

May/June 2004  
Issue 268  
Free

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# jazz & blues report



## Cookin' at the Cookery

The Music & Times  
of Alberta Hunter

# jazz & blues report

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## On The Cover

Gail Nelson as the 82-year-old blues singer Alberta Hunter during her 1977 comeback performance at The Cookery Club in New York City in The Cleveland Play House production of Marion J. Caffey's *Cookin' at the Cookery: The Music and Times of Alberta Hunter* in the Drury Theatre. Photo By Roger Mastroianni

# COOKIN' AT THE COOKERY: THE MUSIC AND TIMES OF ALBERTA HUNTER

## The Final Production of The Cleveland Playhouse's 88th Season

The much anticipated Marion J. Caffey bio play *Cookin' at the Cookery: the Music and Times of Alberta Hunter* will close out the 88th season of The Cleveland Playhouse. It is currently running and will continue through May 30 in the Drury Theatre. Mr. Caffey will stage The Cleveland Play House regional premiere of this co-production with Geva Theatre.

Before Billie Holiday, Etta James, Koko Taylor, Janis Joplin or Bonnie Raitt, there was Alberta Hunter. Though overshadowed by her contemporary, Bessie Smith, Alberta made it big in Chicago, New York, and Paris. Her career was on the fast track, performing with Louis Armstrong and Paul Robeson in the original Broadway cast of *Show Boat* when she decided to quit music to become a nurse. When opportunity knocked again, Ms. Hunter made a big splash when she performed at the Cookery in New York City, at the tender age of 82. This retrospective tale celebrates the life and the music of one of the "First Ladies of Blues."

**GAIL NELSON** (*Alberta Hunter*) hails from North Carolina and Maryland and is equally at home with Opera, Broadway, Theater and Clubs. She has appeared on Broadway in *The Tap Dance Kid*; *Applause*; *Hello, Dolly*; *On the Town*; *Eubie*; *Music, Music!*; *By Strouse*; *The World of Carl Sandberg*; *Beyond Measure*; *Love Letters*; and Radio City Music Hall's *The Ginger Rogers Special*. She toured with *Bubbling Brown Sugar*; the Houston Grand Opera's revival of *Porgy and Bess*; *Funny, You Don't Look Like a Grandmother*; and *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*. Ms. Nelson also appeared as Coretta Scott King in the musical *King*, by Maya Angelou, for the presidential inauguration of Bill Clinton, and birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ms. Nelson continues to perform in the

revues: *This Joint is Jumping*; *Puttin' on the Ritz*; *Gershwin and Friends*; and *Billie Holiday, Remembered*. She was a guest artist and hostess for the annual Indianapolis Christmas Yuletide Extravaganza, and remains a popular guest entertainer on Holland American, Seabourn, and Raddison Cruise Lines. A graduate of Oberlin College, with a Master's from New England Conservatory, Ms. Nelson was a member of the Metropolitan Opera Studio, and an Artist-in-Residence with Affiliate Artists, Inc. She is married to pianist-arranger, Musical Supervisor of this production, Danny Holgate.

**CARLA WOODS** (*The Narrator*) most recently appeared in *Smokey Joe's Café* at the Westchester Broadway Theater. She appeared in Playhouse on the Green's production of *Ain't Misbehavin*, which received a Connecticut Critics Circle Award for Best Ensemble. Ms. Woods originated the role of Rose in the Off-Broadway production of *Abie's Island Rose*, performed at the Jewish Repertory Theater, as well as the Hollywood Playhouse. She has been seen three times at the York Theatre Company performing in *New Girl in Town*, *Carmen Jones*, and *Wish You Were Here*. Other credits include *Merrily We Roll Along* (Guthrie Theater), *Blues In The Night* (Virginia Stage), Mary Magdelene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and Lizzie in *Baby*. Ms. Woods hosted the talk show "The Chat Zone" for HBO, and performed on the Disney Magic as the "Circle of Life" finale soloist, a Muse and even a sword-fighting pirate.

The production's creative team earned multiple awards from the NAACP for their work on COOKIN' AT THE COOKERY, including: Mr. Caffey for Best Playwright (Equity), Best Choreography (Equity), Best Director (Equity) and Best Director of a Musical (Equity); Danny Holgate for Best Music Director (Equity);



Dale F. Jordan for Best Set Design (Equity) and Marilyn A. Wall for Best Costumes (Equity).

**MARION J. CAFFEY** (Playwright, Director-Choreographer) wrote and directed the World Premiere of his musical *Cookin' at the Cookery: The Music and Times of Alberta Hunter*, which has been produced at many prestigious regional theatres, as well as Off-Broadway. Mr. Caffey began his career as a "song-and-dance man," working in the United States and around the world. Now he dedicates himself to conception, writing, directing and choreography. This marks his first writing effort, for which he was nominated for the 2001 Barrymore Award for Best Director, the 1998 Arkansas Travelers Award, the 1996 Carbonell Award for Best Choreographer, and an honorable mention for Best Director and Best Musical. Mr. Caffey has served as Director and/or Choreographer for *Blackbirds of Broadway*, *Chicago*, *Forever Plaid*, *Jelly Roll: The Music and the Man*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Tintypes*, *All Night Strut*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Purlie Victorious*, *Ruthless*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *Spunk*, *The Colored Museum*, and *1940's Radio Hour*. He has produced *Cookin' at the Cookery*, *Three Mo' Tenors* and *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*. Most recently he completed *Sunset and the Mockingbird*, starring Tsidi Le Loka, and a national tour of *Bowfire*.

**DANNY HOLGATE** (Musical Supervision and Arrangements) served as Musical Director and Arranger on Broadway for *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*; *Bubbling Brown Sugar*; *Eubie*; *Guys and Dolls* (revival); *Rainbow Jones*; and *Odyssey*, starring Yul Brynner. He also performed the role of Jimmy Powers in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* in New York. He currently tours the show with his wife, Gail Nelson, who performs the title role of Billie Holiday. Other credits include: *Daddy Goodness*; *Two Faces of Africa*; the revival of *Golden Boy*; *Stringbean*, with Leslie Uggams; *Sweet and Hot - an Evening of Harold Arlen*; *Aretha*, *Queen of Soul*; *Blackbirds of Broadway*; and a revival of *Storyville*. He served as Producer and Arranger for *Puttin' on the Ritz*, *This Joint is Jumping*, and *It's Nice to Be Civilized*, which often perform on the Holland America cruise lines, as well as for concerts and Symphony "Pops" Orchestras across

the country. In addition to his prolific theatre work, Mr. Holgate was the conductor and arranger for the legendary Cab Calloway. In a career spanning over 40 years, his renowned talent has taken him from theatre, to radio, to recording, and far beyond.

**WILLIAM FOSTER MCDANIEL** (Musical Director, Conductor, Pianist) began his musical theatre career as pianist-conductor for the New York production of *The Fantasticks*. He has since conducted *Timbuktu!*, *Bubblin' Brown Sugar*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *House Of Flowers*, *Once On This Island*, *Big River*, *Stringbean*, *Fiddler On The Roof*, *Nunsense II*, *Lady Day At Emerson's Bar & Grill*, *Guys and Dolls*, *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, *Hello Dolly*, *Dream Girls*, *Damn Yankees*, *Showboat*, *Dinah Was*, *Will Rogers Follies*, *Crazy For You*, *Storyville*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *A Wonderful Life*, *Always...Patsy Cline*, *Call The Children Home* and the Broadway and National Touring companies of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Mr. McDaniel's classical compositions have been performed by the Philharmonia of Greensboro, the Savannah Symphony Orchestra, the Mozart Society Orchestra at Harvard and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. He is a graduate of Capital and Boston Universities, and was a Fulbright Scholar in Paris.

The play will be at The Drury Theatre, The Cleveland Play House, 8500 Euclid Avenue. Closing night is Sunday, May 30.

