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Stanley Clarke George Duke TOGETHER AGAIN



Stanley Clarke & George Duke - 2006

Bassist Stanley Clarke and keyboardist George Duke are together again. The Clarke Duke Project is now engaged a major U.S. and worldwide swing. Two cities are included on the tour which readers of our pulp version either live in, or nearby. The band will be playing our home city of Cleveland on Saturday, August 19 at the Ohio Theatre at Playhouse Square, and in Detroit on Saturday, September 23 at Music Hall Center For The Performing arts.

The month of July will take them to Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia to appear at major jazz festivals as well as private venues. This part of the tour began with the Montreux Jazz Festival on July 1. They will also be playing in jazz venues in in Russia in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

The current tour also carries with it an anniversary celebration for Clarke and Duke. It has been 25 years since they first joined forces in 1981 when they released their first self-titled album, **The Clarke-Duke Project**. That album's hit, "Sweet Baby," reached the Pop

Top 20 singles chart, helped to propel the album to the top of the jazz charts that year, and remains a top request on Smooth Jazz and Urban Adult radio formats. They went on to record two more albums together, **The Clarke Duke Project Vol. 2** in 1983 and **3** in 1988.

In fact, although though they have remained great friends and occasionally collaborated and played together on special occasions, it has actually been 15 years since they last toured together as The Clarke/Duke Project back in 1991.

Demand for their special brand of jazz-funk continues to make the Clarke Duke Project, including Ron Brunner on drums and Phil Davis on synthesizers, one of the top touring attractions in the world. At each stop so far in current the tour, which began May 25 in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, critical acclaim has been heaped upon bassist Stanley Clarke and pianist/producer George Duke for their bold forays into funk, jazz, R&B and rock. Those elements have served Clarke and Duke well, both collectively and solo, through hundreds of musical undertakings and countless trips around the globe.

In the midst of the Clarke Duke Project tour, on June 27, George Duke released his 31st solo CD, **In a Mellow Tone**, which features such top notch musicians as drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, saxophonist Everette Harp, bassist Brian Bromberg and other noteworthy musicians. The CD showcases Duke's unique take on jazz standards and his own re-interpretations of his own compositions. Stanley Clarke has also just released a new CD, also an acoustic affair titled **Standards**, with Patrice Rushen and Ndugu Chanler. Both CDs are reviewed in this issue.

Although Stanley Clarke and George Duke are best known world-



Archival photo of Stanley Clarke and George Duke performance from the first Clarke/Duke Project tour in 1981

wide for their collaborative efforts with the C-D Project, each was a star in his own right before they joined forces. Duke, born in California in 1946, studied music at San Francisco Conservatory and San Francisco State College. He worked with Gerald Wilson and Bobby Hutcherson, and then Don Ellis and Jean-Luc Ponty. During the seventies, Duke worked two stints with Frank Zappa, and between those he worked for two years with Cannonball Adderley. It was with Cannonball that he became very familiar to jazz audiences worldwide. He co-led a group with drummer Billy Cobham for a while before delving into the record production aspect of the music business in the late seventies, producing efforts by Jeffery Osborne and others.

Stanley Clarke was born in 1951 in Philadelphia. He played accordion, violin and acoustic bass before taking up electric bass. He split Philly for New York City after high school after deciding to switch from his plans of being a classical musician in favor of jazz. He would find quite a bit of work, on both acoustic and electric bass, and landed a gig with Pharoah Sanders, followed by tours or recording dates with such top jazz names as Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Art Blakey, Horace Silver, Gil Evans and drummer Mel Lewis. Then, while with the great tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson, he met pianist Chick Corea and became a founding member of the supergroup Return To Forever, with which he would go on to record eight albums. He worked with both jazz and rock groups after leaving RTF in '77 and hooked up with Duke forming the Clarke-Duke Project four years later.

On a recent note, Clarke is hosting a new television series on BET-J entitled "On the Road with Stanley Clarke." On the show Stanley visits Black musicians, composers, conductors and educators around the country. He delves into the influence of Black music from its origins to the development of jazz, its presence in film, television and theater, and the "Philly Sound" of his hometown. The shows ran in June, but keep your eyes open for repeat showings. He is also currently scoring a new TV show for The Disney Channel, "Lincoln

Heights," and doing workshops at various universities around the country.

George Duke was recently inducted into the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame for his contributions to jazz and music over a nearly 40-year career. It stated, "The Jazz Hall of Fame honored one of the great contemporary jazz producers, composers, arrangers and artists, the phenomenally talented George Duke. He received the Jay McShann Lifetime Achievement Award for his many years of musical contributions to jazz, pop, R&B, Blues and classical music in America and internationally." Some interesting production projects are also in the works, including a foray into the Broadway Musical scene

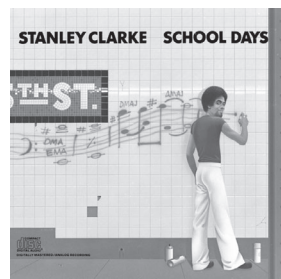
For more information on Stanley Clarke and George Duke, visit them online at www.stanleyclarke.com or www.georgeduke.com.

For the benefit of our web readers, or local pulp readers who are world travelers, or those who are into such tidbits, the July through September dates for the Clarke-Duke Project Tour are as follows:

- 7/1 Montreaux, Switzerland - Montreaux Jazz Festival
 - 7/2 Madrid, Spain - Festival de Jazz
 - 7/5 Cartagena, Spain - Mar de Musicas
 - 7/8 Tabarka, Tunisia - Theatre de la Basilique
 - 7/10 Stockholm, Sweden - Berns
 - 7/11 Helsinki, Finland - House of Culture
 - 7/13 Budapest, Hungary - Millenaris Kht
 - 7/14 Rotterdam, Netherlands - North Sea Jazz
 - 7/15 Graz, Austria - Jazz Summer Graz
 - 7/17 Tel Aviv, Israel - Hangar (Bitan) 11
 - 7/19 Riga, Latvia - Riga Arena
 - 7/21 Moscow, Russia - Ikra Club
 - 7/22 St. Petersburg - Jazz Q. Festival
 - 7/23 Wiesen, Austria - Festivalgelände
 - 7/28 Tulalip, WA - Tulalip Ampitheatre
 - 7/29 Berkeley, CA - Berkeley Jazz Fest
 - 7/30 Winter Park, CO - JVC Jazz Fest
 - 8/3 Jacksonville, FL - Florida Theatre
 - 8/4 West Palm Beach, FL - Kravis Center
 - 8/5 Gainesville, FL - Phillips Center for the PA
 - 8/12 Long Beach, CA - Long Beach Jazz Fest
 - 8/18 Richmond, VA - Kanawha Plaza
 - 8/19 Cleveland, OH - Ohio Theatre
 - 9/8 Lancaster, CA - Lancaster Perf Arts Ctr
 - 9/9 Reno, NV - Hawkins Ampitheatre
 - 9/10 Guerneville, CA - Russian River Jazz Fest arts
 - 9/23 Detroit, MI - Music Hall Center
- For The Performing arts

STANLEY CLARKE WEB SPECIAL!

Check out Brian Gilmore's revisit to Stanley Clarke's song "School Days" - from the mid-'70s album of the same name. It has been a full 30 years already, and Brian spoke with Stanley and David Sancious recently for the retrospective piece. In our August Special...only at jazz-blues.com



BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

New Release Blues.... Get out the check book and party on!! Here's the discs that will keep you groovin' between festivals this summer: **Hollywood Blue Flames-** *Road to Rio*; **Tab Benoit-** *Brother to the Blues*; **Michael Coleman and the Delmark All-Stars-** *Blues Brunch at the Mart (Live)*; **Albert Castiglia-** *A Stone's Throw*; **C.J. Chenier-** *The Desperate Kingdom of Love*; **Smokin' Joe Kubek and Bnois King-** *My Heart's In Texas*; **Bernard Allison-** *Energized-Live in Europe*; **Popa Chubby-** *Stealing the Devil's Guitar*; **Dr. John-Mercenary**; **Charlie Musselwhite-Delta Hardware**; **Steven Seagal** (yeah, that Steven Seagal)- *Mojo Priest*; **Keb' Mo'-** *Suitecase*; **Omar & the Howlers-** *Banboozled: Live in Germany*; **Dr. John-** *What Goes Around Comes Around*; **Muddy Waters-** *King of Chicago Blues (Box Set)*; **Otis Rush-** *Live at Montreux, 1986*; **Guy Davis-** *Skunkmello*; **Doug MacLeod-** *Where I Been*; **Fred McDowell-** *I Do Not Play No Rock 'n' Roll: The Complete Sessions*; **Harmonica Shah-** *Listen At Me Good*; **Lee Gates-** *Black Lucy's Deuce*; **Willie "Big Eyes" Smith-** *Way Back*; **Juke Boy Bonner-** *The Sonet Blues Story*; **Magic Slim & The Teardrops-** *Tin Pan Alley*; **Memphis Slim-Boogie Woogie** (Remastered); **Ronnie Earl-** *Heart and Soul: The Best of Ronnie Earl*; **Savoy Brown-Blues, Balls and Boogie**; **Studebaker John & the Hawks-** *Self-Made Man*; **Deborah Allen-** *Memphis Princess*; **Jay McShann-** *Hootie Blues Live*; **Mitch Woods-** *Big Easy Boogie* (cd and dvd); **Slick Ballinger-** *Mississippi Soul*; **Arthur Smith-** *Guitar Boogie*; **Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown-** *Dirty Work at the Crossroad 1947-1954* (import); **Lynwood Slim-Last Call**; **Betty LaVette-** *Child of the Seventies*; **Long John Baldry-** *Looking at Long John Baldry: the UA Years 1964-1966* (import); **Various Artists**

