

November / December 2017
Issue 375
now in our 43rd year

jazz
& **blues** report



Russell Malone



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PDX jazz
PORTLAND

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Founded in Buffalo New York in March of 1974; began our Cleveland edition in April of 1978. Now based in San Diego, this global e-zine edition is posted online bimonthly at www.jazz-blues.com

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"Buffalorious"
Our original mascot from the very early Buffalo Jazz Report days – mid '70s. He is older now, but global & still very cool!

PDX jazz



Esperanza Spalding

2018 Lineup Set for BIAMP PDX Jazz Festival Portland, Oregon

The 15th Annual Biamp PDX Jazz Festival Presented by Cascades Sotheby's International Realty is set to commence Thursday, February 15 through Sunday, February 25 with 30 featured concerts at venues throughout the Portland metro region. Tickets are on sale now.

The 15th anniversary edition will acknowledge the originally hip and wonderfully wacky world of jazz vocalese, highlighted by Grammy® Award-winner Kurt Elling and his homage to mentor, 95-years-young Jon Hendricks with daughters Michele and Aria Hendricks performing along with Portland stalwarts Randy Porter and Nancy King, and a performance by the Portland State University Jazz Vocal Ensemble under the direction of Sherry Alves.

A nod to hipsterism will be penultimate when Richie Cole, the last living link to Eddie Jefferson's pioneering legacy, makes a rare PDX appearance joining Harlem-based Allan Harris to fete the deceased singer on his 100th birthday. Keeping it local and very real on the subject of scat is the Bobby Torres Ensemble with vocalist Sean Holmes paying respect to the legacy of Al "Breakin' Away" Jarreau. Always a great hang at Al's Den, the annual themed residency curated by Mary Sue Tobin of free nightly programs by Portland based artists will spotlight singers, scatters and swingers.

The loss of pianist Geri Allen this summer was emotionally hard and sent shock waves through the jazz community as she touched so many of us in a myriad of meaningful ways. She also left an indelible mark on the



Abdullah Ibrahim

festival with her stirring performance in tribute to Alice Coltrane in 2015 and as the centrifugal force in the trio collective, ACS which made their west coast debut here in 2013. It was the pioneering pianist's wish that Ravi Coltrane play for her in Portland and we are humbled by this auspicious occasion. States Esperanza Spalding, "Geri was and is a divine prism of pure heart and artistry." Terri Lyne Carrington recalls, "You are an inspiring maverick an exemplary creator that I'm proud to have been able to call my friend and bandmate. You've positively touched so many and my life and art will always reflect your vision and influence." Darrell Grant, who worked

with her a decade ago at Reed College, speaks of Allen in reverential terms as his singular most important influence.

States Executive Artistic Director, Don Luoff, "Frankly from a programming standpoint, it's seamless to bring back a bevy of perennial headliners who graced our stages these past 15 years, but we chose rather to focus and blend on who has not appeared and should be here with select returnees that speaks to the emerging, established and legacy careers of Charles Tolliver and New Music Inc., Miles Electric Band, Ben Allison, Scott Amendola, Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Jazz By 5, Charles Gayle, Mostly Other People Do the Killing, Dave King, Russell Malone, Rachel Flowers, Tigran Hamasyan, Marcus Roberts, and Lisa Fischer, Yotam Silberstein, among others.

"Many of our esteemed resident artists will appear in a variety of special situations including the David Friesen Reunion Trio, Randy Porter with Nancy King, Trio Subtonic featuring Dan Balmer, Devin Phillips Trio, Domo Branch Quintet, Portland Jazz Master Art Abrams, Tahirah Memory, Bobby Torres, UP Jazz Ensemble, PSU Vocal Jazz Ensemble, George Colligan with Buster Williams and Lenny White and Dan Gaynor and Gordon Lee.

"PDX Jazz partners with a variety of selected venues: Revolution Hall, Newmark and Winningstad Theatres, Classic Piano, The Mission Theatre, The Old Church, Mississippi Studios, Jack London Revue, University of Portland, PSU, Al's Den and White Eagle Tavern," continues Luoff. "Free music will also be heard in over a dozen hotels and restaurants throughout Portland. We welcome the continued year-round partnership with Soul'D Out Music Productions and their special programs of Snarky Puppy and Lettuce, the enduring support from KMHD Radio and our many sponsors, members and supporters."

The 15th annual Biamp PDX Jazz Festival Presented by Cascades Sotheby's International Realty was co-founded in 2004 with Travel Portland to establish a cultural tourism initiative in the metro Portland area, and to celebrate Black History Month through education and outreach programming.

LIKE JAZZ & BLUES PHOTOS?



This photo of Gary Bartz captured by Ron Weinstock at the 2008 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival is just one of hundreds of Ron's photos you can view online at www.flickr.com/photos/novaron



Luciana Souza

Why Some People Think Duke Ellington Is a Member of the Royal Family.

KIDS DON'T GET ENOUGH ART THESE DAYS. So you can see why some of them might accidentally confuse a jazz legend named Duke with royalty named duke. But it's finally time to set the record straight.

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington didn't rule over a small English estate. Instead he reigned supreme over jazz institutions like The Cotton Club. He riffed

powerfully on the piano, but it was the full orchestra that he considered his most compelling instrument. He introduced improvisation to his compositions — a process unheard of using a 15-piece orchestra. The result was a different approach to jazz that sparked a revolution and an evolution. His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady," "In a

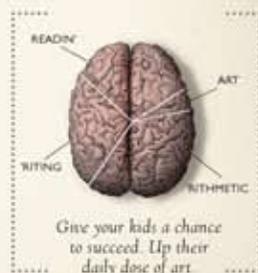


A piano player. A composer. An orchestra leader.
Duke Ellington reigned over a land called Jazz.

"Sentimental Mood," and "Take the 'A' Train." His historical concert in 1953 at the Newport Jazz Festival has entered the lexicon of legendary live performances. There is no doubt about it, Ellington's brand of jazz has contributed significantly to the American songbook and to the lives of anyone who has ever tapped their foot to a beat.

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

really transform lives. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And the more likely they'll become well-rounded, cool members of society. For *Ten Simple Ways* to get more art in kids' lives, visit AmericansForTheArts.org.



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We only bring you
the Cream of the Crop!



CHICKENBONE SLIM

The Big Beat
LO-FI MOB RECORDS

Chickenbone Slim is the alter ego of Larry Teves, a San Diego based musician who started playing guitar in 2011 after playing bass in many bands for many years.

Years of playing in a variety of blues and rockabilly bands is reflected in the performances here where he is backed by Big Jon Atkinson on harmonica, guitar and bass, Marty Dodson on drums and Scot Smart on bass. Recorded at Greaseland Studios, Kid Andersen engineered and mastered this and played guitar on one of the nine songs here.

With austere, relaxed backing and Slim's relaxed, unforced and grainy vocals, some of the songs have an ambience similar to the Baton Rouge based 'swamp blues' of Lazy Lester, Lonesome Sundown and others.

The opening title track features superb harmonica as well as Slim's own smartly played solo while "Me and Johnny Lee" is an even better performance in this vein as he sings about being as lonely as he can be as after she broke his heart; is just him and Johnny Lee. "Long Way Down" has a bit more grit in the manner of a Tony Joe White, and a biting guitar solo from Scot Smart as he sings about meeting his lover on the long way down.

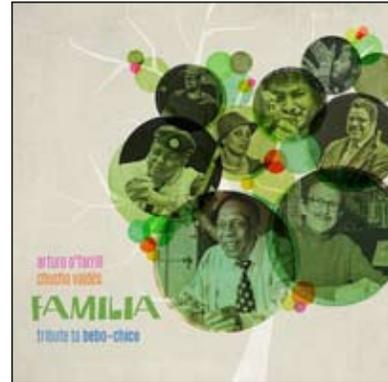
The country-flavored "Hemi Dodge" has Kid Andersen on guitar and mournful harmonica from Atkinson, while there is a folk performance with just his acoustic guitar accompanying his vocal on "Vodka and Vicodin," his best friends as he is out of luck.

There is an insistent groove to "Long Legged Sweet Thing" as Slim hammers out his vocal against skeletal backing and strong harp, while "Man Down" has a West

Side Chicago feel with a boogaloo rhythm.

The closing "Break Me Of a Piece" returns us to the swamp blues vein and ends a most entertaining album of gritty performances that evoke the golden period of fifties and sixties blues.

Ron Weinstock



ARTURO O'FARRILL & CHUCHO VALDÉS

Familia: Tribute To Bebo & Chico
MOTEMA MUSIC

Bebo Valdés and Chico O'Farrill, along with Machito and Mario Bauzá, were major innovators of Afro Cuban jazz. On this double CD collaboration, their sons, Arturo and Chucho, along with grandsons, Adam and Zack O'Farrill and Jesse and Leyanis Valdés, play tribute in a wonderful celebration of original music, with a "dazzling display of musicality and striking musicality" to quote executive producer Kahir Sehgal.

The first CD features Bebo and Chico with the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra or six spectacular performances starting with a joyous merengue the two composed. "Bebochichochoturo" opens with Arturo's cadenza, ending with Chucho's cadenza, with brilliant solos from both as well as blazing trumpet from Jesse Ricardo Anduz, set against a brilliant orchestration and the surging rhythms. The title of Arturo's "Three Revolutions" refers the three generations of the families and the revolutionary musical environments they were affected by and affected. It is the most experimental composition employing atonalism, delayed resolution and free improvisations with Arturo and Chucho dazzling in their respective solos with the swirling horns and vigorous percussion adding to the fireworks here. While the rest of this first disc is of a similar level, one takes note of the elegant, soaring melody and scrumptious harmonies of "Ecuación" that Bebe composed (with lovely trumpet from Seneca Black); Chucho's tribute to his father "Tema De Bebo" which provides a view at the contrasting, brilliant piano styles of the two leaders; Chico's, "Pianitis," that Machito commissioned Chico to write for his son that opens sonorously before a rhythmic explosion before returning to a melodious conclusion; and "Fathers, Mothers, Sons Daughters," that Arturo composed and includes solos from among others Adam O'Farrill and Leyanis Valdés (whose solo

is for Arturo the highlight here) with Zack O’Farrill guesting on drums.

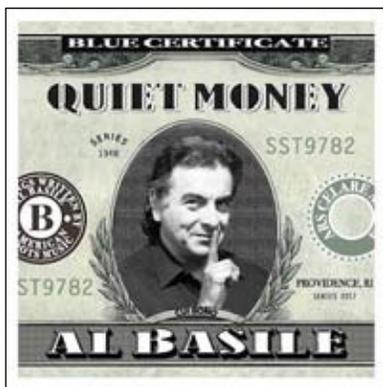
The second disc features the Third Generations Ensemble, a slightly smaller ensemble (a big little band) than the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra centered on Adam & Zach O’Farrill and Leyanis & Jesse Valdés. Adam contributed “Run and Jump,” a bouncy original with a bass ostinato and some swirling clarinet from Ernesto Vega. Jesse wrote, “Recuerdo,” dedicated to his grandfather and with a lovely theme that showcases Leyanis’ lyrical pianistic touch along with the mellow trumpet of Kali Rodríguez-Peña. After another melodious clarinet solo from Vega, Jesse then solos.

Zack’s “Gonki Gonki,” referring to a phrase his father used to describe to his mother gigs he often played, is a lively performance with a scintillating opening piano solo from Leyanis along with a robust tenor sax solo from Chad Lefkowitz-Brown and trumpet fireworks exchanged between Kali Rodríguez-Peña and Jesus Ricardo Anduz on a terrific contemporary composition.

There are sublime solo performances by Arturo and Chucho in honor each other’s father, followed by a highly spirited small ensemble performance led by Arturo and Chucho of Bebe’s “Con Poco Coco,” with Adam’s trumpet and a very percussive rhythm section with Gregg August impressing on his bass solo.

The album closes with “Raja Ram,” composed in part by producer Sehgal and inspired by Gandhi and an arrangement of a favorite tune of Gandhi in part looking at his own heritage. It features Arturo on piano and Anoushka Shankar (daughter of Pandit Ravi Shankar) on sitar who adds her own brilliant contribution. Sehgal notes that he and Arturo have dreamed of recording in India so this might be a hint of a ‘future adventure.’

It is an intriguing close to a remarkable fabulous recording. **Ron Weinstock**



AL BASILE

Quiet Money

SWEETSPOT RECORDS

This is the latest from the former Roomful of Blues trumpeter, Al Basile, who is also a poet, songwriter and vocalist. This was produced by his former Roomful colleague Duke Robillard, who is also on guitar, along with original Roomful alums Rich Lataille and Doug James

in the horn section with the rhythm section from the current Duke Robillard Band: Mark Teixeira on drums; Brad Hallen on bass (with the addition of Bruce Bears on piano and Jeff “Doc” Chanonhouse on trumpet).

Regarding the songs here, Basile says, “I went into full nostalgia mode for my old Roomful of Blues days when I wrote this group of new songs. We used to listen to all the flavors of ‘40s and ‘50s R&B, and every kind of blues and jazz, especially from swing to bop, in that band, and our set lists reflected that. I decided to write in that spirit musically, but with my modern lyrical bent as usual, and here’s the result. Of course having Duke, Doug, and Rich along didn’t hurt!”

Basile is interesting in his use of words, and on several of these songs, one wonders if he first came up with the title and then developed lyrics from the title. Perhaps not my favorite singer, that should be regarded more as a matter of taste although his vocals, and some of the music, comes across as a bit self-conscious and deliberate, as opposed to naturally flowing. Again that is more a subjective reaction and his vocals on this set strike me more favorably and the backing is certainly in the small group swing and jump blues of early Roomful of Blues. Robillard is outstanding throughout in a T-Bone Walker-Pee Wee Crayton vein.