**Cast:**

Alberta Hunter-Gail Nelson  
The Narrator-Carla Woods

**Creative Team:**

**Playwright:**

Marion J. Caffey

**Director-Choreographer:**

Marion J. Caffey

**Musical Supervision and Arrangements:**

Danny Holgate

**Musical Director, Pianist:**

Billy McDaniel

**Scene and Lighting Design:**

Dale F. Jordan

**Costume Design:**

Marilyn A. Wall

**Wig Design:**

Bettie O. Rogers

**Resident Sound Designer:**

Robin Heath

**Times:** Tuesday-Friday-8:00 p.m.

Sat. Matinee/Evening 4:00/8:00 p.m.  
Sunday Matinee 2:00 p.m.  
Thursday, May 6 1:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, May 18 7:00 p.m.  
No evening performances May 11 – 13;  
No performance May 25.

**Prices:** Tue-Thu. Previews \$32.00

Tue-Thu; Sat./Sun. Matinees \$40.00

Fri./Sat. Evenings \$47.50

"Under 25" tickets \$12.00 with proper ID

**Single Tickets On Sale Now:**

Call the Ticket Office, (216) 795-7000, ext. 4, or visit [www.clevelandplayhouse.com](http://www.clevelandplayhouse.com)  
Groups of 10 or More: Call Peter Mahoney, Audience Development/Group Sales, (216) 795-7000, ext. 235

The Cleveland Play House gratefully acknowledges *Cookin' at the Cookery* sponsors KeyBank and Baker & Hostetler, LLP

## Eagle Vision Presents Montreux Jazz Festival

Eagle Vision has announced a deal to represent the Montreux Sounds catalogue. Montreux Sounds is the label which controls the archive of the celebrated Montreux Jazz Festival, which is now preparing for its 38th edition from July 3-18.

Founded in 1967 by Claude Nobs, who continues as its CEO today, the Montreux Jazz Festival has established itself as one of the most prestigious annual music events in the world.

The list of artists who have performed at the festival over the years is extraordinary. A random sampling includes David Bowie, Paul Simon, Jamiroquai, Isaac Hayes, Basement Jaxx, David Gray, George Benson, Diana Krall, Deep Purple, R.E.M., Pat Metheny, Bob Dylan, Santana, Bjork, Eric Clapton, The Corrs, Paco De Lucia, Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin, ZZ Top, George Clinton, Simply Red, James Taylor Quartet, Ice T, B.B. King, Van Morrison, Johnny Cash, Fats Domino, Miles Davis, Phil Collins, Courtney Pine, Elvis Costello, Dizzy Gillespie, Hugh Masekela, Garbage, Buddy Guy, Ella Fitzgerald, John Lee Hooker, Count Basie and Stevie Ray Vaughan – and that still leaves out a host of stars from across the musical spectrum.

Eagle Vision will be representing this entire catalogue, including the 2004 Festival, for TV sales on a worldwide basis. In addition, they will be making selected titles available on DVD.

## Blues Watch

By Mark Smith

**New Release Blues....** Here's a whole slew of discs to keep your spring hopping: **Diamond Jim Greene-** *Snapshots*; **Guitar Shorty-** *Watch Your Back*; **Clarence Bucaro-** *Sense of Light*; **Popa Chubby-** *Peace, Love & Respect*; **Dirty Dozen Brass Band-** *Funeral for a Friend*; **Rod Piazza & The Mighty Flyers-** *Keepin' It Real*; **Sam Myers-** *Coming from the Old School*; **Paul Oscher-** *Alone with the Blues*; **Deborah Coleman-** *What About Love?*; **Lucille Bogan-** *Roots 'n Blues: Shave 'Em Dry- The Best Of*; **Fabulous Thunderbirds-** *The Essential*; **John Lee Hooker-** *Jack O' Diamonds*; **The Mississippi Shieks-** *Roonts N' Blues: Honey Babe Let the Deal Go Down- The Best Of*; **Maria Muldaur-** *I'm a Woman: 30 Years Of*; **Mamie Smith-** *Roots N' Blues: Crazy Blues- The Best Of*; **Hound Dog Taylor-** *Release The Hound*; **Sonny Terry-** *Whoopin' The Blues*; **Phil Upchurch-** *Feeling Blue*; **Peter Green-** *Man of the World: the Anthology 1968-88*; **Lightnin' Hopkins-** *Roots N' Blues: Hello Central- The Best Of*; **Mississippi John Hurt-** *D. C. Blues- The Library of Congress Recordings Volume 1*; **Muddy Waters-** *Hard Again, I'm Ready and King Bee*; **Johnny Winter-** *Johnny Winter*; **Houston Person-** *Everything's Alright: Broken Windows, Empty Hallways/Sweet Buns and Barbecue....* **Festival Blues....:** make sure to reserve the weekend of June 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> for the **21<sup>st</sup> Annual Chicago Blues Festival**, the weekend of July 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> for the **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Kalamazoo Blues Festival** and August 14<sup>th</sup> for the **Cow Pie Blues Festival** in Grand Rapids. Info on the Chicago Festival is available at [www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org). Info on the Kalamazoo event is available at [www.kvba.org](http://www.kvba.org). Info on the Grand Rapids festival is available at [www.wmbs.org](http://www.wmbs.org). Here's a few more festivals to consider for the summer months: **W.C. Handy Blues and Barbecue Festival-** June 12-20, Henderson, KY. Call 270-827-1852 or log onto [www.handyblues.org](http://www.handyblues.org) for info. **Blues on the Fox-** June 13-14, Aurora, IL. Call 630 897-4372 or log onto [www.foxvalleyblues.org/bluesonthebox](http://www.foxvalleyblues.org/bluesonthebox) for more info. **Greater Rockford Blues Festival-** June 21-23, Davis Park, Rockford, IL. Call 815-282-2954 for info. **Toledo Rock, Rhythm and Blues-** July 23-24, Promenade Park, Toledo. Call 419-249-5018 or log onto [www.cityfest.org](http://www.cityfest.org) for more info. **Summer Fest-** June 24- July 4, Milwaukee, WI. Call 800-273- Fest or log onto [www.summerfest.com](http://www.summerfest.com) for further info. **Blues Festival-** July 5-7, York Quay Centre, Toronto, ON. Ca; 416-973-3000 or log onto [www.harbourfront.on.ca](http://www.harbourfront.on.ca) for more info. That's it for this month. See ya.

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## Caught Live!

### Van Morrison in Chicago

I have been trying to make it to a Van Morrison concert for roughly 30 years now, narrowly missing out on tickets several times. Then some kind of miracle happened and I was the proud holder of tickets to his April concert at the Chicago Theatre. So off to Chicago it was for a noon visit with the folks at Alligator Records, and the evening concert, then back the next morning.

Morrison recently signed to Blue Note Records and was touring in support of his new album, **What's Wrong With This Picture?** on a very brief 5-city tour, playing venues in the 3,000 seat neighborhood. Backed by some of the musicians heard on his last two albums, and definitely in a jazz vein playing tenor sax, trumpet, guitar, piano, bass and drums, Morrison, dressed in a pale yellow suit and black fedora, delighted the audience with a slew of songs covering a span of over 35 years including "Into The Mystic" from the **Astral Weeks** album to "Whinin' Boy Moan" and Lightnin' Hopkins' "Stop Drinking" from his new Blue Note effort. Covering the years in between, we heard such Morrison nuggets as "Sometimes We Cry," "It's All In The Game," "Cleaning Windows." "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?," "Vanlose Stairway," "Bright Side Of The Road," Jackie Wilson Said, "Days Like This," "Back On The Top," and many more. He was in good form and, despite his reputation, certainly seemed to be having a grand time on vocals, alto sax and harmonica. Since he did not talk, except to say "Thank You, Chicago" at the end, I figure he got some more music in. After 90 minutes he headed off the stage, but was soon back for an encore where he took us "way, way back" for a medley of "Brown Eyed Girl" and "Gloria." I don't know if I have ever heard 3,500 people sing backup in time and in tune!

There was indeed a lot of energy in the old Chicago Theatre that night, and a sea of smiling, satisfied faces were seen floating out of the building when it was all over. The next morning I was surprised to see that the reviewer from one Chicago newspaper seemed to want him to play stuff like "Domino" all night. The reviewer from the Sun got it right though - I guess he was at the same concert as I. The concert of year for this particular guy.