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(**Carey Bell, Lazy Lester, etc)-** *Blues Harp Meltdown, Volume 3- Live*; **Nathan & the Zydeco Cha Chas-** *Hang It High, Hang It Low*; **David Junior Kimbrough-** *Shell Shocked*; **Bug Henderson and the Shuffle Kings-** *Electric Snow: Best of Bugs Henderson* (import); **Alex Korner-Kornerstoned: The Anthology 1958-1983**; **Chicken Shack-** *Complete Blue horizon Sessions* (import-re-mastered); **Mel Brown and the Homewreckers-** *Blues- A Beautiful Thing*; **Keene Brothers-** *Blues and Boogie Shoes*; **Sweet Betty-** *Live and Let Live*; **Jimi Prime Time Smith-** *Back on Track*; **Five Blind Boys of Alabama-** *Collection 1948-1951* (import); **Rick Derringer-** *Collection: The Blues Bureau Years*; **Katherine Whalen-** *Dirty Little Secret*

Blues on the radio.... Blind Pig Recording artist, the **Rev. Billy C. Wirtz** now has his own radio gig. On May 26th, the pastor of the First House of Polyester Worship and Horizontal Teenage Throbbing commenced hosting "**The Reverend Billy's Rhythm Revival**" on WFIT-FM in Melbourne, Florida. The program will air every Friday from 10 pm to midnight (EST), and can be heard live worldwide via streaming audio on the station's website (<http://www.wfit.org/>). Called "part preacher, part carnival barker, part big-time wrestling announcer and full-time boogie-woogie piano player," the Reverend is an extremely knowledgeable musicologist as well as amusic journalist for Blueswax.com and the *Charlotte Observer*. According to Wirtz, "blues, R&B, gospel, hill-billy, social commentary and musical finds from the outer reaches of reality will all be featured during the show. It will be an entirely new all-inclusive genre that I call Greasy Listening." The Reverend promises to make it "Two Hours of Uplifting Anarchy."

In other blues news, 525 World-wide has announced that New Orleans guitar god **Anders Osborne** has been added to its roster of artists, joining Mavis Staples, The Howl, Garrison Starr and others. According to press releases, "Osborne is in the studio working on his next record, but he continues to make high-profile live appearances, including his recent slot on the Acura Stage at this year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Fest be-

fore Keb Mo and Bob Dylan. In addition to his touring (usually with Kirk Joseph on sousaphone, Tim Green on sax and Eric Bolivar on drums), Osborne often writes for others. His song 'Watch the Wind Blow By,' was recorded by Tim McGraw, hit No. 1 on the country charts and appeared on a multi-platinum album. The song most recently appeared on *Tim McGraw's Greatest Hits, vol. 2*, released in March. Osborne's songs have also appeared on GRAMMY-winning albums by Keb' Mo', and have been recorded by Double Trouble and Dr John. Anders also plays with the Voice of the Wetlands All-Stars and has produced albums by Clarence Bucaro and Jesse Moore.".....**RIP Blues....** Keyboard wiz **Billy Preston**, died June 6th at the age of 59 after spending several months in a coma due to chronic kidney failure. Preston was best known for his singles "Outta Space," "Nothing From Nothing," "Will It Go Round in Circles?" and for his gigs as keyboardist with the Beatles, the Stones and Eric Clapton. He also penned Joe Cocker's big hit "You are so Beautiful."

2006 Blues Awards.... The Blues Foundation hosted the annual Blues Awards (formerly the W.C. Handy Awards) in Memphis. The late **Little Milton** won a whopping four awards: Soul Blues Male Artist; Soul Blues Album for *Think of Me*; Song of the Year for *Think of Me* and Album of the year for the same release. Also racking up multiple wins were guitarist **Hubert Sumlin** who took home two awards for—Best Guitarist and for Traditional Blues Album for *About Them Shoes* and **Paul Oscher** who took home awards for Acoustic Artist of the Year and had his disc *Down in the Delta* selected as the Acoustic Album of the Year. While the voters are still a sentimental lot they did stretch a bit more this year with a number of first time winners including **Eddie Shaw, Al Kooper, Mookie Brill, Janiva Magness, Tab Benoit** and **Zac Harmon**. The B.B. King Entertainer of the Year award went to **Buddy Guy** and the Band of the Year is **Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers**. Congratulations to all the winners.

That's it for this month. See you at the Festivals.

At the Rock Hall...

CLEVELAND – There are a number of interesting new or fairly recent exhibits now open at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in downtown Cleveland. We have covered some in depth in previous issues, and others we are announcing here for the first time. The following is an overview of the exhibits.

Bob Dylan's American Journey: 1956-1966 Few figures in the history of American popular music have reached the status of Bob Dylan. Many people have declared Dylan's lyrics to be poetry; his songs also unearth and revitalize the American folk and blues tradition, serving as a key link in the chain that extends from Southern work songs, blues and Anglo American ballads to the many contemporary singer-songwriters for whom Dylan is a main influence. But Dylan's story is not simply that of a musical evolution. As a public figure and artistic innovator, he has taken and chronicled a journey emblematic of modern America's own development. The exhibit features more than 150 artifacts, including Dylan's 1949 Martin 00-19 guitar, typed and handwritten lyrics, rare concert posters and handbills, signed albums, and dozens of photographs. At the center of the exhibit are four films exploring different facets of Dylan's career, with rare performance footage and interviews with Dylan and other artists. In addition, three viewing stations allow visitors to watch excerpts from the Dylan films *Don't Look Back* and *Eat the Document*, as well as an interview with Dylan himself. Throughout the exhibit space are seven listening stations that enable visitors to hear Dylan's musical evolution and innovations during this 10-year period.

Haunting and Yearning: The Life and Music of Roy

Orbison Roy Orbison was rock and roll's Caruso. He possessed a three-octave range and sang in a soaring, operatic tenor. Orbison was a balladeer who specialized in elegant reveries on the subject of love. Though the Texas-born singer/guitarist briefly recorded for Sun Records where he had one modest hit, "Ooby Dooby," Orbison never really fit in with the rowdy rockabilly crowd. Early on, he enjoyed success as a songwriter, placing songs with Jerry Lee Lewis, the Everly Brothers and Buddy Holly. After signing with Nashville-based Monument Records in 1960, his own career took off. Orbison's sumptuous, sophisticated pop hits include "Only the Lonely," "Blue Bayou" and "It's Over." On the rock and roll side, he cut his biggest hit, "Oh, Pretty Woman," in 1964. The singer was enjoying a successful comeback, on his own and with the Traveling Wilburys, when he died of a heart attack on December 6, 1988. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987. The exhibition will include rare records, memorabilia and personal artifacts covering his life and career, including clothing, instruments and pieces from his model plane collection.

Rick Nelson: From Idol to Icon In remembrance of Rick Nelson's untimely death 20 years ago on New Year's Eve, the Museum is paying tribute to this early pop icon with an exhibition of never before seen artifacts. The exhibit is in the Museum's Main Exhibit Hall and includes costumes, instruments and handwritten lyrics.

Sam Cooke: A Change is Gonna Come In celebration of American Music Masters honoree, Sam Cooke, this exhibit features items from Cooke's career, some of which are on display for the first time anywhere. Featured artifacts include commendations and music industry awards, wardrobe items and other personal belongings, in addition to contracts, photographs, advertisements, concert

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programs and records. Highlights from the collection include the tuxedo Cooke wore in the early 1950s while a member of the Soul Stirrers, his William Morris Agency contract from 1960, one of his signature red sports coats and the ukulele he used to compose music while on the road.

Unless otherwise noted, all tickets can be purchased at the Museum box office or by calling Ticketmaster at 216.241.5555.

For more information on concerts and special events call 216.515.8444 or visit www.rockhall.com

Guitar Player TV Boasts Hot Lineup of Guitarists

SAN MATEO CA – Guitar Player TV (www.guitarplayertv.com), a web-based television station driven by a partnership between the Music Player Network and TrueFire TV, announces an expanded channel lineup featuring several accomplished legendary and contemporary guitarists including:

- **Larry Carlton** - A consummate artist, and one of the most versatile guitarist walking the planet today, Carlton brings over 30 years of experience and insight to his exclusive GPTV channel, Mr. 335.

- **Roger McGuinn** - Byrd-man Roger McGuinn's GPTV channel, McGuinn's Den, reveals Rogers passion for folk music and home recording, along with intimate performances of McGuinn's legendary tunes.

- **Dweezil Zappa** - Son of renowned electric guitarist, Frank Zappa, Dweezil's GPTV channel features his own renditions of his father's music played on the original equipment Frank used in the seventies.

- **Joscho Stephan** - Gypsy jazz wunderkid, Joscho Stephan keeps gypsy jazz very much alive and well on GPTV channel, Gypsy Guitarre, featuring eight exhilarating, and very passionate performances.

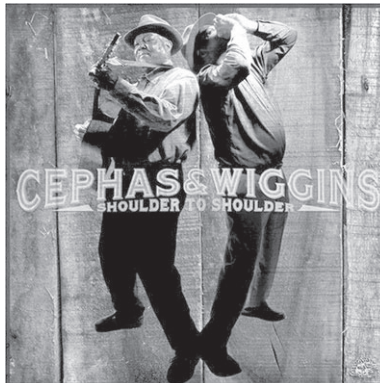
GPTV's new line-up of eighteen channels also features several very popular educational channels including Jazz Anatomy from Mimi Fox, Blues Alchemy from David Hamburger, Assembly Lines from Mark Stefani and many more.

For more information on Guitar Player TV and its featured artists, go to www.guitarplayertv.com.

