soundtracks from more than 75 musicals such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *Meet Me In St. Louis*, *Singin' In the Rain*, *Easter Parade*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Brigadoon*, *An American In Paris*, *Show Boat*, *Gigi* and more. Songs are performed by big stars such as Judy Garland, Fred Astaire, Tony Martin, Lena Horne, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Debbie Reynolds, Gene Kelly, and numerous others.

Gems such as "I Got Rhythm," "Thou Swell," "Easy To Love," "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "Dancing In The Dark," "Fascinating Rhythm," "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes," "Taking A Chance On Love," "Lover Come Back To Me," "The Lady Is A Tramp," "Just One of Those Things," and other songs on this set have also become jazz standards.

Among tracks added that were not included in the original 1995 set are: three Bing Crosby duets (with Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Grace Kelly) from the 1956 film, *High Society*; Doris Day singing "Ten Cents A Dance" and "Shakin' the Blues Away"; Elvis Presley leading the prison band through "Jailhouse Rock"; and a performance from *Silk Stockings*, spotlighting Fred Astaire and Janis Paige. The sixth disc features 25 demos, outtakes and complete versions of songs never released before. Still, even with sound quality improved on 30 percent of the tracks, it may not be enough incentive for owners of the 1995 edition to purchase this new edition.

While it may bother some listeners that CD tunes are not arranged in chronological order, it apparently makes more sense in the onscreen versions. Enhancing the attractively packaged set is a well-organized, informative, four-color, 108-page book containing historical facts about M-G-M studios, the musicals, the original films, and individual songs and artists.

An American Songbook treasure for both music and film fans, this CD set will have listeners reminiscing about all the great Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer musicals.

Nancy Ann Lee

BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS

Africa Unite: The Singles Collection

ISLAND/UNIVERSAL

Want reggae? You can't go wrong with **Africa Unite**, a collection of 20 gems delivering the best-known songs from the late reggae master, plus a few extras. A great choice for anyone who wants to get into Marley's music, or those on a budget looking to get a lot of bang for the buck, you'll find such classics as "Get Up, Stand Up," "Jamming," "I Shot The Sheriff," "Buffalo Soldier," "Waiting In Vain," "No Woman, No Cry," "Exodus," "One Love/People Get Ready" and lots more.

Also included are some of his early work and two 2005 remixes – "Africa Unite" and "Standup Jamrock," plus the only 'new' Marley song, "Slogans," which existed only as Marley's vocal and acoustic guitar tracks on tape with recent music tracks added by a slew of musicians, including Eric Clapton on guitar and Marcia Ball on background vocals.

Everybody should own a copy!

Bill Wahl

SUZANNE VEGA

Live at Montreux 2004

EAGLE VISION DVD/CD

Anyone who enjoys the music of singer/songwriter Suzanne Vega should love this DVD/CD set. Vega first emerged on the scene in the mid-eighties and has had a successful career ever since. She just recently signed with Blue Note Records.

This DVD was first released by Eagle in 2005, but has just been issued in a collector's edition packaged with a full length CD containing 12 of the 21 songs from the DVD. This is an extra seen more and more lately. For around an extra five bucks or so you can take the music with you - in the car or whatever.

The first 18 songs on the DVD are from the 2004 Montreux Festival with Vega's voice and guitar backed by her band consisting of guitar, bass and drums. She delivers an array of her big and lesser-known "hits" and appears to be having a good time while she's at it. Some of the songs she's included are "99.9° F", "Marlene On The Wall", "Luka", "Tom's Diner", "When Heroes Go Down", "Left Of Center", "Solitude

Standing", "Gypsy", "The Queen And The Soldier," "Blood Makes Noise" and "Caramel"...her song featured in the movie *Closer* (Julia Roberts et al). There are also three bonus songs from her first Montreux appearance in 2004, where she was in a duo format with a bassist. Both the sound and video quality on the DVD is superb, as is the CD audio. Vega mixes it up between folk, folk/rock and even more rocked out offerings, plus a version of the jazz standard "Have You Met Miss Jones." You'll find that pretty much all her most popular songs are included on the CD as well, and are listed on the back of the case for your inspection.

A wonderful live set from Suzanne Vega.

Bill Wahl

ERIC CLAPTON

Live at Montreux 1986

EAGLE VISION DVD

Eric Clapton's 1986 Montreux concert featured the guitarist backed by drummer Phil Collins (of Genesis) and session musicians Nathan East on bass and Greg Phillinganes on keyboards.

His longtime fans will certainly enjoy the Cream songs, such as the opening "Crossroads," played here in a slower, funkier style. The following song, "White Room," does stay a bit closer to Cream's version, then they slip into a rock-reggae groove for Bob Marley's "I Shot The Sheriff."

The rest of the set includes several songs from his then upcoming "August" album, plus "Miss You," "Let It Rain," "Badge (Cream)," and "In The Air Tonight," a Genesis song sung by Collins. Then they return to some more Clapton classics with J.J. Cale's "Cocaine," "Layla," another Cream song "Sunshine Of Your Love" and the closing extended slow blues "Further On Up The Road."

Clapton delivers several blistering solos throughout the concert, which clocks in at just under two hours. The sound quality is very good, with Eagle's usual DTS, Dolby 5.1 Surround and digital stereo offerings; and the video side of things is certainly very respectable, especially given the timeframe.

Died-in-the-wool Eric Clapton fans will love owning a copy of this DVD. Those more into his earlier Cream years and blues-rock offerings will especially enjoy the live versions of those songs, though by contrast the "August" material is less interesting.

Bill Wahl

J. J. CALE & ERIC CLAPTON

The Road To Escondido

REPRISE RECORDS

It has been two years now since J. J. Cale's last album, **To Tulsa And Back**. Now, the the reclusive, very prolific songwriter who performs and records when he feels like it has teamed up with Eric Clapton for this collection of 14 songs set for release November 7. Clapton cites Cale, who wrote the songs "After Midnight" and "Cocaine," as a strong influence and decided he'd like J.J. to produce his next album to get that "Cale sound." Well, it worked, and then the *Clapton album* mushroomed into a full-blown Cale/Clapton collaboration with the two co-producing and both playing guitar and singing on the tunes. The result? Every bit as good as I anticipated...and then some.