### Tri-C JazzFest

Well, it's all over but the smoke. JazzFest has concluded their 25th Anniversary event in grand style and are no doubt working on the 26th by now. There are so many events that we have never covered them with reviews after all is said

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and done. It would take up half an issue, and I'd rather use that many pages before the event as we did in March/April. We did have several writers at several events, and I was able to make it to the tribute to Cleveland's own Tommy LiPuma, which featured several artists who he has produced albums for. Pricey tickets for that one, but an exquisite show. After segments featuring each of the various artist, such as Joe Lovano, Diana Krall, George Benson, Dr. John and others, the highlight was the grand finale — a Jazz at the Philharmonic style all-star jam on Monk's "Straight, No Chaser," featuring Lovano and David "Fathead" Newman on saxes, Krall/piano, Benson/guitar and Christian McBride/bass, and the John Clayton/Jeff Hamilton Jazz Orchestra I'm not even going to waste any more time insulting the jazz police who say Krall can't play piano. They need to wake up and get a life...or perhaps just grow some ears. oops...I did it again!

I also made it to the tribute to Cleveland's Tadd Dameron, featuring Kenny Davis, Don Braden, Howie Smith, Robin Eubanks, Eric Gould, Glen Holmes, and Derrick Gardner playing several of Dameron's compositions with marvelous arrangements.

As an unadvertised treat, the master saxophonist Jimmy Heath sat in as well. At the beginning of the show, Terri Pontremoli and Willard Jenkins (who wrote for us about 20 years ago) of JazzFest presented Jazz & Blues Report with a classy plaque commemorating our 30th anniversary. Our first award ever! We thank them, and we would like to once again congratulate everyone at JazzFest for 25 fantastic years!



In what is becoming an annual trek to Playhouse Square Center, the multi-talented musician, saxophonist, keyboardist, songwriter, producer **Boney James** will play in concert Thursday, June 24 at the **Palace Theatre**.





**April 27 -  
May 30**

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**TRI-C  
JAZZFEST  
CLEVELAND**  
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# **COOKin'** at the **COOKERY**

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**Friday!**  
in  
THE PLAIN DEALER

**jazz  
& blues**

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# DVDs

## DVD-AUDIO



**JANE MONHEIT**  
Never Never Land  
Dream With Me  
SILVERLINE DVD-AUDIO

These two albums are reissues of her N-Coded Music albums of the same title. For those unfamiliar with the format, DVD-AUDIO is an enhanced music disc, audio only, presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound. Both these excellent Monheit albums sounded great in their original stereo CD versions, but if you have a DVD player hooked to a Dolby 5.1 Digital Receiver, and the front, center and rear surround speakers, you will hear them as though you were in a small concert hall with the extra surround presence and delayed reverberation things happening all over the place.

It says on the back cover that this

disc is playable on all DVD players. I'm not quite sure about that. It would be best to check your manual for the player and see if the playable formats listed include DVD-AUDIO. I have a Philips that is about two years old which will not play it. I also have a new \$59 Daewoo that does play it and just about anything else I put into it, although it *does not* make a decent cup of coffee.

As far as the music goes, rather than to rehash reviews we have already done, you can read reviews of both of these albums written by Nancy Anne Lee in past issues on our website, which has a database with 2,500 CD & DVD reviews. Simply go to [http://www.jazz-blues.com/record\\_detail.cfm?recordid=777](http://www.jazz-blues.com/record_detail.cfm?recordid=777) for one, then substitute the number 913 at the end (for 777) for the other. Happy surfing.  
*Bill Wahl*

**Jane Monheit** will be appearing at the **Palace Theatre** on May 23 on a bill with the **Manhattan Transfer**

## DVD-VIDEO

### RANDY WESTON

Live in St. Lucia

IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT (DVD)

From BET Jazz comes this dazzling 68-minute DVD concert performance of pianist Randy Weston and his African Rhythms Quintet at the 2002 St. Lucia Jazz Festival in the Caribbean Sea. Weston grew up in Brooklyn, NY surrounded by a rich musical community, and through extended stays in Africa during the 1960s and early 1970s, has creatively merged African and American music.

He and his team are individually and collectively at their best for this performance. Musical director T.K. Blue (saxophone/flute) fka Talib Kibwe, Benny Powell (trombone), Alex Blake (acoustic bass) and Neil Clarke (African percussion) and Weston offer scintillating performances as they navigate six Weston originals. "African Cookbook" is a sizzling 20-minute workout for all. "The Shrine" spotlights Blue on flute. Weston wrote "African Sunrise" originally for Dizzy Gillespie and Machito and the group gives it a fiery reading. Weston plays solo piano on "Little Niles," which segues into "The Three Pyramids & the Sphinx," performed as a duo with Blake. The familiar "Blue Moses" closes the concert.

It's always a treat to see Weston perform. A tall man whose knees are level

with the keyboard, he's captured by the camera frequently as his hands tickle the ivories. Excellent sound production (mixed in Dolby 5.1 digital surround-sound), superb lighting and comprehensive camera work capture the essence of each musician and add to the excitement of this concert performance. Special features include a brief interview with Weston.  
*Nancy Ann Lee*



### 46664-THE EVENT

WARNER STRATEGIC MARKETING  
DVD OR CD

When I got this one I had absolutely no idea what it was. A big picture of Nelson Mandela on the front of the box and the big stencil style numbers 46664.

I read a bit of the enclosed paperwork to find that 46664 was the name of the concert held in Cape Town South Africa in November, 2003 to raise awareness for 46664, Nelson Mandela's global anti-AIDS campaign. 40,000 people were packed into Green Point Stadium on that night. The concert was hosted by Mandela and broadcast around the world. The message was "Give one minute of your life to AIDS."

Now this is the kind of stuff I really enjoy. Coming upon something totally unexpected that has virtually nothing to do with jazz or blues (the closest thing to jazz is the fact that Rachel Z plays with Peter Gabriel) but is so good that it completely transcends musical barriers (or barriers of any sort for that matter) and needs to be covered. So if you are a dyed-in-the-wool listener of jazz and/or blues ONLY, go directly to the next review. If your musical tastes follow Duke Ellington's logic of "There are only two kinds of music...good music and the other kind," then by all means—read on.

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 Vibraphonist with his legendary group.

**Sat June 5 8 PM**  
**2 Shows 8 & 11 PM**  
**Pieces of a Dream**  
 Heads Up recording artists. Soulful  
 Smooth Jazz from classic band.





This comes in two versions, or should I say four. One is the 2-DVD Set video of the entire concert. The other is three CDs sold separately. I put on the DVD one night figuring I would sample it - a little of each track to get an idea of what was there. I figured I could even skip some tracks this time around. That was at 9 p.m. The next thing I knew, it was 1:30 in the morning and the finale was happening. There was nothing to skip, nothing to simply sample. There was some kind of magic happening in Cape Town on that night and I obviously did not want to miss any of it. The list of musicians included several names I had never heard of, with many I knew from years past. Perhaps the most current name was Beyoncé, who opened the show. She was followed by a Bob Geldof who introduced the show and sang "Redemption Song." Then things just kept going, and going and getting better, and better and...well, you know...4-1/2 hours went by. There were many African performers, with choirs, drums and fantastic rhythms. There was Peter Gabriel with Yusuf Islam (better known as Cat Stevens) with a spectacular re-worked version of "Wide World." There was Jimmy Cliff, Johnny Clegg, Bono, The Edge, The Eurythmics, The Corrs, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Queen, Yvonne Chaka Kahn and many, many others. I even enjoyed the rap guy!

On many songs, the artists were sitting in with each other, and many of them were backed by the Soweto Gospel Choir. Add to that the fact that the video footage was first rate -sharp, clear and wonderful cuts and angles, plus the near perfect audio in Dolby Digital Surround, and you have a DVD that everyone who simply *likes good music* should own. Period.

So the dilemma might be DVD or CD(s)? Well this is actually a no-brainer. If you have a DVD player going through a stereo, or even better an A/V Receiver...get the DVD (24.95 list) for sure. Otherwise, get one, two or all three of the CDs (18.95 list each), the latter of which the songs and performers are listed on the back. I definitely feel that the video adds to the magic of this event.