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CEPHAS & WIGGINS Shoulder To Shoulder ALLIGATOR

The release of the new Alligator CD by (John) Cephas & (Phil) Wiggins will certainly be welcome by lovers of acoustic blues lovers. The two are in usual fine form with Cephas' assured guitar and Wiggins' remarkable crying harmonica. Ann Rabson adds piano to six tracks while Daryl Davis is heard on one.

It opens when a fine Cephas original, "Ain't Seen My Baby" that shows off Cephas' Piedmont guitar style, and closes with a blues taken from Robert Johnson's "Walking Blues," "The Blues Three Ways" on which Daryl Davis adds some solid piano.

In between, the pair rework Skip James' recording of the Delta classic "Catfish Blues," on which Cephas shows himself to be one of the most consistently able interpreters of James' music. Another highpoint is Cephas' Piedmont reworking of Charlie Patton's deep delta blues, "Dirt Road," with Rabson's piano adding to the tune's flavor. "Seattle Rainy Day Blues" is another standout original with a wonderful lyric and solid piano from Rabson behind the two.

The performances are consistently strong with the piano especially lending a bit more city feel to some of these cuts adding up to what is another excellent addition to their body of recordings.

Ron Weinstock

STANLEY CLARKE

Standards

KIND OF BLUE RECORDS

GEORGE DUKE

In A Mellow Tone

BPM RECORDS

As Stanley Clarke and George Duke tour the world again, each has a brand new CD out, though both are in a different vein than the music the pair creates together. They came in right before presstime, but we'll squeeze them in.

Stanley Clarke has recently released **Standards** on Kind of Blue Records, a relatively new label from Switzerland with an impressive start. It is an acoustic trio outing from start to finish, and is one of the more enjoyable such offerings I've heard in a while. Starting with a latin-tinged version of "Lover Man," the three come up with a nicely varied set of songs, including "Mack The Knife," "Salt Peanuts," "Now's The Time," "Take Five," Monk's "I Mean You," Gerry Mulligan's "Geru" and Sonny Rollins' "Oleo." The disc closes with a burning version of the old bop warhorse "Perdido." Oddly, 2 Christmas songs are listed to be the two closers after that, but they are not on the disc. Perhaps the cover as not changed from a European version, or whatever.

Clarke may have made his mark popularity-wise with electric bass, but he has always been a master of the acoustic with a strong, fat tone and incredible ideas. Although he takes some relatively short solos here, he is more in the traditional piano trio bass player role. Drummer Ndugu Leon Chancelor, who has worked with many of the greats over the years, fits Clarke extremely well throughout, and gets some short solos as well.

Now that you have that important bass/drums thing happening, pianist Patrice Rushen literally has a field day, and she shines brighter than most might expect. Why? Well, Rushen has, since the late seventies, focused on more and more R&B/pop material, and made her mark there. But before that, some will remember her promising mid-seventies albums (I believe on Prestige) as a leader, and her fine work with such names as Donald Byrd and Sonny Rollins. She then worked with Jean Luc Ponty and Lee Ritenour before going off on her own. Her early influences such as McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock and Oscar Peterson are very evident in her

here, and she fits Ndugu and Clarke like a glove. To make the total experience even better, this music is extremely well produced and recorded. There is also a second disc, a DVD included shot during the recording sessions with four songs and interview clips. A nice bonus.

George Duke's brand new CD, **In A Mellow Tone**, is also more of a straight jazz effort than the Clarke-Duke Project plays, but not all in the pure straight-ahead acoustic direction of the Clarke disc. Drummer Terry Lynn Carrington and upright bassist Brian Bromberg are with Duke on all but two of the eleven tracks, and those two are solo pieces for George.

Duke states that "The central idea for this album was to perform traditional standards along with new songs that fit within that framework. I wanted the vibe to be soulful and cool without losing character or depth." I'd say he accomplished that quite nicely. The standards he referred to are Duke Ellington's title track, which opens the disc, plus "For All We Know," "Never Will I Marry," "Spring Is Here" and the disc's closer, "I Loves You Porgy," a solo acoustic piano piece from George. The other solo piece is a reprise of the Clarke-Duke hit "Sweet Baby," as he plays acoustic piano and sings. Duke included more originals for the disc, the lightly swinging, almost Mose Allison-like "Down The Road," a ballad with a vocal from Duke which was previously sung by Diane Reeves, "So I'll Pretend" and another slow acoustic ballad for the trio sans vocals "Just Because." Also heard, between those two ballads is a straight-ahead burning version of "Quiet Fire" and a rendition of Sergio Mendes' "So Many Stars" precedes all three.

While only the two ballads feature just the three musicians comprising the trio named above, the other tracks include such players as Ray Fuller or Mike Miller/guitar, Munyungo Jackson and/or Airtio Moriera/percussion, Everette Harp/saxes and Dennis Farias/trumpet.

Some nice, mostly mellow music from Duke and friends. Some will no doubt feel that there are a bit too many of his vocals, but his core fans who enjoy his singing and would probably be the most likely to search out the CD, probably won't think that way at all. Some serious kudos must go out to Bromberg for some very solid basswork throughout.

Bill Wahl

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Blues Harp Meltdown Volume 3 MOUNTAIN TOP RECORDS 2 CD SET

This is the third CD documenting Mark Hummel's annual tour of harp masters. Recorded in January 2004, Hummel brought to the tour guitarist Steve Freund, drummer-harmonica player Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith, Carey Bell & Lazy Lester for a smorgasbord of blues stylings. Hummel himself is a formidable harp player and revives a Lloyd Price Crescent City rocker *Where Y'at* along with Little Walter's *Roller Coaster* followed by Freund who sings two numbers followed by Smith ably handling *Hoodoo Man Blues*. Cephass & Wiggins come off typically fine on five numbers including an instrumental, Fats Domino's *Going to the River* and Robert Johnson's *Walkin' Blues*.

The second disc has some strong performances by Bell including *It Ain't Right* and *I'm Ready* while Lazy Lester handles his own *Blues Stop Knocking*, Slim Harpo's *Raining in My Heart* and his own *Sugar Coated Love*. Freund plays on Bells selections and Hummel's band ably supports all the performances except those by Cephass & Wiggins. Blues harp fans will find plenty of music to entertain them here.

Ron Weinstock

ANJANI Blue Alert COLUMBIA

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

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

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

It would be very tempting to start spouting off some lines from the lyrics on some of these songs, but if you are at all familiar with Cohen, you'll know what to expect from his

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protegé. Leonard Cohen perhaps sums her up best as he states "Anjani's music is exotic, dreamy and hypnotic." To add to the pleasure, this music was marvelously recorded. Crank it up a bit, sit in your favorite chair, close your eyes – it sounds like she's right in the room with you. Yes, and many will wish.

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

Bill Wahl

POPA CHUBBY

Stealing the Devil's Guitar

BLIND PIG

New York City falls far behind Chicago, Memphis, Kansas City and, well, virtually every other major city when it comes to the average blues fan's identification of blues hot spots. So to say that Popa Chubby is one of the brightest stars on the New York City blues scene could be seen as faint praise. That's a shame since he has released a steady stream of consistently good releases. This one is another fine effort. What distinguishes Chubby from other blues artists is that he roots his blues in modern experiences rather than engaging in the all too frequent and often silly efforts of too many blues musicians to convince us of their roots in the Mississippi delta. Chubby is proudly from the Bronx and combines the many different sounds heard in that melting pot to fuel his songs.

The opening track, "Slide Devil Man Slide" takes the blues straight on, but the disc soon moves into other directions with classic Otis Redding style soul making an appearance in "Back in my Baby's Arms" and "Why I Can't Have You." Chubby reveals time spent with Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen with "Young Guns," which is a natural heir to that band's "Hot Rod Lincoln." Chubby also proves to be adept at rap on "Smuggler's Game," which deftly fuses his smooth rhymes with sitar. While Chubby clearly enjoys the pure joy of letting things rip on his electric guitar as evidenced by "Long Deep Hard and Wide," and his sinister tale of dog lust, "Virgil and Smokey," he also proves his mettle on acoustic guitar on "In this World" and "Buffalo Chips."

The disc closes with a cynical take on men of God, "Preacher Man," which is fueled by evil sounding slide guitar that gives way to the snake charmer allure of "The Devil's Guitar" that will soon have you in its spell. For blues with a modern twist this is just the ticket.

Mark Smith

CHARLIE HUNTER TRIO

Copperopolis

ROPEADOPE

It's for more than formality that this disc should be credited to the group rather than the individual. 'Tis the group that's the star here. Motifs and coloration change from tango-meets-New Orleans second line to Mingus-by-way-of-Carla Bley and parts beyond. Moods transit from bashing good jazz-rock fun to more introspective fare. The constant on this set is the congeniality of this threesome's interaction. If the play is not brilliant it is inspired-sounding and true to the spirit of improvisation. Guitarist and *ersatz* bassist Hunter, reed and keyboard man John Ellis and drummer Derrek Phillips are reportedly together for the last time and one can only hope their future ventures can generate as many tasty moments as they bring forth on *Copperopolis*.

Duane Verh

COLIN DUSSAULT

& HIS BLUES PROJECT BAND

Watch This
ERICA RECORDS

Colin Dussault and his Blues Project band proudly dubs themselves the "The hardest working band in Northeast Ohio." That just might be true, and they have certainly been around for quite a while.