As to the songs here, some resonate easily such as the opening “Blues Got Blues,” a strutting number with a lyric on the state of the blues noting that “they are calling it blues no matter what they play,” and one “cannot draw a crowd unless you play it too damn loud,” and it is getting harder to make it pay as people don’t go out, and blues has blues for the players with people thinking one should play for free... he takes a crisp, concise cornet solo as well. “Simple Ain’t Easy,” opens with Duke in a hard T-Bone Walker vein, before Basile’s philosophical take that if things were so easy we would do it every day or easy ain’t right, while he does a nice job delivering the ironic “Wrong To Be Right.”

The title track has an interesting rhythmic groove, with a chorus of “Follow the money, see where the money goes; Follow the money, see what the money knows” and has muted cornet as well as biting guitar. Then there is the fifties’ R&B feel of “Put Some Salt On It,” with its double entendre lyric and a tough guitar solo followed the easy stepping “The Time Is Now,” and then the Gulf Coast flavored jump blues original, “I Woulda Been Wrong,” with another superb Robillard solo.

Basile’s songs and music here is evocative of the sophisticated, uptown blues of such legends as Percy Mayfield, Jimmy McCracklin, Lowell Fulson and Buddy Johnson. He may not reach the level of their music, but acquits himself well as a songwriter and performer on this very intriguing recording. **Ron Weinstock**

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JANE IRA BLOOM

Wild Lines: Improvising Emily Dickinson OUTLINE

The latest recording by soprano saxophone master Jane Ira Bloom is a two-cd recording with improvisations inspired by poems of Emily Dickinson. One of the two discs has instrumental performances by her quartet of pianist Dawn Clement, bassist Mark Helias and drummer Bobby Previte while on the second disc the quartet is heard with Deborah Rush's recitation of the poems.

Listening to this one is of course struck by the clarity and tone of Ms. Bloom's soprano as well as the logic, imagination and invention of her compositions and her solos not to mention the complementary playing and support her excellent band provides whether the lyricism and drive of pianist Clement, Helias anchoring of the groove and Previte's groove keeping as well as adding rhythmic accents.

It starts with "Emily & Her Atoms," with shifts in tempo as well as the group dynamics changing as Helias takes a solo. On "Alone & In a Circumstance" we are again impressed by the command Bloom displays and one only needs to listen to a couple selections to understand why she is so highly regarded.

The second disc brings together Deborah Rush and the quartet with a recitation sometimes being a brief line as in "Wild Lines." Her recitations open the performances on the second disc with Clement lightly comping or Previte providing a light pulse for "Emily & Her Atoms," "Alone & In a Circumstance," and "Dangerous Times." After her recitation, the quartet starts in a restrained manner but slowly builds in intensity exhibiting the same lyricism, drive, charm and imagination as on the all instrumental disc. This formula is not followed on every selection. For example "A Star Not Far Enough" has the recitation following the quartet with Bloom's sax adding coloring during the recitation."

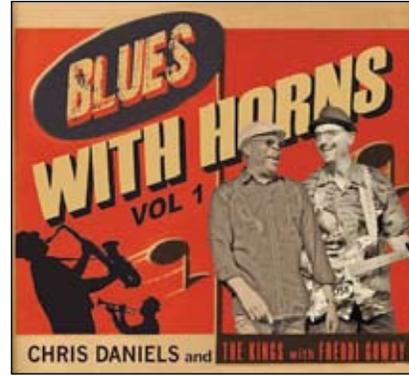
There are so many pleasures such as her solo on "Dangerous Times," with her swirling, then extended lines, or Previte's marching drum lines as Rush recites a celebration of the circus coming to town "Singing the Triangle," before Helias kicks off the quartet's response.

The performances range from cerebral to highly

animated ("Big Bill"), but all exquisitely played.

This writer had the pleasure of seeing Jane Ira Bloom and her quartet along with Ms. Rush perform some of the selections here at the Kennedy Center at what was a thoroughly enchanting evening. The superb performances on these two discs have the same magic as was witnessed live. Highly recommended.

Ron Weinstock



CHRIS DANIELS AND THE KINGS

(WITH FREDDI GOWDY)

Blues With Horns Vol 1
MOON VOYAGE RECORDS

The Colorado based Chris Daniels And The Kings brings together a touch of rock to their soul-blues mix. Both guitarist and vocalist King and vocalist Gowdy are cancer survivors, but still bringing their music decades after they first started.

The Kings are in their 33rd year while Gowdy's career goes back to the 1960s. The mood of this is funky, horn driven rhythm and blues delivered as a cross between Memphis and New Orleans.

One of King's influences is Little Feet and it's evident on the opening "Sweet Memphis" with guest Sonny Landreth's slide guitar (Calvin 'Bones' Jones takes most of the lead guitar on this album).

The next number, a homage to age-old juke joints and down-home blues, "Fried Food/Hard Liquor," has Gowdy authoritatively joining in the vocal after the instrumental breaks from harp (Clay Kirkland who is not credited on the album), guitar runs and sax on a performance with an arrangement that evokes Steely Dan.

Gowdy himself co-penned the James Brown styled "Get Off the Funk," and takes the terrific vocal on Sam Cooke's "Soothe Me," followed by another strong performance on the Bobby Bland classic "Wouldn't Treat A Dog (The Way You Treated Me)."

There are a couple of solid Johnny 'Guitar' Watson covers ably sung by Daniels; "Baby's In Love With The Radio," and "You Can Stay But That Noise Must Go," with the latter influenced by Walter 'Wolfman' Washington's rendition. Daniels captures the humor of Elvin Bishop's "Can't Even Do Wrong Right," while Gowdy channels Buddy Miles on a blues-rock take on Miles' classic "Them Changes," with everybody joining in on

this jam. The Subdudes' John Magnie on piano joins King on acoustic guitar and harpist Kirkland on the closing "Rain Check," with a back door porch feel. This low-key number contrasts to the strong, horn-driven, soul-funk-blues of the rest of this recording.

Strong vocals, first-rate material and an excellent backing make for some fine listening.

Ron Weinstock



JASON STEIN QUARTET

Lucille!

DELMARK RECORDS

Very welcome is this new release from Stein, one of the few bass clarinet specialists. Like his Delmark debut "This Story, this Time," Keefe Jackson adds his tenor sax (and contrabass clarinet for a couple numbers) and Joshua Abrams is on bass. Drummer Tom Rainey replaces Frank Rosaly who was on the earlier release as the quintet negotiates several originals here along with some songs representing the Tristano school, as well as bop standards from Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk.

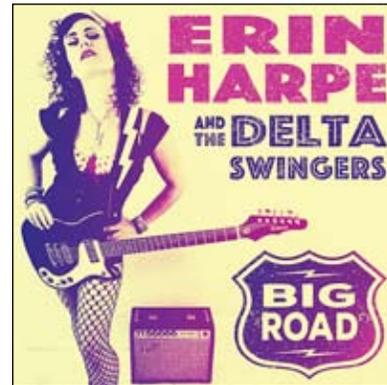
About the earlier album I wrote, "Some might describe this as free jazz, but that may refer to the looser musical structures they build their improvisations and with few exceptions do not relate to frenzied or frenetic playing" Certainly the interplay between Jackson's tenor sax and Stein on Warne Marsh's "Marshmallow" establishes the in the moment quality of the performances here with Abrams and Rainey providing an almost atemporal underpinning between their well crafted intricate interplay.

Stein's own "Halls and Room" has Stein stretching out as his serpentine lines illustrate his focus on the normal range of the instrument (say compared to Dolphy's bluesy employment of the upper range) and followed by a sober tenor sax from Jackson set against Abrams' bass before Rainey joins in to support the smoldering heat in Jackson's solo.

Jackson's contrabass clarinet sets out the theme on Parker's "Dexterity," a nicely loose rendition of this modern music classic (to use the phrase Symphony Sid employed in broadcast of Bird). Equally engrossing is the performance of Monk's "Little Rootie Tootie," again with Jackson on contrabass clarinet, with some

honking, squawks and other effects again with the two clarinets weaving in and around each other. The interplay between tenor sax and bass clarinet also is present in their vibrant handling of Tristano's "Wow."

Stein's own "I Knew You Were" has a floating drone-like quality as a duet by him with Abrams, as Rainey adds some understated accompaniment and on Tristano's "April," he states the theme as well as ably negotiates the twists and turns of the melody before Jackson's tenor joins in adding his weight and counterpoint to Stein's lead. It is a strong close to a terrific new recording from Jason Stein. *Ron Weinstock*



ERIN HARPE

AND THE DELTA SWINGERS

Big Road

JUICY JUJU RECORDS/ VIZZTONE RECORDS

The sophomore album by the Boston-based Erin Harpe and the Delta Swingers brings together more small band adaptations of vintage blues classics along with some rock-oriented and world music tinged originals. Along with her vocals, guitar, washboard and percussion, she is joined by her husband Jim Countryman on bass, Matt 'Charles' Prozialeck on harmonicas and Kendall Divoll on drum kit and percussion.

Harpe is a wonderful singer and a superb traditional blues guitarist who has shown an affinity for delta blues and Memphis blues, although to these ears, not everything is completely successful here. The opening rendition of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Kokomo" is a solid performance, if a bit too arranged with a tad too much amplification for these ears.

Harpe takes credit for "Lonely Leavin' Town," a strong adaptation of some delta blues lyrics followed by a choppy "Big Road Blues," well sung but this writer prefer's Canned Heat's rendition that used an arrangement adapted from Poor Wille Lofton's "Dark Road Blues." The rhythm section on these two come across to these ears as a bit mechanical.

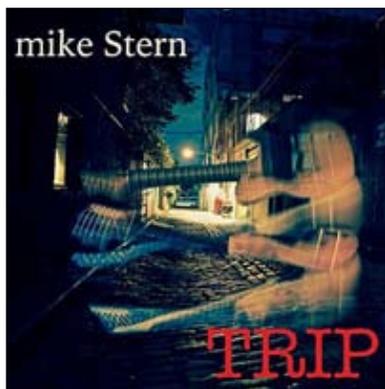
Better to these ears is a marvelous acoustic interpretation of Mississippi John Hurt's "Frankie," with agile, deft guitar, honey vocal and nice supporting harmonica. It is followed by a cover of Slim Harpo "Shake You Hips," that becomes an extended jam and is the longest selection here. John Hurt is also the source for "Casey Jones," another acoustic perfor-

mance with drums added and once again Prozialeck stands out on harmonica and Harpe sings strongly. A solid band blues "Voodoo Blues," is nicely performed before another adaptation of traditional blues, "Stop and Listen," which is based to some extent on the Mississippi Sheiks classic, and is taken at a breakneck clip mixing lyrics from Cannon Jug Stompers' "Viola Lee Blues" with the Sheiks classic.

A terrific acoustic rendition of Randy Newman's "Guilty" is followed by the closing "Gimme That Somethin' Special," a funky jam that displays her impressive guitar playing in a slightly different setting along with more strong singing.

"Big Road" is an intriguing mix of material and musical style. There is some very fine music mixed in with some that's interesting, if to these ears less compelling, but certainly merits attention from blues and roots music lovers.

Ron Weinstock



MIKE STERN

**The Trip
Heads Up**

Mike Stern has recuperated from a horrible injury that left him with two broken arms and significant nerve damage in his right hand that prevented him from doing the simplest tasks, including holding a pick.

Following a second surgery, he gained more control of his nerve-damaged picking hand and subsequently devised a scheme where he literally glues his right-hand fingers to the pick, strengthening his grip and allowing him to more fully realize his signature speed, precision and fluidity informed mainly by bebop and the blues.

Feeling sufficiently fortified, Stern and his stellar crew of sidemen — many of whom go back with him to the '80s — went into Spin Studio in Long Island City between January and March of 2017 to record his 17th album as a leader. His sly, self-deprecating sense of humor comes across in the title of the album, "Trip," as well as on individual tracks like "Screws" (he initially had 11 screws put into his arm following his first surgery) and "Scotch Tape and Glue" (his current method for holding onto the pick).

Produced by pianist-keyboardist Jim Beard, "Trip" features a number of longstanding colleagues including trumpeters Randy Brecker and Wallace Roney, saxophonists Bob Franceschini and Bill Evans, bassists

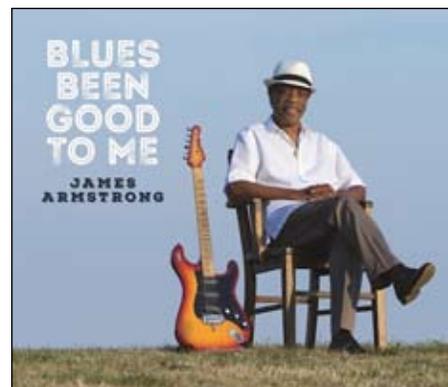
Victor Wooten and Tom Kennedy, and drummers Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers and Lenny White.

The title track is a driving composition with a bit of funk and some fervent tenor sax from Franceschini, with Wooten and Chambers providing a tight bottom while Randy Brecker's muted trumpet adds a Miles Davis ambience to "Blueprint." His former Davis colleague Bill Evans adds some staccato tenor sax to open the effervescent "Half Crazy," with some percolating backing from pianist Jim Beard, drummer Lenny White and bassist Tyrell Phell to support Stern's horn-like licks.

The afore-mentioned "Screws" has the same rhythm trio along with Wallace Roney's trumpet on a performance that starts playful and reflective before Stern forcefully solos, following this up with pretty, tender acoustic guitar on "Gone." Then there is the funky fusion of "Whatchacallit," followed by the ebullient, Latin-tinged "Emelia," with Stern on acoustic guitar as well as singing (Gio Moratti adds the backing vocal).

"Scotch Tape and Glue" is a spirited high-velocity romp based on the changes to "Green Dolphin Street," while the closing "B Train" is a quirky, mid-tempo contrafact on "the" "Take the A Train," with Roney's muted playing adding to the enjoyment of Stern's own inventive playing. It is a delightful close to a varied recording that is perhaps more impressive knowing what he has had to overcome. Stern is modest about his own playing noting that "Everybody played their asses off on this record," but he certainly is back on top of his game on this excellent recording.