Right off the bat that medium tempo J.J. groove comes at you with "Danger," one of 11 Cale originals in the set. The proceedings mostly stay in that groove that makes you want to bob your head or drive on the highway; some a bit faster, some a bit slower...but all with that classic, wonderful J.J. Cale trademark sound. One that slows way down is a version of Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee's "Sporting Life Blues," and the next one speeds way, way up as they run through a Cale bluegrass song titled "Dead End Road." The other two non-Cale songs are Clapton's ballad "Three Little Girls" and John Mayer's slow blues "Hard To Thrill."

One song J.J.'s fans will recognize is the freshly updated version here of "Don't Cry Sister," which was on his classic 1979 album titled **5**. The disc closes back in that same above-mentioned groove, at a bit quicker clip this time to take it all home. That instantly recognizable J.J. blend of blues, rock, country and jazz is always a certified treat.

In true J.J. Cale tradition, the music here comes off sounding very sparse...nothing coming even close to overproduction. Yet, the listing of musicians is definitely not a short one. You have Cale & Clapton on guitars and vocals, four drummers, four bass players, the late Billy Preston on Hammond organ and electric piano, J.J. on keyboards, a small battery of guitar players consisting of Doyle Bramhall II, Derek Trucks, John Mayer and Albert Lee; Cale's longtime bandmate Chris-

tine Lakeland on acoustic guitar and background vocals, Taj Mahal on harmonica, Dennis Caplinger on fiddle, three percussionists and four horn players. Obviously they are not all playing at once!

Pick this one up and get yourself or a deserving friend into that groove!

Bill Wahl

ANJANI Blue Alert COLUMBIA

Anjani Thomas has been playing piano and adding her vocals to many of Leonard Cohen's albums dating back to 1984. Before joining the Canadian poet/songwriter/singer, she worked the jazz clubs in New York and performed with Stanley Clarke and others. After she wrote the title track based on some poems she happened across at Cohen's place one day, he was quite taken with it and gave her a pile of them to work with. She indeed went to work and the result is this gorgeous, melodic, very laid back, smokey collection of ballads showcasing her very sweet voice and piano playing.

It is not her first album, but it is the first on a major label. No doubt Cohen had something to do with getting her heard by the powers to be at Columbia, and no doubt that's all he had to do. Having heard some samples of her earlier music, it is quite obvious she has dropped her voice very low for this outing, on which she sounds like a bit of a female Leonard Cohen, and her phrasing and sense of timing is very much like his. Check out "Half The Perfect World" and the closing waltz "Thanks For The Dance" for instance. Wonderful.

The entire set is performed with very sparse accompaniment, in fact she is mostly solo with just her voice and keyboards, and I presume the bass and the light brushwork on drums is her as well.

It would be very tempting to start spouting off some lines from the lyrics on some of these songs, but if you are at all familiar with Cohen, you'll know what to expect from his protégé. Leonard Cohen perhaps sums her up best as he states "Anjani's music is exotic, dreamy and hypnotic." To add to the pleasure, this music was marvelously recorded. Crank it up a bit, sit in your favorite chair, close your eyes – it sounds like she's right in the room with

you. Yes, and many will wish.

Do yourself a favor, pick this one up, or at least check her out at www.anjani-music.com where you can click to the Amazon link to sample some songs. You can read all the lyrics at www.BlueAlertMusic.com. Indeed, Hawaiian-born Anjani might just give you a glimpse of musical paradise. What a coincidence.

Bill Wahl

BRUCE HORNSBY Intersections

RCA/LEGACY CD/DVD BOXED SET

Those who enjoy the music of pianist/singer/songwriter Bruce Hornsby through the many songs heard on radio or his CDs over the years will be thrilled with this new boxed set on RCA/Legacy. Inside the longbox you'll find four CDs and one DVD covering Hornsby's career from 1985 through late 2005. This is by no means a "greatest hits" set re-issuing familiar versions of his many recordings. In fact, although his best-known songs are here, pretty much all of them are different versions, mostly live, making this set much more enjoyable for his fans old and new; as well as those remotely familiar with him.

Hornsby is one of those songwriter/performers who refuses to stick with one genre, much like Van Morrison and Big Al Anderson. That aspect keeps things very interesting as the music flows from song to song, disc to disc. In fact, When I first popped Disc 1 in, I followed it with 2, 3 and 4. After a short break, I watched Disc 5, the DVD, while eating dinner. I was sorry to see it all come to an end. Hornsby gets away with mixing rock, jazz, pop, bluegrass, country and whatever else he feels like in such a way that they all seem to belong together. He even mixes in some classical flavored songs on solo piano backed by an orchestra.

Of the 52 tracks on the CDs, 26 have never been released on CD; and most of the ones that were previously released are not his better-known songs. The 5 discs in set are loaded with treats, whether he be playing solo, with his band, with the Grateful Dead, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band or the members of the New York Philharmonic...or collaborating with Ornette Coleman, Branford Marsalis, Bonnie Raitt, Pat Metheny, Chaka Kahn, Ricky Skaggs, Roger Waters, Robbie Robertson and on...

While oftentimes a DVD included

with a CD set is something you might watch once, or twice at most...that is not the case here. Though it starts out with his early videos, which admittedly do seem hokey by today's standards, they start to improve greatly by track 6, the first of three Spike Lee directed videos. Mixed among the Lee contributions are videos featuring Robbie Robertson, Chaka Kahn and Branford Marsalis. Then things begin to become even more interesting. Some of the highlights you'll get between tracks 13 and 23 are a studio performance of "Valley Road" with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and a host of live performances, including Bob Dylan's "The Mighty Quinn" with B.B. King and Lou Reed; a 1991 live performance with the Grateful Dead; another 1991 live show at the Legends of Guitar Festival in Spain with Hornsby joining Pink Floyd's Roger Waters for a version of PF's "Comfortably Numb;" a beautiful version of John Lennon's "Imagine" in Constitution Hall, Washington D.C in '93; a live trio performance of Hornsby's "The Tide Will Rise" with Bonnie Raitt and Pat Metheny and a real treat for Clevelanders – a duo performance of "Star-Spangled Banner" with Branford Marsalis at the opening of the fifth game of the World Series in 1997 at Cleveland's Jacobs Field.