The DVD is straight music except for short speeches by Nelson Mandela and Geldof. There are some interspersed clips of celebrities such as Opra (who was in the audience), Bill Clinton and Robert DiNero asking you to log on to [www.46664.com](http://www.46664.com) and "Give one minute of your life to AIDS." Other than that...it is all music. Don't miss out on this one.

Bill Wahl

# Compact Discs



## RUSSELL MALONE

Playground  
MAXJAZZ

Guitarist Russell Malone produces his own CD for the first time and with a gifted group of tight-playing musicians he's been performing with on the road - pianist Martin Bejerano, bassist Tassili Bond, and drummer E. J. Strickland.

All 10 tracks were arranged by Malone and he contributes six satisfying originals to the diverse mix. His fiery composition "You Should Have Known Better" launches the set but it's the racing "Sugar Buzz" featuring guest vibraphonist Joe Locke with the full band that leaves you emotionally charged and wondering how Malone can finger so fast.

While Malone often inspires awe with his formidable chops, he's a versatile player who does slow down to feature ballads, and his quartet reading of Billy Strayhorn's "Something To Live For" and his solo performance of the Fields/Kern gem "Remind Me" provide beautifully warm respite from speedball tempos. The lovely melody and quote-full quips by Malone on his mid-tempo title tune provide for equally engaging listening. "Mandela," a Malone original with an African flavored theme, spotlights guest Gary Bartz on alto sax. One of the nicer surprises is that Malone's dug into classic pop tunes: The Carpenters' "We've Only Just Begun," performed with a Latin beat by the quartet and, the closer, Carole King's "You've Got A Friend" featuring Malone's soulful solo guitar.

Malone is a star player capable of creating many moods and there's plenty to like about this first-rate recording that launches the MAXJAZZ Strings Series.

Nancy Ann Lee

## NIGHT TOWN

12387 Cedar Road  
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Reservations: 216-795-0550

JWP



TUES MAY 11 7 & 9 PM

### VANESSA RUBIN

Telarc recording artist. Jazz vocal stylist with ERIC REED, RODNEY WHITAKER, GREG BANDY.



TUES-WED MAY 18-19 7 & 9 PM

### JOHN PIZZARELLI

"Bossa Nova" CD release. Telarc rec. artist. W/Brazilian Quintet - Daniel Jobim, Paulinho Braga, Romero Lubambo, Cesar Camargo Mariano.



SUN MAY 23  
5:30 & 7:30 PM

### FOUR FRESHMEN

Legendary vocal group.



TUES MAY 25 7 PM

### HILARIO DURAN

From Cuba. Dynamic pianist returns w/ROBERTO OCCHIPINTI, bass & ERNESTO SIMPSON, drums.



WED MAY 26 7 PM

### MARTHA AARONS/JASON VIEUX

Flutist from the Cleveland Orch. and master acoustic guitarist.



SUN MAY 30 7 & 9 PM

### BRIAN AUGER'S OBLIVION EXPRESS

From London. The Godfather of "Acid Jazz". Legendary B-3 player.



TUES-WED JUNE 1-2 7 PM

### SCOTT HAMILTON

Concord recording artist. Classic Saxophone sound.



THURS JUNE 3 7 PM

### LAURA VARCHO

Cleveland's favorite torch singer.



FRI JUNE 4 9 & 11 PM

### CHUCHITO VALDES

From Cuba. Son of Chucho Valdes. Smoking Cuban Jazz Pianist with Quintet returns to NightTown.

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6/14 .....KENNY RANKIN  
6/17 ... JOE DENIZON/CHRISTIAN HOWES w/ALEX SKOLNICK  
6/29 .....BEPPE GAMBETTA & KATHY CHIAVOLA  
6/30 .....RICK STONE TRIO



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**Friday 11: Blue Lunch**  
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**Saturday 12: Michael Burks**  
Alligator recording artist returns!

**Thursday 17: Candye Kane**  
**Saturday 19: Papa Chubbie**  
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## HOUND DOG TAYLOR Release The Hound ALLIGATOR

You don't realize how much you've missed blues this good until you hear this disc. Culled from previously unreleased "live" club and radio sessions from 1971-75, these tracks consistently telegraph the energy, the exuberance and the infectious personality that were hallmarks of the primitive slide-guitar master's work. Hound Dog appears to be having a great time on each of these dates. It's a mood that is obvious track by track, vocally and instrumentally, as is the solid rapport Taylor shares with his trio-mates, guitarist Brewer Phillips and drummer Ted Harvey (or Levi Warren).

In particular, *Release The Hound* re-introduces Taylor and Phillips as one of the most distinctive and resourceful guitar tandems in blues. Three decades before the Black Keys indie-blues generation discovered the bass-less band format, Hound Dog and Brewer did it and managed to cover the "bottom" chores between them as if there was a phantom "fourth" on the crew.

The tunes on *Hound* have been out before but the performances here will justify them to the fan of long standing. Post-Fat Possum era newbies should run, not walk, out for this one. When, in the early 70's, up-and-coming blues entrepreneur Bruce Iglauer had a hunch his favorite local artist would provide his fledgling label with a proper launch, he was on to something. This disc will rate among your wisest purchases this year. *Duane Verh*

## CAL TJADER

### The Best of the Concord Years CONCORD

This two-CD collection celebrates the last four years (1979-82) of vibraphonist Cal Tjader's life and features him with illustrious sidekicks in peak form performing some of his renowned Latin jazz works in small groups.

Born in St. Louis and raised in San  
May/June 2004 • Issue 268

Francisco, Tjader was a pacesetter who introduced the world to his unique blend of West Coast cool jazz, mainstream bop and Latin music. He helped to launch the Concord Picante label and his legacy continues to inspire musicians today. Tjader studied music and education at San Francisco State College and, throughout the 1940s and 1950s, experimented with Afro-Cuban rhythms, adding the fiery sounds to his relaxed vibes style to help define the Cool jazz sound.

Compiled from six previously issued albums, *La Onda Va Bien*, *Heat Wave*, *Gozame! Pero Ya*, *The Shining Sea*, *Good Vibes*, and *A Fuego Vivo*, the two discs contain a mixture of 21 Latin-jazz tunes spotlighting top artists such as Carmen McRae, Hank Jones, Scott Hamilton, Poncho Sanchez and other talented musicians comfortable with Tjader's Latin-jazz blend. Flutist Roger Glenn adds fluent improvis to some tracks.

Disc One highlights include Latinate chestnuts such as "Evil Ways" and "Besame Mucho," both enhanced by McRae's vocals, and several danceable tracks. Among best showcases for Tjader's fine playing is the lovely mainstream ballad, "Don't Look Back," performed with pianist Jones, drummer Vince Lateano, and bassist Dean Reilly. Exciting gems such as Dizzy Gillespie's "Guachi Guaro (Soul Sauce)," Ray Bryant's "Cuban Fantasy" and John Coltrane's "Naima" on Disc Two will make your heart beat a bit faster.

A pure delight for Tjader fans as well as Latin jazz lovers, the set could equally serve as an introduction for new fans. Hats off to compilation producer Nick Phillips for his selective process and good ears! A 16-page liner booklet provides Tjader's career highlights and compilation details.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

## OTIS TAYLOR Double V TELARC

Anyone who read my critique of Otis Taylor's *Truth Is Not Fiction* back in the J&BR issue number 263 pretty well knows how this is going to go when it comes to *Double V*.

Taylor's work is not so much blues as anti-blues with soul infused into it; it is rap without the redundancy. How else could you describe 12 cuts that are basically laced with non-traditional blues instruments like banjo and cello?

What's interesting about Taylor's songs are they delve into historical anecdotes such as "Mandan Woman," the story of the



Lewis & Clark trek across America as told through the eyes of Clark's slave York with a banjo riff by Taylor in the background. "They Took Their Land" has Taylor on guitar and harp making the jump from Native Americans on reservations to Japanese Americans in internment camps.