Ron Weinstock



JAMES ARMSTRONG

**Blues Been Good To Me
CATFOOD RECORDS**

The latest recording by James Armstrong brings us eight originals and covers and was produced by Armstrong and Johnny Rawls with some help from Jim Gaines. Mostly recorded in St. Louis it has James supported by Matt Murdick on keyboards, Johnny McGhee on rhythm guitar, Darryl Wright on bass and Andrew Thomas on drums, with assistance from John Kattke on the B-3, Will Jackson who plays bass on one track and a horn section.

This album, his third in 6 years for Catfood, features his thoughtfully-structured, crisp, incisive guitar; his

quietly burning, soulful vocals; and imaginative songs opening with the title track. He incorporates a riff (played on slide) from Johnny Rivers' "Secret Agent Man," to open "Second Time Around," as he urges this lady to try love the "Second Time Around." Armstrong imaginatively transforms Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love," into an easy rocking blue shuffle with backing vocals and punchy, brassy horn riffs with hot piano and guitar breaks. It is a superb performance as is the other cover, his heartfelt rendition of the Marvin Gaye classic, "How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You."

The other originals are similarly solidly performed and display his craft as a lyricist, such as "Early Grave," singing about a love gone bad as he tells his woman that he knows she wasn't at church last night in that low cut dress and she treats James like a dog, stole all his love and send him to an early grave with his referencing a variety of musical icons who passed young. Then there is the humor of Old Man In The Morning Young Man At Night," where he sings about waking up finding it hard to move, but when on stage it is completely different.

Also on this is a revival of "Sleeping With a Stranger," which was the title track of his debut album from 1995, a song he has been bringing back into his live performances, and resonates as well with the listener today as it did then. It is another excellent album of strong soulful blues by a blues artist who has not quite achieved the level of recognition he merits.

Ron Weinstock



GIL SPITZER
Falando Docemente
ZOHÓ MUSIC

The English translation of the title of alto saxophonist Gil Spitzer's debut is Speak Sweet, which is a reference to the dulcet toned saxophonists that inspired him growing including Stan Getz, Paul Desmond and Johnny Hodges. He also cites the influence of Nat King Cole's vocals as another influence.

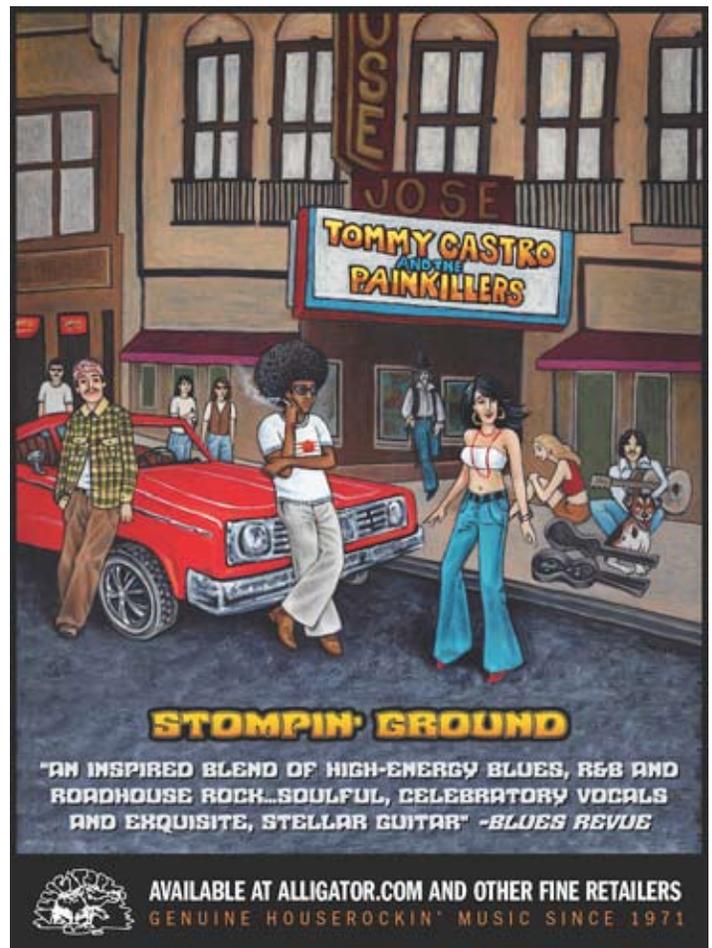
Throughout this marvelous recording one gets impressed by his own feathery lyricism and the dry martini tone (characteristic of Desmond) as well as the superb backing band behind him that includes the Brazilian bassist and producer of this session, Nilson Matta. Matta assembled a like-minded crew of Brazil-

ian compatriots — guitarist Chico Pinheiro, drummer Mauricio Zottarelli and percussionist Fernando Saci — to provide an authentic vibe on several alluring bossa novas, as well as as a number of standards.

Matta met Spitzer at his Samba Meets Jazz Summer Music Camp in Bar Harbor, Maine and the friendship deepened when the bassist invited Spitzer to an international SMJ camp in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Taken by the altoist's sound, Matta later invited him to sit in with his group on gigs at Birdland back in New York City. "He's got that lyrical thing, which is very charming," said the bassist of Spitzer, "and also nice tone, great taste."

He embraces all of those things and he plays with a lot of spirit." Also on several selections is tenor saxophonist Harry Allen who was a guest faculty member at Matta's SMJ camp. Listening to this, one will be astonished that Spitzer is debuting on a recording at the age of 75. But as Matta, says of Spitzer, "You don't have to be any certain age to play music. Anytime is about time."

This is such a delightful album starting with the opening swing of "Angel Eyes" with melodic magic from Spitzer along with a delightful piano solo from Julian Shore (who also arranged strings for several selections), and the first of a number of marvelous solos from guitarist Pinheiro. There is a Getz spirit in Spitzer's playing on a light bossa rendition of "Em-



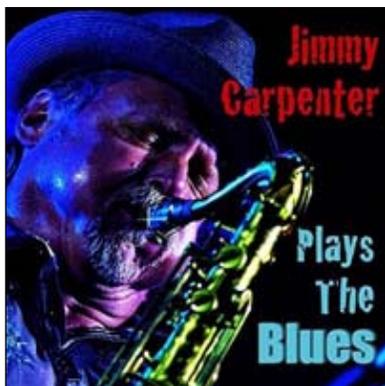
braceable You,” with a nifty guitar solo while bassist Matta and the rest of the rhythm provide sure backing. Spitzer’s only original, “Blues For Harry A.,” has Shore on piano as the two saxophonists display their lyrical magic and distinctive sounds (Allen has a much harder attack compared to the dry-martini, feathery playing from Spitzer). The two also are heard together on an easy going Hank Mobley hard bop number, “This I Dig of You,” and “Early Autumn,” a wonderful ballad performance.

Strings help create an atmosphere for Spitzer’s sublime treatment of the Ray Noble classic, “The Very Thought of You,” and then there is a most appealing rendition of Paul Desmond’s “Bossa Antigua,” with some wonderful guitar from Pinheiro.

The rhythm duo of Matta and Zottarelli shines here as well as Matta’s “This Is For Luisa,” with more exquisite sax, guitar (and piano on the latter number). Nat King Cole is among those famous for his rendition of “Nature Boy,” and set against a string quartet setting, Spitzer produces a sublime performance. Other songs interpreted include an engaging Jobim’s “Triste” and a most appealing reading of Rodgers and Hart’s “My Romance.”

The opening of the string arrangement for Sonny Rollins’ “Valse Hot,” alludes to “Over the Rainbow,” before this effervescent rendition of this jazz waltz. It is a wonderful close to a delightful and superb recording.

Ron Weinstock



JIMMY CARPENTER

Plays the Blues
VIZZTONE

Veteran saxophonist Jimmy Carpenter is currently part of blues rocker Mike Zito’s band, though he previously had lengthy stints with Jimmy Thackery and Walter ‘Wolfman’ Washington. Zito produced this and adds his guitar and vocals to Carpenter’s tenor saxophone, along with bassist Bob Bridges, Matthew Johnson’s drums, and Marc Adams’ keyboards with a variety of guests including guitarists Tony Diteodoro, Tinsley Ellis, Anders Osborne and Jonn Del Toro Richardson and keyboardists Lewis Stephens and Dave Keyes.

The ten songs heard include two originals and eight covers starting with Magic Sam’s “You Belong to Me,” and ending with a rousing Junior Walker’s “Shotgun.”

Carpenter plays plenty of rousing, raspy saxophone in a Junior Walker-King Curtis-Boots Randolph vein throughout and, if not a great singer, is like-able with an unforced delivery as on the hot Little Walter shuffle “Too Late.” The longest selection is “Jimmy Plays the Blues,” a nice blues instrumental with plenty of space for his roadhouse saxophone. The other original is a piece of old-fashioned rock and roll, “Kid in My Head,” with rollicking piano from Stephens in support of the leader’s yakety-yak sax playing.

Jonn Del Toro Richardson adds some nice guitar support on the cover of “Blues With a Feeling,” which has a booting sax solo as well, while Tinsley Ellis joins in for a musical dialogue with Carpenter on a rendition of Freddie King’s “Surf Monkey,” and Anders Osborne contributes to an instrumental interpretation of Sam Cooke’s “Change Is Gonna Come,” which arguably has Carpenter’s finest playing with more attack employing a broader tonal range. Up next is a rousing rendition of King Curtis’ “Preach,” and then Otis Rush’s “All Your Love (I Miss Lovin’)” with fine guitar from Zito and another booting sax solo.

A straight cover of “Shotgun” closes this pretty straight-forward, well played recording that entertains if it breaks no new ground.

Ron Weinstock



KAYO

Manhattan Sunset
EDWARDS RECORDS

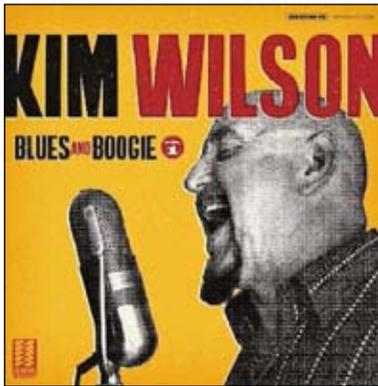
NYC jazz regular Kayo Hiraki brings her elegant, delicate touch to a varied, mostly original and most refreshing trio set.

House pianist at the Greenwich Village jazz club, Arturo’s, Ms. Hiraki on this set takes on blues (“59th Street Station B Line”), breezy waltz-tempo (“Tarte aux Fraises”) and, a particular and unsurprising strong suit, ballads.

Of a number of these, the minor-keyed “June In Paris” is a standout. Guest harmonica player Giuseppe Milici provides a haunting theme statement that sets up a pleasing chorus from the leader. Good stuff.

Duane Verh

jazz-blues.com



KIM WILSON
Blues and Boogie Vol. 1
 SEVERN RECORDS

This latest album from Kim Wilson finds him in somewhat of what some might describe as a retro-blues vein.

Recorded at a number of sessions, it was mostly recorded and mixed by guitarist Nathan James at Sacred Cat Studios, Oceanside, California, except for a couple tracks recorded and mixed by Big Jon Atkinson at Big Tone Recording Studios, Hayward, California.

Among those playing are the late pianist Barrelhouse Chuck and drummer Ricard Innes. Others heard backing Wilson include Billy Flynn, Atkinson, Marty Dodson, James, Larry Taylor, and Malachi Johnson.

This consists mostly of songs that Kim states he “always wanted to do. However, I have to put my own twist on everything.” The focus on this is Chicago blues and the harmonica masters such as Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson and ‘especially’ James Cotton to whom this recording is dedicated.

Even Wilson-penned originals like the opening harmonica romp “Bonus Boogie” are styled in the manner of Little Walter instrumentals. Then there are solid interpretations of songs previously recorded by Elmore James (“No Love in My Heart,” “Sho Nuff I Do”), Little Walter (“Teenage Beat”, “Blue and Lonesome” and “Mean Old Frisco”), Sonny Boy Williamson (“Ninety Nine”), Little Milton (Same Old Blues”), and Jimmy Rogers (“You’re the One”) with solid backing in the style of this the fifties and sixties originals with the recording adding to this retro-blues flavor.

Wilson has always been a terrific harmonica player as well as a natural, assured vocalist and the performances here certainly showcase his considerable talents along with the tight, idiomatic backing.

Kim has recorded several similar albums previously and it is certainly one that his fans will appreciate, although it would hard to call this entertaining set, primarily of covers, essential. *Ron Weinstock*

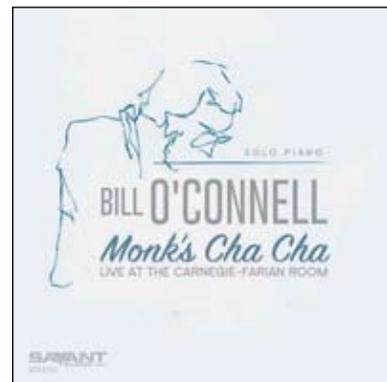


CECILE MCLORIN SALVANT
Dreams and Daggers
 MACK AVENUE

The praise Cecile McLorin Salvant has garnered over a now three-album, Grammy-recognized career seems further justified as evidenced on this third release. The Miami-born vocalist sets a high bar on virtually every measurement with which one might assess a jazz vocalist: technique, range, power and, perhaps most important, the mastery of these finely-honed tools.