The enclosed 60-page booklet is loaded with information, mini posters and photos, plus some notes from Hornsby on the songs, most of them anyway, on all 5 discs. This would make an excellent gift for a rather wide range (no pun intended) of people.

Another excellent boxed set from the Legacy Records division of Sony-BMG.

Bill Wahl

BIG AL ANDERSON After Hours COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Even before his celebrated stint as guitarist for the most-eclectic NRBQ, Al Anderson was a masterful songsmith who took on a number of styles. Back in his mid-60's Wildweeds days, he drew upon the British Invasion, folk-rock and large helpings of soul music in plying his trade. On this, his first solo outing in a decade, "Big Al" shows he can still pull a song from most anywhere.

The Anderson songwriting magic blends well with various collaborators and styles on **After Hours**. Whatever genres he works with or mixes, the big

man's songs always stand taller than their ingredients. While country may be the most pervasive influence on the disc, the big man unsurprisingly brings in sounds that reflect his eclectic nature. Jazz fans, in particular, should take to the grown-up straightforward ballads that open ("Love Make A Fool of Me") and close ("Two Survivors") the set. Ditto for the big-band workup of "Do Nothin' Day," co-written with Delbert McClinton and featuring guest vocalist Sharon Vaughn. And if radio knows what it's doing, the tracks "Trip Around The Sun" and "What's A Thousand Miles" (featuring his pen partner Tia Sellers on vocals) will get major exposure.

Tempos and moods vary, but Anderson maintains a fairly laid-back attitude throughout *After Hours*. Long-time fans be aware- he intends to take his forthcoming records in a new direction (see our interview on the web). Big Al has been away far too long. Here's hoping this is just the first of a whole slew of new stuff.

Duane Verh

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Jazz Vocalists Here & Now

CONCORD

Concord has just released this 2-CD set featuring a wide array of jazz vocals from 37 singers on a total of 36 tracks (one is a duet with Vanessa Rubin & Etta Jones.) The project's proceeds will benefit the Jazz-Alliance International's (JAI) Education & Advocacy Programs.

Disc One features singers covering "more contemporary" songs...such as the opening track with Ray Charles doing "Mary Ann," followed by Shirley Horn covering "Everything Must Change." Some of the others on the first disc are Freddie Cole with a wonderful version of "I Can't Make You Love Me" – a big hit for Bonnie Raitt – and Diana Krall and Lizz Wright doing their own compositions "Temptation" and "Salt." Just a few of the other singers on that disc are Cassandra Wilson, Al Jarreau, Karrin Allyson, Joni Mitchell and Norah Jones. There may be a few pleasant surprises for many listeners as they stumble upon some less-known voices such as Jackie Allen (who does a haunting version of "Lazy Afternoon," Mary Stallings and Madeleine Peyroux. Brazilian singer Luciana Souza also offers a bossa nova song done as a voice-guitar duo.

Disc Two covers older jazz standards, but also done by a variety of singers, including Dianne Reeves, Jane Monheit, Abbey Lincoln, Jimmy Scott, Kevin Mahogany, Nancy Wilson and Ernie Andrews...to name just a handful. This set features such chestnuts as "Taking A Chance On Love," "Lover Man," "Skylark," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and "You Don't Know What Love Is."

The project's concept is best summed up by producer Michael Cuscuna, who states "In 36 tracks on two discs, we set out to represent listener-friendly vocal jazz by including songs meant to entice the novice just looking to get into this music. We embraced the time-honored icons, veterans making a comeback, new artists (the emerging and successful) and singers from other fields who've chosen to do jazz projects." The last part of the statement no doubt refers to Joni Mitchell, Linda Ronstadt and a few others, and they fit in here just fine. Cuscuna obviously is too good at his job to include some who have taken a stab at jazz, such as Rod Stewart and Carly Simon. Good man!

In short, this is a wonderful set sampling the many possible facets of jazz vocals. It is extremely listenable, flows very well and is an excellent way to sample 37 different singers. On a closing note, all but three of the singers on the set are still with us. Etta Jones, Ray Charles and Shirley Horn passed away in 2001, 2004 and 2005 respectively.

Bill Wahl

LOS LOBOS

The Town And The City HOLLYWOOD RECORDS

Los Lobos is certainly not a band I am unfamiliar with. In my old concert promotion days I brought them to Cleveland twice. Since that time I have kept up with their recordings...always interested in seeing what new stuff they came up with. Known for their Tex-Mex rock, roots and Mexican music with tinges of jazz, blues and more, they began to branch off into a fresh and different direction on the CD *Kiko*. Now they have really expanded more on that with this brand new album, resulting in their finest, deepest, most creative offering to date.

The music here is comprised of dark moods and strange grooves – done mostly at medium or slow tempos and

loaded with emotion. The concept is a look at life in America today...working harder and harder just trying to survive, not to mention so many other problems in today's society, those of immigrants and in the world in general. Each song carries a different message and very different music to convey it, sometimes with some eerie things going on with the guitars, keyboards or percussion.

Los Lobos actually began in 1973 in L.A., but became well-known with their mid eighties album **How Will The Wolf Survive?** This is their 13th album with the same bandmembers; and the long road they've travelled, and experience they've garnered together certainly shows here. This is a keeper to be played again and again. Viva Los Lobos! Crank it up.

