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Return To Forever

RETURNING!



Jazz & Blues report

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Jazz Report was founded in Buffalo New York in March of 1974 and began in Cleveland in April of 1978.



On the Cover

Return To Forever. Standing: left to right, Chick Corea, Lenny White, Al DiMeola
Seated: Stanley Clarke.

This Page: left to right, Al DiMeola, Stanley Clarke, Chick Corea, Lenny White.

Photos by Lynn Goldsmith



"Buffalonus"

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



THE RETURN OF Return To Forever

Summer Tour Includes North American and European Concert Halls and Festivals

Return to Forever's classic lineup of keyboardist Chick Corea, bassist Stanley Clarke, guitarist Al Di Meola and drummer Lenny White have announced a tour that will represent their first extensive engagements together in 30 years.

The foursome will play more than 50 dates across North America and Europe, featuring primarily classic music from their chart-topping albums. Beginning in Austin, Texas, on May 29th, the legendary supergroup will swing across the U.S. and Canada in June, cross the Atlantic for July dates in Europe from Lithuania to London, then return to the States for an East Coast run of major venues.

Fans should check their local venues for ticket on-sale information or visit www.return2forever.com for the latest information and unique VIP fan experience ticket packages.

The tour includes top outdoor festivals such as the Montreux Festival, the Montreal International Festival, Spain's San Sebastian festival, France's Nice Festival and the Freihofer's Festival in Saratoga Springs, NY, as well as theaters and concert halls chosen to showcase what LA Times critic Don Heckman

calls Return to Forever's "rich improvisational symbiosis."

"What made me want to do it," Corea told the Times, "was just recalling how great the feeling was playing with these guys. Just the experience of playing, when I thought, 'Wow, yeah, that was an amazing period — fun, creative, exciting.'"

Heckman, who attended the band's first rehearsal, said the group is now "bringing a 21st century perspective to the visceral blend of rock energy with the improvisation and compositional structures of jazz that made the quartet a phenomenon of the '70s."

Original Return to Forever fans and a new generation of listeners can experience their unparalleled high-powered, yet grooving, musical mastery themselves this summer. Tour dates are below.

A special Return to Forever anthology, compiled from the classic albums 'Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy', 'Where Have I Known You Before', 'No Mystery' and 'Romantic Warrior' and featuring dramatic sonic improvements, will also be released to coincide with the tour. This definitive collection, which was produced by founding RTF members Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke, is the first to include music from all these albums in one double-

CD package.

Find out more about Return To Forever and additional tour dates at www.return2forever.com.

Tour Dates

(Note: Fans should check with their local venues for ticket on-sale dates.)

May

29-30 (Thu-Fri) Austin, TX - Paramount Theatre
31 (Sat) Houston, TX - Verizon Wireless Center

June

1 (Sun) Dallas, TX – Nokia Theater at Grand Prairie
3 (Tue) Denver, CO - Paramount Theatre
4 (Wed) Salt Lake City, UT – Kingsbury Hall
6 (Fri) Portland, OR - Schnitzer Concert Hall
7 (Sat) Jacksonville, OR - Britt Music Festival
8 (Sun) Seattle, WA – The Paramount
9 (Mon) Vancouver, BC – The Centre in Vancouver For Performing Arts
11-12 (Wed-Thu) San Francisco, CA - The Grand At The Regency Center (2 shows/night)
13 (Fri) Los Angeles, CA – Gibson Amphitheatre
14 (Sat) Phoenix, AZ - Dodge Theatre
17 (Tue) St Louis, MO – Fox Theatre
18 (Wed) Omaha, NE - Holland Performing Arts Center
19 (Thu) Minneapolis, MN - Orpheum Theatre
20 (Fri) Chicago, IL – The Chicago Theatre
21 (Sat) Detroit, MI - Freedom Hill Amphitheatre
22 (Sun) Indianapolis, IN - Murat Theatre
24 (Tue) Cleveland, OH – The Plain Dealer Pavilion
25 (Wed) Toronto, Canada - Sony Centre
26 (Thu) Ottawa, Canada - Ottawa Jazz Festival/Confederation Park
27 (Fri) Montreal, Canada - Pelletier Hall/Place Des Arts
28 (Sat) Saratoga Springs, NY – Frehofer's Jazz Festival

July

2 (Wed) Vilnius, Lithuania - Utenos Arena
4 (Fri) Warsaw, Poland - Congress Hall
5 (Sat) Budapest, Hungary - Budapest Arena
6 (Sun) Belgrade, Serbia - Belgrade Arena
8 (Tue) Paris, France – Olympia Hall
9 (Wed) Vienne, France – Vienne Jazz Festival
10 (Thu) Madrid, Spain - Via Jazz Festival
11 (Fri) Girona, Spain - Cap Roig Festival
12 (Sat) Lorca, Spain
13 (Sun) Valencia, Spain
16 (Wed) Neuhardenberg, Germany
18 (Fri) Montreux, Switzerland - Montreux Jazz Festival
19 (Sat) Essen, Germany - Grugahalle
21 (Mon) London, England – Indigo2
23 (Wed) Nice, France - Nice Jazz Festival
25 (Fri) San Sebastian, Spain
30 (Wed) Miami, FL – The Fillmore Miami Beach
31 (Thu) Clearwater, FL - Ruth Eckerd Hall

August

1 (Fri) Orlando, FL - House Of Blues
2 (Sat) Atlanta, GA - Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre
4 (Mon) Baltimore, MD - Merriweather Post Pavilion
5 (Tue) Philadelphia, PA - Mann Center For The Performing Arts – w/ Béla Fleck and The Flecktones
6 (Wed) Boston, MA - Bank Of America Pavilion – w/ Béla Fleck and The Flecktones
7 (Thu) New York, NY - United Palace

Again, visit www.return2forever.com for newly added dates.

eMusic brings David Murray's rare recordings to light

NEW YORK – eMusic, the world's largest retailer of independent music — and the world's second-largest digital music service after iTunes — has announced that 26 rare and out-of-print recordings by influential jazz musician David Murray are now available for the first time digitally and exclusively on eMusic for three months.