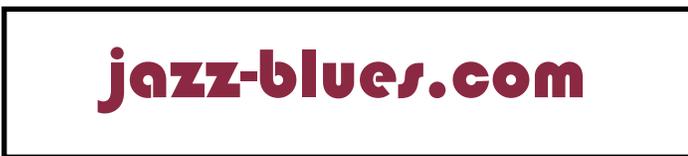
On these “live” recordings, Ms. McLorin Salvant takes on Irving Berlin (“The Best Thing For You Would Be Me”, “Let’s Face The Music and Dance”), Kurt Weill (“Somehow I Never Could Believe”) and Bob Dorough (“Devil May Care”, “Nothing Like You”) among others, constructing a most satisfying pair of classic jazz singer’s sets. Thrown in for good measure are some delightful blues diva gems, Ida Cox’s “Wild Women Don’t Have The Blues” for one.

Her trio backup is solid and pianist Aaron Diehl delivers some ear-catching choruses of his own. The reliable appearance of “Best Of” candidates close to year’s end continues with the arrival “Dreams and Daggers.” Excellent work. *Duane Verh*



BILL O'CONNELL
Monk's Cha Cha
 SAVANT RECORDS

Bill O'Connell 40 year career, he has contributed substantially to both jazz and the Afro-Cuban musical traditions, including a stint with Mongo Santamaria and engagements with such hallowed improvisers as Sonny



Rollins, Chet Baker, Gato Barbieri and Emily Remler. He also had a long working relationship with the late bassist Charles Fambrough that produced four recordings. O'Connell's latest release is a solo recording from a solo performance at the Carnegie-Farian Room at the Nyack (NY) Library. Five of the nine selections are O'Connell originals, with four interpretations of standards.

The swinging opening "The Song is You" provides the first taste of the lyricism and improvisatory invention that O'Connell invests in his performance as his chords mix in with flowing arpeggios as he explores the familiar melody in several fashions. The following rendition of "Dindi" is a more pensive approach to Jobim's classic that illustrates his use of dynamics. The classic ballad "It Could Happen To You" also exhibits his ability to extract so much from a melody, yet play in a spare manner. The title track intertwines an evocation of "Misterioso" and "Well You Needn't," with him providing spicy Afro-Cuban flavor with his right hand. One might imagine the joyfulness of a performance by The Latin Jazz All-Stars, that he leads, on this composition. The striking, "Zip Line" has a lively tone, while "Hither Hills" is a lovely, reflective performance.

Among the remaining performances is a scintillating rendition of Mongo Santamaria's classic "Afro Blue." This is a fine homage to the gentleman who allowed him as a young man to hone his skills as a pianist, composer and arranger. Decades later, the performances here show just how he has further developed into an exceptional solo piano recording.

Ron Weinstock



JOHNNY RAWLS
Waiting For The Train
CATFOOD RECORDS

Johnny Rawls has a silky-smooth voice that he has employed in the service of his own tunes and as a background singer for the likes of Z.Z. Hill, Joe Tex, O.V. Wright and a host of others.

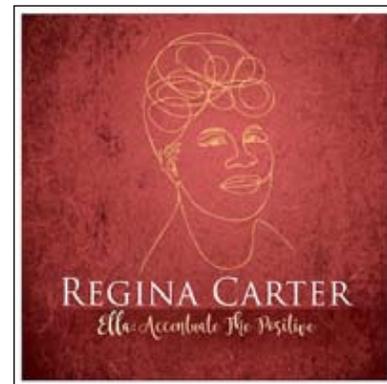
On this follow up to his chart-topping "Tiger In a Cage," Rawls explores his last ride to glory on the moody "Waiting for the Train," his joy at a new love on the Bobby Womack penned "I'm in Love," the hypocrisy of the fun-time crowd in Vegas who praise God for their success at the table but damn him for the rolls that

go bad, "Las Vegas," and the amorous neighbors who move their bed with the fury of an earthquake on the funky, horn-driven, "California Shake."

He also lays down a cautionary tale about the perils of playing things a bit too cute, "Blackjack Was a Gambler" and even works his way through Dylan's oft-covered "I Shall Be Released," which he imbues with a solid gospel feel compliments of the sympathetic background vocals of Janelle Thompson and Shakara Weston.

Those that have Rawls slotted into the soul-blues category will be rewarded with his great readings of the Tyrone Davis classic, "Turning Point," and Syl Johnson's "We Did It." He also reveals a rocker's heart on "Rain Keep Falling ('Til I'm Free)" which could fit comfortably on a Huey Lewis disc. Throughout, his all-star band provides solid support as he swoops and glides over the big horn charts and tasteful guitar licks. Don't miss this train.

Mark Smith



REGINA CARTER
Ella: Accentuate the Positive
OKEH RECORDS

The wonderful jazz violinist Regina Carter helps celebrate the centennial of Ella Fitzgerald on her latest recording. Speaking of Ella, she explains, "One of the many things that I adore about Ella is that she just loved music and didn't box herself in. She recorded everything, not just the American Songbook – doo-wop, Stevie Wonder and Beatles songs, even some country western music. The fact that she experimented with so many different styles made me feel that, with this record, I would pay respect to her by taking the music and doing something else with it. I feel that she would smile in agreement."

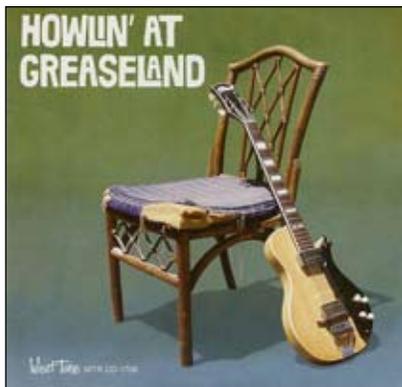
To realize this vision, which transforms the songs through a lens of classic 1950s-'60s soul and blues, Carter calls on an impressive roster of musicians and arrangers including her longtime rhythm section of bassist Chris Lightcap and drummer Alvester Garnett. She is also joined by pianist Xavier Davis and guitarist Marvin Sewell, both of whom serve double-duty as arrangers, and they are supplemented by bassist Ben Williams; producer and hitmaker, Ray Angry; vocalist, Charenee Wade and pianist Mike Wofford, Fitzgerald's own former accompanist and musical

director. Two tracks feature vocals by Regina's fellow Detroiters, actress and singer, Miche Braden; and long-time friend and vocalist extraordinaire, Carla Cook.

The result of this imaginative fusion is an album that is less akin to Ella's own music as opposed to taking songs associated with Ella as a springboard for Carter's imagination and strong musical personality. Braden contributes a soulful, let's go to church, vocal on the opening "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," with a funky groove underlying comping from pianist Davis and Williams' rock solid bass before Sewell's blues-rock toned guitar and Carter's own full-bodied, and free ranging violin. A nice take on "Crying in the Chapel" showcases the warmth and romanticism Carter invests her playing with Davis on Fender Rhodes and Sewell adding a neat riff. Bassist Lightcap provided the bluesy arrangement for "I'll Never Be Free," with Davis' accompaniment complementing Carter's very bluesy playing.

Wofford arranged the piano, bass, violin trio performance of "Dedicated To You," with Carter at her lyrical best. Another highlight is the most charming, intimate duo between Carter and guitarist Sewell on "Judy," a song the performance of which at the Apollo Theater jump-started Fitzgerald's career. Wade's R&B flavored take opens "Undecided," which after some vibrant violin also features strong singing from Cook. Sewell's slide guitar provides a down home blues feel for "I'll Chase the Blues Away," with some down-in-the-alley violin opening segueing into a bluesy small band performance with biting slide guitar interacting with Carter's violin and Fender Rhodes on a rootsy close to an imaginative, captivating tribute to the great Ella Fitzgerald.

Ron Weinstock



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Howlin' At Greaseland
WEST TONE RECORDS

Some veterans and new names join together for a tribute to Howlin' Wolf that was recorded at Kid Andersen's Greaseland studio and has a cover inspired by Wolf's Rockin' Chair album. Assembled for this besides Andersen on guitar, bass and piano, are Rick Estrin and Aki Kumar on harp, Lorenzo Farrell, Jim Pugh and Henry Gray on piano, Rockin' Johnny Burgin, Johnny Cat, and Chris James on guitar; Joe Kyle Jr,

Patrick Rynn, Robby Yamilov and Vance Ehlers on bass; Derrick Dmar Martin, and Junior Core on drums; and Terry Hanck on sax, with vocals from Gray, Hanck, Alabama Mike John Blues Boyd, Lee Donald and Tail Dragger on vocals.

There are solidly played and sung performances in the manner of the originals, if not quite of the level of the originals. After all, there was only one Howlin' Wolf. Alabama Mike sings with urgency on "Meet Me In The Bottom," with Estrin's harmonica and Farrell's piano featured while "Smokestack Lightning," has the first of Boyd's vocals with Estrin doing a nice evocation of Wolf's harp over the solid vocal. Boyd also recalled seeing Wolf in 1956 visiting a school friend of his before launching into a rollicking "Riding in the Moonlight," with the spirit of Willie Johnson suggested in the guitar backing. After recalling his father booking Howlin' Wolf in the sixties in suburban Chicago, Terry Hanck handles "Howlin' For My Darling," with a fine vocal and strong sax, while Johnny Cat emulates Hubert Sumlin.

Tail Dragger has a couple of recollections of Wolf here along with performances of "I'm Leaving You," and "Don't Trust No Woman," with his slightly muffled vocals with strong accompaniment from Rockin' Johnny Burgin on guitar and Aki Kumar on harp. Henry Gray, who spent 14 years in Wolf's band, is backed by Chris James, Patrick Rynn, Ali Kumar (who shares the vocal) and Junior Core, doing a solid "Worried Life Blues." I believe this is the only song here not identified with Wolf. Also, Gray sings and plays "Little Red Rooster," with Kid Andersen's acoustic guitar the only other backing.

I am not familiar with Lee Donald, who is the strong vocalist on "Forty Four," and Boyd sings robustly on "Spoonful" that closes the album. While there is nothing earthshaking here, this is a fine, straightforward homage to one of the icons of the blues. Ron Weinstock



KEN WILEY

Jazz Horn Redux
KRUG PARK MUSIC

French horn is not a common solo instrument in jazz, often found in ensembles to add musical color such as in Gil Evans orchestrations or Hall Overton's Big Band arrangements of Thelonious Monk for Monk's legendary Town Hall Concert. Wiley is among those

who have provided more prominence to the instrument and on this disc he has put together eleven interpretations of some famous jazz compositions with a group that includes Wally Minko on piano; Trey Henry on bass; and Kendall Kay on drums with appearances from Luis Conte on percussion; Dan Higgins on flutes and saxophones; Gary Grant on trumpet or flugelhorn; and Bob Sheppard on saxophones.

The album opens with a rendition of Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower," with Dan Higgins' flute and alto sax adding to the melodious warmth of Wiley's imaginative french horn playing which exhibits considerable warmth and imagination (think of the wonderful playing of trombonist Lawrence Brown with Duke Ellington).

On a superficial note, there is a CTI feel obvious here, but on many of the performances here with a polish, but not lacking substance, which is a credit to the arrangements and the players. "Bags Groove" is a marvelous interpretation of The Milt Jackson classic with a nice blues solo from Wiley followed by crisp solos from pianist Minko and some brash flugelhorn from Grant with the group interpolating "Killer Joe" at the end.

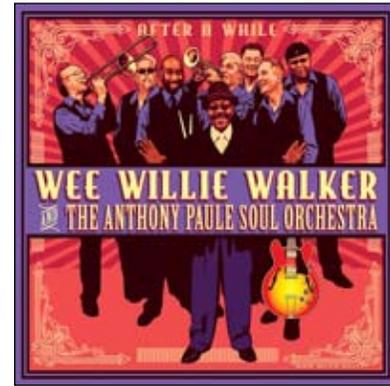
There are two numbers from "Kind of Blue," "All Blues" and "Freddie Freeloader." Grant, on trumpet, helps state the theme on the opening of the former number before Wiley's mellow, furry tone improvisation captures the feel of Miles Davis' playing here while Grant's open trumpet has more overt fire, set against the solid rhythm section. On "Freddie the Freeloader," Grant uses a Harmon mute, while Minko again adeptly solos. There is a relaxed rendition of "Scrapple From The Apple," with Chuck Findley's trumpet contrasting with Wiley's horn along with Bob Sheppard's hard bop tenor sax.

Other performances include a couple of blues, Sonny Rollins' "Sonny Moon For Two," and Coltrane's "Equinox." There is a marvelous bossa nova treatment of Jobim's "Corcavado," with lovely arranging of the unison heads from Higgins on flute and Wiley on french horn, and there is another lovely Brazilian jazz performance of Clare Fischer's "Morning," with Higgins on soprano sax in addition to flute. A bouncy rendition of Sonny Rollins' "Oleo," has some sizzling muted trumpet from Grant in addition to the leader's horn.

Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance" is the closing performance here with Minko on electric piano, while Chuck Findley blasts away followed by Sheppard's clarinet sounding soprano solo before Wiley solos over the funky rhythm section followed by a bouncy Minko solo. It draws a curtain on a marvelously programmed recording that has clean, crisp arrangements and presents several different settings for the performances including several with an imaginative front-line of trumpet and french horn.

There is wonderful playing from all, but Wiley as leader stands out on this delightful, superb recording.

Ron Weinstock



WEE WILLIE WALKER & THE ANTHONY PAULE SOUL ORCHESTRA

After A While
BLUE DOT RECORDS

An encounter performing in Europe first brought together California guitarist and band leader Anthony Paule with deep soul-blues singer Wee Willie Walker. This has led to the present recording where the one-time Goldwax artist is backed by a full band led by Paule.

I recently reviewed a live album from the Notodden Blues Festival with a band led by Kid Andersen about which I concluded "Wee Willie Walker certainly has it still and this live recording suggests just how moving and powerful a performer he remains." Walker is also present on a recent recording by Austrian organist Raphael Wressnig & Brazilian guitarist Igor Prado singing several songs that were associated with the legendary Little Willie John.