Bill Wahl

WEATHER REPORT

Forecast: Tomorrow

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Fusion was the spawn of Miles Davis' electric bands of the late 60's and early 70's and no alumni of those outfits fared better than keyboardist Joe Zawinul and saxophonist Wayne Shorter. While other first-wave fusionists seemed to eventually paint themselves into a creative corner, the co-leaders of Weather Report kept it fresh for years drawing on diverse influences, while maintaining the group's core identity. This three-disc retrospective does a first-rate job in showcasing the band's success at mastering both of these feats.

Serving as a marker for WR's evolution (and also as a possible cause for the band's constant rejuvenation) is the periodic changes in the rhythm section. As the excellent debut lineup of bassist Miroslav Vitous, drummer Alphonse Mouzon and percussionist Airtio Moriera would be replenished by the likes of Dom Um Romao, Eric Gravatt, superstar/tragic figure Jaco Pastorius and others, the band's early instincts expanded. Textures get more complex and colorful and a growing "world music" influence makes its presence felt. Catch the development on Zawinul's compositions from "Unknown Soldier" to "125th Street Congress" on the first disc to the next one's leadoff track, an exciting "live" take of "Mysterious Traveller." It's a timeline that remains reliable through this entire box.

Unlike some of its early 70's brethren, Weather Report never abandoned the jazz dimension of this new "fusion"

in the name of high-energy rock. Sampling these tracks makes a strong case for crediting the lower-keyed co-leader Shorter for much of this. Then again, Zawinul learned how to simultaneously swing and funk it up back in his Cannonball Adderly days.

One of the set's best features is the handful of opening tracks that set the stage for the birth of Weather Report. Zawinul's "In A Silent Way" from Miles' album of the same name, the title track from Shorter's *Super Nova* and an excerpt from a Zawinul suite performed by the Adderly group plus orchestra, "Experience In E" all speak to WR's future values. Of course, signature tracks like "Birdland" are here, too. Credit goes to Zawinul and Shorter, who prepared this release, for avoiding gratuitous "unreleased" fare and providing instead a quality overview of one of the most substantial (and still fresh-sounding) fusion bands.

The bonus DVD features a two-hour concert set from Germany in 1979. The band was a compact foursome with rhythm courtesy of Pastorius and drummer Peter Erskine and this was a time when WR was arguably at their peak, "blowing"-wise.

In addition to solid run-throughs of well-known numbers, Shorter and Jaco, in particular, steal the show during inspired-sounding solo stints. Are you ready for Jaco doing Hendrix??

Duane Verh

SANTANA

Santana III

Legacy Edition

COLUMBIA/LEGACY 2CD SET

This double disc set released by Columbia/Legacy earlier this year would certainly make a great gift for any Santana fans out there.

Recorded in 1971, *Santana III* was the last to feature the original lineup, which was heard on their debut *Santana* and the follow up *Abraxas*, with the addition of Neal Schon/guitar and Coke Escovedo/percussion & background vocals. The big radio hits were "Everybody's Everything" and "No One To Depend On," but the real treats come with instrumental songs such as "Toussaint L'Overture," "Batuka," their unique version of Gene Ammons' "Jungle Strut," and one with Spanish lyrics, "Guajira." The Legacy Edition bonus tracks consist of three previously unreleased studio tracks from the

album's sessions, two of which are extended instrumental jams, "Folsom Street-One" and "Banbeye," running over 7 and 10 minutes respectively. The fourth bonus track is the single version of "No One To Depend On," clocking in over two minutes shorter than the album version. But the treats have just begun...

Disc 2 contains 11 tracks recorded live at the Fillmore West in July of '71. Three of these were previously released on the Expanded Edition of this album's CD release in 1998, and two others were issued on the album *Fillmore-The Last Days* - a 1972 boxed LP set. The remaining six, include six minute-plus versions of "Toussaint L'Overture" and "Black Magic Woman/Gypsy Queen." The two from the *Last Days* set are a version of Joe Zawinul's "In A Silent Way," originally recorded by Miles on his album of the same name, and another very jazzy instrumental "Incident At Neshabur" - quite a blowout in fact. The remaining Fillmore tracks are "Batuka," "No One To Depend On," "Taboo," "Jungle Strut," "Savor," "Gumbo" and Tito Puente's "Para Los Rumberos."

The sound on these Fillmore cuts is excellent—to add even more icing on this well-stacked cake. At \$24.98 list, this Legacy Edition is just about twice the price of the regular single-CD expanded edition — but the added songs, especially the 11 Fillmore cuts — are so good that it is more than worth the price.

Bill Wahl

THE BYRDS

There Is A Season

COLUMBIA/LEGACY BOXED SET

This new 4-CD/1-DVD set is definitely one of our baby boomer gift choices for this year's guide. The handsomely packaged set serves up 99 songs in all, presented in near perfect chronological order by recording date.

The Byrds emerged on the scene in the mid sixties with a folk-rock blend highlighted by Jim (Roger) McGuinn's 12-string Rickenbacker guitar and the rich harmonies coming from the vocals of McGuinn, David Crosby, and Gene Clark. While born of both The Beatles and Bob Dylan, The Byrds took their influences in, and then put out a sound of their own. They would, in fact, record many of Dylan's songs, including their first big hit "Mr. Tambourine Man."

This set contains most of the Byrds recordings made for Columbia Records

from their 1965 debut through 1971's *Farther Along*. You also get some early recordings, their Jet Set demo, Beefeaters singles and three Preflyte recordings on disc one before the songs from their first two albums, *Mr. Tambourine Man* and *Turn! Turn! Turn!*. Most of the band's best-known songs are on this disc, such as the title tracks for both albums, plus "I Feel A Whole Lot Better," "The Bells Of Rhymney," "All I Really Want To Do," and three more Dylan covers "Chimes Of Freedom," "It's All Over Now Baby Blue" and "The Times They Are A-Changin'."

Disc 2 opens with another hit, "Eight Miles High," plus "5D (Fifth Dimension)," "Wild Mountain Thyme" and "Mr. Spaceman," along with many of the songs from the *Fifth Dimension* album of 1966 and their following two releases.