Formed in 1989, the band has, of course, undergone numerous personnel changes over the years. There is no shortage of talent in the current unit. Pianist Greg Hurd and I actually had a trio together for a couple of years around 1980. We played songs by Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Horace Silver, Joe Henderson and The Doors. Yes, you did read that right. A mix of beer, coffee and some other stuff can do funny things to some people. When our regular bassist was not able to make the gig, Fred Tobey was our first choice...always a fat tone, and rock solid. Joining them on this disc are remaining bandmembers guitarist Jim Feeney, who has been on board since the beginning, Drummer Rick Fischer and leader Dussault on harmonica and vocals.

Though named "Blues Project" they cover a lot more ground than that, including country, rap, folk-rock, Celtic, old style rock & roll ballads and even an old standard, "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." And yes, there is some blues too. There is a warning attached. If you happen to be a Republican, or a big fan of the current administration for any other reason, you'll want to take heed of the advisory printed on the front cover of the booklet. After Katrina, Dussault reworked Arlo Guthrie's "City Of New Orleans" to the point that some will say "right on" and others will say "arrest him." But, he certainly gives fair warning! Several guest musicians from the Cleveland area are heard on various songs, including Robert Lockwood Jr., who plays on "Blues For Robert Lockwood Jr.," guitarist Austin Charanghat and singers Mary Bridget Davies and Becky Boyd team up for backup vocals on one cut, and Davies sings second lead on the Lockwood Blues opener.

This extremely diverse, not-really-a-blues-album is Dussault's 8th CD release so far. Sounds like they were certainly having fun. Check it out at www.colindussault.com

Bill Wahl

BRIAN BROMBERG

Wood II

ARTISTRY MUSIC

In the hands of a lesser creative talent, bassist Bromberg's chops would end up being simply annoying. Another player possessed of this one's speed, precision, melodic and harmonic smarts minus Bromberg's rock-solid jazz instincts and lyrical wisdom would doubtless seek to astound the listener with a stream of technical stunts and slickness *ad nauseum*. What Bromberg's latest disc delivers is an imaginative and consistently refreshing set primarily of standards and quality jazz literature, throwing the spotlight on his combined improvisational artistry and (yes) his mind-blowing chops.

The multi-faceted but singularly focused solo Bromberg carves from the innards of the Ellington gem "Caravan" sets the high creative tone for *Wood II*. He continues to dazzle throughout on a set that spans from Wayne Shorter to Jimmy Giuffrè to Earth, Wind and Fire. His trio-mates- pianist Randy Waldman and drummer Vinnie Colaiuta contribute most respectably- Waldman making particularly good use of his role-reversed status here.

Duane Verh

ROBERTA FLACK

The Very Best Of Roberta Flack

RHINO

Singer/pianist Roberta Flack was certainly the reigning queen of jazzy, sexy R&B during the early seventies. Right off the bat her first album, 1970's **First Take**, served up the big hit (though it took two years for that to happen) "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," along with a number of equally pleasing songs. Some of her other early albums brought such gems as "Killing Me Softly With His Song" and "Feel Like Makin' Love." Then from her classic album with the late Donny Hathaway we got tunes like "Where Is The Love." She continued recording some very good music – though more in a commercial R&B vein – including more sessions with Hathaway and some with Peabo Bryson, including their beautiful duet "Tonight I Celebrate My Love."

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

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

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

Bill Wahl

EDDIE DANIELS QUARTET

Mean What You Say

IPO RECORDINGS

Backed by a sterling rhythm team, Eddie Daniels returns to playing tenor saxophone (as well as clarinet) on his first straight-ahead jazz recording in a decade. Joining him for a sentimental journey in jazz are pianist Hank Jones, bassist Richard Davis and drummer Kenny Washington.

Playing tenor, Daniels displays novel phrasing and ideas that engage the listener. While Daniels' tenorisms are consistently solid and highly expressive, his best instrument may still be the clarinet, which he plays on seven of the 12 tunes. He revolutionized the clarinet, melding jazz and classical influences to create his own elegant style, especially notable on his graceful interpretation of Strayhorn's "Passion Flower." Uptempo tunes such as "Nagasaki," and Jones' "Why You..." – featuring Daniels on clarinet – have a light, airy feel, due also to Jones' keyboard stylings. Other tunes include Charlie Parker's "My Little Suede Shoes," Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is the Ocean," Ellington's "Azure," and more gems polished to brilliance by this magnificent foursome.

A fluid player, Daniels excels throughout and has picked the right team for the job. The versatile Jones can play everything from stride to bebop and the contributions of ace veterans Davis and Washington combine to make this satisfying album a huge success.

Nancy Ann Lee

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Texas Harmonica Rumble

DIALTONE RECORDS

This disc collects performances by Orange Jefferson, Lazy Lester, Bobby Rush, Sammy Myers, Mel Davis and Joe Jonas, backed by some solid groups, except for Orange Washington who is backed solely by guitarist Thierry Cogne.

July

SAT 1	MIKE MILLIGAN & STEAMSHOVEL
FRI 7	THE STOKES BROTHERS (BLUES)
SAT 8	THE DEACONS (EVANGELISTS OF SOUL)
FRI 14	HIPNOTIC DOG (SOUTHERN ROCK)
SAT 15	DENZON & THE ROADDOGZ
FRI 21	THE KRAKER BROTHERS (BLUES)
SAT 22	ACES & EIGHTS,
FRI 28	K.G. BLUES
SAT 29	E.T. KING AND DETERMINATION

August

FRI 4	WYNG IT (CLASSIC ROCK)
SAT 5	TONY KOUSSA JR. BAND
FRI 11	MINGO FISHTRAP
SAT 12	KRISTINE JACKSON'S
	BASICALLY BLUE
FRI 18	DAVE C. & THE SHARPTONES
SAT 19	CLAY MCCLINTON BAND
FRI 25	DUPREE'S BLUES
SAT 26	THE SWAMP BOOGIE BAND



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AUGUST

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SUNDAYS

MONDAYS

EDDIE & THE EDELS

TUESDAYS

JULY

4 CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY
11 THE GEEZECATS
18 TBA
24 TBA
31 TBA

AUGUST

1 THE GEEZECATS
8 TBA
15 TBA
22 TBA
29 ERNIE KRIVDA &
THE FAT TUESDAY BIG BAND

WEDNESDAYS

JULY

5 KENTUCKY THUNDER
12 LEVEE TOWN
19 LAWLESS
25 J.P. & THE CHATFIELD BOYS

AUGUST

2 BRYAN LEE
9 KENTUCKY THUNDER
16 LAWLESS
23 J.P. & THE CHATFIELD BOYS
30 NORTH OF TEXAS

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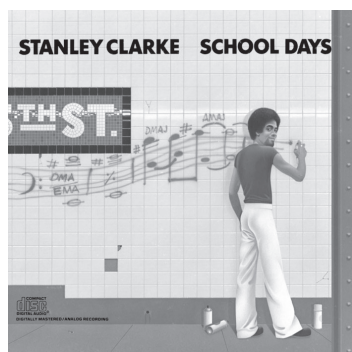
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Orange Washington's two tracks are the most down home with his *Hey Warden!* reflecting his real life experiences as Thierry adds some crackling Texas guitar with echoes of Hopkins and Frankie Lee Sims as Washington's own harp supports Washington asking the warden to let him back in. Lazy Lester handles a couple of Chicago blues classics, *That's All Right* and *Honest I Do*, in his amiable style while Bobby Rush reworks (and credits himself) Willie Mabon's *Poison Ivy* and Little Walter's *Temperature* (called *Hot Tempter* here) in straightforward performances while Sammy Myers does a brisk instrumental *Brain Dean* and Otis Spann's *It Must Have Been the Devil*.

Lesser known will be Mel Davis, a fine singer with a rocking shuffle *I Love My Baby* with a bit more urbane vocal and solid playing suggesting Junior Wells and Joe Jonas whose Sonny Boy styled harp and vigorous singing are exemplified by *Blues From Beaumont Texas*. Nothing but some fine harmonica blues on this really nice compilation with guitarist Little Joe Jonas fronting *Jonas for Take Off Your Shoes*. **Ron Weinstock**

STANLEY CLARKE School Days Revisited

By Brian Gilmore



Check out Brian Gilmore's revisit to Stanley Clarke's song "School Days" - from the mid-'70s album of the same name. It has been a full 30 years already, and Brian spoke with Stanley and David Sancious recently for the retrospective piece. Coming in our August Special...only at jazz-blues.com

www.jazz-blues.com



JANITA Seasons of Life LIGHTYEAR

It is time for Sade to move over a bit and make room for another singer on the smooth jazz airwaves. Janita, who has a silky voice that also matches her natural beauty, was voted the most sensuous woman in her home country of Finland, where she has had several hits and garnered many awards, including some Grammys.

Janita moved to New York City several years back working clubs, and has just released her first American CD, and if things actually operated the way they should, she will be seeing some smooth jazz hits coming her way stateside. She co-wrote all but one of the songs and has assembled an excellent band which includes drummer Antonio Sanchez, who is a member of the Pat Metheny Group, and who I just had the pleasure of seeing in concert with the Gary Burton/Pat Metheny Reunion Quartet.

Though she has been compared to Sade and Norah Jones, I don't really see either one. She actually mixes contemporary soul/R&B, smooth jazz, Latin and jazz in various different blends on the eleven songs here, coming up with a sweet, balanced set which also has some songs that could cross over to R&B or straight jazz. There are many standouts, such as the two latin flavored songs opening the disc, her very lush, outstanding version of Depeche Mode's 1990 hit "Enjoy The Silence" (the one she didn't write, but deserves to be a hit for her too) and the very jazz oriented "I Only Want You," which is one of a number of songs that include strings. Imagine that, an album with a real drummer and real strings!

This music keeps growing on you more and more with each listening. And to make the experience even better, it is very well produced and recorded.