The present recording opens with the Memphis soul-styled "Second Chance," with the rhythm of Paule, Tony Lufrano on keyboards, Paul Olguin on bass and Derrick 'D'Mar' Martin on drums laying down a firm base for Walker's church-rooted singing with brassy horns. It was written by Christine Vitale, who contributed to several other songs including the title song and a performance (including the horn arrangements and Charles McNeal's wonderful tenor sax solo) and evokes Little Willie John and other legends.

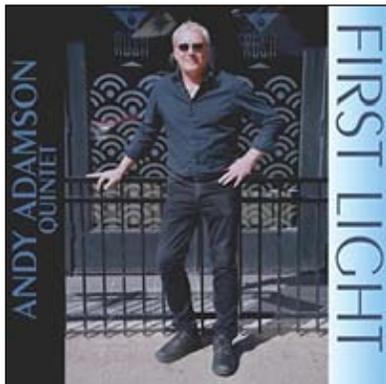
Walker recorded George Jackson's "I Don't Want To Take A Chance" as a demo 50 years ago, but gets to record it anew for this marvelous rendition that again conjures up the classic R&B era of the 50s and early 60s. His soulful phrasing is supported by the handsome playing and Paule adds some nice chords and fills. Then we get a little big band treatment of the Lil Green classic "In the Dark," strongly sung in a manner that Little Willie John might have done it, and Paule takes a strong guitar solo in a jazzy-blues vein on this superb performance.

The message song "Hate Take a Holiday," which has its call for love to take out hate and folks of all colors and creed walk together in peace, has organ grease and a somewhat spare rhythm backing. It is followed by the Tex-Mex tinged romantic ballad, "Thanks

For the Dance,” with Paule on acoustic guitar on a song with a feel of a Drifters recording. There is a bit of Muscle Shoals funk underlying “If Only,” while the soul ballad “Cannot Be Denied” is a lovely blue ballad. Both of these were written by Walker with Vitale and Paule. There is a stunning cover of a Little Willie John recording, “Look What You’ve Done To Me (not the Boz Scaggs song),” with brilliant playing from trumpeter Tom Poole and trombonist Derek James. Vitale and Paule’s original “I Don’t Want To Know,” is a superb original blues in this same vein with a choice jazzy Paule solo.

After a punchy instrumental, “The Willie Walk,” there is a wonderful duet with Terry Odabi updating The Clovers’ hit “Lovey Dovey” followed by a return to the Memphis sound on a terrific soulful cover of the Mable John classic “Your Good Thing (Is About To End).” This is an excellent close to an imaginatively programmed and arranged recording that showcases one of the last original soul singers who still sings with all his vocal power intact on this terrific recording.

Ron Weinstock



ANDY ADAMSON

First Light
ANDROS RECORDS LLC

Ann Arbor, Michigan based pianist-composer-bandleader Andy Adamson’s influences include John Coltrane, Mahavishnu Orchestra and Chick Corea and for over 50 years worked, and composed, in a variety of styles. This new release has nine of his straight ahead and jazz fusion compositions with a band including Brennan Andes on bass, drummer Jonathan Taylor, trumpeter Ross Huff and saxophonist Dan Bennett.

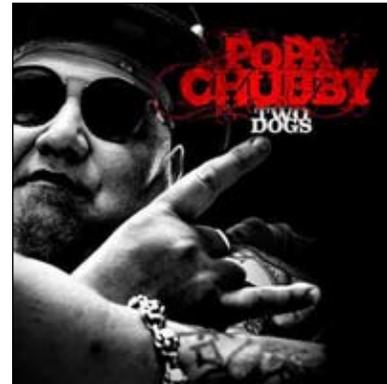
This is a tight quintet that plays strongly on a varied program that opens with the Coltrane-flavored title track that showcases the leader’s fluid piano style along with Bennett’s robust, high intensity tenor sax. “Corner Store” is a Latin-accented number with a nifty piano riff underlying this high-spirited quintet performance with shifting musical textures with Adamson and Bennett soloing.

The opening of “Twilight in the Making” has a romantic tone before it transitions into a fusion evoking mode. Bennett’s free-sounding tenor interacting with the leader’s piano is at the front of “Velvet Sunset,”

followed by “Divided We Stand.” “High Street Roundabout” is another engrossing performance with spirited tenor sax and piano with bassist Andes and drummer Taylor ably backing and complementing them through shifts in tempo and textures from Adamson’s lyrical improvisation to the more buzzsaw, vibrato-laden tenor of Bennett.

If Bennett and Anderson have most of the spotlight on “First Light,” Huff’s blistering trumpet is featured on the vibrant hard bop “Sunny Side Up,” which also has a brief, taut solo from Taylor. It is a strong conclusion to this very memorable recording of modern jazz.

Ron Weinstock



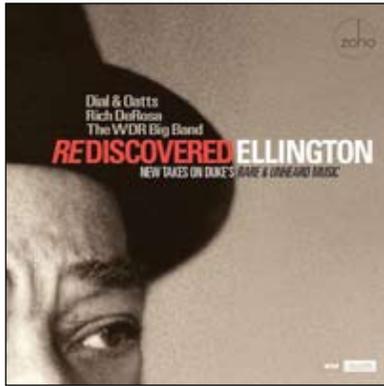
POPA CHUBBY

TWO DOGS

POPA CHUBBY PRODUCTIONS

Ted Horowitz a/k/a Popa Chubby is a triple threat performer who not only plays a kicking guitar but sings and writes solid tunes. This new release finds him applying his considerable talents to tales about the need to hold back from a fledgling relationship, “Rescue Me,” the drag of the physical ailments that accumulate over time but may not be covered by insurance if certain politicians get their way, “Preexisting Conditions,” the fact that everyone has a good side and a bad side with the winning side being the one you nurture, “Two Dogs,” the fate that awaits a lying mate who talks fiction when Popa has established the facts through his sleuthing, “Shakedown,” and the need to stand firm in the face of power, “Me Won’t Back Down.”

While Popa certainly knows his way around the blues and blues rock, “Sam Lay’s Pistol,” “Chubby’s Boogie” and “Dirty Old Blues,” he has a broader palate than that. “Wound Up Getting High” is a ballad that could easily find its way onto a Peter Wolf disc with its wistful lyrics and sense of regret and the instrumental “Cayophus Dupree” echos Santana with its ringing tone and smooth solos. The two live bonus tracks are worthy of note as well with his version of the Stone’s “Sympathy for the Devil” given new power with a faster beat and a rollicking piano solo before Popa chimes in with a smoking guitar solo, and Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” given a straight, almost tender, reading that is all the more powerful in the face of Popa’s tough as nails image. Add Two Dogs to the list of great Popa Chubby discs. *Mark Smith*



**DIAL & OATTS - RICH DEROSA -
THE WDR BIG BAND
Rediscovered Ellington
ZOHU MUSIC**

Produced in cooperation with the maestro's family, his nephew, Steven James, notes that "In 1979, my mother, Ruth Ellington, and I wanted to record and archive all of the Tempo Music catalogue. This included compositions by my uncle, Duke Ellington, and many of his musical associates. We hired Garry Dial to do this job. I am thrilled, that after 38 years, Garry has revisited the more obscure tunes of Duke Ellington."

The trio of Garry Dial - piano, arranger; Dick Oatts - soprano sax, alto sax, flute, arranger and Rich DeRosa - conductor, arranger, big band orchestration undertook this task, but in a manner that did not try to simply recreate the Ellington sound and try to bring something original in a manner that the Duke did when approaching the classical repertoire as he did with Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite, stating "Rediscovered Ellington is presented in the same respectful manner. To continue Ellington's legacy, we resurrected these compositions with our perspective through personalized arrangements. Although a few of them suggest a 'tip of the hat' to Duke's sound, most of these renditions showcase how quality music may be transformed into something new and refreshing while respecting the original essence of its composer. We hope you enjoy these compositions in this context."

For example the opening "Hey Baby," was originally recorded for Victor in 1946, and is a mid-tempo swinger with some sterling solos from Oatts (soprano sax), Paul Heller (tenor sax), Dial (piano) and Johan Hörlen (alto sax) as well as has multicolored shout sections from the brass section, especially heard at the closing section.

"Let The Zoomers Drool," is an Ellington-Hodges composition with a bluesy feel, and a superb Dial piano solo along with trombonist Shannon Barnett, with the Oatts-DeRosa arrangement here providing a definite Ellington Band flavor with Oatts alluding to Jonny Hodges with his alto sax towards the end. There is a pensive ballad, "I Like Singing" from a musical "Saturday Laughter" that was written with lyricist Herbert Martin, that has a lush orchestral setting and solos

from Dial and Oatts (on alto sax).

The composer and arranger Onzy Matthews worked with the Duke in the late 1960s and early 1970s and likely composed most of "Just A Gentle Word From You Will Do." While probably performed live, this is the first recording of this composition with its straight-ahead melody recast (by Oatts and DeRosa) across the horn and reed sections and in addition to Dial's lively piano, there is delightful flute from Oatts and spirited, if a tad blustery, trombone by Ludwig Nuss.

There are no known recordings of either "Introspection," or "Kiki." The former number is an uptempo swinger that is far from introspective and displays the Big Band's marvelous playing along with outstanding solos from Oatts and trombonist Andy Hunter. The latter number is a jaunty showcase again for the precision and command of The WDR Big Band along with pianist Dial, Karolina Strassmeyer on alto sax, Jens Neufang's riveting baritone sax solo, and John Marshall who takes a blazing trumpet solo (and what marvelous timbre he has) on another performance with a definite Ellington tinge to it.

"Love Came" is a lovely ballad that was issued first on Bob Thiele's Red Baron label (it may have been recorded in 1965 but I do not believe it was issued until a few years later), and this is a quiet, reflective performance. It is followed by "KCOR," likely one of the latter compositions of Ellington, opening in an introspective fashion before being enlivened by the full band and Oatts' impassioned soprano sax solo. The closing ballad, "I Must Be Mad," has wonderful interplay between Oatts on alto sax and Dial on piano, with the full band entering midway through this lovely closing number.

One might question such the approach of recasting material that was either rare (that is had a brief public life with Ellington) or unheard, away from an Ellingtonian sound, yet one would be hard-pressed to fault any of the performances here.

The trio with the celebrated The WDR Big Band, have provided strong, fresh big band performances of the lesser known, but not lesser in quality works of Duke Ellington on an important and enthralling recording.

Ron Weinstock

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ROCKIN' JOHNNY BURGIN

Neoprene Fedora
WEST TONE RECORDS

This new release is a follow-up to "Greetings From Greaseland," and further chronicles Burgin's move to California from Chicago. Like the early recording, this was recorded by Kid Andersen (who plays guitar, bass, baritone guitar and piano on various tracks) at his Greaseland Studio.

Others backing Burgin include Ali Kumar on harmonica and a couple vocals; Bob Welsh on guitar and piano; Alabama Mike (who plays guitar or piano on several tracks); bassist Vance Ehlers; drummer June Core; drummer Stephen Dougherty; saxophonist Nancy Wright and accordion player Steve Willis.

There is a mix of material from the opening title track, an instrumental that bridges blues, surf and Tex-Mex guitar on a tune that deconstructs the melody of Herbie Mann's hit "Comin' Home Baby" with Wight's raspy sax adding atmosphere behind Burgin's tremolo laced runs then transitions into a "Night Train" inspired segment segueing into a "Bo Diddley" beat groove with some Chuck Berry styled guitar.

This tour de force is followed by a West Side Chicago blues "Guitar King" which suggests Otis Rush crossed with Jimmy Dawkins. Burgin is an amiable singer, if not a great one. He is convincing on "Won't Get Married Again," in the manner of the legendary Eddie Taylor. "Let Me Be Your Teddy Bear," has Magic Sam styled guitar with uncluttered backing reminiscent of Eddie C. Campbell.

Alabama Mike wonderfully handles the lead vocal on "Smoke and Mirrors," with its syncopated Byther Smith meets Bobby Rush accompaniment. Mike's other vocal is a nice soul ballad, "I Did The Best I Could," with a bluesy solo from Burgin. Besides the nods to Chicago blues, "Kinda Wild Women" is a zydeco flavored dance number followed by an attractive swamp pop ballad, "Please Tell Me," and "Our Time Is Short" is a waltz that employs the "Jole Blonde" melody. On this musical trip to the bayou, there is solid accordion and rubboard.

"Self-Made Man" has some shattering Jimmy Dawkins' flavored guitar along with Aki Kumar's reedy singing and terrific full-bodied chromatic harmonica.

"I Ain't Gonna Be Working Man No More" brings back memories of the greatly underrated Johnny Littlejohn's "Chips Flying Everywhere," both with the interesting syncopation of rhythm.

"Goodbye Chicago" musically evokes Howlin' Wolf as Burgin sings about why he is going to California and has to put the Windy City down. As the song progresses he recites a list of Blues artists he played with in Chicago, and quite an impressive list it is. Wright takes a terrific tenor sax solo in the manner of Eddie Shaw on this. It closes another fine recording by Rocking Johnny Burgin who displays his deep Chicago blues roots while incorporating other sounds into his fertile musical garden.

Ron Weinstock



PAUL MCCANDLESS

Morning Sun: Adventures with Oboe
LIVING MUSIC

This is described as "A Retrospective Celebrating 45 Years of Genre-Bending Iconic Mastery" and gathers 16 performances by McCandless with the Paul Winter Consort over this period of time with over an hour of music. McCandless, as demonstrated on the performances on this recording, that the oboe is an instrument that can be welcomed out the confines of the Western classical music tradition on performances capturing folk roots, jazz improvisation and new age sensibility. McCandless also brings the French Horn on several selections to the fore in a similar fashion.