Over the next two discs their remaining albums are represented. Mixed in throughout the set are five previously unissued live recordings and a total of 30 which had been unissued prior to Legacy's Byrds restoration project of the 1990s. Disc 4 also includes the band's final recordings, done for Asylum Records in 1973.

The DVD included in the set contains 10 videos taken from television appearances in the U.S and Britain during the 60s as they run through nearly all of their most popular songs.

The 100-page book is loaded with photos, essays and all the track and recording information anyone would ever need. Another nice touch is the fact that the song titles and track numbers are printed beneath each of the clear disc trays so you don't have to keep paging through the book.

If you have a Byrds fan on your shopping list, now or any time of the year, *There Is A Season* will be right on time.

Bill Wahl

ROBERTA FLACK

The Very Best Of Roberta Flack

RHINO

Singer/pianist Roberta Flack was certainly the reigning queen of jazzy, sexy R&B during the early seventies. Right off the bat her first album, 1970's *First Take*, served up the big hit (though it took two years for that to happen) "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," along with a number of equally pleasing songs. Some of her other early albums brought such gems as "Killing

Me Softly With His Song” and “Feel Like Makin’ Love.” Then from her classic album with the late Donny Hathaway we got tunes like “Where Is The Love.” She continued recording some very good music – though more in a commercial R&B vein - including more sessions with Hathaway and some with Peabo Bryson, including their beautiful duet “Tonight I Celebrate My Love.”

All the above songs and many more are included on this single disc, 17 song retrospective of Roberta’s recordings. Note that I said Retrospective, as that is really what it is, rather than as titled. Granted, it is a matter of opinion, but many will agree that an actual “Best Of” would include more songs from the early years and less from the latter. Some of are here, but there are no songs from the albums **Chapter Two** or **Quiet Fire**, and only one from **First Take** and **Feel Like Makin’ Love**...which are, artistically speaking, her four finest recordings.

As a sampling of her career and her hits, one can’t go wrong with this release. If you remember, and want to revisit, her early sexy/jazzy stuff, you might just want to bite the bullet and pick up the four CDs mentioned in the paragraph above...or at the very least her first two albums, which should be obvious by reading the titles.

Either way, you will no doubt enjoy hearing Roberta Flack once again. She is still performing concerts today. You can check up on her at www.robertaflack.com, where you can also see her tour dates. *Bill Wahl*

ROY ORBISON

The Essential Roy Orbison
GEORGE JONES

The Essential George Jones
JOHNNY CASH

Man In Black DVD
LEGACY RECORDS

Except for the recent exceptional Big Al Anderson CD on Legacy, where he mixed country, jazz and pop – we don’t cover country music very often. But with the gift-giving season shortly being cleared for takeoff - these three items would all make very good options for the right person on your list.

Although **Roy Orbison** is not a country singer, he actually did start there prior to passing through rockabilly and rock & roll before pretty much forging his own musical genre with a slew

of lost love ballads. **The Essential Roy Orbison** on **Monument/Legacy** briefly covers his early years on Sun Records before heavily focusing on the Orbison most are familiar with. That would be his Monument Records years, a label he began recording for in 1959. A year later his career took off with a bang with the first big lost love ballad titled “Only The Lonely,” which hit #2 on the pop chart. This set is loaded with Orbison hits after that, such as “Love Hurts,” “Crying,” “Candy Man,” “Dream Baby,” “Leah,” “Falling,” Mean Woman Blues,” “Blue Bayou,” It’s Over” and “Oh, Pretty Woman.” We are now only up to 1963, and soon that song would reach #1.

Also included on this 2-CD set are another 19 cuts on disc 2 covering his years on MGM, Virgin, Warner Bros, Mercury and Orbison Records. It is loaded with gems, starting off with “You Got It” and four more tracks from his posthumous **Mystery Girl** album and ends with “Life Fades Away” from the **Less Than Zero** Soundtrack, released in 1987. Ironically, Roy Orbison died of heart failure the next year. A great sounding, well put together retrospective for an American music legend.

A country music legend is represented with a recent Legacy reissue...that being **George Jones**. **The Essential George Jones** on **Epic/Legacy** covers his long and storied career beginning in 1954 and sampling his King, Mercury and United Artists recordings before delving into his Long association with Epic Records. The Epic period begins with the last 5 songs on disc one, 1971-3, and continues on with the first 19 out of the 20 on Disc 2. The final song, “Choices,” was recorded in 1999 for an Elektra album. Another good sounding set of recordings, this would make a great gift for a “true” country music fan.

If you know someone who is into the late **Johnny Cash - Man In Black: Live In Denmark 1971** on **Columbia/Legacy** is a good choice. This live DVD catches Cash filmed before a small audience covering such songs as “A Boy Named Sue,” “I Walk The Line” “Folsom Prison Blues,” “Me And Bobby McGee” and others before turning the stage over to Carl Perkins who does “Blue Suede Shoes” and “Matchbox.” Then the Statler Brothers come on for two more songs before Cash returns with June Carter Cash for another three and The Carter Family do one before the four

remaining songs featuring Cash, The Carters, and The Statlers with Perkins joining in for the finale.

Legacy Records has long been among the leaders in our annual gift guide with their marvelous reissues in jazz, blues and classic rock. Now after the merger of Columbia Records with BMG, the label has been reissuing much more material from the two labels and their subsidiaries’ vast catalogues, which include Epic and RCA. More are on the way over the next issues as they are released, so stay tuned for your shopping ideas. *Bill Wahl*

LUTHER VANDROSS ROY ORBISON SARAH McLACHLAN LEGACY CDS

Legacy Records has just released three CDs - two singles and and 2-CD set - which would make fitting gifts anytime.