Sound interesting? Check her out for yourself and play some clips from the CD by going to www.janita.com. **Bill Wahl**

NICK MOSS & THE FLIP TOPS Live At Chan's BLUE BELLA

Every once in awhile, a dose of Chicago blues doesn't kill you, but it seems to always help one's circulation. Nick Moss' first live effort just might be the spoonful you need this month.

Urged on by some east coast fans, Moss decided to record this eleven cut effort at Chan's in Rhode Island, a long-time blues stop for those out touring. Mixing Moss' originals with some hand picked cover tunes, *Live At Chan's* features members of his band, most notably keyboardist Willie Oshawny, who tickles the 88's during the opening instrumental "Eggroll Stroll" and pumps the B-3 via "The End."

"Check My Pulse" is pure Chicago boogie while the group stretches out as far as they can with Freddie King's "I Love The Woman" passing the ten minute mark without being tedious. Come of think of it, most cuts here go long, which, in this case, isn't a bad thing. Case in point would be the harp work of Gerry Hundt, which gets a good work-out, thanks to "One-Eyed Jacks." Moss leaves a lot of spotlight for himself on guitar but also has Boston guitarist "Monster" Mike Welch to guest on three tunes during the performance.

So, in conclusion, let's run through a laundry list of reasons to buy *Live At Chan's*: Hot blues music, no cover charge, no two drink minimum for watered down drinks, no obnoxious service from the bar staff, no bad food, no fights breaking out during the show, no red light cameras to give you a ticket on the way home, no DUI check points and, best of all in my mind, no second hand smoke to deal with. **Peanuts**

AVISHAI COHEN Continuo

RAZDAZ RECORDS Peanuts

Composer-bassist Avishai Cohen has been described as a "jazz visionary of global proportions" and on this outing combining jazz with classical and Middle Eastern music, he earns that accolade with help from pianist Sam Barsh and drummer Mark Guiliana.

This trio is a tight, imaginative unit that has been performing together for about three years and that familiarity shows up in their intuitive collaborations as well as in solos, especially those from

Barsh who has obvious classical training. Guiliana, a free style drummer, can lay back or dynamically build drama into a tune, as he does on "Emotional Storm." For its sheer energy, "Smash" may be the best tune on the album and prominently features oud player Amos Hoffman, who also plays on three other tunes.

Continuo is a shortening of the term "basso continuo," which in baroque music means an accompaniment (bass line and harmonies) typically played on a keyboard instrument almost always assisted by a bass melody instrument. Cohen wrote and arranged all but one of the 10 tunes and, with such pretty melodies, there's not a dull one in the bunch. His compositions feel similar to music from the ECM label, but with warmer harmonies, Middle Eastern tinges and more power underneath. Rarely does Cohen's trio swing. For the most part, their achieved sound is somewhere between Third Stream and New Age.

Regardless of where they fit in the jazz realm, it's the inspired, energetic playing from each musician that engages and holds your attention.

Nancy Ann Lee

MINGO FISHTRAP

Yesterday
Manor Productions

A few months ago I trekked over to The Savannah in Westlake, Ohio to hear a band called Mingo Fishtrap. I'd heard about them from someone whose recommendation meant something and I must admit...it was a thoroughly enjoyable night.

This eight piece band from Austin, Texas included a tight four-piece horn section that was powerful and in your face song after song. At first I thought Tower of Power meets Roomful of Blues. As the night went on, I heard some heavy doses of James Brown funk and some New Orleans spice, and then a bit of early Blood, Sweat & Tears. Quite gumbo to be sure. They had the dance floor packed all night long.

The rhythm section part of the band consists of Roger Bevins, Jr. on guitar & vocals, his father Roger, Sr. on bass, Aeron Riordon on keyboards and chip Vayenas on drums. The horn section is Greg Wilson/baritone & alto saxes, flute and bass clarinet, Dan Bechdolt/tenor & alto sax and clarinet, Steve Butts/trumpet & flugelhorn and Mark Gonzales/trombone. Believe me, even live they sounded much larger than four pieces.

Their set was made up of originals and a number of very cleverly arranged covers. One that still comes to mind today (I don't like to take notes) was Bill Withers' 1972 hit "Use Me" (you know..."until you use me up").

Their latest CD has a lot of the presence of their live show, with the horns right up front and all. It contains 14 originals...no covers here...but Blevins, Jr, who wrote most of them, provides some tasty material for him to sing and the band to work with. Some of the things I immediately noticed both live and on the disc is the tightness, funkiness and power of the bass and drums. Also, the qualities of the horn section mentioned above with the bottom end supplied by the baritone sax. Very nice stuff.

While this kind of band is best experienced live (that is, the ones like this that can pull it off) if you can't be there this CD is the next best thing. But they tour the country, so don't miss them if they come to a venue near you. You can get this

online at amazon or CDbaby, or at a live show if you make one. Their website, www.mingofishtrap.com, is under construction at this writing, but should be done sometime soon.

Bill Wahl

See **Mingo Fishtrap** live on their return visit to the **Savannah** on Friday, August 11.

RANDY WESTON AND HIS AFRICAN RHYTHMS TRIO

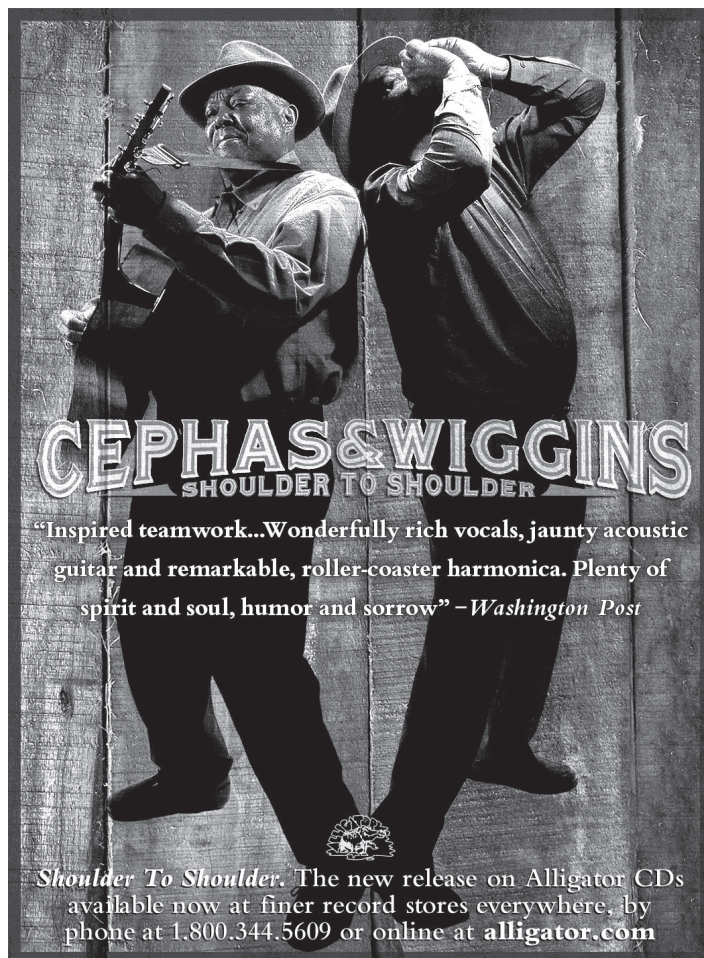
Zep Tepi

RANDOM CHOICE

Pianist Randy Weston combines jazz, blues, and music from the Caribbean, all tracing back to the mother source, Africa. Thelonious Monk is one of Weston's influences and you'll hear Monkish chops creep occasionally into his style. He's joined on this 10-tune session by bassist Alex Blake and percussionist Neil Clarke.

Weston launches the set with "Blue Moses," a throbbing, spiritually rich tune that, along with "The Healer," is one of my favorites for the sparsely built, percussive African themes. Weston's grandiose 11-plus minute tune "African Sunrise," commissioned by the Jazz Institute of Chicago, honors the collaboration between Dizzy Gillespie and Machito with its mix of jazz and Latin rhythms.

Weston goes solo for the potent "Route of the Nile" and on his engaging homage to Monk, "Ballad for T." Weston's father gave him his first piano lessons and the lively trio rendition of "Portrait of Frank Edward Weston" pays tribute to his late father. Included on the disc are two Weston classics



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**jazz
& blues** report

What U Missed

If you didn't check our website since the March/April pulp issue:

1. Our April issue - web only - with info on the historic Gary Burton-Pat Metheny concert tour - playing closely in Buffalo and Detroit, plus many CD and Book Reviews

2. Duayne Verh's interview with former NRBQ guitarist and master songwriter Big Al Anderson

3. Our June issue - web only with a preview of the Cleveland Fats/Louisiana Red show at the Parkview Nightclub, Eric Clapton's Fall U.S. Tour, the Rock Hall's Heil Sound exhibit, the 2005 International Songwriting Competition winners, Guitar Player Magazine's launching of its Internet-based TV station for guitar players, and 12 pages of CD, DVD and book reviews.

4. The web version of this issue with extra CD reviews and book reviews that would not fit in the pulp version.

5. Be sure to check the upcoming August special edition with an in-depth look at Stanley Clarke's "School Days" by Brian Gilmore as 30 years have passed.

Stop By Now & Then

jazz-blues.com

written in the 1950s: "Berkshire Blues" and "High Fly." Only one tune ("Love, The Mystery Of") is not a Weston original.

If you've caught pianist Randy Weston in a live trio performance, you'll likely agree that he's at his best in a trio setting because it suits his sparse style and percussion-punctuated African themes. This album holds appeal not only for fans of Weston, but for those who love Monk, African music and jazz piano. It's one of those sessions that you'll want to hear over and over to absorb all the nuances.

