

# jazz & blues report

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May-June 2007

Issue 293

Free



## KOKO TAYLOR



# jazz & blues report

Published by Martin Wahl Communications

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# KOKO TAYLOR

## Old School

### A New CD... On Tour... & Appearing at the Chicago Blues Festival

The last time I saw Koko Taylor she was a member of the audience at Buddy Guy's Legends in Chicago. It's been about 15 years now, and while I no longer remember who was on stage that night – I will never forget Koko sitting at a table surrounded by fans standing about hoping to get an autograph...or at least say hello. The Queen of the Blues was in the house that night...and there was absolutely no question as to who it was, or where she was sitting. Having seen her electrifying live performances several times, combined with her many fine Alligator releases, it was easy to understand why she was engulfed by so many devotees. Still trying, but I still can not remember who was on stage. Oh well!

One thing is for sure – anyone who hears Koko live will *not* forget who was on stage many years down the road. Her sheer power, guts and emotion smack you in the head, make you sit up straight and demand your attention. Rolling Stone indeed put it right with the quote describing her as "Deep soul, raw vocal power, blustery swagger...the great female blues singer of her generation." She's won many accolades and awards during her long career, but it is the music that speaks out.

A scare hit the blues world when in 2003 Koko suffered serious complications after surgery for gastrointestinal bleeding. It was a struggle for her to even breathe and was placed on a ventilator. But, not surprisingly, she is one tough lady and, though it took quite some time, she recovered and finally returned to the stage the next year. She has her strength back and has been touring as well as recording. She has just released **Old School**, her first album in seven years, and the 10th Koko Taylor title in the current Alligator Records catalogue. With the warm weather finally here, it might be a good time to try to catch



Koko at the 2006 Pocono Blues Festival. Photo by Ron Weinstock. Cover photo courtesy of Alligator Records

her live on her current tour. The cities and dates are at the end of this story. She'll be at the Chicago Blues Festival on Thursday, June 7. Our pulp readers will find Pittsburgh to be the closest, while our planetwide web readers might find her coming very close to home. Her new CD is reviewed by Duane Verh in this issue.

For those who might want to know some history on The Queen, her biography follows, courtesy of the folks at Alligator.

*Bill Wahl*

"I come from a poor family," recalls Koko. "A very poor family. I was raised up on what they call a sharecropper's farm." Born Cora Walton (an early love of chocolate earned her the lifelong nickname Koko) in 1928 just outside of Memphis in Bartlett, Tennessee, Koko was an orphan by age 11. Along with her five brothers and sisters, Koko developed a love for music from a mixture of gospel she heard in church and blues she heard on radio stations beaming in from Memphis. Even though her father encouraged her to sing only gospel music, Koko and her siblings would sneak out back with their homemade

instruments and play the blues. With one brother accompanying on a guitar strung with baling wire and another brother on a fife made out of a corn cob, Koko began her career as a blues woman. As a youngster, Koko listened to as many blues artists as she could. Bessie Smith and Memphis Minnie were particular influences, as were Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson. She would listen to their songs over and over again. Although she loved to sing, she never dreamed of joining their ranks.

When she was in her early 20s, Koko and her soon-to-be husband, the late Robert "Pops" Taylor, moved to Chicago looking for work. With nothing but, in Koko's words, "35 cents and a box of Ritz crackers," the couple settled on the city's South Side, the cradle of the rough-edged sound of Chicago blues. Taylor found work cleaning houses for wealthy families in the ritzy northern suburbs. At night and on weekends, Koko and Pops would visit the South and West Side blues clubs, where they would hear singers like Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Magic Sam, Little Walter, and Junior Wells. And thanks to prodding from Pops, it wasn't long before Taylor was sitting in with many of the legendary blues artists on a regular basis.

Taylor's big break came in 1963. After a particularly fiery performance, songwriter/arranger Willie Dixon approached her. Much to Koko's astonishment, he told her, "My God, I never heard a woman sing the blues like you sing the blues. There are lots of men singing the blues today, but not enough women. That's what the world needs today, a woman with a voice like yours to sing the blues." Dixon first recorded Koko for USA Records and then secured a Chess recording contract for her. He produced several singles and two albums for her—including her huge 1966 hit single "Wang Dang Doodle" — firmly establishing Koko as the world's number one female blues talent.

In the early 1970s, Taylor was among the first of the South Side Chicago blues artists to find work—and an audience—on the city's white North Side. In 1972, Koko played at the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival in front of more people than ever before (including a young Bruce Iglauer). Atlantic Records recorded the festival (including her performance) and released a live album, which brought Koko to the attention of a large, national audience. In 1975, Koko found a home with the city's newest blues label, Iglauer's Alligator Records. Her first album for the fledgling label, *I Got What It Takes* (AL 4706), earned her a Grammy nomination. Since then, Koko's recorded eight more albums for Alligator (and received five more Grammy nominations) and has made numerous guest appearances on various tribute albums and recordings of her famous friends. She's been in movies and on television, on radio and in print all over the world.

#### Remaining 2007 Tour Dates

Jun 03 - Puerto Rico Heineken JazzFest - Hato Rey, PA,  
PUERTO RICO  
Jun 07 - Chicago Blues Fest - Chicago, IL,  
Jun 09 - Three Rivers Arts Festival - Pittsburgh, PA,  
Jun 16 - Russian River Festival - Guerneville, CA,  
Jun 19 - Red Rocks - Red Rocks, CO, - w/Buddy Guy  
Jun 23 - Morton Arboretum - Lisle, IL,  
Jun 24, - Booth Amphitheatre - Cary, NC,  
Jul 04 - Waterfront Blues Festival - Portland, OR,  
Jul 11 - Empire State Plaza - Albany, NY,

Jul 18 - Nanba-Hatch - Osaka, JAPAN  
Jul 19 - Bottom Line - Nagoya, JAPAN  
Jul 20 - TBA - Tokyo, JAPAN  
Jul 22 - Tokyo Hibiya Outdoor Theater - Tokyo, JAPAN  
Jul 28 - Cazorla Blues Festival - Cazorla, SPAIN  
Aug 18 - Concert In The Park - Dayton, OH,  
Aug 23 - Lowell Summer Music Series - Lowell, MA,  
Sep 07 - Metropolis Performing Arts Centre - Arlington Hts, IL,  
Nov 10 - Lucerne Blues Festival - Lucerne, SWITZERLAND  
Mar 15 - Town Hall - New York, NY

## Blue Note Remembers Andrew Hill

The Blue Note Records Family is very saddened to announce the passing of the great pianist and composer Andrew Hill. Andrew passed away in the early morning on April 20 after battling lung cancer for several years. He was 75 years old.

Andrew was considered "the next Thelonious Monk" by Blue Note founder Alfred Lion, and over a 44 year association with the label, beginning with his debut in 1963, he made what will forever stand as some of the most groundbreaking recordings in Jazz history, including such classics as *Point of Departure*, *Black Fire*, *Judgment!*, *Passing Ships*, and *Time Lines*, his triumphant 2006 return to the label that was named the #1 album of the year by Ben Ratliff of *The New York Times*, who described it as "a master's record, quiet, daring and magnificent."

Our hearts go out to his wife Joanne, and the countless musicians, friends and fans that his music and spirit touched over the course of his remarkable life.

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Visit them at [www.myspace.com/capersbar](http://www.myspace.com/capersbar) or call 216-910.1297 for Jazz details.

Caper's Bar is located in the Hilton Cleveland East/Beachwood, 3663 Park East Drive, Beachwood, Ohio.

## Gabriel's Horns Concert May 27

CLEVELAND – The Gabriel's Horns Fundraiser Concert featuring gospel, blues, jazz, jazz-praise and big band music under the direction of James T. May Jr. with special performances by The Jesse Dandy Ensemble, blues/jazz vocalist Ron Davis and gospel vocalist Beverly Brown is set to take place on Sunday May 27 at 4 p.m. at Zion UCC of Tremont, 2716 W 14 St, Cleveland. Tickets are \$10/advance, \$8/seniors and \$15/door. Children under 10 will be admitted free accompanied by an adult. For tickets and information call 216-861-2371 or 216-244-0646. There will be ample parking and handicap accessible.

The proceeds will benefit Zion's community outreach, Drop-in Center, Saturday Meals Program and Food Pantry as well as help to support the bands outreach music program and provide them with much needed equipment. Gabriel's Horns is a 501(c)3, nonprofit organization. To learn more about Zion UCC of Tremont and Gabriel's Horns, visit [www.zionchurch.org/gabriels.htm](http://www.zionchurch.org/gabriels.htm).

## Diana Krall in Vegas June 14-17

LAS VEGAS – The Las Vegas Hilton has signed Diana Krall to her first Las Vegas appearance, with the popular entertainer performing four nights, June 14-17 in the legendary Hilton Theater- featuring the Clayton/Hamilton Jazz Orchestra.

"Diana Krall is an incredible talent, and we're delighted that the Las Vegas Hilton will be the site of her Las Vegas debut," said Ken Ciancimino, the resort's executive vice president. "Diana continues the Las Vegas Hilton tradition of bringing great entertainment to the next level." This exclusive engagement also marks the start of her three-month long U.S. tour in support of her latest release, 'From This Moment On' (Verve).

'From This Moment On,' both in songs, mood and delivery, reflects Krall's personal love for that golden era of song making, when Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Nat "King" Cole were in their prime. The Hilton engagement is one of the only two exclusive performances featuring Krall with the Clayton/Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, which also were featured on the album.

In 1993, Krall released her first album on Canada's Justin Time Records, 'Stepping Out,' which she recorded with John Clayton and Jeff Hamilton. Her third, now moving to the Verve label, 'All for You: A Dedication to the Nat King Cole Trio' (1996), was nominated for a Grammy and continued for 70 weeks in the Billboard jazz charts. She has won two Grammys, one for "Best Jazz Vocal Performance" (1999) for 'When I Look In Your Eyes' (the first ever Jazz record

nominated for "Best Album") and the other for "Best Jazz Vocal Album" (2002) for 'Live in Paris'.

Diana Krall will perform June 14-17 at 8 p.m. in the Hilton Theater. Tickets are Golden Circle \$125 (plus tax and service charge); Remaining Front Orchestra \$115 (plus tax and service charge); Rear Orchestra \$105 (plus tax and service charge); and Balcony \$95 (plus tax and service charge).

Tickets can be purchased at the Las Vegas Hilton box office or by logging onto [www.lv Hilton.com](http://www.lv Hilton.com), [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), or [www.Vegas.com](http://www.Vegas.com) or by phone at 702-732-5755 or 1-800-222-5361.

## The 3rd Annual Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Camp July 10-13

CLEVELAND – The Roberto Ocasio Foundation today announced the convening of the third annual Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Music Camp, which will be held July 10-13, on the campus of Baldwin-Wallace College (Music Conservatory) near Cleveland, Ohio. The three-day program is geared to music students in grades 7-12 — brass and woodwinds and all other instruments (piano, guitar, bass, violin, etc), Afro-Cuban percussion (congas, timbales, bongó, auxiliary percussion, etc), Brazilian percussion (surdo, repiñique, ganza, agogo, etc) as well as drumset. Vocal students are also welcome. Also offered is a full-day master class open to all, adults in particular, on July 10 with renowned drummer, percussionist, composer, arranger, educator, and multi-Grammy nominee, Bobby Sanabria, who is returning for his second year as Artist-in-Residence at the camp.