The cello work of Shaun Diaz and Ben Sollee put "505 Train" into motion as "It's Done Happened Again" is Taylor's primal scream put to music. Although I can swear I've heard one of these cello riffs on **Double V** in a Hawkwind disc I once reviewed, the biggest surprise comes at the end as Taylor's 17 year old bass playing daughter Cassie gets a spotlight on lead vocal. With Ron Miles' trumpet as the backdrop, her lilting voice tells the tale of a young African American woman's dreams in the 1960's south.

When it comes to **Double V** and Otis Taylor, expect the unforeseen. If the Bizarro world ever had a big blues festival, I'm sure they'd contact Otis Taylor about headlining. And that might not be a bad thing.

*Peanuts*

## JOE LOVANO

### I'm All For You—Ballad Songbook BLUE NOTE

In a first-class quartet setting with pianist Hank Jones, bassist George Mraz, and drummer Paul Motian, tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano displays his penchant for ballads. Cleveland-born Lovano has a special knack for soulful ballads and he doesn't disappoint on this outing, his 16th Blue Note release.

Lovano demonstrates his lush chops, fertile imagination, and ability to lead and interact with acknowledged lyrical players such as Jones and Mraz. Longtime collaborator Motian's tastefully restrained time-keeping gently guides the foursome as they remake gems such as "Don't Blame Me," "Monk's Mood," "Stella By Starlight," "I Waited For You," "Early Autumn, and others. Each musician accomplishes pleasing spotlighted moments that display their individual chops yet it's Lovano's seductive, warm improvisations throughout that capture your heart.

Some might guess that Lovano is guided in spirit here by his late father, saxophonist Big T (Tony), as there's a certain tender, nostalgic feeling in his smoky-toned expressions on these vintage tunes. Lovano is a full-spectrum player who can navigate inside/out extremes. This CD represents one of his most "inside" endeavors and we really get to hear the inventive core of this gregarious guy.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

**jazz  
& blues**

## CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE

### Sanctuary REAL WORLD

Charlie Musselwhite's transition from "straight" blues to an expanded blues-based palette has never yielded finer fruit than this latest disc. The venerable harp master favors his Southern roots over his Chicago side on a moody, seductive set of solid originals laced with well-chosen contemporary covers.

In the wrong hands emotional monotone can quickly wear thin but the unchanging dusky atmosphere of *Sanctuary* weaves a spell that gathers power with succeeding tracks. The vocal chorus propelling both the leader's harp and Charlie Sexton's agile acoustic guitar on Ben Harper's "Homeless Child" is equal parts gospel and voodoo. The bayou backwater re-statement of Randy Newman's "Let's Burn Down The Cornfield" gives the tune a new serious nature. The band maintains a tense, engaging simmer through the entire set that, while only nearing a full boil on Sonny Landreth's "Shootin' For The Moon", never loosens its grip. Production is simpatico and exquisite. Musselwhite's minimalism, vocally and instrumentally, is the perfect focal point for what will surely prove to be one of the best blues-oriented discs of the year. Definitely worth the money.

*Duane Verh*

## ABDULLAH IBRAHIM TRIO

### Cape Town Revisited ENJA/JUSTIN TIME

Pianist Abdullah Ibrahim draws on his heritage for this December 13, 1977 live-recorded performance in Cape Town, South Africa.

With Marcus McLaurine (bass) and George Gray (drums) Ibrahim performs 15 tunes which merge the flavor and tempos of South African music with the jazz idiom. Highlights include the three-part suite, "Cape Town to Congo Square," featuring "African Street Parade," "District Six Carnival," and "Too-Kah." The churchy "Barakaat (The Blessing)" provides a solemn close to the set. Guest trumpeter Feya Faku nicely augments three tracks.

Ibrahim/Brand has numerous recordings to his credit. Though his native roots always come through, he's comfortable working in a traditional jazz context and draws main inspiration from Monk and Ellington. What gives him his distinctive sound is his potent spiritual playing evident in his use of percussive left-hand chords that draw from gospel roots.

Born Adolph Johannes Brand, Octo-

May/June 2004 • Issue 268

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ber 9, 1934, in Cape Town, South Africa, Ibrahim (aka Dollar Brand) began playing piano as a youth, became enraptured with American jazz and later joined the pioneering group The Jazz Epistles. Lack of opportunities in his homeland led Ibrahim to move his family in 1962 to Zurich, where he gained attention from Duke Ellington, who nurtured his career. Ibrahim began leading and recording his own groups. He converted to Islam and adopted his Muslim name in the early 1970s. He eventually moved to New York.

Though this 1977 performance may not be as scintillating as Ibrahim's works to come over the next two decades, it's a pleasurable listen.

Nancy Ann Lee

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Windy City Blues

STAX

This new compilation on Stax brings together selections from various Prestige blues discs featuring Chicago blues acts with a previously unissued Albert King session that Willie Dixon produced in Chicago. This 1970 session is simply stunning as he plays some very hot guitar and sings strongly while backed by a band with a full horn section that complements his performances. The opening track, *The Lovin'est Woman in Town*, is an original he would record later. Here he just tears into the song with his guitar blasting away on his solo as the horns riff behind him. Equally as good is King's rendition of Dixon's *Put It All In There* and *Love Me To Death*. One wonders why these songs were not issued until now, as they are first-rate Albert King.

In addition to King, James Cotton handles *Dust My Broom*, while Otis Spann recreates his *It Must Have Been the Devil*. Willie

Dixon handles a couple songs in an uptown vein with saxophonist Harold Ashby among those backing him. Billy Boy Arnold shows the influence of John Lee 'Sonny Boy' Williamson on *Two Drinks of Wine*, derived from Sonny Boy's *Early in the Morning*. Sunnyland Slim advises us that The Devil is a Busy Ma, one of three tracks backed by a combo that included King Curtis and an organist. Finally, three alternate takes by slide guitarist Homesick James close this disc out.

Most of this is solid, if not exceptional, and it is well worth getting for the Albert King sides. They are that good.

Ron Weinstock

## JIMMY AMADIE TRIO

### Live At Red Rock Studio

TPRECORDINGS

Alto saxophonist Phil Woods guests on some tracks of this latest release by pianist Jimmy Amadie and, together with long-time Woods associates bassist Steve Gilmore and drummer Bill Goodwin, they tidily serve up the eight standards and Amadie originals.

A romantic and swinging tribute to Tony Bennett, this straight-ahead outing grabs and holds your attention. Amadie's originals are the stuff of standards. "The Thought Of Losing You" was written specifically for this session. He reworked "Baby Blue" which was originally recorded as "My Lady Lu" on his first CD in 1995. "Phil Woods With Music" was crafted specifically for Woods, who complements Amadie's approach and solos comfortably in his usual fluid style. The band also delivers enchanting re-inventions of Cole Porter's "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," the Washington-Young warhorse "Stella by Starlight," Lorenz Hart's "This Can't Be Love," Ray Noble's "The Very Thought of You," and the Mercer-Arlen gem "Come Rain or Come Shine."

The 67-year old Philadelphian was a racing bebop pianist behind greats such as Mel Torme, Woody Herman and Coleman Hawkins before he became an educator. Amadie's acute tendinitis has benefitted from surgeries and new therapeutic treatments, allowing him to play more frequently and he's definitely in peak form on this session. A warm, innovative performer, Amadie seems to be even more enlivened, more expressive and hard swinging than on his previous CDs as leader. An A-plus album you'll want to replay.