Nancy Ann Lee

GEORGE THOROGOOD

The Hard Stuff

EAGLE

True to this disc's title, George Thorogood is much like a shot or two of whiskey. What he delivers is reliable and right to the point. This East Coast master of high-octane boogie-rock keeps to the point for the majority of

The Hard Stuff. The occasional ballad attempt aside, Thorogood and his very solid band crank out no-frills rockin' fare. Slide-meister Thorogood and guitar partner Jim Suhler are in fine form on a set that includes the Hound Dog Taylor gem "Gimme Back My Wig".

Three of this publication's favorite towns- Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago- are celebrated in that order on "Any Town USA".

Duane Verh

TINEKE POSTMA

For the Rhythm

215/MUNICH RECORDS

Alto saxophonist Tineke Postma studied at the Manhattan School of Music and was the first Dutch female musician to win the Sisters in Jazz Competition at the International Association of Jazz Educators convention in the USA. She's backed on this 11-tune outing by drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, bassist Darryl Hall or Jeroen Vierdag, pianist Rob van Bavel, and guitarist Edoardo Righini.

Postma's playing shows technical prowess and she's mastered the language of jazz. Most of the tunes have a jazz-fusion feel. Exceptions include her gorgeous rendering of the Gordon Jenkins ballad "Goodbye" with piano accompaniment, her tidy interpretation (with Hall, Carrington) of Alex North's "Love Theme," and the catchy, swinging version of the postbop her title tune (with Righini, Vierdag, Carrington), which closes the set.

Born in 1978, Postma began playing

saxophone, flute and piano at age 9. Attracted to jazz and pop music, she eventually graduated in June 2003 from the Masters program at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, where she's been on the faculty since September 2005. She's won many awards and has performed internationally. She released her debut album, *First Avenue*, in 2003.

A talent who deserves tracking, Postma shows plenty of promise and seems comfortable in the company of more experienced American players such as Carrington and Hall.

Nancy Ann Lee

TAIL DRAGGER

**My Head is Bald, Live at Vern's
Friendly Lounge, Chicago**

DELMARK CD/DVD SET

James Y. Jones, the Chicago blues singer took his stage name, Tail Dragger, from a Howlin Wolf song. This was fitting insofar as Wolf was a mentor and heavy influence on him as reflected in his singing, stage act and his music, which employs some of the grooves and melodies associated with some of Wolf's classic recordings, even tossing in a yodel-like Howl on several tracks. On his new CD and DVD on Delmark, he certainly benefits from a terrific band that has Billy Branch on harmonica, Lurrie Bell on Guitar, Kevin Shanahan on guitar, Bob Stroger on bass, Kenny Smith on drums and Willie Young on tenor sax. Jimmy Dawkins replaces Shanahan on *My Head is Bald*.

Tail Dragger contributed all the songs except Jimmy Dawkins' *So Ezee*. One song, *Cold Out Doors*, is a DVD bonus track not on the CD. While one would be hard-pressed to call the Tail Dragger a major artist, he certainly entertains with a program that evokes the Wolf. His vocals are slightly slurred and don't have Wolf's crispness, nor is he as forceful as Wolf was, but still is a very enjoyable singer with the band rocking behind him. Billy Branch is typically outstanding while Lurrie Bell's stinging lines and riffs evoke Hubert Sumlin's playing with Wolf. The rhythm duo of Stroger and Smith provide a solid foundation for everybody else. Songs like *Tend to Your Business*, *My Woman is Gone*, and the title track, are typical of the solid evocation of Wolf's music present throughout and it's entertaining to watch the DVD to see Tail Dragger singing for the women, working the crowd and egging his musicians on. I was

also impressed by the camera work and production on the DVD which really gives a sense of that evening at Vern's Friendly Lounge.

This is certainly welcome as an entertaining release that should appeal to fans of classic Chicago blues. **Ron Weinstock**

ERNIE KRIVDA & THE FAT TUESDAY BIG BAND

Body & Soul
ONE SOUL RECORDS

For their third recording, Cleveland-based saxophonist/leader Ernie Krivda directs his lively 17-musician band through 13 tunes.

Reminiscent of the jazz big bands of the 1930s and 1940s., their fare is full of expression and vitality. Krivda features more ballads on this CD and it's to his credit because the tenor saxophonist has always been exceptionally expressive when playing ballads. Warmly emotional, his solo on "Where Or When" is a prime example. Other ballads include the title tune, "Never Let Me Go," "The Midnight Sun," and the tunes with the "girl singer" Erin Kufel. Despite her pleasant voice, sound production is of poor quality on the ballads "Come Back To Me" "Never Let Me Go," and "I Didn't Know About You." (My preference would have been to mike her to appropriately bring her voice forward so she didn't sound as if she were in the distance of a cavernous auditorium.)

The swinging "Big Bad Band," an Ernie Wilkins composition, is a blues-tinged delight reminiscent of the Basie sound, with pianist Joe Hunter spotlighted. The band also excels on Jimmy Mundy's arrangement of "Caravan," on a catchy version of "Broadway" arranged by Don Turoso, on a Fletcher Henderson arrangement of the Mary Lou Williams original "Roll 'Em," and on more good stuff.

This CD documents 13 years of hard work on Krivda's part. The band has matured and attracted the best area musicians. Charts are bright and colorful, soloists sublime, and Krivda performs at his expressive best without hogging the limelight.

Nancy Ann Lee

LYNWOOD SLIM LAST CALL DELTA GROOVE

After stints on the Atomic Theory, Coldwind and Pacific Blues labels, harmonica ace Lynwood Slim has joined Delta Groove which has become home to a who's who of the West Coast blues scene. For this effort Slim has rounded up label mates Kirk Fletcher on guitar and Richard Innes on drums (both of the Hollywood Blue Flames) as well as long time guitar foil Kid Ramos and a host of other guests to swing and strut his way through 12 cuts that range from the late night jazzy blues of Pete Johnson and Big Joe Turner, "Wee Baby Blues" to the Clifton Chenier classic, "All Night Long" which substitutes Ramos' urgent guitar work for Chenier's accordion.

Between those bookends, Slim covers a lot of musical ground including the harmonica fueled shuffle, "Across the Sea," the doo-wop reworking of Bo Diddley's "I'm Sorry," the peppy guitar and sax driven "I'm Tired," the fast paced piano work out, "You're a Pain," (featuring Carl Sonny Leland) and the mildly raucous "Say It." For the most part Slim leaves his harmonica in his pocket and focuses on his sleek, soulful vocals. With a voice that recalls Sugar Ray Norcia, Slim cuts a commanding swath

through classics such as Duke Ellington's "Nothing but the Blues" and the Billie Holiday staple, "Me, Myself and I" which he delivers with an old-timey vaudeville flair. Also included is the oft covered "Well Alright, O.K. You Win" which is given new life by Slim's energetic delivery. Slim's own material stands up well to the lofty standard of these covers especially on the disc closer, "You Never Cried for Me" which puts you firmly into a smoky downstairs club with a deep case of the blues and only Kirk Fletcher's guitar and Slim's haunting flute work to save you from the bottom.

While this disc won't have you throwing back the rug for a party it will make that next scotch go down real easy.

Mark Smith

SPYRO GYRA Wrapped In A Dream HEADS UP

Jazz fusion pioneers Spyro Gyra and this publication have ties going way back to the mid seventies when we both had our beginnings in Buffalo, NY. We began in 1974 as I actually printed the early issues myself at my father's printing company. A case of beer was enough to get some friends over to collate the pages and we were off and running. Around the same time, Spyro was playing local bars and was building quite a following. One that comes to mind was the No Name, where there was, if my memory serves me right, something like a 25¢ cover charge. Jay Beckenstein was still living there after finishing college and he formed the band with keyboard

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player Jeremy Wall. It was not long before an amazing young pianist named Tom Schuman came on board. They recorded a self-produced album which included a song titled "Morning Dance" and sold thousands of copies on their own. Then known as Buffalo Jazz Report, we were the first publication to review that album, which was reissued by Amherst Records (and later MCA I believe) a few years later. "Morning Dance" of course became a massive hit and still gets loads of airplay.

Jumping ahead three decades, **Wrapped In A Dream** is their 25th album. They certainly didn't last 30 years by being stagnant, and this brand new one is one of the more creative contemporary jazz releases I have heard. Opening with the funky "Spyro Time" they travel through a lot of musical territory, including different world rhythms - check out "Impressions of Madrid" for one. "Wrapped In A Dream" is pretty much in a straight jazz vein and is a medium-tempo showcase for Beckenstein on soprano with nice backing from Schuman (the only other original member still on board) on acoustic piano. There are 12 songs in all, with the closer being the gospel/soul flavored "Woogitybop." Dave Samuels, whose marimba work was a big part of "Morning Dance," has often appeared on Spyro albums over the thirty years and is heard on four cuts here.

It's great to hear them still sounding fresh after all these years. Very nice stuff. Bill Wahl

See **Spyro Gyra** in concert at **Cain Park** on Sunday, July 30.

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LIL' ED & THE BLUES IMPERIALS

Rattleshake ALLIGATOR

When Lil Ed Williams & the Blues Imperials come to town, one can expect an evening of some houserocking blues and boogie. This is also true of their recordings, as Lil 'Ed with his declamatory vocals and driving slide guitar with the hard rocking Blues Imperials may not be masters of subtlety, but they can play the blues music to lift your spirits and get your feet tapping.