The late **Luther Vandross** has quite a few compilations available. The most up-to-date is **The Ultimate Luther Vandross** (Epic/Legacy) which opens with two previously unissued songs, “Shine” and “Got You Home.” After that comes a program of 16 Luther favorites, which bounce all over the map chronologically, but offer a tidy single-disc collection of Luther including his 2003 hit “Dance With My Father,” taken from the album of the same name which was his first to reach #1 on Billboard’s Album Chart. Some of the other songs here are “Never Too Much,” “Here And Now,” “A House Is Not A Home,” “Give Me The Reason,” “Any Love,” “Power Of Love/Love Power,” “Your Secret Love” and two beautiful duets – “The Closer I Get To You” with Beyoncé and “Endless Love” with Mariah Carey. I’m glad to see they left his cover of Stephen Stills’ “Love The One You’re With” off of this one, which makes this sweet set an even more desirable, nicely updated compilation for the much-missed Luther Vandross.

Roy Orbison, who was just featured in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame’s American Music Masters Series is another singer who left us way too early. **Black & White Night** (Orbison Records/Legacy) has just been re-released featuring Roy’s performance at the Coconut Grove nightclub in Los Angeles in late 1987 just a year before he passed away. The comeback concert was aired

on TV in January, 1988 and included 17 Orbison favorites, like "Only The Lonely," "Blue Bayou," "Crying," "Candyman," "It's Over," "Oh, Pretty Woman" and too many more to list here. He had quite a cast of guest singers on stage for the event (some of whom also played guitar), including Tom Waits, Elvis Costello, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, K.D. Lang, Jennifer Warnes, Bruce Springsteen and T Bone Burnett. The recording sound is fantastic, Orbison is in great form and his backing singers are all stars in their own right. A great choice for getting most of Orbison's hits all on one disc with the best sound available.

Legacy has just released a deluxe 2-CD version of a Sarah McLachlan live album titled **Mirrorball - The Complete Concert** (Arista/Legacy). The original Mirrorball CD, released in 1999, contained 14 songs recorded on her 1998 concert tour. The Mirrorball DVD release of the concert contained 23 songs in all. The concert was recorded and filmed on the last night of the tour in Portland, Oregon with first rate audio quality, at a time when her versatile band was as well rehearsed as possible, and the resulting CD was a terrific success for McLachlan. Now this set contains all 23 songs in the order performed, with the those from the original CD plus "Plenty," "Witness," "Wait," "Ice," "I Will Not Forget You," "Mary," "Elsewhere," "Vox," and "Into The Fire." A great gift choice for any fan of Sarah's music, regardless of whether or not they may have the original CD release. **Bill Wahl**

BOOKS

RAMPART STREET

By David Fulmer

HARCOURT 2006

About a year ago I picked up a paperback by Atlanta based David Fulmer, **Chasing the Devil's Tail**. It was a mystery set in New Orleans of the early part of the century and featured a Creole of color, Valentin St. Cyr as its main character. St. Cyr was a one-time New Orleans policeman who left the force and began working for Tom Anderson, the King of Storyville, who owned a legendary cafe in "The District." In a novel populated with Jelly Roll Morton and Buddy Bolden, at a time right after the Supreme Court's infamous opinion in

Plessy v. Ferguson, St. Cyr solves the Black Rose murders of some of the District's working ladies. By the time of the second volume, **Jass**, Buddy Bolden has been institutionalized and the members of a jazz band are being murdered. Everyone seems to want him not to solve the case except the musicians and after the case is solved St. Cyr leaves New Orleans.

Rampart Street takes place a year and a half after the events in **Jass**, and has somehow gotten back in the good graces of Tom Anderson, working Anderson's, bar but somehow someone disinterested in handling the pickpockets, card sharks and other predators as he had a few years before. A prominent New Orleans businessman is found murdered on Rampart Street, at the time the back end of the city where such a man would not have been found and an alderman goes to Anderson to have St. Cyr try to find the killer on behalf of the businessman's daughter. Not that they want him to actually solve the case. Its better that the death quickly get forgotten, so no one but the daughter or St. Cyr want him to really solve the case. A street criminal is picked up and charged with the murder, but the evidence of the bullet wound and the lack of the powder burn does not support this being a case of a street robbery. St. Cyr seems to have everybody working against him and more people get killed around him including the person at the Picuyane's morgue who had been helping St. Cyr in trying to unravel the series of murders. Unlike the earlier novels, Jelly Roll Morton is now in Chicago and jazz has a lower profile than in the earlier novels. Yet, the Sicilian grocery and saloon owner, whose place St. Cyr has a room at, features a jazz band in the saloon and Beansoup, the street kid who had been assisting St. Cyr and had been in the waif's home at the same time as Louis Armstrong, is now playing harmonica in Jackson Square behind Charlie Jackson, a blues singer and guitarist who performs *Duncan and Brady*, a ballad about an altercation between a saloon keeper and a sheriff in East St. Louis.

Fulmer continues to develop his characters and weaves the story together in a compelling fashion.

I could not put this down after starting it or the two earlier novels. He really brings this long gone period to life in all three of these excellent books. If you like

mysteries, you certainly might read **Chasing the Devil's Tail** first (it and **Jass** are currently available in paperback) and if you enjoy it (as I suspect you will), you will dig into the sequels including **Rampart Street**. I am not sure if this is the last Valentin St. Cyr novel, as Fulmer's next novel, **The Dying Crapshooter's Blues** (scheduled for publication in January) is set in Atlanta, Georgia and amazon.com suggests that Fulmer will be bringing "another absorbing mystery in a new setting raucous with music and rich history." The Valentin St. Cyr mysteries certainly are absorbing. **Ron Weinstock**

TEXAS ZYDECO

By Roger Wood & James Fraher
(photographer)

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS 2006

Zydeco music is usually associated with Louisiana, but, historically Texas, and especially the city of Houston, has been central to the growth and development of the idiom from the more traditional la la music of the Creole population that is concentrated in southwestern Louisiana and neighboring portions that include Texas. The place of Texas in the rise and evolution of zydeco is the subject of **Texas Zydeco**, the latest collaboration between writer Roger Wood and photographer James Fraher, who previously collaborated in **Down in Houston Blues in Bayou City**, the superb book on Houston's blues scene.