Sessions throughout the camp will include instruction for all instrumentalists in the technical aspects of playing, composition and improvisation in the various styles in Latin jazz, and the history of the continuum as well as analysis of the rhythmic aspects of the music, in particular, the engine that drives Afro-Cuban based music, la clave. In addition, there will be opportunities for hands-on learning through jam sessions, rehearsals, a public-concert appearance, and a Caribbean music-and-art session provided by The Cleveland Museum of Art. In addition to Mr. Sanabria, instructors will include professional educators and musicians from Cleveland's Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Project and from New York City, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Tabago.

"What a great summer environment for learning the fundamentals of Latin-American rhythms, its history and its relationship to jazz all rolled into one," said Bobby Sanabria. "I can't think of a better way to honor Roberto Ocasio than to bring Afro-Cuban and Brazilian music along with jazz into the lives of young people through this inspiring program with its knowledgeable and experienced instructors. For advanced students or those who have some professional experience, they will be able to expand on their knowledge in a more challenging setting."

Sanabria will conduct the July 10th master class for college-level, adult amateur and professional musicians (all instruments). It includes a morning session of class instruction and demonstration of various Afro-Cuban rhythms/styles from a historical perspective as well as an overview of the evolution of the Afro-Cuban/Latin Jazz continuum. An additional afternoon session will involve student presentations, critique and individual instruction.

Camp application/tuition deadline is June 1. A Founda-

tion subsidy and a \$225 student fee (\$250 after June 1) covers instruction, materials, supervised overnight dorm accommodations, all meals, and social activities. Financial assistance is available for qualified students. Placement of students will be based on application information, references, and audition the first day of camp. Master Class application/ tuition deadline is June 10. \$160 per student covers morning and afternoon sessions, lunch and dinner, and an evening historical stage production.

Application forms and further information regarding both the Camp and Master Class, as well as travel and lodging information, can be obtained by contacting The Roberto Ocasio Foundation, 440.572.2048 or through [www.latinjazzproject.com](http://www.latinjazzproject.com).

# BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

**New Release Blues....**Ahh, Summer, here we come....

**Koko Taylor-** *Old School*; **Chris Whitley-** *Dislocation Blues*; **Joe Cocker-** *Hymn for My Soul*; **Deborah Coleman, Roxanne Potvin & Sue Foley-** *Time Bomb*; **Roy Buchanan-** *Messiah on Guitar*; **Lady Bianca-** *Through a Woman's Eyes*; **Blind Boy Arnold-** *Dirty Mother*; **John Mooney-** *Testimony*; **Sunnyland Slim-** *The Classic Sides 1947-53*; **Howard Glazer-** *Liquor Store Legend*; **R. Scott-** *Snake Oil Elixir*; **John Lisi-** *Dead Cat Bounce*; **Terry Cashman-** *Texas Mississippi Stomp*; **Sister Rosetta Tharpe-** *From Blues to Gospel*; **Chris Caffery-** *Pins and Needles*; **Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges-** *Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges*; **Big Joe Turner-** *The Platinum Collection*; **Lightnin' Hopkins-** *Texas Thunderbolt*; **Mary Flower-** *Instrumental Breakdown*; **Jimmy Thackery-** *Solid Ice*; **Maria Muldaur-** *Naughty, Bawdy and Blue*; **Carrie & Lurrie Bell-** *Getting' Up: Live at Buddy Guy's Legends, Rosa's & Lurrie's Home*; **Jimmy Hall-** *Build Your Own Fire*; **Roxanne Potvin-** *The Way it Feels....*



**Big happenings on the West Coast....** While many blues labels are cutting back operations in the face of a sour economy and sparse records sales, Delta Groove has announced a number of new band signings and has an aggressive release schedule planned this year. On the new signing front the label has added **The Insomniacs** to its roster. Based in Portland, Oregon, the band led by 25 year old **Vyasa Dodson** draws inspiration from many of the West Coast's most highly regarded and influential musicians including **Hollywood Fats**, **Junior Watson** and **Little Charlie & the Nightcats**. The Insomniacs have a solid reputation for delivering highly energetic live performances along with strong, well crafted originals, helping to earn them a **Muddy Award** last year for **"Best New Act" of 2006**. Look for their official worldwide debut release **"Left Coast Blues"** this summer on **Delta Groove**. Also added to the Delta Groove roster is **Jason Ricci & New Blood**. Jason's instrument of choice is the harmonica and he's played alongside **Junior Kimbrough** and **R.L. Burnside**. Over the years Jason has also crossed paths and worked with other up & coming talent including **Enrico Crivellaro** and **Nick Curran**, in addition to winning numerous awards including the **"Muddy Waters Award"** for most promising talent, and signing on as an

endorsee with **Hohner Harmonicas**. His upcoming release for **Delta Groove** will be produced by the **Grammy Award** winning producer **John Porter**. Rounding things out Delta Groove has also signed veteran singer **Bobby Jones** to its roster of acts. Jones has a deep history on the Chicago Blues scene, going back to the late '50s when he was the featured vocalist with the legendary Aces band of Dave and Louis Myers. He also worked with famed guitarist Jody Williams in the early '60s, Syl Johnson, and many others. A sneak peak of this artist will take place by virtue of his appearance on two songs on the upcoming Mannish Boys release **"Big Plans"** scheduled for a May release. On the new disc front, **Rod Piazza & the Mighty Flyers** have just finished recording the follow up to their Delta Groove debut release **"For The Chosen Who."** Expect to hear fresh original material and hand selected covers that spans traditional Chicago blues, West Coast jump to 50's R&B, all from the current line-up of the band that consists of **Rod Piazza** on harmonica and vocals, **Honey Piazza** on piano, Henry Carvajal on guitar, and **Dave Kida** on drums. Also on deck with a forthcoming new release for the label is **Ana Popovic** with **Still Making History**. Produced by **John Porter**, whose long list of credits include **Buddy Guy**, **B.B. King**, **Los Lonely Boys**, **Keb' Mo'**, **Santana**, **Taj Mahal**, and **R.L. Burnside**, the cd features a blend of electric funk slide guitar, jazzy flourishes, reggae rhythms and tight blues grooves topped by soulful feminine vocals. Ana is also supported by a terrific band which includes **Jon Cleary** on piano and **Phantom Blues Band** alumni **Mike Finnigan** on Hammond B-3, **Tony Braunagel** on drums, **Joe Sublett** on tenor sax and **Darrell Leonard** on trumpet.


See ya next month...Mark

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## KOKO TAYLOR

### Old School ALLIGATOR

Wherever Ms. Taylor has been recharging her batteries recently, the place ought to advertise. Whatever the source of her energy these days, the First Lady of the blues has

just dropped a robust and enthusiastic-sounding set that rates as one of the very best blues offerings of recent months. Rebounding from major health concerns, Ms. T here sounds ready for action from the get-go and maintains her momentum throughout.

Her feisty, playful persona works equally well on form-fitted originals: "Piece Of Man", "Better Watch Your Step" and classics such as Memphis Minnie's "Black Rat" and Willie Dixon's "Don't Look No Further" and "Young Fashioned Ways". There's not a trace of compensation for age or ailment evident anywhere in the lady's delivery; all that's "old" here is simply time-tested and strong.

Ms T.'s consistency and exuberance is matched by that of her splendid supporting cast on *Old School*. Guitarists Bob Margolin and (co-producer) Criss Johnson, harmonica ace Billy Branch and piano man Brother John Kattke highlight the rock-solid solo work and backup to be found throughout the set. Kattke, in particular, deserves special mention. From track to track he skillfully drives the band while leaving plenty of room for his cohorts. The rhythm players, particularly drummer Willie Hayes, are none too shabby themselves.

Koko Taylor matters as much to the legacy of *grand dames* of the blues such as Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith as she does for the blues of her hometown Chicago. The fact that she's still making vital music besides is our very good fortune.

*Duane Verh*

## READ ABOUT THE 2007 CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL

Koko Taylor is one of many blues artists on tap for the Chicago Blues Festival. Read all about it further on in this issue.

[www.jazz-blues.com](http://www.jazz-blues.com)

## JOE LOVANO AND HANK JONES

### Kids: Live at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola

#### BLUE NOTE

Saxophonist Joe Lovano teams up again with pianist Hank Jones for a live duo performance at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in New York City. Jones (who turns 89 in July) and Lovano (who'll be 55 in December) have worked together in the past in the studio and on stage.

Performing a satisfying menu of 11 tunes, the pair reaffirms how well they team up as they polish off tunes Thad Jones (Hank's brother) tunes rarely played outside of a big band setting ("Lady Luck," "Little Rascal on a Rock," "Kids Are Pretty People"), and other numbers by Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, and Tadd Dameron. Their improvs on Lovano's hearty tune, "Charlie Chan," demonstrate how well Lovano and Jones can interact. Jones contributes the ballad "Lullaby," to which Lovano warms up nicely.

There's plenty to like about this album. Neither player overpowers the other. This is an equitable partnership of two top jazz players who are both lyrical and extremely inventive. Their idea-rich musical relationship provides for pleasurable listening.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

## PHANTOM BLUES BAND

### Out of the Shadows

#### DELTA GROOVE

Best known as the band that backed Taj Mahal on several award-winning recordings, The Phantom Blues Band finally has a handsome disc of its own that will certainly will make even more people aware of this superb group.

The seven members of the band have a wealth of experience playing with a who's who of pop and rock music ranging from keyboard whiz-vocalist Mike Finnigan who was on Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland* album and toured with Dave Mason to guitarist Denny Freeman who was sharing guitar duties with Stevie Ray Vaughan before being part of the Antone's House band and currently is in Bob Dylan's touring group. Saxophonist Joe Sublett and trumpeter Darrell Leonard are known as the Texacali Horns, guitarist-vocalist Johnny Lee Schell had a lengthy tenure with Bonnie Raitt starting in the late seventies, bassist-vocalist Larry Fulcher had stints with Smokey Robinson and the Crusaders as well as reggae groups Third World and Andrew Tosh while drummer Tony Braunagel has too many credits as a producer to list.

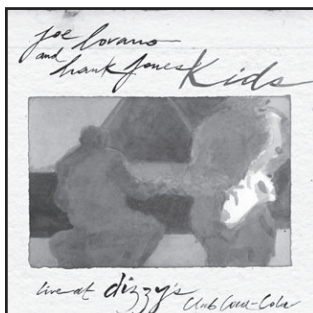
Producer John Porter has let them wax a number of classic R&B numbers with a dash of reggae added that should go down easy. From the opening funk groove of The Meters' *Do the Dirt*, they go on to the Memphis Hi Records groove of *I Only Have Love*, the rocking reworking of Don & Dewey's *Big Boy Pete*, a fresh reworking of Chuck Berry's *Havana Moon*, Flasher's handling of a reggae classic, *Book of Rules*, and solid takes of blues from Jimmy McCracklin, Bobby Bland and Ray Charles.

Finnigan especially is a terrific vocalist and Schell and Fulcher are very good with some terrific playing (listen to Freeman solo on *Part Time Love*). Perhaps the only shortcoming is that this album is of covers, although few acts can perform the range of material they do or inject the band's personality into the material.