Nancy Ann Lee

## BLUES EVOLUTION

### Blues Evolution

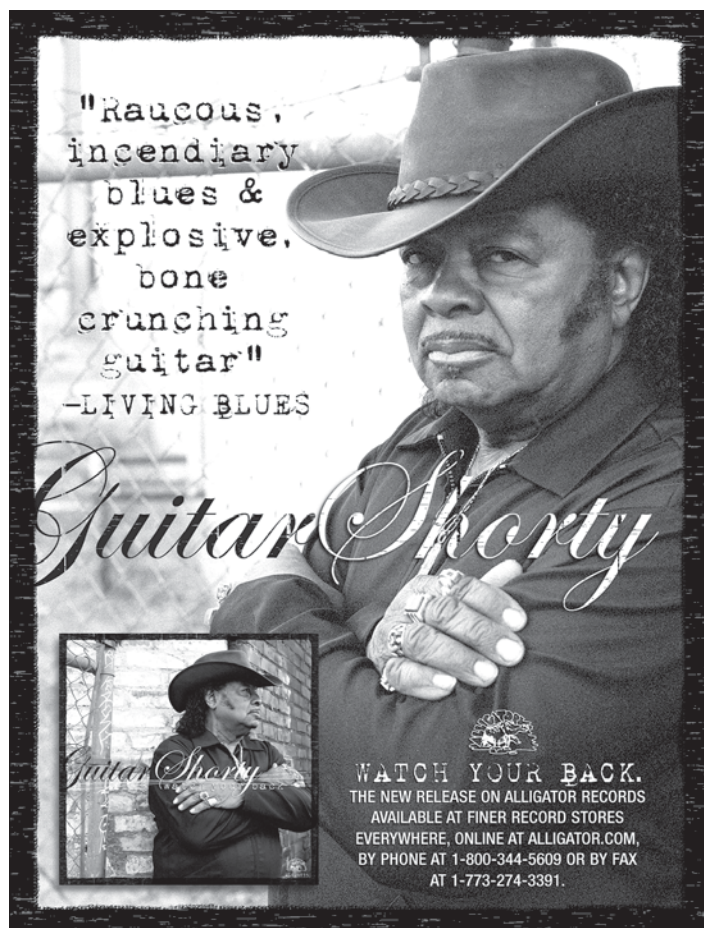
INNER VISION RECORDINGS

On this self-titled debut, Blues Evolution offers a full band sound, complete with horns, piano, saxophone, and guitars. These blues men hark back to the sounds of Stax Records circa 1966. Their ringleader is singer Elexus Quinn, who formed the group with Ziggy True in 1990; the duo co-wrote all the songs on *Blues Evolution*.

From gospel and acoustic blues to a few jazzy blues offerings, and even a reggae-flavored number, Blues Evolution offers a little bit of everything for the blues-lover's palate. Think an appetizer of Otis Redding, an entrée of Steve Winwood and Clapton with a little Van Morrison for dessert.

Quinn's voice is deep, rich and refined, a little like Michael McDonald and a little like Joe Cocker. This smooth voice, along with the big brass sound, drives the Blues Evolution. Combine this rich instrumentation with some soothing background vocals, and the result is an album that resonates with lots of soul.

The disc includes eight originals and stunning, soulful rhythm





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and blues arrangement of Procol Harum's classic "A Whiter Shade of Pale."

Other highlights include the lazy-sounding slide-blues of "Another Blue Day," the bubbly blues of "Down for the Count," and "Dyin' Day," the slow acoustic blues of dobro and that closes the album.

Overall, Blues Evolution depicts a modern blues band that knows where it's heading and this evolution is definitely going in the right musical direction.

David McPherson

## GARY BURTON

Generations

CONCORD RECORDS

Vibraphonist Gary Burton, a five-time Grammy Winner and significant mentor to young musicians, showcases 16-year old guitarist-composer Julian Lage along with Burton's trio featuring pianist Makoto Ozone, bassist James Genus and drum-

mer Clarence Penn.

Burton, who first gained notice some 43 years ago with his RCA release of *New Vibe Man in Town*, is a jazz educator with a knack for finding young talented musicians. Lage is definitely a rising star. On this 10-tune disc recorded September 16-18, 2003, he demonstrates he's a guitar virtuoso whose imaginative solos belie his youth, and a composer whose original contributions ("First Impression," "Early," "The Title Will Follow") are surprisingly mature.

Each tune is a treasure. Four-mallet master Burton reigns supreme, especially on graceful, romantic ballads such as the Mitchel Forman tune, "Gorgeous," performed with his trio. Oscar Peterson's zooming "Wheatland" gives Ozone a chance to shine. The mid-tempo pleaser, "Take Another Look" by Pat Metheny finds Burton, Lage and the rhythm section at their lyrical best. Carla Bley's "Syndrome" is given a racing, post-bop workout and Steve Swallow's "Ladies in Mercedes" is a Latin delight. Ozone, a long-time Burton collaborator and a leader in his own right, contributes to the fare with his seductive, bluesy "Test of Time" and the bittersweet "Heroes Sin Nombre."

Considering the appealing, diverse material, first-rate musicianship and Lage's extra-special talents, this is one of Burton's best studio recordings and a must-own for vibes fans.

Nancy Ann Lee

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## GUITAR SHORTY

Watch Your Back

ALLIGATOR

Somewhere along the spectrum between Robert Cray's torch tunes and Stevie Ray's rockin' blues one will find Guitar Shorty. Both an unabashed blues-rockers accessible for present-day audiences and a classic-era blues personality, the Florida-bred Shorty (born David Kearney), here delivers a set laden with catchy material and strong blowing.

Titles such as "What She Don't Know (Won't Hurt Me)" and "It Ain't The Fall That Kills You" betray the sly wit in the material here. The tempos vary from classic SRV drag-shuffle ("Old School") to simmering

## May

SAT 1 .....	COLIN DUSSAULT'S BLUES PROJECT
FRI 7 .....	BFD BLUES BAND
SAT 8 .....	BLUE LUNCH
FRI 14 .....	ARMSTRONG BEARCAT BAND
SAT 15 .....	THE DEACONS
FRI 21 .....	STACY MITCHHART & BLUES-U-CAN-USE BAND (NASHVILLE) (\$5 COVER)
SAT 22 .....	FRANKIE STARR
FRI 28 .....	HEART & SOUL
SAT 29 .....	TRAVIS HADDIX BAND

## June

FRI 4 .....	THE MADISON CRAWL
SAT 5 .....	COLIN DUSSAULT'S BLUES PROJECT
FRI 11 .....	RHYTHM SYNDICATE
SAT 12 .....	BLUES ON PURPOSE
FRI 18 .....	LOCO GATOS
SAT 19 .....	BIG DADDY & THE HOODOO MEN
FRI 25 .....	REAL LIFE
SAT 26 .....	TRAVIS HADDIX BAND



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r&b ("I've Been Working") to neo-Bo Diddley ("Let My Guitar Do The Talking"). Most every track carries enough of a hook to distinguish it and Shorty is entertainer enough to properly sell each mood. Nice stuff. *Duane Verh*

## EBERHARD WEBER

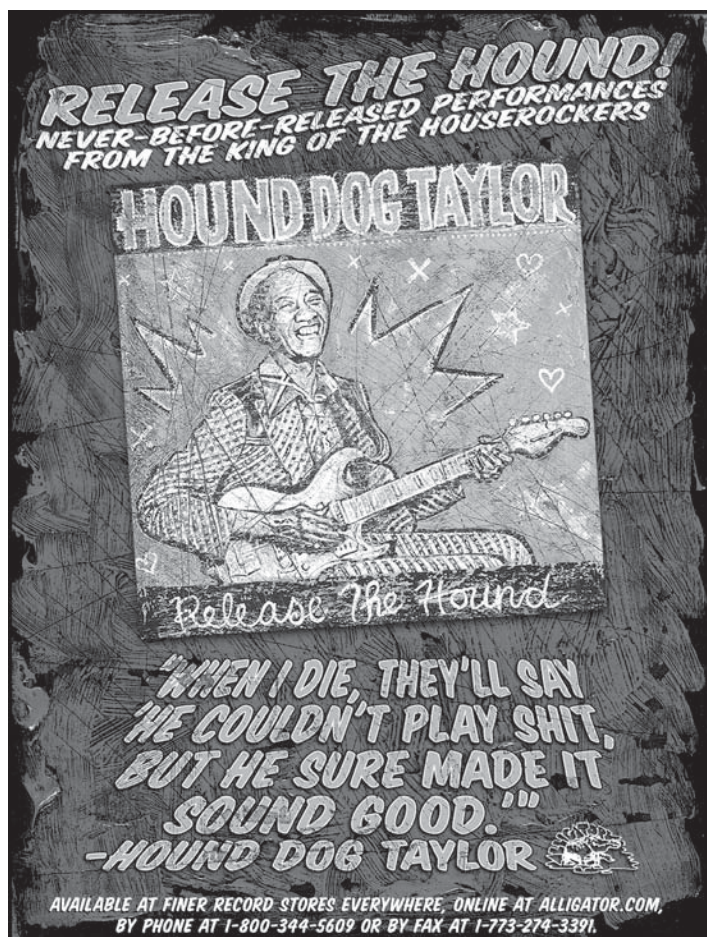
### Selected Recordings

ECM :rarum

Bassist Eberhard Weber was always one of my favorite ECM artists during the seventies. He had a very unique sound, due in no small part to his custom made 5 (or 6) string upright solid body electric bass, which he both plucked and bowed with a fondness for the upper register. He had several ECM albums of his own, but was often heard on other artists' recordings for the label as well. Although he took a couple of long breaks from recording, he put out his last album to date as a leader in 2000.