Listening to McCandless' melodious playing certainly can bring a sense of calm and relaxation, even when playing some rhythmically spirited tunes. There is a such a broad spectrum of musical settings represented, including the unusual instrumentation of the Consort that included when he joined it Ralph Towner's guitar, Winter's soprano sax, Colin Walcott's tabla, triangle and drums, and David Darling's cello starting with the uplifting opening selection "All the Mornings Bring." "Elves Chasm," is a lovely solo oboe performance recorded in the Grand Canyon with the sounds of nature (birds and the Colorado River) in the background while "Whooper Dance" has voices of a pair Whooping Cranes echoed in the Oboe improvisation, and "Eagle," a duet with the melodic theme suggested by the cry of an African Fish Eagle.

A later version of the Consort with Oscar Castro-

Neves on guitar, David Grusin on keyboard and John-Carlos Perea on vocal, performs “Witchi Tai Too,” a Native American traditional healing song that Indian jazz musician Jim Pepper adapted. McCandless plays the opening on French Horn but later taking off on oboe after the first vocal chorus here. The Brazilian singer and guitarist Renato Braz is present on the lovely “Anabela,” with lovely oboe accompaniment and sings wordlessly on “The Last Train,” with a mesmerizing, soaring oboe solo. On the uplifting message song “Common Ground,” there is marvelous McCandless accompaniment to later choruses of the song.

The serenity of “Sunset on the Great Sand Dunes” is followed by the lively Ralph Towner composition “Un Abraço (A Big Hug)” (which was McCandless’ first recording on oboe). The stately “Sunderland,” has lyrical French Horn framed in a pastoral setting while “Twilight” finds McCandless’ French Horn improvising over Grusin’s synthesized chordal journey. Bach’s “Fantasia in G” was recorded by the Consort at New York’s Cathedral of St. John the Divine employing the Church’s pipe organ over which McCandless plays somewhat wildly over Bach’s harmonies.

This wonderful retrospective closes with the tranquility of “Morning Sun,” with the interweaving of the various solo voices (oboe, Winter’s soprano sax and Eugene Friesen’s cello). The marvelous compilation of music is accompanied by a 32 page liner booklet with essays, including an appreciation of McCandless’ oboe playing from Winter, a short autobiography by McCandless, and notes on each of the 16 selections from Winter with session information included. Of course McCandless’ musical legacy also includes his decades with Oregon, but even this slice of his musical career is something to be savored. **Ron Weinstock**

while relatively short, provides a solid look at the versatility he exhibits when playing zydeco.

Corey is heard on accordion, washboard and drums as well as vocals, while Jesse Delgizzi plays guitar, bass, Moog and vocals with Cecil Green on keyboards. After an opening funk “Intro” with keyboards and vocal effects on the spoken intro (presumably by Delgizzi), Corey takes us into a Boozoo Chavis styled rocker, “Push Me Away,” with some marvelous button accordion playing and the crisp, emphatic groove. Given Ledet’s overdubbing his accordion over his drums and washboard, the recording sounds natural. In contrast, an instrumental “Love Never Felt So Good,” comes off as a mix between zydeco and contemporary dance music with Delgizzi’s funky bass and synthesizer work is intriguing.

The driving zydeco gospel number, “Standing on Faith,” is Ledet’s statement of his faith, followed by a contemporary urban soul ballad, “Take Me There.” “New York City” is a terrific zydeco rocker that will evoke Clifton Chenier and Roy Carrier as he sings about going to New York City for a zydeco dance. “Good Day” again takes things in a more contemporary mode where Delgizzi’s synthesizer playing emulates steel pans lending a Caribbean rhythmic accent. The closing “Street Light” is another contemporary zydeco number, well played and sung, but being perhaps a bit smoother at the edges..

With its relatively short playing time and its contemporary flavor, there may not be enough straight-ahead zydeco here to appeal to the more traditional zydeco audience. But those looking for a more updated twist on the idiom will be more interested in this latest chapter in Corey Ledet’s career. **Ron Weinstock**



COREY LEDET & HIS ZYDECO BAND

Standing on Faith
COREY LEDET MUSIC

Corey Ledet has been one of the vital ‘young’ voices in Zydeco for over a decade. Rooted in the creators of the idiom like Clifton Chenier, John Delafosse, and Boozoo Chavis, he has musically evolved to incorporate some of the modern trends in the music. It has been a few since his last recording, but this new recording,



NESTOR TORRES

Jazz Flute Traditions
ALFI RECORDS

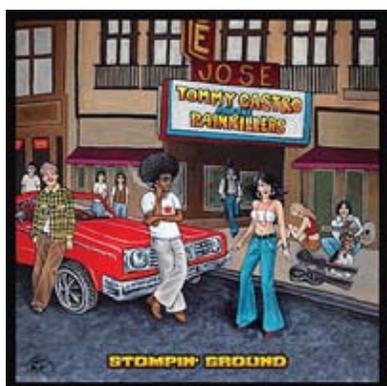
Recorded live at the Miami radio station, WDNA, the Grammy nominated and Latin Grammy Award winner flautist Torres plays homage to early pioneers and legendary modern jazz pioneers backed by a studio band that includes Silvano Monasterios on piano, Jamie Ousley on bass, Michael Piolet on drums and Jose Gregorio Hernandez on percussion with appear-

ances from Ian Muñoz on alto sax, Miguel Russell on percussion and Marcus Grant on drums. Born in Puerto Rico, Torres moved to New York where he pursued Classical flute studies at Mannes School of Music, Jazz at Berklee College of Music and Classical and Jazz at New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He certainly displays his technical facility as well as showing himself to be a player of imagination, humor and passion on this splendid CD.

There are marvelous treatments of Herbie Mann's "Memphis Underground" as well as his playfulness on Rashaan Roland Kirk's "Serenade to a Cuckoo." Then there is spirited Latin groove on Esa Morales "Jungle Fantasy," a number that for some reason suggested sixties Ellington to these ears that is a highpoint among the many fine performances here along with his medley where he plays the opening "Adagio From Concierto De Aranjuez" (familiar from "Sketches of Spain") then segueing into a spirited treatment of Chick Corea's "Spain." Other pleasures include a superb medley of Luciano Berio's "Sequenza" with Eric Dolphy's "Gazzeloni," that opens unaccompanied before the band joins in and Torres takes off with Monasterios playing in a complementary, modernistic manner that captures the unusual intervals, and use of dissonance in Dolphy's music. It is followed by an effervescent take on Neal Hefti's "Cute."

After a sublime, extended rendition of Cole Porter's "So In Love," the album closes with the spicy flavor of "Miami Beach Rhumba," with superb playing throughout as Torres and his exceptional band kick the temp up a notch a third of the way through. Despite the hot tempo, Monasterios never falters, displaying a deft touch no matter what the tempo. The rhythm section, exemplary throughout, helps provide a passionate close to this extraordinary recording.

Ron Weinstock



TOMMY CASTRO & THE PAINKILLERS

Stompin' Ground
ALLIGATOR RECORDS

While Tommy Castro is now 15 discs into his recording career, he refuses to rest on formula and this new release finds him continuing to expand his sonic palette with ample doses of rock and soul joining his well-honed blues.

Notably, Castro and crew also move beyond their party-hearty anthems and delve into weightier issues such as economic inequality and social injustice. Featuring the core Painkiller band (Randy McDonald-bass and background vocals, Bowen Brown-drums and tambourine and Michael Emerson-Keyboards) and a host of guests including a horn section and such "A" listers as David Hidalgo, Charlie Musslewhite, Danielle Nicole, Mike Zito, Kid Andersen, Lisa Leuschner Andersen and Nancy Wright, Castro has all the firepower he needs to pull the full potential out of the seven self-penned tracks and five covers.

The originals find Castro alternately waxing nostalgic for days past and then railing against current headlines. "Fear is the Enemy" is a soulful blues rocker that challenges the listener to look beyond differences to find common ground while "My Old Neighborhood" finds him reminiscing about simpler times when he knew exactly where he stood. "Enough is Enough" finds Castro jumping into political territory with a funky shuffle and a take no prisoners attitude against how he's going to handle those who push things too far at the expense of the common man-it's revolution time baby! "Love Is" extols the virtue of love as the antidote to intolerance and other lapses in civility with the loose-limbed bass groove and stinging guitar aimed at your feet allowing the track to avoid being preachy. "Live Every Day" finds Castro and Charlie Musselwhite promoting the virtues of living for today instead of tomorrow, which, in these days, may never come. The second half of the disc features Castro rooted firmly in the past with the covers he treasured over the years including Elvin Bishop's "Rock Bottom" which features a hot guitar duel with Mike Zito, Delaney & Bonnie's "Soul Shake" featuring Danielle Nicole's scorching vocals, Taj Mahal's rootsy "Further On Down the Road," Buddy Miles' blues rock scorcher, "Them Changes" and Ray Charles' rollicking "Sticks and Stones."

By refusing to stick to straight blues and formulaic bad luck, bad women and bad whisky lyrics, Castro is clearly on to something as he continues his prolific career. Top notch from beginning to end. *Mark Smith*

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HIROMI AND EDMAR CASTANEDA

Live in Montreal
TELARC

Recorded at the 2017 Montreal Jazz Festival, this new release brings together the Japanese pianist/composer and the Colombian harpist. The two first met when the harpist opened for Hiromi's Trio project at the 2016 Festival. Catching each other's set, they were enthralled with each other's music. Hiromi herself recalled, "I didn't really know what to expect. When I heard Edmar play I couldn't believe what I was witnessing. It was a jaw-dropping experience. I didn't realize the harp could create such rhythm and groove." Castaneda had a similar reaction to her music observing, "The energy that she produced was the same as I like to play. I realized that we share the same passion for our instruments."

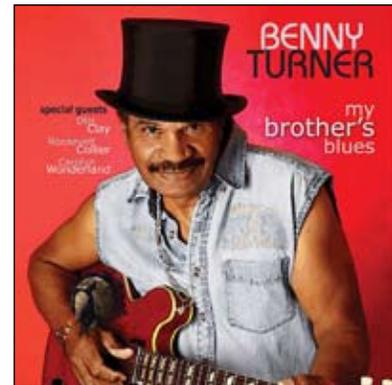
The pair first played together for a week at the Blue Note in New York City, and they recall the almost instantaneous chemistry that happened, and it is evident in these Montreal performances starting with Castaneda's "A Harp in New York" where they move from tranquility to propulsive drive with their mix of virtuosity and melodic invention and their playing off each other with Castaneda playing harp almost like a manic finger-style guitarist with his flamenco accents, and driving chording complemented by Hiromi's dazzling arpeggios as the two shift tempos and feeling. On his tribute "For Jaco," the two play with each other at the lower register of their instruments before joining in a playful romp in tribute to the bass legend. Hiromi's lovely "Moonlight Sunshine," written in response to the devastating tsunami and earthquake suffered by her native Japan in 2011, exhibits the lyrical side of both before an exhilarating romp through a composition from "Star Wars," John Williams' "Cantina Band," sort of a boogie woogie on hyperdrive.

The centerpiece of the performance was a four-part suite Hiromi composed, "The Elements," that was written specifically with his jazz approach to harp in mind. She explained, "I was imagining Edmar's sound and it reminded me a lot of sounds in nature." Each part imaginatively reflects its subject: the weightless of "air," the gritty, deep-rooted groove of "earth," the shimmering fluidity of "water," the roiling simmer of "fire." And the four parts each have their own flavor,

the light, dancing quality of "Air"; the rumbling undercurrent to "Earth"; the tranquility of "Water"; and the heated intensity of "Fire."

Their inspired playing, as well as how they complement and interact with the other, results in some brilliant, enthralling performances, that concludes with a vigorous take on Astor Piazzolla's "Liberating," adding fieriness to the romantic core of the tango. "Live in Montreal" is a superb debut of a duet that one hopes to have more to enjoy in the not too distant future.

Ron Weinstock



BENNY TURNER

My Brother's Blues
NOLA BLUE RECORDS

The latest album by Benny Turner pays homage to his big brother and best friend Freddie King. The personal relationship between the two is documented in Turner's recent autobiography "Survivor," which provides more on their close relationship and the professional relationship when Turner's bass was a major part of Freddie's band.

The 11-song set features Turner on bass, lead guitar and vocals, leading an all-star ensemble of top New Orleans players (including guitarists June Yamagishi, Derwin "Big D" Perkins, and Jack Miele; keyboardists Davell Crawford and Joe Crown; trumpeter Barney Floyd; saxophonist Jason Mingledorff and drummer Jeffery "Jellybean" Alexander) and special guests including Otis Clay, Roosevelt Collier and Carolyn Wonderland on arrangements that are not reproductions, but rather represent Turner's own take on songs associated with his brother.

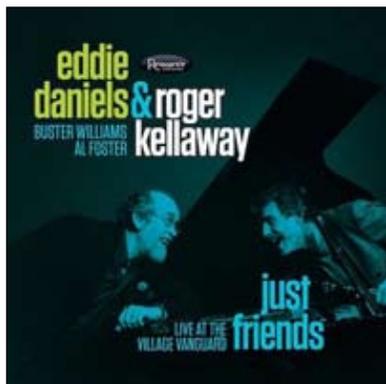
The performances mix a bit of funk along with an occasional rock accent starting with the funky "Big legged Woman," with Turner's vocal supported by some slashing King-tinged guitar from Yamagishi with brassy horns riffing. "It's Your Move" is a less familiar part of King's body of blues, but this slow, moody song is fervently sung. A couple of the most famous songs that King recorded for Federal follow, "Have You Ever Loved A Woman," and "I'm Tore Down," with Davell Crawford's greasy B3 under Jack Miele's sashing guitar on the intense rendition of the former number, while Otis Clay and Marva Wright share the vocal on the latter number with Yamagishi ripping some hot guitar

from a performance that predates Wright's 2010 passing. Turner captures the sensuous quality of King's own rendition of Tampa Red's blues standard "You've Got To Love Her With A Feeling" (album uses Federal Records erroneous composer credit to King and Sonny Thompson).