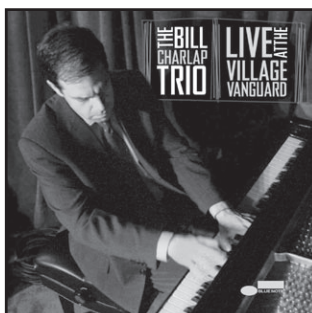
Few will be disappointed in this disc of solid blues and rhythm numbers masterfully played.

*Ron Weinstock*

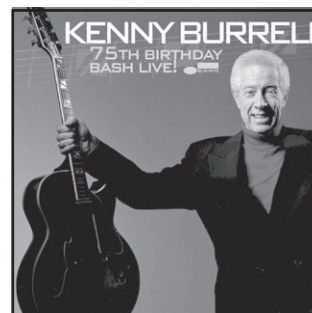
## EXQUISITE NEW RELEASES FROM BLUE NOTE!



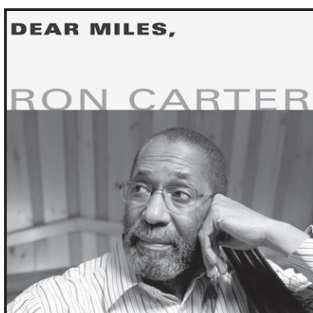
*Kids: Live at Dizzy's Club, Hank Jones & Joe Lovano*



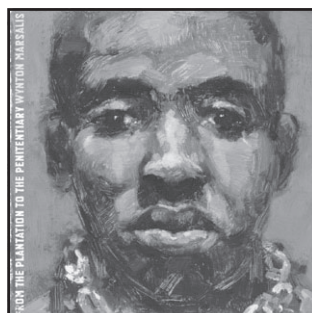
*Live At The Village Vanguard, Bill Charlap Trio*



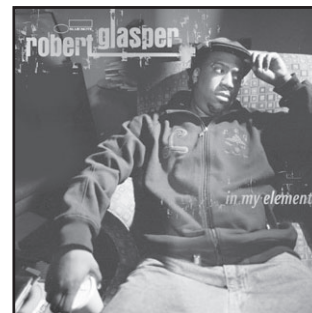
*75th Birthday Bash LIVE!, Kenny Burrell*



*Dear Miles, Ron Carter*



*From The Plantation To The Penitentiary, Wynton Marsalis*

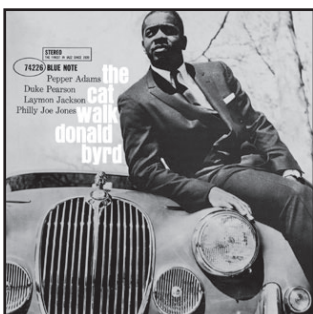


*In My Element, Robert Glasper*

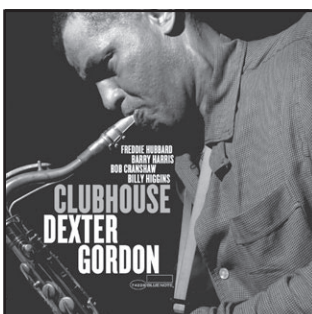


## THE RUDY VAN GELDER EDITIONS

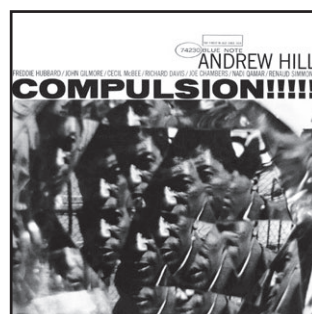
From 1953 to 1967, Alfred Lion produced a body of work that ranks as the most innovative series of recordings in modern jazz. Almost all of these masterpieces were documented by the extraordinary Rudy Van Gelder; a self-taught engineer who more than set a new standard. Devoid of caution or timidity, he captured the full power and rich sound of jazz ensembles with dazzling clarity. His contribution to the focused approach that Blue Note took at every stage of any album was immeasurable. Decades later, Rudy agreed to take a second look at the original recordings, bringing them into the digital domain with the same skill and focus. Six more RVG Editions have just been released. If you think you've heard these gems before, listen again.



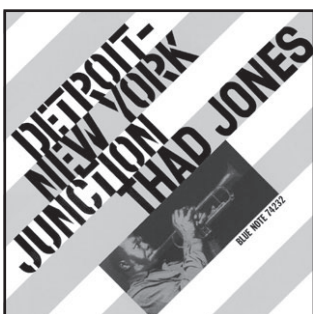
*The Cat Walk, Donald Byrd*



*Clubhouse, Dexter Gordon*



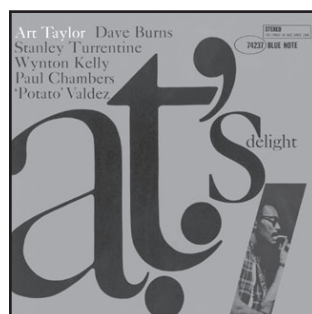
*Compulsion, Andrew Hill*



*Detroit-New York Junction, Thad Jones*



*New And Old Gospel, Jackie McLean*



*A.T.'s Delight, Art Taylor*

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**BILL CHARLAP TRIO**  
**Live at the Village Vanguard**  
**BLUE NOTE**

Pianist Bill Charlap has long been one of the stalwarts performing at the Village Vanguard in New York City. On this disc, he's captured in a live performance there with his trio featuring bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenneth Washington.

Showing off his penchant for interpreting tunes from the American Songbook, Charlap adroitly displays his classical training and jazz chops. Expressing sheer romanticism, the band plays three Harold Arlen gems ("It's Only A Paper Moon," "My Shining Hour," "Last Night When We Were Young") and six other tunes including the chestnuts "Autumn In New York" and "While We Were Young." Charlap's light touch on the keys is matched by understated, tidy playing from his team mates. Most of the tunes are ballads but the trio does an equally fine job on their uptempo take of "The Lady and the Tramp," a perky 8:17 rendition that gives the bassist room in the spotlight.

This appealing album (his fifth for Blue Note) demonstrates why Charlap, who launched his career with the Gerry Mulligan Quartet and played with a quintet led by Phil Woods, has earned growing recognition and admiration. For his lyricism, creativity and warm-hearted expressions, Charlap has always been one of my favorite pianists and he's in peak form here.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

**WANDA JOHNSON**  
**Call Me Miss Wanda**  
**ERWIN MUSIC**

One of the very pleasant surprises at the 2006 Pocono Blues Festival was the performance from South Carolina singer Wanda Johnson, who was backed by a tight combo led by pianist Shrimp City Slim (Gary Erwin). Opening with a lively song about telling her lover he's history, *I'm Through With You*, Johnson enthralled the Pocono audience at the Friday Night concert she performed at, whether singing a bluesy rocker or a soulful ballad.

She has a marvelous voice and delivery and the band provided tight, punchy backing. At the Festival, I picked up her 2004 debut album, **Call Me Miss Wanda**, which contained some of the same musical magic I had experienced at the Festival. Comprised of originals by her and Erwin, the album is full of lively, heart felt performances whether the rocking blues of *I'm Through With You*, the gospel-tinged soul of *The River*, or the lovely ballad *Always* with some nice backing harp. *If I Rise in the Morning* opens with some nice guitar before she tells her man that he may not think she is strong enough or smart enough to be on her, but one thing's for sure, she ain't waking up next to him.

*Finally Back* is a nice rocker celebrating the blues as she recites a litany of blues greats including Eddie Boyd, Memphis Minnie, Lightnin' Slim, Muddy Waters, Roosevelt Sykes, Jimmy Reed, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Bessie Smith and Bo Diddley. Never does she get shrill or exaggerate her delivery, rather her delivery is smooth like honey, yet it does not sweeten up her better barbs at her mistreating man while the band is right in the pocket and the solos are well played and to the point.

PAGE EIGHT

I have been listening to this regularly for over a month and the recording still sounds fresh and is one of this listener's favorite recordings of 2006. Wanda has a more recent CD, **Natural Resource**, which I more recently purchased. It is a good CD but neither the songs nor performances seem to be as good as those on **Call Me Miss Wanda**. I suspect I may warm up to it upon further listening.

Both CDs can be purchased on cdbaby.com, and you can contact Erwin Music directly by mail at PO Box 13525, Charleston, SC 29422 (843) 762-9125), or email [emusic@mindspring.com](mailto:emusic@mindspring.com).

*Ron Weinstock*

**DAVE LIEBMAN**  
**Back On The Corner**  
**TONE CENTER**

Tenor/soprano man Dave Liebman named this set in honor of his 1973 debut with Miles' band but the influence doesn't sound so literal. The hot, texturally dense funk romp referenced in this disc's title was a constantly busy, multi-directional machine that exuded a sweaty, sexy atmosphere. While unquestionably grounded in 70's fusion, *Back On The Corner* swings more conventionally and is decidedly more sparing texturally and singular in focus than its namesake. Weather Report would be a more obvious model for this lineup. Check out the reworking of "Black Satin" from *On The Corner*.

What does speak to Liebman's "M.D." days is the fleet, fluid and frequently edgy dance of his soprano atop a funk framework. Both guitarists, Vic Juris and Mike Stern, provide additional fire to a tasty, varied set. An actual tribute to mid-period electric Miles?, perhaps not, but **Back On The Corner** is most definitely a better than average outing.

*Duane Verh*

**FRANK "PARIS SLIM" GOLDWASSER**  
**Bluju**  
**DELTA GROOVE**

Paris isn't the first city that usually comes to mind in the list of birth places for bluesmen. Hell, it isn't even in the top hundred. This release reveals that the blues can sprout up anywhere the sweet sound of a blues guitar can land. In this case, Hound Dog Taylor's classic *Natural Boogie* found its way into the hands of young Parisian Frank Goldwasser who fell under its spell. By the time he was 21 Goldwasser was gigging with Sonny Rhodes and moved to the states where he perfected his blues craft alongside Lowell Fulson, Percy Mayfield, Jimmy McCracklin and a host of others.

The 15 cuts collected here demonstrate a gift for the blues that many a stateside bluesman would envy. With raw, fearless takes on two Hound Dog Taylor cuts, *She's Gone* and *55th Street Boogie*, straight up covers of Elmore James' *Twelve Year Old Boy*, Jimmy Reed's *I'm a Love You* and Philip Walker's *Playing in the Park*, as well as a host of originals, Goldwasser covers a lot of blues territory.

The disc gets off to a banging start with the monster groove of *Feels Like Home* which features ample doses of smooth guitar and sly, sexy background vocals. Elsewhere, Goldwasser mixes things up with guest guitarists **Alex Schultz** and **Kirk Eli Fletcher** who push him in inspired directions as they work each other over with riff after stinging riff.



Goldwasser is also willing to turn down the heat a bit: check out his eerie, electrified acoustic work on *Don't Take Away My Love* or his homage to Oakland's late night blues scene, *Three Sisters*, which will have you reaching for the nightcap and lighting the last smoke of the night.

While this is certainly a guitar disc, Goldwasser's vocals fit in nicely and there's enough soulful horn charts, B-3 grooves and background vocals to hold the attention of those who don't live or die by six strings. Keep an eye on this guy.