Their latest Alligator disc, **Rattleshake**, is no exception. Opening with Holland & Dozier's "Leaving Here," Lil' Ed mixes some hard rocking numbers with a few slow blues where he sings his heart out. There are also strong covers of Elmore James' "You Know You're Wrong," and "That's the Truth," from his uncle J.B. Hutto, and amusing originals like "Icicles in My Meatloaf," where this fine lady takes him home but there were some strange things on his plate.

Perhaps the Billy Joe Shaver number "Tramp on Your Street" does not come off totally successful, but overall this is another typically fine recording by Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials and easily recommended. **Ron Weinstock**

DON TUROSO

The Don Turoso Septet SELF-PRODUCED

Saxophonist Don Turoso makes his self-produced recording debut with this nine-tune CD featuring top players from the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra and other area bands: trumpeter David Banks, trombonist Garney Hicks, pianist-keyboardist Rock Wehrmann, guitarist Brad Bolton, bassist Kip Reed, and drummer Mark Gonder.

Turoso's playing throughout is communicative, imaginative and rich-toned. Six of the nine tunes are originals, testifying to his skills as an innovative composer-arranger as well as a fluid and expressive performer. Turoso wrote the melody of "Children's Song" for two of his children to play when they were taking piano lessons. Fleshed out for horns and a rhythm section, it's a perky number with an appealing Latin-tinged sound. Turoso again addresses his love of Latin music with "D'Samba." "Changing Places" is devoted to the bebop style, featuring union horns and brisk solos

from Wehrmann and Hicks. "Hobo Junction" is a clever piece jotted down while driving to a gig. With its pulsing bass, horns sounding like train whistles, and Bolton's guitar solo, it's a swinging delight. All of his originals are engaging and listener-friendly. He also does justice to standards: Lee Morgan's "Sidewinder," Freddie Hubbard's "Red Clay," and Bobby Hebb's "Sunny."

Turoso grew up in Cleveland and performed while still in his teens with the Ray Eberle band, The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, and Bob Crosby and the Bobcats. A few years later, he toured with the Glenn Miller Orchestra. Turoso obtained his undergrad degree in Music Education from Kent State University and earned a Masters in performance from the University of Akron. He currently runs the Jazz Studies program for Jackson Local Schools and performs as a regular member of the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, Ernie Krivda's Fat Tuesday Big Band and other groups beside his own.

This is an exceptionally impressive debut and outstanding showcase for Turoso and his colleagues. Turoso is a fine musician deserving of widest recognition. This disc is available online at cdbaby.com or email Turoso at dturoso@neo.rr.com for more information. **Nancy Ann Lee**

MEL BROWN

AND THE HOMEWRECKERS BLUES- A BEAUTIFUL THING ELECTRO-FI

Kicking things off with the loping gallop of "Take Your Time" which extols the virtues of slow love making, Mel Brown mixes up a rich stew of blues styles. On the low key instrumental title track, Brown channels B.B. King's sweet, lyrical guitar chops while the jazz stylings of George Benson make an appearance on "Sundown." Elsewhere, Brown breaks out the funk on Stevie Wonder's reggae tinged "Master Blaster" and on his own "Ruby Mae." "I Wanna See My Baby" is another funky number highlighted by Brown's abandonment of his normally silky smooth vocals in favor of a gritty growl that falls somewhere between Omar Dykes and Wolfman Jack.

Brown puts his gunslinger bravado aside long enough for the tender piano driven ballad, "Make Love To Your Mind" and the bitter "baby done me wrong blues of "I Wouldn't Treat A Dog." "Snap" and

"Karansa's Boogie" are the type of instrumental tracks that typically either start a blues set at the club or signal that it's time for a break.

Taken individually, the tracks are expertly played and work well. Taken as a whole, the low-key feel of the majority of the tracks leaves you waiting for something that will take the disc from a simmer to a boil.

Mark Smith

YELLOWJACKETS

Twenty Five

HEADS UP/TELARC CD/DVD

Twenty-five years is a serious piece of time in anyone's entire life let alone for surviving as a group entity in the fickle world of the music business. But that's just what's happened with this most popular jazz-fusion act.

Founding members Russell Ferrante (keyboards) and Jimmy Haslip (bass) have hung on for a quarter-century with the group guitarist Robben Ford brought together, the celebration of which is preserved on this thoroughly enjoyable double-disc set.

Recorded live in Paris last year, the CD functions as an eight-song "Greatest Hits Live" set and the DVD concert footage (wisely) provides a second cross-section of the band's history with mostly different tune selections. Drummer Marcus Baylor and saxophonist/EWI player Bob Mintzer have been onboard since the new century and the '90s respectively and the instrumentation lends a "traditional" jazz group dimension to what is essentially a fusion band, particularly when Ferrante mans the grand piano.

Fans should love both discs and the uninitiated might want to start their catalog exploration with this piece.

Duane Verh

WILLY DEVILLE

Live In The Lowlands

EAGLE VISION DVD

Mink DeVille was probably the most roots-bound of any band that emerged from the 70's NYC New Wave scene. Bandleader Willy grounded his outfit's music in the Apple's urban/doo-wop/Latino aesthetics and the end result was steamy, gritty fare that was a first cousin to Springsteen and Lou Reed. DeVille's later solo efforts embraced blues, Creole and Cajun strains and all facets of his music get coverage this 2005 concert in Amsterdam.

Blues fans not familiar with DeVille should be impressed with his John Hammond/Tom Waits-like vocal attack on blues-inspired pieces ("Muddy Waters Rose Out Of The Mississippi Mud" and r&b gems ("Bacon Fat," "Cry To Me"). Mink's fans should get off on "Cadillac Moon" and "Savoir Faire." The band fits all DeVille's influences flavored with accordion, acoustic guitar and Latin percussion. With all participants sitting, the editing keeps things just active enough visually, but this excellent show is allowed to speak for itself.

Duane Verh

MORE IN THE ONLINE EDITION...

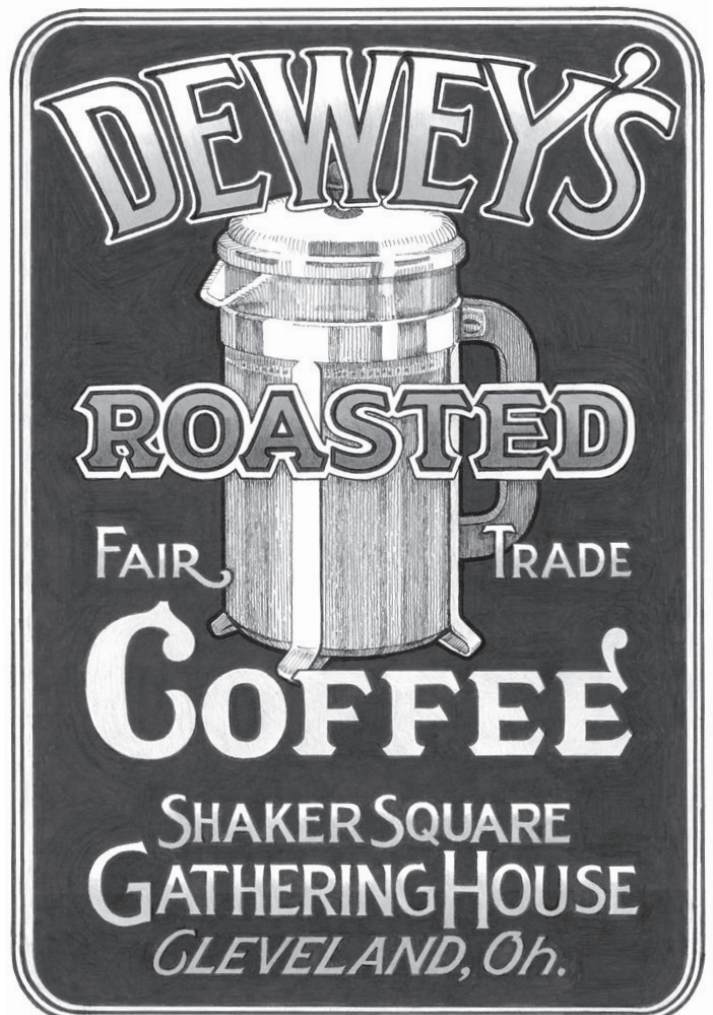
of this issue with extra pages, containing more reviews, and our latest batch of book reviews. We run out of pages with the pulp version since we can only add 8 at a time!

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B.B. King in Concert August 20



See **B.B. King** in concert at **Cain Park** Sunday, August 20 at 8 p.m., The concert is part of B.B.'s 80th Birthday Celebration!





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THE REVEREND BILLY C. WIRTZ SERMON FROM BETHLEHEM BLIND PIG CD

Part preacher, part carnival barker, part big time wrestling announcer and full time boogie woogie piano player, the Reverend Billy C. Wirtz is essentially the male counterpart of *Saffire, the Uppity Blues Women*, with a heavy dose of novelty tunes sharing space with straight forward blues.

This live release features the good Reverend working his way through a stand up routine of observations about freaks, geeks, wrestling grandmothers and other assorted oddballs. Double entendres are in short supply as the Reverend gives it up straight and dirty on tracks like *Female Problems* and *What I Used to Do All Night*. While the novelty aspects of the tracks wear a bit thin over time redemption comes in the form of the rollicking piano work.

While you may not join his congregation you'll enjoy at least a part of the Reverend's sermon.

Mark Smith

ERNIE ANDREWS How About Me HIGHNOTE

Vocalist Ernie Andrews has had quite a career dating back to the Central Avenue scene in Los Angeles of the forties (he first recorded in 1947 when 17 with Red Callendar's band). Musically he has aged like fine wine as indicated by his new album for the HighNote label.