A hard rocking rendition of "I'm Ready" has lap steel guitar from Roosevelt Collier who takes a hot solo, while a nice relaxed version of "See See Baby" features a booting Mingledorff tenor sax. King did a high energy take of J.B. Lenoir's "Mojo Boogie," which Turner does a nice job of catching the feel with Krown laying down solid piano while Carolyn Wonderland plays intense lap steel guitar. Wonderland adds backing vocals on "Wee Wee Baby," with Collier returning on steel guitar with some sharp-toned playing.

The B.B. King-Dave Clark penned "Ghetto Woman," may have Turner's finest vocal while Mingledorff's sax solo drips with emotion. A fairly straight reading Don Nix's "Same Old Blues" closes this heartfelt, well-recorded and performed brotherly homage.

Ron Weinstock



EDDIE DANIELS & ROGER KELLAWAY

Just Friends

**Live at the Village Vanguard
RESONANCE RECORDS**

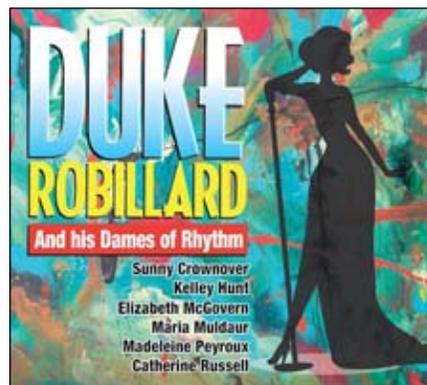
Reedman Eddie Daniels and pianist Roger Kellaway have been stalwarts on the jazz scene for many decades, and the two have teamed up for recordings several times. This particular recording features Daniels on clarinet and Kellaway on acoustic piano along with Buster Williams on bass and Al Foster on drums for a roughly one hour program captured live at the Village Vanguard in New York. The music was captured by Resonance Records' founder George Klabin from his table in the front row in November of 1988 using a very high quality cassette recorder and a Sony stereo mic. Surprisingly, the resulting sound is actually quite decent. Although only intended to be a private recording for Klabin's collection only...things change.

It was a spirited performance as the quartet played five tunes; two originals each from Daniels and Kellaway, and one standard, "Just Friends." While this music might not necessarily be what I'd expect to hear from a clarinet/piano led band, it is rather what I'd want to

hear, especially from a group with the talent these four guys possess. They nicely mix things up with regard to tempo and feel. One tune here will especially be of interest to those who enjoy both jazz and classical music – Daniels' "Wolfie's Samba," inspired by Mozart.

It was a wonderful November night at the Vanguard almost 30 years ago, made available at last by Resonance Records. Audiophiles be warned that the sound quality might not be good enough for you, but most musicphiles will probably not have a problem at all. A very nice set. Go to Amazon and sample some cuts.

Bill Wahl



DUKE ROBILLARD AND HIS DAMES OF RHYTHM M.C. RECORDS

This new release from Duke Robillard is a bucket item dream come true with him on acoustic arch-top guitar and occasional vocals along with his rhythm section of Bruce Bears on keyboards (with Kelley Hunt subbing on three tracks), Brad Hallen on bass and Mark Teixeira on drums.

There is also a horn section including regular collaborators Billy Novick on clarinet and alto saxophone; Rich Lataille on alto and tenor saxophone and clarinet; Carl Querfurth on trombone; and from Vince Giordano's Nighthawks, Jon Erik Kellso on trumpet and Andy Stein on violin, with arrangements mostly from Novick or Kellso. With these players, Duke has a program of songs from the twenties and the early thirties with the dames of Rhythm, Sunny Crownover, Kelley Hunt, Elizabeth McGovern, Maria Muldaur, Madeleine Peyroux and Catherine Russel handling the bulk of the vocals with Duke adding a couple.

The general tenor of the music here is early and pre-bop swing jazz as opposed to the jump blues of much of Duke's recordings. The music is handsomely played and the ambience is not far from that of Giordano's Nighthawks starting off with Crownover's bright, cheerful vocal, joined by Duke here, on the opening "From Monday On," with some terrific violin from Stein, and followed by Muldaur's wistful handling of "Got the South in My Soul," with Querfurth's growling trombone adding flavor, a lovely clarinet solo from Novick and a brief guitar break. Crownover has a naughty innocence on "My Heart Belongs To Daddy," with its light latin

groove and marvelous Novick arrangement.

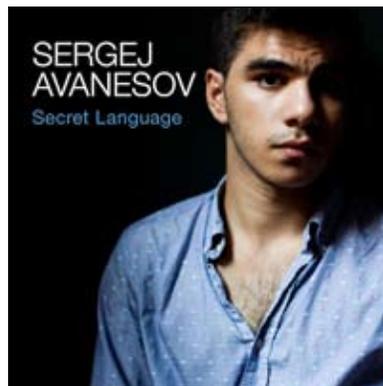
Peyroux is flirty on "Squeeze Me," however she lacks the emotional depth of Billie Holiday on "Easy Living," although she is nicely supported. Similarly Elizabeth McGovern comes off lightweight on her interpretation of another number associated with Holiday, "Me, Myself and I." Catherine Russell is superb as always on a sublime rendition of Benny Carter's "Blues In My Heart," with John Kellso's superb arrangement and growling trumpet (along with Querfurth's similarly toned trombone) lending this sublime performance a Ellingtonian flavor.

"Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone" features some singing from Kelley Hunt with sparse backing primarily from Bears and Duke for the first couple verses, before the rhythm kicks in to back Mark Earley's tenor sax solo followed by Kellso's trumpet and then she leads the band on a rousing close. She also has a marvelous take on "Lotus Blossom," a number I am familiar with from Jimmy Witherspoon, and kudos to Rich Lataille for his arrangement. With the combination of Duke's guitar, her piano, Novick's clarinet and Stein's violin, she does a marvelous rendition of the torch song, "If I Could Be With You (One Hour Tonight)."

Duke's own vocal features include the bouncy "Walking Stick," with Kellso's arrangement showcasing Stein along with Kellso's fiery trumpet, along with the

gently swinging lament "What's The Reason (I'm Not Pleasin' You)." The instrumental "Call of the Freaks," closes this out with Duke playing Lonnie Johnson to Kellso's Henry 'Red' Allen on a nice rendition of a tune recorded by Catherine's father, Luis in the early 1930s. If the vocals by Hunt and Russell stand out over the others here, it should be noted that there is appeal to all of the singing, and does nothing to lessen the delights heard in Duke's revival of some musical gems from the distant past.

Ron Weinstock



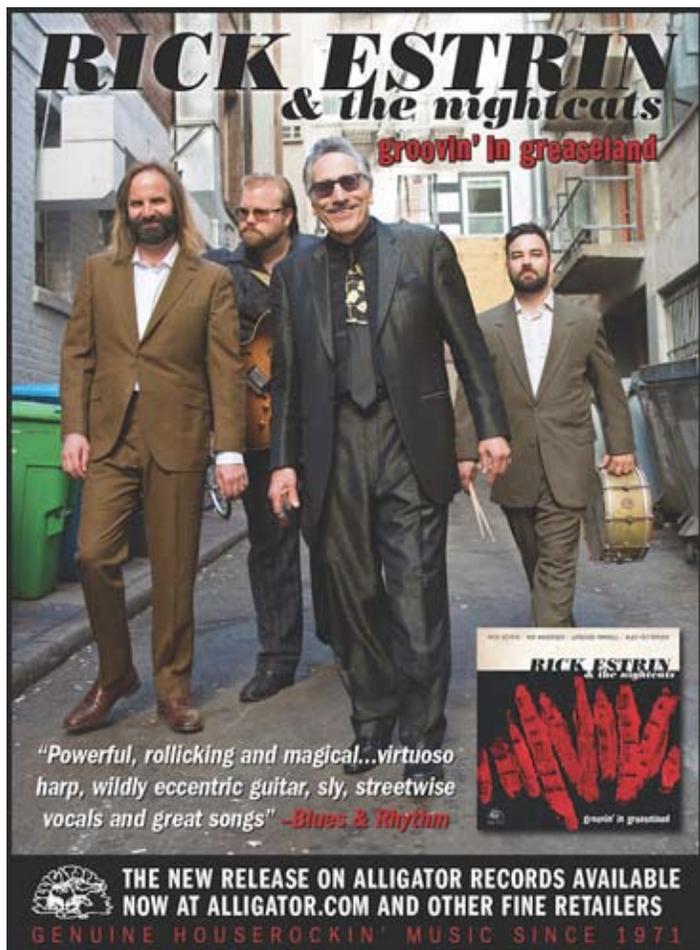
SERGEJ AVANESOV

Secret Language
N.C. MUSIC

Russian born saxophonist and composer Sergej Avanesov debuts on this new release. He attended the well-known Kim Nazaretov jazz music school in Russia and after graduation moved to the Netherlands to study at the Prince Claus Conservatoire.

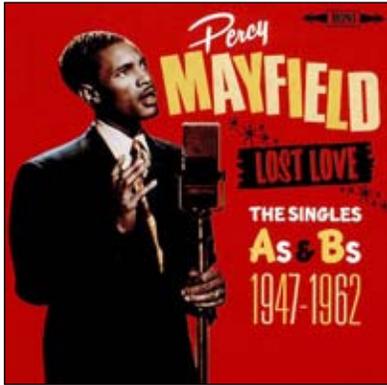
Now he lives in Groningen, Netherlands, and performs with different bands all over the world. strong influences on his music include John Coltrane, Joshua Redman, and Keith Jarrett. he is backed on this by John Escreet - piano, Fender Rhodes, Boris Kozlov - double bass, and Samvel Sarkisyan - drums on a program of original compositions that reflect his love for the American song book from the contour of modern classical music which he studied before jazz and is the catalyst of most of his original compositions.

Avanesov impresses from the first notes on the opening "14," a hard bop romp with his vigorous, brawny tenor saxophone set over Escreet's block chords and the tight rhythm with Sarkisyan soloing. "A," dedicated to his brother, is a bit moodier with bassist Kozlov getting the spotlight along with a playful piano solo by Escreet in addition to the leader's probing solo exhibiting a slight vibrato is his tone. The title track is an exquisite, softly played ballad followed by the comparative rambunctiousness of "Short Memory," with more standout piano and another impressive drum solo against Escreet's repeated figure. "I Trust You" is an atmospheric ballad with Escreet bringing forth chime-like sounds on the Fender Rhodes under the leader's reflective sax. A performance that displays the interplay between the members as well as the use of dynamics by Avanesov and the group is "Big Mike,"



inspired by the movie "The Blind Side" about the football star Michael Oher, while his classical background is exhibited on his composition "8632," with a fugue like quality with Escreet on the Fender Rhodes. The closing "Yoonmi," is a dreamy performance with the leader on soprano sax.

Sergej Avanesov's debut is an engaging recording of interesting originals that display his saxophone voice with a terrific band.
Ron Weinstock



PERCY MAYFIELD

Lost Love: The Singles As & Bs 1947-1962

JASMINE (UK)

Another English public domain reissue of vintage rhythm and blues brings us Percy Mayfield's first 27 singles (whether 78s or 45s) and a previously unissued couple of tracks. While Mayfield's Specialty recordings were a subject of classic reissues some time ago, they may hard to find. Furthermore, here are his recordings for Gru-Tone and Supreme that predate his joining Specialty, and also are recordings Checker, Cash, Imperial, 7 Arts, and Tangerine.

The album opens with the two part jump and jive "Jack You Ain't Nowhere," and then his first recording of "Two Years of Torture," both with an unidentified band although his vocal is under-recorded on the latter two. When he signed with Supreme he had a pair of singles including a remake of "Two Years of Torture," with a band that included Maxwell Davis, Marshall Royal, and Chuck Norris and much better recorded presaging the time with Specialty. His first record for Specialty, with a band that included Maxwell Davis as well as Jack McVea, Gene Phillips, Red Callender and Lee Young, had the classics "Please Send Me Someone To Love" and "Strange Things Happening." So many classics are here, including "Lost Love (Baby Please Come Back to Me)," "The Hunt Is One," "The River's Invitation," "The Bachelor Blues" and "My Heart Is Crying," with Maxwell Davis being a constant on these. Besides his tenor saxophonist, I suspect Davis was responsible for the arrangements and leading the studio band.

While Davis is not present on the recordings for Cash and Checker, those sides produced gems like "No.43 (My Story About A Woman)," with a choice Fred Clark tenor saxophone solo, and the moody "The Bluest Blues." "Please Believe Me" is an unusual ballad recording with a

sweeter sound than earlier selections, while He produced an urban blues gem "My Heart is a Prisoner," with the guitar more prominent in the backing along with some tough tenor sax. One of his last Specialty singles was the jazzy cocktail ballad, "When Did You Leave Heaven," while for 7 Arts he recorded "Ha Ha In The Daytime, Boo Hoo At Night," a tune he would remake a bit more emphatically later. A Tangerine coupling that included Ray Charles, Hank Crawford, Teddy Edwards and Chuck Norris include the hard swinging big band groove of "Never No More," which would also be on his LPs that he recorded for Ray Charles' label. Mayfield would continue to make strong music beyond the singles documented here including albums for Brunswick and RCA Victor along with a single for Atlantic.