**Mark Smith**

## BEBO VALDES & FEDERICO BRITOS

**We Could Make Such Beautiful Music Together**  
**CALLE 54/MOJITO RECORDS**

Performing as a duo, Cuban-born pianist Bebo Valdes and Uruguayan-born violinist Federico Britos serve up a lovely array of 14 tunes that include jazz and popular standards as well as Afro-Cuban gems.

Their playing is warm, engaging and interactive as they gracefully reinvent gems such as "My One and Only Love," "Someone To Watch Over Me," "I Only Have Eyes For You," "Waltz For Debbie," and Latin numbers, including "Claudia," a tune by Bebo's son Jesus "Chucho" Valdes.

Though he's been around a long time, Bebo Valdes (b. 1918) became globally known after the release of the 2000 feature film, *Calle 54*. In Cuba during the 1940s and 1950s, he was a leading pianist, bandleader, arranger and composer who worked with now-legendary figures. Valdes left Cuba in 1960, and since 1963 has lived in Stockholm, Sweden.

Britos, who spent time in Havana and now lives in Miami where he became concertmaster of the Miami Symphony, first gained notice in the jazz realm when featured on Charlie Haden's 2001 album, *Nocturne*.

The beautifully expressed and improvised music on this album—a mixture of Classical, jazz, Latin, and more—invites you to kick off your shoes, sit back, relax and listen.

**Nancy Ann Lee**

## THE ROUGH GUIDE TO THE BLUES

**WORLD MUSIC NETWORK/ROUGH GUIDES**

There is a series of Rough Guide CDs released in conjunction with books of the same name which cover a lot of ground. This Rough Guide to the Blues is one of the latest to join the family of Rough Guides to Chicago Blues, Bottleneck Blues and Delta Blues. The series also covers such things as Rough Guides to Tex Mex, Zydeco, Scottish Folk, and Flamenco, as well as odd topics like Mediterranean Cafe Music, Sufi Music and The Music of Balkan Gypsies.

While we have never seen any of the books, or previous CDs, this 22-track disc does give a tidy history of the blues beginning with Mamie Smith singing "Crazy Blues" in 1920. With a different artist for each song, much ground is covered with such artists as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Memphis Minnie, Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, T-Bone Walker, Elmore James, John Lee Hooker, B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Albert King, Albert Collins and others. Curiously, it ends with Africa's Ali Farka Touré, who passed away last year.

While a compilation such as this is an invitation to reviewers to pick it all apart, mention who should be in it that

is not, which would have to follow with who is on it that should not, or this song would have been better than that...we will save a lot of space and simply say that this particular CD would make a nice introduction to the blues for someone who needs one. It covers 86 years in 22 tracks and runs just under 75 minutes at \$14.98 list.

In short, this is a nice little package to whet someone's interests and get them to search out some of the artists represented. I already have someone in mind to pass my copy on to.

**Bill Wahl**

## KAHIL EL'ZABAR'S RITUAL TRIO

**Big M: A Tribute to Malachi Favors**  
**DELMARK**

Drummer-percussionist Kahil El'Zabar (b. November 11, 1953) grew up hearing myriad musical sounds of his South Side Chicago neighborhood and was inspired early on by Malachi Maghoustut Favors, then bassist with the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Years later, Favors would join El'Zabar's Ritual Trio for seven years. Favors died in Chicago on January 30, 2004 and this tribute to him was recorded in December of that year, two days after this same team filmed the DVD/CD, *Ritual Trio Live at the River East Arts Center* (previously reviewed in *Jazz & Blues Report*).

El'Zabar is a percussive genius, shading, shaping and coloring each tune with an array of different-sounding beats. Violinist Billy Bang joins El'Zabar's Ritual Trio with bassist Yosef Ben Israel and tenor saxophonist/pianist Ari Brown

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for this spirited seven-tune journey dedicated to Favors. You'll hear "ancient-to-the-future" influences of Chicago's AACM in performances from these musicians. El'Zabar recorded the funkish "Crumb-puck-u-lent" with his Ethnic Heritage Ensemble a decade ago and, here, he injects added percussive oomph to Bang's and Brown's contributions over a riffing bass line. The title tune launches with a melodic, mournful wail from Brown's tenor sax, thumbing of El'Zabar's kalimba and pulsing percussion underneath. Another highlight is the bluesy Billy Bang composition, "Freedom Flexibility," with Brown at the piano and El'Zabar on the hand drums. Around 11 minutes each, "Oof," "Kau" and "Maghoustut" are the longest tunes, yielding time for soloists and for El'Zabar to hypnotize the listener with primitive beats.

Conveying a mixture of joy, reverence and exploration, El'Zabar's Ritual Trio pays earnest tribute to Malachi. Big M is a magical, musical tour to excite your ears.

Nancy Ann Lee

## THE ROUNDERS

### Wish I Had You

#### BLIND PIG

Over the years bands like The Rounders have shown up: spare, two-guitars-bass-and-drums lineups with a good sense of their blues roots and a creative bent that made for impacting music, even if many of these same groups were fated with cult followings and relative obscurity. (anyone for Doll By Doll, What Is This or the Royal Court Of China?) Hopefully the fortunes of this Oklahoma City crew will be brighter for they deserve a shot at a large audience.

The brains of the outfit is apparently Ryan Taylor, lead guitarist and principal songwriter, and its primarily Taylor's songwriting instincts that enable this outfit to crash the invisible barrier that walls in so many blues-rockers. His knack with a "hook" makes for the goodly number of freestanding songs here that maintain an identity beyond that of mere root concoctions.

Strains of blues and rockabilly mesh with lyric sets that grab one harder upon repeat listening. Solid blues-harp cameos and back-home rhythms should attract the more broadminded blues listener. Be the first on your block to scope out a really hip band.

Duane Verh

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## N'AWLINS GUMBO KINGS

### UFO Saloon

#### BLUE CAT RECORDS

UFO Saloon is the second release of the N'awlins Gumbo Kings, a sextet of musicians who all at one-time played on Bourbon Street and had years of varied professional experience whether in big bands, backing pop and jazz singers, studio work with Allen Toussaint or stage shows.

After Katrina, the six were in the Dallas-Fort Worth area where they came together with a common love of swing and New Orleans jazz, which permeates the present album. Looking at the personnel (Steve Howard, trumpet; Brad Herring, trombone; Bobby Breaux, drums; Brian Piper, piano; Mike Sizer, clarinet and Kerby Stewart bass), one might think of them as a trad jazz band, but the instrumentation should not confuse things.

This is not a traditional jazz band, although the trad repertoire does influence their songbook and some of their performances (*When It's Sleepy Time Down South*, *Tin Roof Blues*, and *Muskrat Ramble*). But the repertoire is just as infused with swing and jump flavoring (the opening Duke Ellington's *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* and *Opus One* (the latter number recalls *Swinging at the Savoy*), and even some bop and more than a small dose of second city R&B grooves (*Bling-Bling* with an enthusiastic vocal from pianist Piper).

Dr. John provides a guest vocal on the classic *When It's Sleepy Time Down South*, and *Mr. Rebennack*, where the group sings the praises the good Doctor who in turn raps a bit against the funky groove. *UFO Saloon* has Piper singing some nonsense about being taken by a UFO with a nice hipster group vocal and a hot groove. *Lament* is a wonderfully played indigo-tinged ballad, while the rendition of *Tin Roof Blues* harkens back to the French Quarter jazz clubs featuring traditional jazz and sports nice growling trombone and talking trumpet, and if a bit hotter, *Muskrat Ramble* is in the same vein. The album closes out with *Sweet Georgia Brown*, which mixes a modern Crescent City groove with traditional jazz horn voicings during the head, and the result is a wonderful swinging performance.

This simply is a delightful, varied session of the group, and to steal a quote from Lou 'Blue Lou' Marino, the Gumbo Kings are "Gumbo-licious."

Ron Weinstock

## BIG PETE PEARSON

### I'm Here Baby

#### BLUE WITCH

How this guy stayed under the radar for as long as he has is a real head-scratcher. And also a bit of a shame. Perhaps it's because his stomping ground, Phoenix, is not a universally recognized blues haven but, whatever the reason, if this disc gets the attention it deserves, Big Pete will be obscure no more.

A powerhouse singer with blues instincts increasingly rare these days, the 70-something Pearson shouts and scorches with energy rarely found in artists half his age. His well-seasoned pipes meet here with a solid set that includes some most authentic sounding originals and a knockout run-through of the Little Milton feature "Tin Pan Alley" on which Pearson comes off as Milton's burlier older



brother.

Pearson's excellent band can stand toe-to-toe with most any outfit around and is enhanced further by tasty guest work from harmonica man Johnny Dyer, guitar stud Kid Ramos and jazz organ ace Joey DeFrancesco. Ike Turner even makes the scene.

*I'm Here Baby* is just the sort of butt-kick traditional blues could use these days and is worth the effort to run down. Check out [www.bluewitchrecords.com](http://www.bluewitchrecords.com). **Duane Verh**

**JOHN PISANO**  
**Guitar Night**  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**MB3 JAZZ HITS VOLUME 1**  
**MEL BAY RECORDS**

On John Pisano's **Guitar Night**, performances span nine years from 1997 when Pisano began hosting a guitar series at Papashon in Los Angeles. Featuring a different guitarist each week, the event became known as "Guitar Night." The setting later moved to Spazio (a dinner club in Van Nuys) but Pisano still presides over the popular Tuesday series currently in its tenth year. Featured on the 16 (mostly) standards of this two-disc set are guitarists Peter Bernstein, Corey Christiansen, Joe Diorio, Herb Ellis, Ted Greene, Scott Henderson, Pat Kelley, Larry Koonse, Frank Potenza, George Van Eps, Anthony Wilson and Barry Zweig. As the tracks cover a nine-year span, different rhythm sections support the guitarists. Disc One highlights include Ellis' brisk version of "I Want To Be Happy" and Greene's mellow solo reading of "When Sunny Gets Blue." Disc Two contains a lovely duo version of "Round Midnight" by Joe Diorio with bassist Dave Carpenter and Pisano's swinging trio version of "Autumn Leaves." Pisano performs on three more tracks on Disc Two. Featuring some of the top guitarists around, his set is an enjoyable listen from start to finish.

**MB3, Jazz Hits Volume 1** features guitarists Jimmy Bruno, Vic Juris, Corey Christiansen, with drummer Danny Gottlieb and bassist Jay Anderson performing 10 jazz standards. It's rare to hear three guitarists performing as a unit but these three musicians equitably share the spotlight, spurred artistically by Gottlieb's pyrotechnics. Tunes include Miles Davis' "Solar," "All Blues" and "Milestones," Herbie Hancock's "Cantaloupe Island," John Coltrane's "Impressions," Horace Silver's "Peace," Benny Golson's "Killer Joe," and more. Execution and technique are all here, but warmth, variety and swinging tempos seem to be lacking. Fusion is the focus and fans of that style should enjoy this album.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

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## **WATERMELON SLIM AND THE WORKERS**

### **The Wheel Man NORTHERN BLUES**

Bill Homans picked up the name "Watermelon Slim" during his tenure as an Oklahoma Watermelon farmer which is only one of the dozens of jobs he's held over the years including stints as a truck driver, fork lift operator, saw-miller, firewood salesman, collection agent and street musician. Along the way he also managed to pick up two undergraduate degrees and a master's degree and became a member of the genius IQ group, Mensa. So what does this have to do with the blues?