Like the previous volume, Wood does more than simply provide sketches of the history of the music. He takes us into the world of the zydeco as his first chapter introduces us to the various venues for zydeco and the audience and musicians there ranging from the clubs and church dances to the all day festivals at a rodeo arena. The history of the music as it was transformed from la la to zydeco and some of the pioneering figures and recordings are presented, and the fact that some of the recordings were made in Houston, including a rare Lightnin' Hopkins recording on organ, *Zologo*. Folklorist Mack McCormick was responsible for the spelling of zydeco, but it was not until a Clifton Chenier recording used that spelling that this spelling received the credibility until it became the established way to spell the term.

A chapter is devoted to Chenier and his influence. Chenier's mix of traditional

Creole music with rhythm and blues, as well as his use of the piano accordion, led to the emergence of zydeco as a musical genre. Through interviews with some of Clifton's contemporaries, as well as some of the musicians who played with him including his son C.J. and guitarists Philip Walker and Sherman Washing, they recall their experiences with Clifton and how he was a mentor to them, and they recognize even today the value of his lessons for them. Clifton was a remarkable person. Chenier invented the frottoir (rubboard) which replaced the washboards that had been used previously, having the first frottoirs fabricated and Wood spends some pages with the individuals that crafted these instruments for use.

Another chapter discusses some of the post-Chenier performers in the world of Texas zydeco, noting that many, but not all, have adopted the button accordion as opposed to the chromatic piano accordion, and provides an overview of these new breed performers including Corey Ledet, Dora and the Zydeco Bad Boyz, J. Paul and Skip Riteau, and in showing their individual maturation as artists how Texas remains a fertile ground for zydeco to continue to evolve.

James Fraher, certainly one of the most outstanding blues photographers alive, contributes some stunning photography. It is unfortunate that Wood and Fraher did not include some actual photographs of Chenier and other masters that Fraher never was able to document, as a photograph of a old Zodic poster for Chenier is not quite the same thing. But this is only a quibble as this book brings out the world of zydeco, not simply reciting the lives of major figures, and joins **Down in Houston** as an important and engrossing book on African-American vernacular music traditions.

Ron Weinstock

LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S NEW ORLEANS

by Thomas Brothers
(NORTON 2006)

Thomas Brothers, a professor of music at Duke University and the author of **Louis Armstrong: In His Own Words**, has written a fascinating book on the upbringing and development as a musician of the great Louis Armstrong. The book interweaves an account of early twentieth-century New

Orleans with a narrative of Armstrong's life. As the book cover describes, "Drawing on a stunning body of first-person accounts, this book tells the rags-to-riches take of Armstrong's early life and the social and musical forces that shaped him."

The dark-skinned Armstrong grew up with low expectations for him in a world of Jim Crow legislation and vigilante terrorism, yet also grew up in the midst of a rich culture that included the ecstatic music of the sanctified Church, the blues of street musicians and the tradition of ragging a tune.

It was a world of the clash of cultures even within the African-American community as the worlds of the uptown Negroes like Armstrong was distinct from the 'cultured' downtown 'Creoles of color,' although the pressures of Jim Crow would undermine the rigid barriers between the two and Armstrong would benefit from the differing musical standards from both communities, the more formal and learned performances by the Creole musicians as well as the uptown musicians playing by ear and their traditions of ragging the music.

In the words of Armstrong and his contemporaries we get a vivid sense of the world and the richness of the culture in which Armstrong was raised. We follow the youngster as he gets in trouble with the law and sent to the New Orleans Waif Home, working on the streets, marching in the second-line and carrying King Oliver's horn.

Others have focused on the poverty he was raised in and emphasized Armstrong's music as a compensation for the deficiencies of his early life, but Brothers emphasizes that he may have been poor but the culture he grew up in was very rich indeed.

Also interweaved in this account are the emergence of early jazz and the lives of legendary figures as Buddy Bolden and King Oliver whose lives are recounted by their contemporaries such as Bunk Johnson and Armstrong himself. And of course an account of the Storyville District as well as the various locations at which jazz emerged in the twentieth century.

This is an invaluable contribution to our understanding of early jazz and its most important figure. It is wonderfully put together and brings the world of the young Louis Armstrong alive.

Ron Weinstock

BROADCASTING THE BLUES

by Paul Oliver
ROUTLEDGE 2006

Paul Oliver's writings have done so much over the past half century to elucidate the history and nature of the blues. His 1960 volume **Blues Fell This Morning: The Meaning of the Blues** was a trailblazing volume that helped bring the music to greater visibility. He has written other equally important books on the blues including **Savannah Syncopators**, which examined the African roots of blues music; **Conversation With the Blues**, compiled from interviews with a number of blues performers; **Screening the Blues**, another examination of lyrical themes in the blues; **The Story of the Blues**, the first history of blues music; and **Songsters and Saints**, which examined some of the musical forms that existed prior to the blues emergence that played a great role in shaping the evolution of blues.

Oliver's latest volume, **Broadcasting the Blues** (Routledge), is a collection of scripts of radio broadcasts that Oliver has produced for the BBC over the past several decades that looks at the emergence of the blues idiom and considers its function as an art form in the community during the period of racial segregation. He also has a section on the history of blues documentation. The text includes a parallel column that indicates recordings Oliver used to illustrate his points. Document Records is putting out a three CD set as a companion to this collection.

An introductory chapter, which is from a 1967 broadcast and raises some broad themes, is followed by the First Section, consisting of 8 fall 1987 broadcasts on the theme of **Before the Blues**.