As is the case with all :rarum recordings on ECM, he hand picked his favorite cuts from his years with the label for this single disc retrospective. Starting with "Nimbus" from Ralph Towner's 1974 release **Solstice**, and culminating with "French Diary" from his own **Endless Days** four years ago, Weber has picked tracks from albums he did with Gary Burton, Pat Metheny and Jan Garbarek along with those from six of his own albums.

The result is a 10-cut album of primo Eberhard Weber, showcasing the multicolored musical tapestries of his very European approach to modern jazz with his own music, and some examples of his outstanding work with the likes of Burton, Metheny, Towner and Garbarek. This is a must-have disc for all his fans from way back when, who probably still have him only vinyl. A wonderful set. *Bill Wahl*



## TARBOX RAMBLERS

### A Fix Back East

ROUNDER RECORDS

From Memphis to Massachusetts, the Tarbox Ramblers rambled on and recorded this blues beast of an album that is a raw, reflective and redemptive set.

A mix of mostly originals, and a few well-chosen covers, the Ramblers' sophomore release **A Fix Back East** showcases the distinct blues sound of Boston-based Michael Tarbox and his merry musical men.

The growl and grinding swamp blues of the Tarbox original "Honey Babe" features just drums and guitar and the result is riveting. The two instruments combine for a blues barrage sure to wake up the listener with their potency.

The traditional song, "No night there" is a lilting song of hope and redemption with lyrics such as 'yes the doors will open wide, there'll be no need to fear' that the Ramblers breathe new life into with their own distinct blues style. The Ramblers also revive another classic, paying homage to the famed banjo-playing blues man Dock Boggs with a raucous version of his "Country Blues."

The album ends with the dark and solemn "Ashes to Ashes" – a murder travelogue that Tarbox didn't want to take responsibility for writing, but it's one of the album's best tracks. Here, with Tarbox' distinctive baritone guiding the journey, his songwriting truly shines, showing his ability to tell a tale. *David McPherson*

## JOHN PIZZARELLI

### Bossa Nova

TELARC

Vocalist-guitarist John Pizzarelli explores 13 Bossa Nova tunes by Antonio Carlos Jobim and others with his fifth Telarc release. He's richly supported by pianist Ray Kennedy, bassist Martin Pizzarelli, drummer Paulinho Braga (Jobim's sideman for many years), percussionist Jim Saporito, and guest artists Cesar Camargo Mariano (piano on two tracks), Harry Allen (tenor sax), vocalist Daniel Jobim (Jobim's grandson) and Chiara Civello on background vocals, a string quartet and flute quartet.

Among five Antonio Carlos Jobim songs, one highlight is "Girl From Ipanema" sung in English by Pizzarelli and in Portuguese by Daniel Jobim. The CD includes Jobim's "Desafinado," "One Note Samba," and two more songs. It's not clear from notes or press materials who sings in Portuguese on the Brazilian classic, "Estate," but it's a gorgeous performance by a singer with timbre, tone, pronunciation and phrasing different from Pizzarelli's (maybe Daniel again?). Despite Pizzarelli's wavering vocals, a string quartet boosts the appeal of Ivan Lins' "Love Dance." Other songs given Brazilian flavor are by Gershwin, James Taylor, Toninho Horta, Stephen Sondheim and Pizzarelli's two instrumentals.

Pizzarelli has proper soft vocal timbre for Jobim songs and his guitar performances are pleasant. A couple of tunes don't quite fit translation to Bossa Nova style, but overall the fare is enhanced by side players who collaborated with Jobim or other Brazilians. *Nancy Ann Lee*

**John Pizzarelli** will be appearing with his Brazilian Quintet - Daniel Jobim, Paulinho Braga, Romero Lubambo, Cesar Camargo Mariano at **Night Town** on May 18 & 19 for two shows each night at 7 & 9.

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## ROD PIAZZA & THE MIGHTY FLYERS

### Keepin' It Real

#### BLIND PIG

Over the course of a recording career that spans all the way back to 1967 Rod Piazza has crafted a few so-so discs, a number of good discs and his fair share of discs that range from great to classic. This one will go down as one of the classics. The jump from the Tone Cool label to Blind Pig Records along with the introduction of new guitarist Henry Carvajal and drummer Paul Vincent Fasulo appears to have inspired the band to new heights. In line with its title, this disc preserves the high energy and musical synergy that follows the band to the stage night after night. While a number of the band's discs have sounded stiff and composed there's no hint of that here. Like the well oiled machine that appears on stage, the Mighty Flyers locks into a tight groove that is interrupted only long enough for a dazzling guitar, harmonica or piano solo. Hard hitting originals appear alongside the well traveled covers that the band has featured on stage for years including *Good Morning Little School Girl*, *Just Like A Woman* and *Baby Please Don't Go*. As with every Mighty Flyers disc, pianist Miss Honey stretches out on a boogie-woogie piano number, *Buzzin'*, and Rod attempts to melt his harmonica on the scorching *Devil's Foot*. The classic, upbeat, West Coast Mighty Flyers sound makes its appearance on *Ain't Nothing Shakin'* and *That's What She Hollered* while new guitarist Henry Carvajal makes his presence known on *Tick Tock* and *Ain't Nothing Happening* which showcase his tough, sinewy guitar licks and reveal a heavier hand than prior guitarist Rick Holmstrom. From the greasy harmonica and slinky guitar that opens the disc on *Big Blues Party* to the fade out 13 tracks later this is all killer, no filler.

Mark Smith

## BILL CHARLAP

### Somewhere: The Songs of Leonard Bernstein

#### BLUE NOTE

Inspired by his memory of composer Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts, pianist Bill Charlap performs 12 freshly arranged tunes from various Bernstein musicals. Assisted by bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington on this October 15-16, 2003 studio set, Charlap launches with a jaunty remake of the familiar gem, "Cool," from *West Side Story*.

"Jump," also from WSS, is given a freewheeling, breathless, bop interpretation. Charlap brilliantly reinvents "America," and closes the set with an emotional solo piano interpretation of one of Bernstein's most recognizable WSS tunes, "Somewhere." "Lucky to Be Me (from *Wonderful Town*) may sound a tad lounge-ish but swings respectably. From that same musical, the trio also performs "It's Love," "A Quiet Girl," and "Ohio." The lovely ballads "Lonely Town" and "Some Other Time," from *On the Town*, highlight Kenny's tasty brushwork and Charlap's tender lyricism. The sole selection from Bernstein's *Candide*, "Glitter and Be Gay," approaches *Third Stream* style.

Charlap's expressive approach serves him well on this ear-pleasing, straight-ahead project, as it did on his album tribute to Hoagy Carmichael (*Stardust*).

Nancy Ann Lee

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Vanthology

#### EVIDENCE

With an overabundance of blues artists recording tributes to rock icons **Vanthology** stands out. One reason that this tribute to Van Morrison works is that producer Jon Tiven has collected a number of blues and soul legends to perform songs associated with the legendary Irishman, setting this apart from many similar concept discs which seem to

have an overabundance of blues-rock guitar pounders.