Plenty as it turns out. While most bluesmen have a pretty limited set of experiences, which forces them into the "Baby done me wrong" and "The boss man is a jerk" school of writing, Slim's storied history gives him a rich and varied base from which to craft his songs. His tales of hustlers making a living as preachers, *Jimmy Bell*, card sharks, *Fast Eddie*, and women who take charge, *Truck Driving Mama*, are welcome changes from the standard blues fare.

Slim also works in a few tales about his own detours into truck driving, *The Wheel Man*, writing for a living, *Newspaper Reporter*, and into the "there goes the fingers" world of sawmill operators, *Sawmill Holler*. Politics find the way into the mix as well as he delivers a scathing indictment of the Washington politicians who have ignored the plight of



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the flooded out south, *Black Water*. Even when Slim turns to more standard fare, such as on the tale of a stripper girlfriend, *Peaches*, he reveals his broad range by resisting the easy cliché's about the profession by noting that she's no victim as she clears the isles "like a Mako Shark" Likewise, he turns a tale about a woman who drinks too much, *Drinking and Driving*, into a clever play on the many ads that discourage such activities. Musically, Slim and the Workers take on everything from Foghat style blues rock on the title track to harmonica and piano fueled shuffles, *I've Got News*, to street corner busker style acoustic blues, *Jimmy Bell*, to a cappella work songs, *Sawmill Holler*, to Chuck Berry style rockers, *Rattlesnake*, and down and dirty Chicago style blues, *Got Love If You Want it*.

Overall, a terrific release that will likely land Slim a whole bunch of new fans.

Mark Smith

## KASSABA

### Dark Eye KASSABA MUSIC

Kassaba's music is infectious, imaginative, improvisatory, jazzy—you name it, all those qualities that sprout so readily from the fertile brain of Greg Slawson, founder of the group. Aply assisted by his wife, Candice Lee, the two of them take turns on piano and percussion; sax man Mark Boich doubles on various saxophones and percussion and Chris Vance mans the stand-up bass—and percussion. Percussion as in many different varieties, with almost nothing from the standard drumset—no snare or bass drum, no real cymbals. Just myriad exotic sounds.

Their new album—*Dark Eye*—is a bit removed from their celebrated first album *Zones* of two years ago. For the first time, they've included a piece arranged by Greg, but not composed by him. *The Montagues and Capulets* from the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* by Prokofiev is as danceable as the original, but in a different, jazzy style. It makes you wish he'd tweak the whole piece! Fabulous!

*Impact* adds just a hint of blues to jazzy improv, while *Possessed* has an interesting duet featuring pizzicato bass and the talking drum. *Extensions* is a group showcase, as is *Dark Eye*, which has them going in all different directions. *Larimar* is Caribbean in nature; *Cat Suit* is just funky, jazzy Kassaba, as is *Jousted*. *Hin Rizzy* is just, well—*Hin Rizzy*. Don't ask, just listen!

The CD is available at several online locations: the Kassaba website ([www.kassaba.com](http://www.kassaba.com)), CD Baby ([www.cdbaby.com/cd/kassaba](http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/kassaba)) and iTunes. Kelly Ferjutz

## HENRY TOWNSEND

### The Real St. Louis Blues ARCOLA RECORDS

Arcola Records is a small label out of Seattle that has been building a very interesting catalog of downhome blues focusing on previously unissued recordings by significant stylists in older blues traditions.

One of the recent additions to the catalog is the late Henry Townsend's *The Real St. Louis Blues*. Townsend, who when he died had probably the lengthiest career on record in blues history, began recording in 1929 and recorded into the 21st Century. In the pre-World War 11 era



he played (and recorded) with many legends including James 'Stump' Johnson, Lonnie Johnson, Henry Spaulding, Roosevelt Sykes, Walter Davis, Charlie Jordan, John Lee 'Sonny Boy' Williamson and Big Joe Williams, and he developed a distinctive style on both guitar and piano.

The music on this set derives from recordings that Arcola's Bob West produced in August, 1979 at Henry's home in St. Louis (and West plays second guitar on a couple of tracks) and at a Baldwin Piano Store in the city. This provides a pretty fair representation of Townsend as a bluesman, displaying his rhythmic driving guitar and deep alley piano style matched with his doleful vocals. His style gives his rendition of Jesse Baby Face Thomas' *You'll Never Find Another Man Like Me*, titled here as *Can't You See* (and credited to Henry) a bit more somber in its tone.

His piano blues feature a steady bass and thundering right hand runs and complement his somber singing on *Mercy*, a take on a traditional blues theme; *So Long, So Long*, a somber goodbye song; *Sad Story*, a minor key blues reminiscent of Walter Davis, that is a marvelous piece of blues; and *Let Her Go*, a fine performance in the vein of *St. James Infirmary* as if Walter Davis sang it.

*Crying Won't Make Me Stay* (one of the songs on which West seconded Townsend) brings together the 'going down the big road' blues theme with 'going and his woman's crying won't make him stay,' which Townsend's plaintive vocal delivers so convincingly.

This is a marvelous collection of blues performances and absolutely recommended to fans of acoustic blues, although this reviewer recognizes that Townsend's sober and thoughtful approach to the blues won't be to everyone's taste.

Arcola should be available from better online retailers if one cannot locate this material in stores. **Ron Weinstock**

## CONRAD HERWIG

### Sketches of Spain Y Mas: The Latin Side of Miles Davis

HALF NOTE RECORDS

In a live performance at New York's Blue Note club in March 2003, trombonist Conrad Herwig leads a nonet performing compositions by Miles Davis. Three nights of the weeklong engagement were recorded and out of that came the album, *Another Kind of Blue*. This is essentially Volume 2.

In addition to Herwig and trumpeter Brian Lynch, who have both been performing with Eddie Palmieri's band for 20 years and wrote the arrangements for this project, the nine-musician ensemble features other big names in Latin jazz—Paquito D'Rivera (alto sax, clarinet), Dave Valentin (flute), Mario Rivera (baritone sax), Edsel Gomez (piano), John Benitez (Bass), Robby Ameen (drums) and Richie Flores (congas, percussion).

The stunning centerpiece at nearly 25 minutes, "Sketches of Spain" is a suite of many flavors. Beginning with a near-Classical feeling and incorporating Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" with elements of Gil Evans compositions (as did the original recording by Davis), the piece spotlights gorgeous clarinet soloing from D'Rivera, as well as fine solos by Lynch, Herwig and others. The ensemble gives spicy Latin flavor to Davis' "Solar," a 13-minute foray featuring horn soloists and section work. "Petit Machins," the shortest tune at 4:25 minutes, focuses on Latin percussion with lengthy solos from Ameen and Flores before launching into a brassy, big band sounding finale. "Seven Stops to Heaven," composed by Davis and Victor Feldman, kicks with a mambo beat, hot soloing and tight section work.

Herwig, who's racked up more than 17 albums as

## May

FRI 4 .....	TUMBLIN' DICE
SAT 5 .....	COLIN DUSSAULT'S BLUES PROJECT
FRI 11 ....	CHOSEN FEW
SAT 12 ....	WALLACE COLEMAN BAND
FRI 18 ....	77 SOUTH
SAT 19 ....	TONY KOUSSA JR. BAND
FRI 25 ....	KG BLUES
SAT 26 ....	SWAMP BOOGIE BAND

## June

FRI 1 .....	COLIN DUSSAULT'S BLUES PROJECT
SAT 2 .....	DENZON & THE ROADDOGZ
FRI 8 .....	ARMSTRONG BEARCAT BAND
SAT 9 .....	ACES & EIGHTS
FRI 15 ....	SLANT ZERO
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TUESDAYS	MAY 1 THE GEEZECATS 8 KRISTINE JACKSON'S BASICALLY BLUE ACOUSTIC 15 THE GEEZECATS 22 TBA 29 TBA	JUNE 5 THE GEEZECATS 12 TBA 19 THE GEEZECATS 26 TBA
WEDNESDAYS	MAY 2 ACOUSTIC JOYRIDE FEATURING BECKY BOYD 9 KENTUCKY THUNDER 16 LAWLESS 23 MY THREE SONS 30 ROGER 'HURRICANE' WILSON	JUNE 6 ACOUSTIC JOYRIDE FEATURING BECKY BOYD 13 KENTUCKY THUNDER 20 LAWLESS 27 STONE RIVER BAND

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leader, is one of my favorite trombonists. Interpreting Davis' music through an Afro-Cuban-Caribbean soundscape makes for inspired performances from these fine players, some of whom have solo recording careers. Latin jazz lovers and fans of Miles Davis should find this CD an exhilarating listen.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

## WILLIAM BELL

**New Lease On Life**

WilBe

Best known for penning the song "Born Under A Bad Sign," vocalist William Bell reappears with his latest release **New Lease On Life**. A native of Memphis who was waist deep in the Stax Records output when the label was at its peak in the 1960's, Bell moved to Atlanta in 1970 and has been plugging away at his R&B craft ever since.

The 12 cut disc is what I'd call old school soul, with Bell making hay from his Memphis roots and bringing them alive for this century's music fans. The title cut starts out in a funky way, and that's a good thing, as the bass and brass lead the stroke during "Part Time Lover (Full Time Friend)," a duet with Jeff Floyd that gives a tip of the hat to the original Memphis soul men, Sam & Dave.

"Keep A Light In The Window" reflects on those far, far away that want to get back home as "My Body Don't Know" is in love with his best friend's girl. The danceable "Honey

From The Bee" has the best groove of the project, plus "Treat Her Right (Like A Lady)" keeps the dance floor moving, although it is channeling the Cornelius Brothers and Sister Rose 1971 hit, "Treat Her Like A Lady," not only in title, but also in style, too.

Echoing what soul music use to be while putting his own stamp on the sound, **New Lease On Life** might just be that for William Bell.

*Peanuts*

## STEVE TURRE

**Keep Searchin'**

HIGHNOTE

On his 13<sup>th</sup> album, trombonist Steve Turre leads a stellar group featuring vibist Stefon Harris, pianist Xavier Davis, drummer Dion Parson, and—sharing bass duties—Gerald Cannon and Peter Washington. The core band is augmented by Turre's wife, Akua Dixon, playing baritone violin on three tunes.

The assemblage polishes off an attractive 10-tune set of mostly Turre originals, ranging from ballads to blues to swingers and more. One of the prettiest tunes, "Faded Beauty," is by Harris and features Turre in a smoky, muted trombone solo. With imagination and spirit, Turre varies the timbre and tone of his instrument throughout by playing open or using various mutes and plungers. His original compositions, such as the stirring opener "Sanyas" and the melodic "Reconciliation," keep the listener interested. The band also delivers a beautifully faithful version of the warhorse gem, "My Funny Valentine." Turre plays his conch shell on the opener and closer.

Davis and Cannon are members of Turre's working group and the trombonist has previously recorded with Harris. Such familiarity leads to a unified band whose members play off each other very well, providing for some imaginative soloing and sensitive comping.