Viewed as a tribute to singers and the songs from the forties and fifties, he brings his talents to eleven choice songs, of which only a couple, *The More I See You* and Percy Mayfield's *River's Invitation*, may be familiar to most. While influenced by the great Billy Eckstine, another formidable influence was the great singer and entertainer Billy Daniels. Nonetheless four of the songs here are from the Billy Eckstine book including the wonderful Leonard Feather number, *She's Got the Blues For Sale*, that opens this disc.

This is a marvelous program that goes from the sophisticated uptown blues of Leonard Feather and Percy

jazz
& blues

Mayfield to bluesy torch songs and ballads, and the closing *Vacation From the Blues*, which Eddie Boyd recorded in the fifties (with Robert Lockwood Jr., I believe on guitar on the original). Andrews reminds me of the late Jimmy Witherspoon and Joe Williams with the authority he brings to the blues as well as how he caresses the other lyrics equally as well.

The wonderful backing band includes the marvelous tenor saxophonist Houston Person, who always shines backing up great singers like Mr. Andrews with his tone and lyrical playing. The rest of the terrific band consists of pianist Phil Wright, guitarist Terry Evans, bassist Richard Simon and drummer Frank Wilson. For those whose leaning are on the blues side and fans of Duke Robillard's music, I would certainly recommend this as it's in a similar vein to Duke's recent swing oriented efforts.

This is highly recommended.

Ron Weinstock

WILLIAM LEE ELLIS Conqueroo YELLOW DOG RECORDS

Ellis plays his guitars, steel guitar and lap guitar. His vocal character continues to change, too. Larry Nager contributes on the mandolins, dobro, washboard, and the bass: Rick Steff on the mellotron, and vocalists Reba Russell and Susan Marshall do their part, also.. And the Masqueraders; Harold 'Sundance' Thomas, Robert 'Tex' Wrighttail, and David 'Cowboy' Sanders give a country feel to the effort.

The thank you list is stacked with notable characters like Jorma Kaukonen, Jim Dickerson, Sandy Carroll, Jim Gaines, Alvin Youngblood Hart, and Ana Popovich.

Notable cuts, such as the leadoff ballad "She Conquered the Conqueroo," "Black Sea Blues" and "Rose Hill" make use the steel and lap. Good job Ellis!

Cole

CHARLIE BYRD Bamba-Samba Bossa Nova EMPIRE MUSICWERKS

Originally released on the Everest Stereo label in 1959, this CD reissue features guitarist Charlie Byrd

backed by two versions of the Woody Herman Big Band recorded on December 24 and 26 the previous year in New York.

Byrd wrote and plays Spanish guitar on four appealing tunes, "Bamba Samba (Bossa Nova)," "Original #2," "Love Song Ballad," and "Prelude A La Cha Cha." Some of Byrd's tunes have a retro Fifties sound, but that doesn't detract from their boldness or beauty. The remaining four tunes, written and arranged by Ralph Burns, entitled "Summer Sequence," are numbered Parts 1 through 4 and work together as an engaging suite.

While Byrd is featured, it's obvious that the brassy Woody Herman band and its fine soloists are the also the focus. Sound quality is impeccable and it's fascinating to hear Byrd fronting such a terrific big band.

Nancy Ann Lee

books

PORTRAIT OF JOHNNY: THE LIFE OF JOHN HERNDON MERCER

BY GENE LEES
2006 HAL LEONARD BOOKS

Gene Lees, author, lyricist and songwriter, and writer/publisher of the award-winning *Jazzletter*, first met Johnny Mercer near the end of his career on February 8, 1966 and maintained a friendship with him until Mercer's death in 1976. Over the years, Lees interviewed Mercer several times for magazine articles and a Canadian broadcast program.

After Mercer's death, his widow Ginger presented Lees with Mandel's unfinished memoir and asked Lees to edit and organize it. A copy of the edited manuscript was left to Mandel's daughter, Amanda Mercer Neder, who asked Lees to write this biography in 1997. Lees uses portions of Mandel's insightful writings as well as resources from the Johnny Mercer Papers housed at the Georgia State University Library, interviews, and other sources. Frequently, Lees interjects his own trenchant observations—sometimes to a fault. Some readers may find the author to be far too intrusive, opinionated and judgmental.

PAGE SEVENTEEN

John Herndon Mercer was born November 18, 1909, of Scottish, Irish, English, and middle European heritage in the Deep South of Savannah, Georgia. Mercer wrote some of the best-known lyrics in the American Songbook repertoire, won four Academy Awards for his songs and helped to found Capital Records. Many of Mercer's songs have become standards. Among those cited in the index are classics such as "Autumn Leaves," "Blues In the Night," "Come Rain or Come Shine," "Days of Wine and Roses," "I'm Old-Fashioned," "I Remember You," "Moon River," "My Shining Hour," "Skylark," "That Old Black Magic," and countless others which are entrenched in jazz repertoire.

Lees digs into the complicated relationships of Mercer's life. A popular radio personality with a happy-go-lucky attitude, Mercer was in reality desperately unhappy. Lees brings to the fore details of Mercer's loveless marriage (worsened by a turbulent long-lasting affair with Judy Garland), his nasty bouts of alcoholism, and his song-writing successes and failures. Lees describes Mercer's efforts to establish himself in Tin Pan Alley; his Hollywood glory years; and his desolation as his style of music gave way to rock and roll. Dedicated fans and anyone interested in the lasting effects of Mercer's songs should find this 384-page book (with 32 photos) an enlightening read. *Nancy Ann Lee*

HARLEM OF THE WEST: THE SAN FRANCISCO FILLMORE JAZZ ERA

**BY ELIZABETH PEPIN
& LEWIS WATTS**

2005 CHRONICLE BOOKS

Many of us have heard of the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco and associate it with hippies and modern rock because of the pioneering shows that Bill Graham booked there. Prior to this, it was the home of a vibrant jazz and blues scene from the forties until urban destruction (aka urban renewal) destroyed much of it. Chronicle Books has issued this marvelous volume by two San Francisco photographers, instructors and historians. Ms. Pepin in fact was a former day manager of the Fillmore under Bill Graham.

Through interviews with musicians, club owners, patrons and local photographers and through the inclusion of more than 200 previously unpublished photographs, they bring forth an overview of the socio-cultural history of the area that is richly illustrated. As they write, "This book is meant to be a slice of life, not a completist's history, nor analysis of events. Such locally noteworthy photographers as Jerry Stoll, Ricardo Alvarado, Steve Jackson, Jr. and David Johnson (who was Ansel Adams' first African-American student) are among those whose works are included here. Among the individuals interviewed are bassist Vernon Alley, singer Sugar Pie DeSanto, former mayor Willie Brown, community activist Steve Nakajo, saxophonist John Handy, club owner Wesley Johnson Jr., record company founder Jim Moore, John and Francis Lynne Coppola, saxophonist Bobbie Webb, musician, producer, radio host Johnny Otis and others.

The book has four sections:

- A general introduction.
- A historical section on the neighborhood that tracks its change from a predominantly Japanese community into an African-American one during the incarceration in internment camps of Japanese-Americans and the emergence of the Fillmore district as a vibrant cultural center.

- A discussion of the various nightclubs in the Fillmore, area including such long-closed rooms as Jack's Tavern, the Club Alabam, the New York Swing Club, The Texas Playhouse/ Club Flamingo, The Long Bar, The Ellis Theatre, Bob City and others – including of course the Fillmore Auditorium which dates back to 1912 as the Majestic Hall & Academy of Dancing, which in 1928 became the Majestic Ballroom and in 1936 the Ambassador Dance Hall. It was a roller skating rink between 1939-1952 although Charles Jordan Hines began holding dances there in 1949 and Charles Sullivan took over booking bands in 1954, renaming it the Fillmore Auditorium, and in December 10, 1965 allowed Bill Graham to use Sullivan's dance hall permit to book a benefit for the San Francisco Mine Troupe, leading Sullivan to allow Graham to book shows when he had no shows booked. Graham took

over booking after Sullivan was murdered in 1966.

- The final section of the book details how urban renewal destroyed most of the Fillmore community.

As mentioned this book has over 200 previously unpublished illustrations which range from street shots to pictures of patrons and performers. The cover has John Handy, Pony Poindexter and John Coltrane (it is also on page 61), while others pictured here include tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves, Louis Jordan outside the Manor Plaza Hotel where a blown up photo of his is in the window; Eartha Kitt with neighborhood children; Sugar Pie DeSanto; Duke Ellington and friends relaxing at the Manor Plaza Hotel; Ruth Brown at the Booker T Washington Cocktail Lounge; T-Bone Walker with Wesley Johnson Sr.... at the Texas Playhouse; Earl Grant; Lionel Hampton; Billy Holiday with her beloved dog and Wesley Johnson Sr. at the Club Flamingo; And Little Richard at the Fillmore with Jimi Hendrix on guitar. The young white photographer that caught this priceless shot from October 1964, John Goddard remembers being up front taking lots of photos. "It was only years later that I found out that the guitar player, who kept getting in the way, was Jimi Hendrix. I remember him because he played with his teeth and behind his neck, but to me that night, he was just this guitar player who kept getting in the way of me taking pictures of Little Richard." It should be noted that Goddard used a Brownie for many of his photos and Hendrix is in the forefront of the picture, although a bit blurred and Little Richard looks outrageous with curly blond hair. And there is plenty of interest in the pictures of yesterday. Even those of the patrons, showing people who dressed up to go out on the town, in contrast to us today who often dress down.

Harlem of the West is a marvelous overview that delivers what the authors promise. Perhaps the only thing missing are suggested recordings, but there is a bibliography, and a list of various websites, including several for some of the musicians who are still active. A most highly recommended book that will hopefully lead to a fuller study of this scene.

Ron Weinstock