Besides one of the great songwriters of the blues leading him to be called "The Poet Laureate of the Blues," Percy Mayfield was a suave, sophisticated singer and a major touring attraction until his face was heavily disfigured in an automobile accident. While his career as a star was over, the music here shows that his music remained original and distinctive. Some of the material (the non-Specialty recordings) on this is rare and even those having the Specialty reissues might want this to fill-in gaps in their collection of his recordings. There is a discography of the songs here and astute notes from Dave Penny. For those not having much by him, this does present the core of his recorded legacy.
Ron Weinstock



WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH & DON EWELL

Grand Piano Duets
SACKVILLE/DELMARK

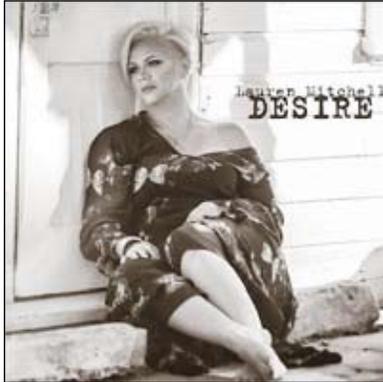
This joyous piano collaboration between one of the great stride piano legends and one of the great two-fisted traditional pianists was recorded in 1967. Patrick Scott observes this is music "to be listened to and not written about." He also notes that The Lion is on the left channel and Ewell on the right, but there times where one will be incapable of telling them apart. They had never met until brought together for a 1966 Canadian TV show. This is the second of two albums by the two.

Musically, the mood is set with a blistering, stomping "I've Found a New Baby," followed by a relaxed

but also playful, “A Porter’s Love Song to a Chambermaid.” The interplay between the two on the opening of “I Would Do Anything For You,” the wistfulness of “Some of These Days,” and then the breakneck tempo of “Just Me, Just You.” “Everybody Loves My Baby” is taken at a relaxed tempo with stunning playing. “Keepin’ Out of Mischief” has an interjection from the Lion as the two trade lines at a relaxed pace before “Sweet Georgia Brown,” that starts in a sedate manner before the two transform it as a lively stomp.

The fact that this is such fun listening should not detract from the fact that there is some serious music being played as well by the two masters of early piano jazz style.

Ron Weinstock



LAUREN MITCHELL
DESIRE
LAURENMITCHELLBAND

Florida based singer Lauren Mitchell is joined on this effort by an all-star cast of West Coast musicians led by producer/drummer, Tony Braunagel and includes the likes of Johnny Lee Schell on guitar, Jim Pugh on keys, Reggie McBride on bass and the Texicali Horns- Darrel Leonard on trumpet and Joe Sublett on sax.

Coming off a broken marriage, Mitchell uses this disc as a vehicle to explore matters of the heart and the never-ending tug and pull of relationships. The horn-driven “Soul Music” finds her favorite music running through her mind as she finds the right man and on the slinky title-track and Etta James’ classic “Jump Into My Fire” she invites a potential conquest to give in to his desire. On the ballad “Today” she laments being left behind by a lover with an ache that is palpable in her voice but quickly rebounds on the funky Ashford/Simpson penned “I Ain’t Been (Licked Yet)” where she proclaims she is far from being consigned to the ash heap of romantic history. On the equally funky “Anti-Love Song” she gives a wary eye to someone she just knows will break her heart. “Lead Me On” finds her ignoring her own instincts that a relationship is going nowhere just to spend an evening wrapped in the warmth of a what appears to be a romantic dinner date but is really only a one-night stand. While she admits she doesn’t always make the best choices she is equally clear that they are for her to make, not for

the sideline quarterbacks, “I Don’t Need Nobody to Tell Me (How to Treat My Man).”

This isn’t all matters of the heart though. On the party ready “Brown Liquor” she dips into liquid courage for a night that finds her waking up in a hotel with a stranger and tales of a night of debauchery and on the gospel-fueled “Bridge of My Dreams” she puts relationships on the shelf and takes a longer view proclaiming she is no longer in fear of the great unknown. With a broad rich voice that is equally effective on the snarling kiss off’s as on the quivering ballads, Mitchell is a welcome new talent.

Mark Smith



TIM ARMACOST
Time Being
WHIRLWIND RECORDINGS

Saxophonist Tim Armacost, who recently impressed this listener as part of the NYSQ has his new Whirlwind Recordings session backed by a crackerjack rhythm section of Robert Hurst (double bass), and Jeff “Tain” Watts (drums) with David Kikoski (piano) on a few selections. The result is a striking album from start to finish as Armacost comes across as a player with tone and intensity, imagination and drive starting with the opening “Alawain” with a sound that has hints of Coltrane, Hank Mobley and others. This is simply an analogy, but Watts comes across as explosive as Elvin Jones while Hurst is a rock anchoring this performance.

The title track is begins as a smokey lament with Armacost employing an effective vibrato in his dark tone with Watts in a free pulse accenting the sax before a slight shift in tempo and a looser mood before the first of three interlude-type numbers titled in part “Sculpture.” Kikoski adds his lyrical touch to “The Next 20,” a lovely ballad performance from the quartet with some affecting playing from Armacost. The trio next is heard playing authoritatively on Monk’s “Teo,” which wonderful solo and responsive backing. Kikoski is also present on “One in Four,” an attractive composition that might hint at the classic Coltrane Quartet with Armacost delving in the lower reaches of the tenor with Kikoski’s chording and Watts being particularly explosive. Ornette Coleman’s poignant “Lonely Woman” has his aching tenor interacting with Hurst’s urgent bass

lines on a superb interpretation and is followed by a solid hard bop original “53rd St. Theme.”

“Sculpture #3: All the Things You Could Become in the Large Hadron Collider,” finds Kikoski’s bebop piano set against the leader’s jarring tenor sax as they both solo off the chords of the standard “All the Things You Are,” before they reach a harmonious accord. Its is an invigorating and imaginative conclusion to a terrific recording. Armacost is superb as is his stellar bandmates on a recording that stands out even among so many excellent recent ones. **Ron Weinstock**



URI GURVICH

Kinship
JAZZ FAMILY

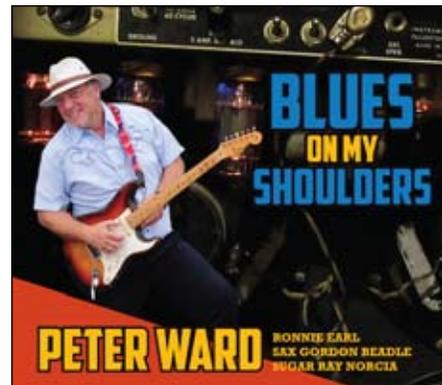
Per its publicity materials, Israeli born saxophonist Uri Gurvich’s latest release “deals with tribal and familial connections between different cultures and individuals, representing ”kinship“ in various forms.” Gurvich is joined by his quartet of the past decade including Argentine pianist Leo Genovese, Bulgarian bassist Peter Slavov and Cuban drummer Francisco Mela. On one selection, “El Chubut,” Bernardo Palombo provided and sang lyrics to Gurvich’s theme.

On the opening “Song For Kate” Gurvich quickly establishes himself as a saxophonist of warmth and invention with Genovese comping under the driving, twisting solo before he himself takes a torrid solo. Genovese further shines brilliantly on “Dance of the Ñañigos,” with its surging rhythm (Slavov is outstanding) with another authoritative alto sax solo from the leader as Mela propels the performance. Palombo recites a poem from a political prisoner during the Argentine dictatorship of the 1980s to open the somber “El Chubut” and then dramatically sings against stately backing with the leader intensely soloing and accompanying him. A Middle Eastern tone is present on the energetic “Twelve Tribes,” with its reference to the tribes of Ancient Israel as Gurvich impresses with the fullness of his tone with an impressive Mela solo also here.

Slavov is outstanding on bass on the delightful, bouncy Sasha Argov composition “I’m Tirtzi,” while the rendition of the spiritual “Go Down Moses” likely will evoke the classic Coltrane Quartet with Gurvich on soprano solo, Genovese in a McCoy Tyner mode and Mela channeling Elvin Jones. Both of these performances have the group chanting towards the close. “Ha’im Ha’im,” (also

composed by Sasha Argov) is introduced with a bass solo on another performance that might evoke for some the classic Coltrane Quartet for some and again Mela is superb while Genovese also sounds inspired in his own manner. The title track, in contrast, might suggest Keith Jarrett’s European Quartet, with Genovese’s playing an impressionistic solo.

This is a superb group of which I am most familiar with Genovese from a tour I saw him part of. They all play with considerable authority and fervor on a mix of material that results in some enthralling listening. **Ron Weinstock**



PETER WARD

Blues on My Shoulder
GANDY DANCER RECORDS

New England guitarist Peter Ward has not forgotten his blues roots growing up in Maine. “ I grew up wearing out the vinyl records trying to understand how Robert Jr. Lockwood, Tiny Grimes, Louis Meyers and Jimmy Rogers made songs sound so good. It’s what I wanted to do.” The chords, fills and bass runs still delight him today and he treasures when Otis Rush told him decades ago that he (Peter) played chords like “an old man.” He also had a stint touring as part of the Legendary Blues Band, “The way they played blues was everything I believed in, then and now.”

On this recording of 12 originals and a cover of Robert Nighthawk’s recording of “Kansas City Blues,” he has an all star cast of players on various tracks, including guitar legend Ronnie Earl, Sax Gordon Beadle on sax and the members of Sugar Ray and the Bluetones: Sugar Ray Norcia (vocals and harmonica), “Monster” Mike Welch (guitar), Anthony Geraci (piano), Michael “Mudcat” Ward (Peter’s brother – bass) and Neil Gouvin (drums).

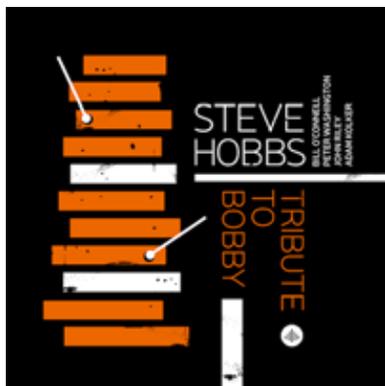
Ward is a Chicago blues traditionalist as evident on the opening “She Took It All,” a song about his ex taking his CDs and MP3s set to a Jimmy Rogers styled shuffle groove with Norcia adding some nice harmonica along with a fine guitar solo and one of Ward’s better vocals here. “Witch Hazel” is a tribute to Chuck Berry with simple bass and drum support and an effective Berry inspired guitar solo. The title track is a modern Chicago blues with a driving groove and more fine harp from Norcia. It is followed by “Collaborate,” a song where Norcia takes the vocal (and has a harp solo) with Ward displaying Robert Lockwood Jr.’s influence and Sax Beadle adding his musical ac-

cents.

Instrumentals like “Shiprock” show his deft touch and a relaxed attack, while “Southpaw” is a tough organ-guitar piece with Rusty Scott adding grease while Ward is in a jazzy vein here. His playing on “On the Ropes” has a bit of country twang mixed in with Geraci and Norcia also sounding fine here. Geraci’s rollicking piano is present on “What Can I Do To You?” with fair singing along with the backing. Ronnie Earl and Sax Beadle are on a couple tracks, an easy rocking shuffle, “It’s On Me,” and a tough West Side Chicago styled blues, “A Little More.” Earl is terrific behind Ward’s singing, and really explodes on the latter number. “Colletta” has a country blues feel with Eric Kilburn adding mandolin, and is followed by a cover of Robert Nighthawk’s recording of “Kansas City Blues,” a song first recorded by Jim Jackson in the twenties.

The closing “Drummin’ Willie” is a tribute to Willie ‘Big Eyes’ Smith who had “that deep blues sound” and his remembrance of Willie and the Legendary Blues Band as he lists some of those he played with. It is set to fine Muddy Waters flavored backing by Sugar Ray and associates. It is a straight-forward, solid performance. Ward is an effective, if not great, vocalist and a fluent guitarist rooted in the classic Chicago blues tradition which has resulted in this appealing release.

Ron Weinstock



STEVE HOBBS
Tribute To Bobby
CHALLENGE RECORDS

Marimba / vibes veteran Steve Hobbs has dedicated this new recording to Bobby Hutcherson, who mentored him as a young player. The dedication came after Hutcherson’s recent death shortly after the recording this program of mostly originals by Hobbs that encompass modern mainstream examples of post bop, Latin, Funk, Calypso, and the such. Emphasis on this date is on the woodier marimba. He is joined by a terrific band including Adam Kolker on saxes, Bill O’Connell on piano, Peter Washington on bass and John Riley on drums. Hobbs himself elaborates on the renditions of ten originals and three covers in the booklet.

On the opening “The Craving Performance,” one notes how tight the rhythm section is with Washington’s firm bass anchoring a lively swinger with Kolker’s tough tenor solo followed by Hobbs on marimba on a solo displaying imagination as well as precision. “Into the Storm” opens with Riley’s drums and a short period of controlled chaos

between marimba and piano, before transitioning to a 5/4 on an animated performance with several metric changes with superb piano from O’Connell.

On the wonderful interpretation of “Besame Mucho,” Hobbs states that he “wanted a West African Naningo feel” This is a quartet performance with his marimba lending more of a Caribbean than Afro-Cuban flavor with both O’Connell and Hobbs spectacular while Washington and Riley are superb throughout. Kolker returns with authority on the vibrant, driving “New Creation,” followed by Hobbs who states Hutcherson’s influence on him is perhaps most evident here. Washington also solos on this selection.

The breezy latin-flavored “Tres Vias” has Kolker on soprano with a serpentine solo, followed by the lovely “Millie,” with nice brush work from Riley and then “Thelonious Funk,” which has a playful, funky tone. “The Road to Happy Destiny” is a song with lyrics about hope and service where the backing track was recorded first and the vocals added later (including a brief scat solo) on a gospel-rock-R&B flavored number. Then comes a reflective rendition of Bob Dylan’s “Blowing in the Wind,” a punchy latin-flavored “El Sueno de Horace Silver” with some hot mallets and tenor sax. “In From the Storm” is a pop-flavored song with vocals with a light bossa nova groove, followed by the ebullient calypso romp, “Let’s Go To Abaco!”

The quartet has a brisk take on the Rodgers and Hart standard “Where or When,” that is kicked off by Riley before Hobbs’ sterling marimba solo with Riley taking a crisp, drum solo. It concludes this recording in an impressive manner.

Ron Weinstock





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