Turre prefers the sonorous middle register voice of his instrument, which makes for richer tonalities and a highly satisfying listening experience. Recorded at Van Gelder Studio in April 2006, this is an effervescent, inventive session with everyone at their best.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

## ROBERT LOCKWOOD JR.

EDDIE 'CLEANHEAD' VINSON

BARRELHOUSE BUCK MCFARLAND

DEWEY JACKSON

COWBOY ROY BROWN

DELMARK RECORDS

Delmark has just repackaged the CD reissue of Robert Lockwood Jr.'s first album, **Steady Rolling Man**. Recorded the summer of 1970 after Lockwood's surprise appearance with The Aces at the 2nd Ann Arbor Blues Festival, Lockwood was backed by that trio of Louis Myers on guitar, Dave Myers on bass guitar and drummer Fred Below. Nothing fancy on this enjoyable disc with some nods to his stepfather, Robert Johnson, in the title track, and *Rambling on My Mind* as well as revive his own *Take a Little Walk With Me* and *Mean Red Spider*, along with new originals like *Western Horizon* and *Worst Old Feeling* as well as the sprite *Lockwood's Boogie*. It's nice that this is available al-





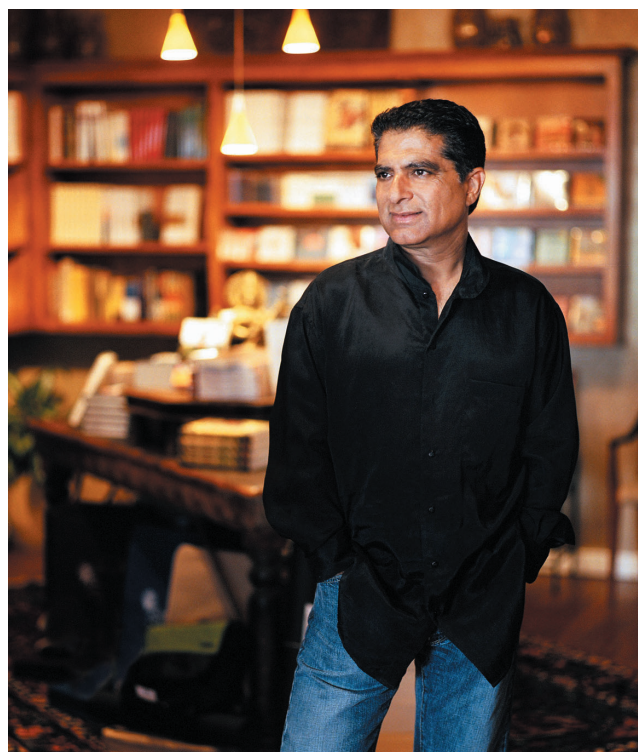


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though it is not his best.

Also Delmark has just reissued **Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson's Kidney Stew is Fine**. Originally issued on the French Black & Blue label, the disc has the shout-alto saxophonist with an all star band that included Jay McShann on piano, T-Bone Walker on guitar and tenor saxophonist Hal 'Cornbread' Slinger. It's a good mix of classic songs that Cleanhead made famous like the title track, *Somebody's Sure Got to Go*, *Juice Head Baby*, Big Bill's *Just a Dream* and *Old Maid Boogie*, along with Joe Turner's *Wee Wee Baby*, Percy Mayfield's *Please Send Me Someone to Love*, and Duke Ellington's *Things Ain't What They Used To Be*. Vinson is in terrific form both vocally and instrumentally and the band swings wonderfully for a most enjoyable session that is welcome to be readily available.

**Barrelhouse Buck McFarland** first recorded for the legendary Paramount label in 1929 and Decca had him wax sides in 1934-1935. Bob Koester was still living in St. Louis where, with the help of Speckled Red and Charlie O'Brien, he located McFarland in 1957 and later recorded him in 1961 shortly after Sam Charters had recorded McFarland for Folkways. I do not believe the selections on the new Delmark CD **Alton Blues** have been previously issued, but it is a delight to hear real barrelhouse piano, which is played as solidly as here. There is his strong left hand and right-hand chords and hammered out single notes as displayed on *Charlie's Stomp*, as well as his more meditative accompaniment (still with hammered single note runs) to *Railroad Blues*, which he sings in a very husky, straightforward manner. Included are two takes of his signature song, *I Got to Go Blues*, which he waxed for Paramount with its marvelous melancholic vocal and a strutting instrumental, *Barrelhouse Buck*. This is a marvelous session with variety in the material, and includes some brief spoken tracks that enhance this wonderful album that anyone who loves blues piano will want.

Fans of traditional jazz will enjoy **Live at the Barrel 1952** by **Dewey Jackson** with Don Ewell. Trumpeter Jackson was born in St. Louis on June 21, 1900 and played in a ragtime band before joining Charlie Creath's band and also Fate Marable before a brief time at the Cotton Club. He recorded for Vocalion in 1926 and with Charlie Creath a year later for Okeh. Later he settled in St. Louis where a young Miles Davis played in his band. These St. Louis recordings feature him with pianist Don Ewell (part of Bunk Johnson's Band at NYC's Stuyvesant Casino and well known in trad jazz circles for his strong two-handed piano); trombonist Sid Dawson (a modern player who fits in with some tailgating here); clarinetist Frank Chace (a fine traditional player) and veteran drummer Booker T. Washington on this live recording. While not the most optimal high fidelity recording, the lively exuberance from the opening *That's a Plenty* to the closing *Royal Garden Blues* is quite evident. The material is familiar from *Bucket's Got a Hole In It*, *St. James Infirmary*, and *Bugle Call Rag*, to *Tiger Rag*, *High Society*, and *Maple Leaf Rag*. This is a nice recording of traditional jazz that is valuable because Jackson recorded so little and fans of traditional jazz will enjoy these performances which occasionally become a bit too hyper (as during Dawson's trombone solo on *Tiger Rag*). One would be hard-pressed to call this traditional jazz disc essential, but Fans of such music will enjoy the passion

these players put into this club recording.

**Cowboy Roy Brown** was born in 1875 in Arkansas, grew up in Missouri across the Black River from Arkansas and learned guitar from his father. In 1904 he visited the St. Louis World's Fair before moving to Kansas City; Marion, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Deadwood, South Dakota; before returning to St. Louis where he busked on the streets as a living, performing with guitar and kazoo a wide repertoire of blues, spirituals, folk and cowboy tunes. In the late 1950s he was recorded and these recordings have just been issued on the Delmark CD, **Street Singer**. Cowboy Roy Brown is more interesting for his wide repertoire than his distinctiveness as a performer. It is fascinating to hear renditions of *Down By the Riverside*, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*, *Under the Double Eagle*, *Over the Waves*, *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder*, *St. Louis Blues*, *Irene*, *Bill Bailey Won't you Please Come Home*, *She's Too Fat/ Roll out the Barrel/ Beer Barrel Polka*, *You Are My Sunshine*, and other tunes. A very interesting document although not perhaps the most compelling recording you may hear.

**Ron Weinstock**

## QUARTETO BRASIL

### Bossa Nova/Delicado

#### KIND OF BLUE RECORDS (SWITZERLAND)

Kind of Blue is a label founded last year by Roy Tarrant in Switzerland. His gameplan is to "record the finest available jazz musicians in the best studios in the world. Most of the recordings are 'live to 2-track' with a minimum of overdub and editing. The sound quality is warm but perfect."

I first became aware of the label via an acoustic Stanley Clarke CD/DVD set last year. They are now improving their U.S. distribution and several titles are due this year, including a new Bobby Hutcherson.

One of the titles released in late April is Quarteto Brasil with a disc titled *Bossa Nova/Delicado*. It is a gorgeous set of nine tunes crafted much like a suite with a central theme, though composed by four different people. Five songs were written by the group's pianist Cristovao Bastos. The title track was penned by Waldir Azevedo; "Juazeiro" by Luiz Gonzaga; "Elo" by Bororo and we have one American composer - Dave Brubeck - represented with "Bossa Nova U.S.A.," the title track from his 1962 Columbia album. Oddly enough, it is the closest thing most of us would relate to a "traditional" boss nova on the disc.

This music is at once very spacious yet intricate. It is certainly not bossa nova played as many might expect. The major roles are played by pianist Bastos and saxophonist (mostly soprano) Zé Canuto, and their interplay is simply a joy to hear. Bassist Bororo, drummer Jurim Moreira and guest percussionist Marcalzinho add just the right touches in just the right places to perfectly complement Bastos and Canuto. And it is all anchored by Bororo's understated, yet rock solid basswork. Comparisons have been made to Return to Forever, but that would be just one light reference point, as much of this is in a different place altogether. The "ethereal" description fits better. And sometimes it reminds me more of Bill Evans in a light yet complex bossa-nova mode, but also has, at times, tinges of classical music.



The four members of Quarteto Brasil are among the elite of Brazil's musicians, and their work here together as a unit makes them a band to keep an eye out for should they choose to continue on with the project. And they certainly should. Very lyrical, attention grabbing music for sure. Recorded in 2005 in Brazil, the sound is...well...warm and perfect!

More from Kind of Blue Records in our next issue.

*Bill Wahl*

## RICH CHORNÉ/NADINE RAE

### Rich Chorné All Stars featuring Nadine Ray CHORNÉ MUSIC

I always seem to get to the wonderful Hot August Blues shows that Brad Selko puts on every summer a little bit after it starts. At last year's event I got there in the middle of the opening set by Lea Gilmore and when I arrived she was sharing the stage with a vocalist I had not seen before, Nadine Rae and was treated to several numbers on which the two shared the stage before Lea finished her set and Nadine was an impressive singer.

Recently the fine guitarist Rich Chorné issued this new CD that puts Nadine at the front and fore. The All Stars is a dandy of a band with Tommy Lepson anchoring the keyboard chair as well as contributing his voice, Charlie Williams guesting on harp and Jimmy Orr playing keyboards on one track. A good portion of the songs here (if not all) are originals and are a blend of blues and R&B with a pop tinge and wonderfully played. Chorné may be a powerhouse guitarist but he plays with a bit of swing and more than a bit of finesse, and with unexpected turns and not simply pounding it out like it was a sledgehammer. *Ain't Goin' Be No Cuttin' Loose* is a strong straight blues with a crisply delivered solo from Chorné. Duets with Lepson including *Don't Wanna Know About Evil* are among the highpoints here, but Rae is a marvelous singer that can belt it out but never sounds strained or frantic and with the solid playing behind her, this is a very enjoyable listen.

*Ron Weinstock*

## TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

### A Love Supreme: The Legacy of John Coltrane TELARC

Turtle Island Quartet has been melding jazz and classical for more than two decades and on this disc the string quartet pays homage to the music of John Coltrane.

The foursome – David Balakrishnan (violin, baritone violin), Evan Price (violin), Mads Tolling (viola) and Mark Summer (cello) – opens the 13-track album with a swinging take on "Moment's Notice" from Coltrane's 1957 recording, *Blue Train*. The sprightly "Countdown" (at 2:13 time) and a graceful version of "Naima" (at 3:43) are brief nods from Coltrane's 1959 recording, *Giant Steps*. Most tunes are from other composers' tributes to Coltrane and include a Stanley Clarke-Chick Corea composition, "Song To John," initially recorded on Clarke's *Journey to Love* album in 1975 and the lively John McLaughlin-L. Shaker piece, "La Danse Du Bonheur," originally penned as a tribute to Coltrane's connection to India. The centerpiece of the album is Balakrishnan's engaging four-part title piece.