After raising the question of what do we mean of the blues and then noting the connections between such early legends as Charlie Patton and Tommy Johnson, to Robert James, to Elmore James and Muddy Waters, Oliver first considers the African echoes in blues and contrasts the recordings of Fred McDowell, a Fife and Drum band and James 'Butch Cage and Willie Thomas with field recordings of African music. He next turns his attention to work songs and compares some of the field recordings made in Prisons in the thirties with the singer, Alger 'Texas' Alexander, whose singing suggested the unformed

moans of solitary field hollers. On another broadcast, Oliver looked at the string band tradition and country dances as reflected in the repertoire of songsters and early blues men, including Henry Thomas, Mance Lipscomb, Jim Jackson and Peg Leg Howell. Songs from stage shows and the minstrel shows also were among those recorded by the early blues acts, who oft subtly adapt them to take the sting from the racist stereotypes of some songs, as reflected in Pink Anderson's *I've Got Mine*. Then there are the heroic ballads of *John Henry* and *Kassie Jones* as well as the saga of the Boll Weevil. After considering some of the song traditions out of which the blues was formed, Oliver next notes how professional songwriters helped shape the development of the blues.

The Second Section, *Blues, How Do You Do?*, considers the effects of recordings and other factors in the emergence of the blues, wondering if Barbecue Bob was familiar with some vocal quartet recordings when he waxed *Chocolate to the Bone*. Another chapter examines the Library of Congress recordings, and notes that most of those recordings that have been reissued were made by the Lomaxes, noting that "[i]t is telling that the recordings made by other fieldworkers for the Archive [of Folk Music], whose interests and perceptions differed from those of the Lomaxes, are largely unavailable.

Another chapter briefly considers the role of the washboard in early jazz and blues before it ended up as a novelty instrument. What makes the blues an art form is considered as the role it played in Black Society, and how some themes served as a coded message.

The Third Section has ten chapters considering *The Meaning of The Blues*. Troubling times inspired many blues and how the records might have touched something that the listeners could relate to. There is the image of going down the dirt road and the movement of Blacks through the south, as well as songs about hoodoo, conjure women and mojos. Discrimination compounded by the depression led to songs about moonshine, canned heat and jake leg, and prostitution, and times got so tough that one would sing that "Tricks Ain't Walkin' No More." Other chapters deal with the hopes fostered by the New Deal, and natural catastrophes as represented by Bessie Smith's *Backwater Blues* and

Lonnie Johnson's *St. Louis Cyclone Blues*.

The finals section, *Documenting the Blues*, shifts the focus from the actual music to the documentation of the music and considers the place of discographies as guides for collectors and the source of information on who played on what, before then considering the work of Johnny Parth who has attempted to reissue all early blues recordings, and Robert MacLeod who has attempted to document all of the lyrics of these recordings that literally fill thousands of CDs before raising the question of what still needs to be documented.

As usual with Paul Oliver, the chapters are concise and lucid. Its unfortunate perhaps that one cannot have the actual broadcasts to listen to with the recordings mixed in, but the themes considered here should help the reader to perceive aspects of the blues that they never considered. I suspect some might be adventurous enough after reading this to delve into Oliver's other works. Certainly this is a most welcome addition to blues literature. *Ron Weinstock*

LATE ADDITIONS

WE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE MORE, BUT HERE ARE THE ONLY LATE ARRIVALS. HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

JOHN COLTRANE

Fearless Leader

PRESTIGE/CONCORD BOXED SET

Although this 6-CD boxed set has been out since September, we just came across a copy just in the nick of time to get it in this Gift Guide section. Concord Records' acquisition of the Fantasy/Prestige/Milestone Group does not seem to be slowing down Fantasy's longlasting reissue and boxed set output, and quells the fears many had that they would rely its vast, very musically rich catalog.

This set was released in celebration of the saxophone legend's 80th birthday and brings together 11 albums he recorded as a leader for Prestige in 1957 and 1958. The albums here are *Coltrane*, *Traneing In*, *Soultrane*, *Lush Life*, *Settin' The Pace*, *Standard Coltrane*, *Stardust*, *The Believer*, *Black Pearls*, *Bahia*, and *The Last Trane*. Most of these were recorded with pianist Red Garland's trio, featuring Paul Chambers on bass and either Arthur Taylor, Jimmy Cobb, Louis Hayes or Albert "Tootie"

Heath on drums. But in addition to those quartet performances, several tracks feature a quintet with trumpeters Donald Byrd, Wilbur Harden or Freddie Hubbard. The opening tracks on the first disc feature a sextet with baritone saxophonist Sahib Shihab, trumpeter Johnny Splawn and pianist Mal Waldron; and the first four on Disc two find Trane leading a trio with bassist Earl May and Taylor on drums.

When these albums were released, many of them had recordings from different sessions making up the program. Here they are presented for the first time exactly in the order as recorded, session by session. It is easy to see Coltrane's development when comparing the Prestige years with the Atlantic Years and finally the Impulse recordings. All are, of course, wonderful recordings chronicling his musical growth and increasing intensity.

The music here was given the '24 bit remastering from the original analog tapes' treatment by Joe Tarantino at Fantasy Studios and sound fantastic. Also included is a 63-page book with all the recording and personnel information, essays, commentary, photos and full color reproductions of the original album covers. A wonderful gift for any fan of John Coltrane. *Bill Wahl*

JOHN MAYALL

Essentially John Mayall

EAGLE RECORDS BOXED SET

This 5-CD set from Eagle Records focuses on John Mayall's output on that label, which he has been recording for since 1998. Mayall has a slew of older classic recordings, but the British bluesman still continues to put out first rate albums, which is well demonstrated throughout this set.

Collected here are three of his studio albums, *Padlock On The Blues*, *Along For The Ride* and *Stories*, along with eight tracks from his live *70th Birthday Concert*, which also featured Eric Clapton and Mick Taylor. The fifth disc is *Exclusive Live Rarities*, which has 11 unearthed Bluesbreakers cuts recorded between 1966 and 1994.

Mayall is joined by a number of guests on this set, including John Lee Hooker, Otis Rush and Coco Montoya. His band is solid and guitarist Buddy Whittington is always a standout. This just-released box, which includes a 20-page booklet, should easily please Mayall's many fans out there. *Bill Wahl*