The performers here include Little Milton, Freddie Scott, William Bell, Bettye Lavette, Eddie Floyd, Sir Mack Rice, Syl Johnson, Otis Clay, Son Seals, Ellis Hooks, Chuck Jackson, Henry Butler and Bobby Patterson. The producer deliberately did not use horn on this to distinguish these interpretations from Morrison's originals. The studio band is anchored by Butler with Tiven on guitar, wife Sally Tiven on bass and Simon Kirke on drums who provide funky, sympathetic backing for the awesome vocal talent here. Highpoints among the exceptional performances here include Little Milton's rendering of *Tupelo Honey*, William Bell's rendition of *Have I Told You Lately*, Freddie Scott's *Brown-Eyed Girl*, Bettye pleading vocal on *Real Gone* and Eddie Floyd's *Crazy Love*. It is a special treat to her Sir Mack Rice, writer of that overplayed staple of blues bar bands *Mustang Sally*, take up Morrison's own bar band classic, *Gloria*.

Morrison has been heavily influenced by blues and soul artist, a debt he has freely acknowledged in developing his own distinctive body of music, and the artists pay tribute in this very fine release.

Ron Weinstock

## PIECES OF A DREAM

### No Assembly Required

#### HEADS UP

Straddling their trademark mix of contemporary jazz and R&B, Pieces of A Dream releases this disc that merges songwriting skills of founding members James Lloyd and Curtis Harmon with the talents of newer members of the group.

Vocalist Tracy Hamlin, who guested on their 2002 Heads Up release *Love's Silhouette*, returns to deliver a spunky re-



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make of Earth, Wind & Fire's "Devotion." Cleveland Eddie Baccus Jr. plays sax on three tracks and co-penned the catchy album launcher, "It's Go Time." David Dyson subs for regular Pieces bassist Gerald Veasley; he co-wrote and underpins the funky "Dyse It Up" with Lloyd. The Lloyd/Curtis original, "Swerve," is a sultry number that attests to the talents of the founders/leaders and why this group has lasted so long since their emergence on the Philadelphia music scene in 1976.

As usual, this is a group endeavor rather than a showcase for star soloists. Several other musicians add to the textured fare that is the customary Pieces of A Dream sound. *Nancy Ann Lee*

**Pieces Of A Dream** will be performing at **Peabody's DownUnder** on Saturday June 5 with 2 shows at 8 & 11 p.m.

## ROBERT CRAY

### Phone Booth

#### HIGHTONE RECORDS

Robert Cray is one of today's greatest R & B singer/guitarists. Essentially a best hits album, **Phone Booth** dates to 1983 and 1985. Robert used two bands during this period of his career; sharing the rhythm section.

The title song, plus 'Don't Touch Me', 'Porch Light', 'The Last Time', 'Bad Influence', 'Playin' In The Dirt', 'Change of Heart, Change Of Mind', 'Got To Make A Comeback', 'The Grinder', 'Where Do I Go From Here', 'Payin' For It Now', and 'I've Slipped Her Mind' are all on the roster for this very affordable sampler.

Robert packs venues and it's his old songs that are in vogue. This Hightone release with those songs will be tremendously popular. *Mark A. Cole*

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Savoy On Central Avenue

#### SAVOY JAZZ 2CD SET

This is a two-disc compilation of blues, jazz and rhythm and blues from Los Angeles in the late 40s until the early 50s.

There is some duplication with the artists on the Blues set released at the same time, including Johnny Otis, Helen Humes, Big Joe Turner and others (although with differing performances) along with Nat King Cole, Dexter Gordon, Charlie Parker, Kay Starr, Illinois Jacquet, Roy Porter, Erroll Garner, Lester Young, Harold Land, Red Norvo and Hampton Hawes. The varied performances range from Johnny Otis' evocative *Harlem Nocturne*, the jive of Slim Gaillard, Joe Turner's strong rendition of Duke Ellington's *Rocks in My Bed*, Charlie Parker's classic bebop tracks *Yardbird Suite* and *Ornithology*, Erroll Garner's distinctive way with a ballad, *I Surrender Dear*, Russell Jacquet's big little band with Numa Lee Davis covering Wyonnie Harris' *Wake Up Old Maid*, Little Esther & the Robins backed by Johnny Otis on the big smash recording *Double Crossing Blues*, and Big Jay McNeely stomping with his sax on *The Headhunter*.

The music here is centered on the intersection of jump blues and big band jazz and represents the transition from prewar swing to postwar jump and jive. There are many classic recordings that I was already familiar with along with music that was a delightful surprise. This also has a booklet with Billy Vera's insightful notes although one does wish full personnel listings for these sessions were provided.

A solid overview of a slice of the West Coast music scene of the years after the war, **Savoy on Central Avenue** is also a value priced compilation. *Ron Weinstock*

## JOEY DEFRANCESCO

### Plays Sinatra His Way

#### HIGHNOTE

Although he's been on the Concord label for several years now, it seems that the well spring of material that Joey DeFrancesco cut for Joe Fields' HighNote imprimatur continues to be harvested with the latest offering being this 1998 session recorded in 24-bit digital splendor by the legendary Rudy Van Gelder. Don't look for the title on this one to provide much more than a unifying element for the tunes included, which just happen to be numbers that 'Ol' Blue Eyes' recorded at some point during the span of his career. Known to vocalize somewhat himself, DeFrancesco does no singing here either. The emphasis is on the type of hard swinging groove music that has always been this organist's main form of expression.

In the company of Houston Person (who led DeFrancesco to the Muse label many years ago), guitarist Melvin Sparks, and longtime drummer Byron Landham, our leading man delivers nine selections that all clock in at around the five to six minute length. With its clever opening vamp, "Pennies From Heaven" finds DeFrancesco at his boppish best, with Sparks weighing in with his own juicy chords in support (as well as a solo that includes a clever "shave and a hair cut" quote to boot). At the start of his career I happened to interview Joey and he commented on how much he dug the bass lines of Groove Holmes. That he's developed his own way with those foot pedals is clear on this performance alone.

There's really no need to analyze each individual track here, as anyone even remotely familiar with DeFrancesco will be aware of his mastery of the mighty B-3. Van Gelder's sound job brings Joey and the guys right into your living room. This no frills affair may be short on the revolutionary, but will surely please fans of DeFrancesco, Person, and Sparks. *C. Andrew Hovan*

## THREE ALLIGATOR ARTISTS RECEIVE FIVE W.C. HANDY BLUES AWARDS

Both Roomful of Blues and pianist/vocalist/songwriter Marcia Ball each received two W.C. Handy Awards at the 25th annual W.C. Handy Blues Awards ceremony at the Cannon Center Ballroom in Memphis, TN. Blues legend Koko Taylor received one Award.

Boogie-woogie piano queen Marcia Ball took the award for Contemporary Female Blues Artist Of The Year and Contemporary Blues Album Of The Year for her Alligator album **SO MANY RIVERS**.

Celebrated swing/jump/blues combo Roomful of Blues won the coveted Band Of The Year Award along with the award for Best Instrumentalist – Horns.

"Queen Of The Blues" Koko Taylor won for Traditional Female Blues Artist Of The Year. This is her 24th W.C. Handy Blues Award. She has received more awards than any other artist - male or female - in Handy history.

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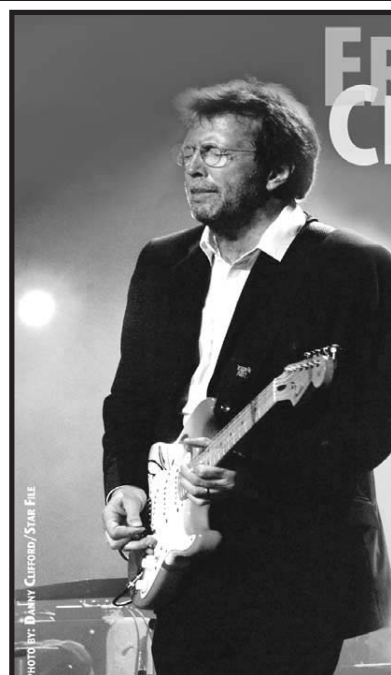


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