With founding member Darol Anger gone from the TIQ (Balakrishnan and Summer are original members from 1985), the group (aka "Turtle Island String Quartet"), seems to lack some of their earlier vigor and true jazz feeling.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

## DAVE GLASSER

### Above the Clouds

#### ARBORS

Alto saxophonist Dave Glasser leads a tidy swing quartet with pianist Larry Ham, bassist Dennis Irwin and drummer Carl Allen.

Among his long list of credits, Glasser played lead alto in Illinois Jacquet's big band and with the Count Basie orchestra led by Frank Foster. His mentors have been Lee Konitz and James Moody, and you'll hear those influences (and others) in his understated, warm-toned, smooth articulations.

Half standards and half originals, the 12 tunes provide a delightful listen. Highlights include lush versions of the Ira/George Gershwin gem "Our Love Is Here To Stay" and Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood," where Glasser is at his expressive best. Whether uptempo or ballads, his original tunes sparkle with melodiousness and imagination. Glasser's "A Little Funky," is just that and his brisk, bopping "Stitt's Bits" allows him to lightly navigate some solid improvisations.

This is a first-rate studio set (recorded February 20, 2006 in NYC) that showcases Glasser's superb compositional and performance skills. His ace rhythm team adds finesse to each tune with their subtle support and fine solos.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

## CHARLES BROWN

### JOSH WHITE

#### Heritage of the Blues Reissues

##### BLUE ORCHID (ENGLAND)

With recordings in much of Europe becoming public domain after 50 years, there has been a prolific amount of reissues of classic blues recordings at very economical prices. Heritage of the Blues is a series of reissues of such material on the Blue Orchard label. Among the reissues on this label are double CDs by Charles Brown and Josh White.

Charles Brown's *Cryin' Mercy* presents 55 tracks by the pioneering pianist and blues balladeer. It ranges from the early Philo-Aladdin recordings by Johnny Moore's Three Blazers to 1956 recordings with many of the greats on so many Rock and Roll sessions present.

There is a generous selection of material here with supporting musician's including Maxwell Davis, Oscar Moore, Don Wilkerson, Clifford Solomon, Pete 'Guitar' Lewis, Plas Johnson, Lee Allen, Red Tyler, and Earl Palmer.

The notes provide the contours of Brown's career and achievements and also give full personnel information. It is a solid overview of the period of his greatest popularity and includes classic recordings such as *Drifting Blues*, *Get Yourself Another Fool*, *Black Night*, *Trouble Blues*, *Honey Sipper*, and *Fool's Paradise* and with good sound easily recommended.

Josh White, *Blood Red River*, is an even more varied

release ranging from *Wing Wang Harmonica Blues* in 1929; the classic Piedmont blues, *Blood Red River*, in 1932; *This Heart of Mine* by Josh White as the Singing Christian; *School Boy Blues* accompanying pianist Walter Roland; *Silicosis Is Killing Me* as Pinewood Tom; *Careless Love* with Sidney Bechet & Wilson Meyers; *Liza Jane* with Woody Guthrie & Pete Seeger; *Hold On* with the Union boys (Tom Glazer, Pete Seeger, Burl Ives, and Brownie McGhee); a cover of *Strange Fruit*; the highly influential *The House of the Risin' Sun*; *John Henry*, and *One Meatball*.

As can be seen its a varied setting for solo blues with wonderful Piedmont fingestyle guitar to sophisticated performances that were at the core of the rise of modern folk music in the cities. White was a sophisticated performer and sang sometimes in a manner that some would consider bland, yet certainly was highly influential and entertaining, and this 2-disc set is invaluable in helping to document this very important and greatly overlooked artist.

**Ron Weinstock**

# DVDs

## JIMMY BURNS Live at B.L.U.E.S. DELMARK CD OR DVD

Younger brother of the veteran bluesman Eddie Burns, this Mississippi-born bluesman has distinguished his modern Chicago blues with some tastefully integrated soul accents. His latest Delmark disc (and DVD) is **Live at B.L.U.E.S.**, the celebrated Chicago club.

With his solid band of second guitar/Tony Palmer, Greg McDaniel/bass and James Carter/drums, Burns launches his live set with what is perhaps his signature song, *Leaving Here Walking*, with striking guitar and his vocal of leaving and going back to his woman back in Mississippi. It's a crisply delivered performance with a solid solo as well. Mixing in other Burns originals like *Better Know What You're Doing* and *Miss Annie Lou* with fresh, interesting reworkings of Little Walter's *Wild About You*, *Baby*, and Elmore James' *Can't Hold Out Much Longer*, Burns showcases his aching, soulful singing with fine playing. Perhaps a few songs go on a bit too long and some solos are more jams over a bass vamp, but this is a live performance after all and is representative of the solid performances by Burns that this writer has seen. A bonus is a guest appearance by Jesse Fortune who is terrific on Lowell Fulson's *Three O'Clock Blues*, which is mis-attributed to B.B. King. There is nearly 70 minutes on the CD and the DVD has an additional two songs for 80 minutes.

I have never been at B.L.U.E.S. and wonder if the room is a narrow room with a somewhat small stage as many of the camera angles of the performers are directed upward at the faces or instruments of Burns and band members, and not many at eye level and less crowd shots say than the wonderful videos of Mississippi Heat and Tail Dragger.

Still the additional songs are not filler and could easily have been substituted for some of the songs on the CD. Thanks Delmark for another solid CD/DVD release. **Ron Weinstock**

## CARLOS SANTANA & WAYNE SHORTER

Live at Montreux 1988

IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT CD OR DVD

Although Carlos Santana has been taking a break from the more jazz & blues entrenched jams many revere him for to concentrate for a while on a more pop direction, we have been treated to some surprise releases of his appearances at the Montreux Jazz Festival from years past. His recent *Blues at Montreux* 3-DVD set on Eagle has now been followed by this 1988 recording of a short stint he did joining forces with Wayne Shorter. The pairing of Santana's guitar and Shorter's tenor and soprano saxes certainly seems like a good match. It is, though, not for everyone.

To clarify, let me say that anyone looking for versions of Santana's more pop oriented pre-'88 fare fare such as "Evil Ways" or "No One To Depend On" will not find it here. But those more into his adventurous moments, like those heard on the live albums *Lotus* and *Moonflower*, will be the ones to grab this release. Some of the Santana tunes heard among the 15 songs here are "Incident at Neshabur," "Europa" and "Blues For Salvador." But this is not a Santana concert with Shorter joining the band. Some comes off that way, while other moments seem like just the reverse, more bringing to mind Miles' *Bitches Brew* era and Weather Report, such as on Shorter's "Sanctuary" and others. And then much of it comes off as a true pairing of the two musical forces.

The fantastic band is made up partly of Santana Band players with Chester Thompson/keyboards, Armando Peraza/congas and Jose Chepito Areas/timbales, and partly of jazz players with Patrice Rushen/keyboards (forget about "Forget Me Nots" – she can *play*), Alphonso Johnson/bass and Leon "Ndugu" Chancler/drums. Both Ndugu and Johnson played in Shorter & Joe Zawinul's Weather Report, and both had worked with Santana as well. And I believe Rushen had recorded with Shorter, and Carlos & Wayne had previously recorded together. So as a group here they come off as being quite comfortable with one another, and the result is a very enjoyable extended set of music. In addition to the songs mentioned above, some of the others here are a 2-minute version of Coltrane's "Spiritual" opening the concert, Wayne Shorter's "Elegant People" (Weather Report) and "Ballroom In The Sky," and two from Patrice Rushen. Not surprisingly, the music is a mix of jazz, blues, Latin and rock.

Like many other Montreux concerts out on DVD, the sound and video quality is very good, even though many were probably not recorded with commercial release in mind. While some may not be thrilled with many of the constant short camera switches, at other times they do focus for a while on soloists, especially Santana, Shorter, Rushen, Peraza and Areas. And while *some* of the synth stuff sounds dated today...it was 20 years ago and it is what it is. But that is offset by Thompson's work on the Hammond B-3 and Rushen on the KX88 with the piano patch.

This music is available either as a single DVD (\$19.99) or in audio only as a 2-CD set (\$18.98). I must say, it is good driving music, but it is also fun to watch. So it may



be a tough choice, unless you are one of those chosen few who has a DVD player in the car. It would have been nice to see this released with both versions in one package like so many others these days, and perhaps that will come. But for now, fans of the real Santana, as well as many of Wayne Shorter's flock, will want to have this and will have to make the choice.

Both versions have all 15 songs in their entirety, and the DVD includes interview clips with Santana, Shorter and Montreux producer Claude Nobs – a few very short clips between some songs, and lengthy segments after the concert.

The closing credits on the DVD list it as being dedicated to Wayne's wife, Ana Maria Shorter, who was killed along with their niece Dalila and 228 others in 1996 on TWA Flight 800. **Bill Wahl**

## DEEP BLUE ORGAN TRIO

### Goin' To Town – Live at the Green Mill

#### DELMARK DVD

This six-tune performance by the Deep Blue Organ Trio was captured at the Green Mill in May 2005 and features Chris Foreman on Hammond B3 organ, Bobby Broom on guitar and Greg Rockingham on drums.

Their music might be labeled as "soul jazz" but it's more cutting-edge than that. The threesome launches the set with the grooving title tune by Foreman and Broom and follows that with a novel interpretation of "The Way You Look Tonight," a catchy Latin version of "Once I Loved," a straight-forward blues-laced reading of Broom's "No Hype Blues," a boppish take of Rockingham's "Lou," and the blues-fused finale, "Can't Hide Love."

The trio began performing a regular weekly gig in April 2003 at Chicago's Green Mill and the reception there led them to focus energies and mature as a band. They had earlier released a studio CD, *Deep Blue Bruise*. But there's nothing like a live-recorded gig that plays off audience enthusiasm and that's the energy you'll experience with this DVD.

Foreman, blind at birth, began playing piano at age five and as a teenager was drawn to the sounds of Jack McDuff, Groove Holmes, Jimmy Smith and Jimmy McGriff and was inspired to pursue playing jazz on the organ. Rockingham began playing as a youngster in his father's jazz ensemble and has performed or recorded with the orchestras of Glenn Miller and Guy Lombardo, vocalists Freddie Cole, Patty Page and Jerry Vale and jazz instrumentalists Nat Adderley, Kenny Burrell, Charles Earland and Ellis Marsalis. Broom attended New York's famed High School of Music and Art, earned a B.A. in music and currently teaches at DePaul University. He's played with an array of jazz greats including Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Stanley Turrentine and others.

Four cameras capture all the lively action and the film is neatly edited, with a focus on hands of Foreman and Broom and overhead shots of Rockingham. Notes by Joe Moor of KFSR in Fresno, CA describe the live recording. Extras include a collective interview with the trio members.

This DVD provides another fine example of the many musical styles of Chicago. **Nancy Ann Lee**

## NIGHT SCHOOL

### An Evening with Stanley Clarke & Friends

#### HEADS UP DVD

A mega-dose of fusion/funk bass waits at the end of the show but there's some tasty moments preceding on this 2002 concert set.

Being staged in Hollywood and being a benefit for the Musicians Institute, there are an abundance of "names" to sit in with bass boss Clarke from Stevie Wonder to Sheila E. to Stewart Copeland. A threesome including Clarke, fusion banjo-meister Bela Fleck and violinist Karen Briggs generate some of the hottest moments. A fusion-ised sextet-plus-horn section version of Mingus' "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" is another standout and Mr. Wonder has fun darting back and forth between "Everyday I Have The Blues" and Coltrane's "Giant Steps".

The closing jam (an extended run at Clarke's signature tune "School Days") boasts no less than eleven bassists including the Red Hot Chili Peppers' slap-happy Flea, Marcus Miller, Stu Hamm and NBA star turned crossover jazzman Wayman Tisdale. It may be a bit much for those who aren't bass freaks but *that* community should have a lot of fun with this set. **Duane Verh**

## books

### TODAY'S CHICAGO BLUES

KAREN HANSON

LAKE CLAREMONT PRESS

(2007, 238 PAGES)

Karen Hanson's *Today's Chicago Blues* is a very useful guide to the blues scene in Chicago, for folks who wish to explore the riches of the scene as it presently exists. It likely serves as a valuable replacement for the sections on blues on many travel guides devoted to the City.

I should emphasize that this is a guide for blues, not hotels or general dining in Chicago and it provides you with information on blues clubs in Chicago and in the Chicago suburbs, focusing on those rooms with the most regular scheduling of blues performances; a chapter on the Chicago Blues Festival that likely will be a must read for those heading out to the world's largest blues festival; Blues Historical and Cultural Sites which include the Chess Studio and the Blues Heaven Foundation; the Chicago Blues Archives; various cemeteries where blues legends rest; Jazz Record Mart, and the New Maxwell Street market; Chicago Blues Labels; Blues Jams with a helpful list of tips for musicians participating in jams and the audience; Chicago Blues Radio; and portraits of mostly currently performing blues musicians around Chicago.

There are some minor errors in the text, such as on page 67 discussing Willie Dixon stating he wrote *Wang Dang Doodle* for Koko Taylor in 1955, when the tune was first recorded by Howlin' Wolf and later by Koko in the late sixties. This is a minor point and possibly reflects the use of websites for some of the information (particularly regarding some of the blues performers) that is presented here. Even so, the entries on the blues cultural

sites for example includes information on performances they may have, while the performer profiles list some of the artist's recordings. So any minor errors do not detract from the overall value of this book which is highly recommended.

**Ron Weinstock**

## IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME: MILES DAVIS ON AND OFF THE RECORD

BY RICHARD COOK  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

This 373-page book by Richard Cook, editor of the British jazz magazine *Jazz Review* and co-editor of *The Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD*, is more a discography of landmark recordings by Miles Davis than a true biography.

Examining Davis' recordings in exhaustive detail, Cook interweaves information on 14 key albums recorded by Davis with session anecdotes, critical reaction and facts about Davis' life, collaborators, sidemen, and more. His viewpoint may differ from widely-held American opinion, but he expresses with confidence his personal bias about Davis' recordings as well as free-wheeling interpretations of Davis' life. He cites as resources several biographies written about Davis (by authors Ian Carr, Jack Chambers, Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, Paul Tingen, George Cole, Ashley Kahn and Jahn Szwed. Other sources include published interviews and liner notes.

Some readers may find that Cook gets bogged down in detail, others may enjoy such depth. This book may not serve as the go-to source about Davis' life, but it's a suitable companion to existing biographies.

**Nancy Ann Lee**

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## 2007 Chicago Blues Festival

CHICAGO – Got the Chicago winter blues? Have no fear, Chicago Blues Festival event planners are gearing up for this year's event with lots of great talent confirmed to entertain blues palates of all kinds. Edition 24 of the Chicago Blues Festival takes place June 7-10. The world's largest free admission blues festival brings people together from all parts of the world to enjoy the very best blues music in Chicago's Grant Park with six stages of entertainment.

Once again, the Chicago Blues Festival celebrates centennials, saluting Sunnyland Slim and Albert Ammons (protégé of Jimmy Yancey, the father of Chicago blues) with Boogie Woogie Stomp: a special piano summit in honor of Albert Ammons.

The Chicago Blues Festival brings several special treats to Grant Park this year, with sax man Big Jay McNeely playing at the festival for the first time. McNeely is a true wild man of Jump Blues / Rock n' Roll, a style of performing that includes rolling around on the floor, jumping up and down on stage, and acting like he's being electrocuted. McNeely's big hit "There is Something on Your Mind" reached # 4 on the R & B

Billboard charts in 1959.

Don't miss the 30th anniversary celebration of Billy Branch and the Sons of Blues performance at the Berlin Jazz Festival. Be a part of the discussion and learn its impact on Chicago blues. Born in Chicago, Branch is always a treat with his vast experience performing with blues greats, including Willie Dixon, Son Seals and many more. Branch is also very dedicated to working with the Blues in the Schools program, helping educate and influence children for more than twenty years.

This year's festival is jam-packed with reunions, celebrations, discussions, great music and back by popular demand, the "front of the line cards" inviting people to jam with blues greats at the Mississippi Juke Joint each day of the festival. More information on the festival will be forthcoming and on the website: [www.chicagobluesfestival.us](http://www.chicagobluesfestival.us)

### A Pair of Queens Confirmed for Chicago Blues Festival 2007

Blues lovers are in for a royal good time at this year's Chicago Blues Festival! When it comes to singing the blues, women can hold court just as well as the men, if not better.

Chicago's **Koko Taylor**, queen of the blues, has been confirmed to open at the festival, June 7. Grammy-winning Taylor has released her first CD in seven years, **Old School**, which was inspired by the sound and spirit of the Chicago blues of the 1950s. This CD is sure to be worth its weight in gold with five new original songs written by Taylor, along with carefully selected songs from Lefty Dizz, Magic Sam, Willie Dixon and more. Taylor continues to thrive, despite her health scare in 2003, and her quick recovery landed her back on stage as well as in the recording studio. The CD mixes a tough "old school" sound that comes straight from her heart, with a life-affirming, joyous sound reminiscent of the Koko Taylor from years past.

**Irma Thomas**, the soul queen of New Orleans, has also been confirmed to headline at the festival, Saturday, June 9. This year, Thomas earned a Grammy® for Best Contemporary Blues Album for

**After the Rain**,— her first win in her acclaimed career of more than 45 years. Inspiration for the CD came from Hurricane Katrina's impact on her home and club in August 2005, Thomas performs annually at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Although she has never crossed over to mainstream commercial success, she has written many popular songs that have been covered by the Rolling Stones, Otis Redding and more.

To match this pair, a couple of soul/blues icons also are scheduled to play the festival. Closing the festival on Thursday and Sunday are Willie Clayton and Bobby Rush, respectively. These artists are two of the final proponents of a blues style better known in southern cities even though they have significant roots in Chicago.

Blues fans cannot feed on the music alone, and there's plenty of food to enjoy at the Chicago Blues Festival. Robinson's Ribs is back by popular demand, and Lagniappe, featuring Chicago's Louisiana flavors.

The Chicago Blues Festival would like to thank the



following sponsors: 7-Eleven, AT&T Yellow Pages, Best Buy, Billy Goat, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Bud Light, Celebration Creamery, Chicago Tribune, Communications Direct, Connie's Pizza, Chicago Transit Authority, Dominick's Finer Foods, Gibson, Hinckley, Lagniappe, Louisiana Tourism, Mississippi Development Authority, National City, Pepsi, Robinson's Ribs, Sensodyne, Southwest Airlines, Star of Siam, Starbucks Coffee Company, US Cellular, Vienna Beef, WSSD, and WXRT.

For more information on the Chicago Blues Festival, visit [www.chicagobluesfestival.us](http://www.chicagobluesfestival.us) or call 312/744-3315 or 312/744-3370. For great hotel rates, visit [www.877chicago.com](http://www.877chicago.com) or call 1877-chicago.

## Chicago Blues: A Free Enhanced Audio Tour Narrated by Buddy Guy

On April 1, the Chicago Office of Tourism launched Chicago Blues, a free enhanced audio tour narrated by Blues legend, Buddy Guy. This tour is available for download to iPods and other portable devices at [www.downloadchicagotours.com](http://www.downloadchicagotours.com).

### Chicago Blues:

The Program Beginning in the early 20th century, when hundreds of thousands of African-Americans migrated from the rural South to Chicago, Chicago Blues takes listeners on a journey through the birth of the electric blues through the lives of key performers and the clubs, juke joints, and record companies that started it all.

The tradition that blossomed in the packed nightclubs of Chicago's South Side has come to be defined as the first truly original American art form. The Blues can still be found in the city today, in the spirit of its people, neighborhoods and, of course, in its night clubs.

"We are excited to be able to share the story of Chicago Blues with the world," said Dorothy Coyle, director, Chicago Office of Tourism. "This free tour connects past Blues legends with today's Blues scene and describes how it all began."

### The Narrator: Buddy Guy

Bluesman, imprimatur, and all-around living legend Buddy Guy serves as the guide to Chicago Blues. Guy's authority on the subject is incomparable; he literally lived the history the tour celebrates.

Born in 1936 and raised on a sharecropper's farm near Lettsworth, Louisiana, Buddy was only six years when he made his first makeshift 'guitar' by fastening two pieces of string to a piece of wood with his mother's hairpins. He came north to Chicago in 1957. There, while playing with Otis Rush at the famous 708 Club, on Chicago's South Side, he was discovered by Muddy Waters.

Guy quickly established himself as one of the biggest name in blues, and his long career includes performances with artists like Willie Dixon, Junior Wells, and Muddy Waters.

### The Music

As Blues artist Billy Boy Arnold relates in Chicago Blues, 'Once you hear the blues, if you are a human being, you will feel emotion' The blues tells human sto-

ries and the emotion of music.'

The music of Muddy Waters, Magic Sam, Koko Taylor, the Rolling Stones (longtime admirers of the Chicago Blues sound) and Howlin' Wolf are prominently featured on this tour. Visitors to the interactive site can also listen to full tracks from some of the earliest blues artists, including Ma Rainey, Papa Charlie Jackson, and Ada Brown, in the 'Featured Music' section.

### Tour Format

Chicago Blues is designed both for listeners who want to download the program and take the tour for themselves, and also for those blues-lovers who can't make the trip in person.

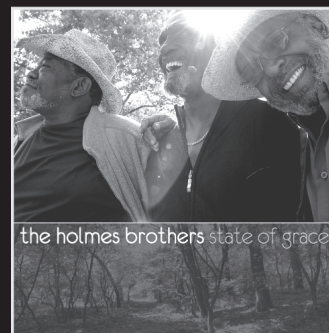
As such, the richly-produced audio tour is complemented by more than 150 archival and contemporary photographs, as well as location maps.

Visitors can access to these materials in three different formats: first, as mp3 files for download, allowing visitors to upload the tour to any portable device or burn it to a CD. Visitors can also download an enhanced podcast of the tour, which includes pictures with the audio that can be viewed on photo and video iPods. Finally, visitors can also navigate the interactive website, and browse audio segments, photos and maps. The interactive site also offers bonus features like a series of video interviews of Buddy Guy.

Chicago Blues is offered in five languages, including Chinese-Mandarin, English, German, Japanese and Spanish.

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