David Murray, tenor saxophone and bass clarinet player, began his recording career more than 30 years ago, releasing more than 100 albums that have earned him countless awards including a Grammy (1989); a Guggenheim Fellowship (1989); and the Bird Award (1986) among others. Murray's family recently secured the digital distribution rights to his master recordings on DIW, the Japanese jazz label Murray recorded for in the late '80s and early '90s. The 26 releases span an eleven-year period and have previously been unavailable, out of print, or simply very hard to find in both the U.S. and the E.U.

"eMusic excels at promoting and contextualizing music like David Murray's with expert editorial and reviews, and at reaching sophisticated jazz consumers, who make jazz one of our top-selling genres," said Rob Wetstone, eMusic Vice President of Label Relations. "Murray has been a favorite of eMusic's jazz fans and we know they'll be excited to hear these new titles which haven't been available previously in the U.S. or Europe."

In 1980, Murray was declared Artist of the Decade by the Village Voice, and in their 2006 guide to Murray's music, seven of the DIW titles were highlighted, including; *Sketches of Tokyo*, *Deep River*, *Shakill's Warrior*, *Real Deal*, *Ballads for Bass Clarinet*, and *The Long Goodbye*.

These highly sought after recordings demonstrate why Murray has become one of the most influential and highly regarded free jazz artists around the world. Each recording on eMusic will be accompanied by detailed notes from eMusic jazz columnist and National Public Radio contributor Kevin Whitehead.

"David Murray is one the most important (and fun to listen to) tenor saxophonists of the last 30 years," said Whitehead. "He has made many fine records, owing to quality of his robust sound, the range of his influences from the swing era to the avant-garde, and the array of settings he records in, from duos to quartets, octet to big band."

David Murray titles now available as MP3 downloads on eMusic (www.emusic.com) are as follows:

1986: David Murray, *N.Y.C. 1986*
1985: John Hicks/David Murray, *Sketches of Tokyo*
1986: David Murray & Jack DeJohnette, *In Our Style*
1988: David Murray, *Deep River*
1988: David Murray, *Ballads*
1988: David Murray, *Lovers*
1988: David Murray, *Spirituals*
1990: David Murray, *Special Quartet*
1990: David Murray Quintet, *Remembrances*
1991: David Murray, *Shakill's Warrior*
1991: David Murray Big Band, *David Murray Big Band*
1991: David Murray Quartet +1, *Fast Life*
1991: David Murray Quartet, *Death of A Sideman*
1991: David Murray & Milford Graves, *Real Deal*
1992: David Murray Octet, *Picasso*
1991: David Murray, *Ballads For Bass Clarinet*
1993: David Murray Quartet, *Tenors*
1994: David Murray Quartet, *Shakill's II*
1994: David Murray, *The Tip*
1994: David Murray, *Jug-A-Lug*

- 1992: David Murray Big Band, *South of the Border*
 1993: David Murray Quartet, *For Aunt Louise*
 1991: David Murray/James Newton Quintet, *David Murray/James Newton Quintet*
 1994: David Murray Quintet, *with Ray Anderson and Anthony Davis*
 1996: David Murray, *Love and Sorrow*
 1996: David Murray, *Long Goodbye: A Tribute to Don Pullen*

eMusic (www.emusic.com) is a specialty digital entertainment retailer that has been at the forefront of offering MP3 downloads and customer-friendly prices since its inception in 1998. The company is focused on serving customers aged 25 and older by offering independent music and audio books in a universally compatible format at a great value. It is the world's largest retailer of independent music and the world's second-largest digital music service after iTunes, with more than 3.5 million tracks from 27,000 of the world's leading independent labels and thousands of titles from top audio book publishers. To super-serve its more than 400,000 customers, eMusic provides award-winning editorial content, a vibrant online community and unrivaled music discovery tools. eMusic's subscription-based service offers free music downloads or one free audio book at sign-up, giving consumers an inexpensive, low-risk way to explore great new music and books they wouldn't find otherwise. Based in New York with an office in London, eMusic is available in the U.S. and all 27 E.U. nations. eMusic.com Inc. is wholly owned by Dimensional Associates, Inc., the private equity arm of JDS Capital Management, Inc.

LA Music Academy Offers Scholarships to Vocal, Drum, Bass and Guitar Students

PASADENA CA – LA Music Academy (<http://www.lamusicacademy.edu>) has announced scholarships are now available for all music departments, according to the school's president, Tom Aylesbury. Interested domestic and international students demonstrating exceptional musical talent, ability and enthusiasm can apply now for the 2008-2009 school year. Applicants are evaluated based on their essays, academic history, playing skills, and letters of recommendation. Last year, LA Music Academy awarded \$100,000 in scholarships.

"The overall skill level of our student base is increasing dramatically," says Aylesbury. He says the average graduate GPA has soared to above 3.5, adding, "As more scholarships are awarded, the bar is being raised, and we see that the students are challenging each other to perform and work with their peers just as if they were working in professional situations."

LA Music Academy gives students big responsibilities from day one; whether playing in ensembles with some of L.A.'s finest professional studio musicians and performers or having to make their way through one of the world's most intense lesson plans. The Academy is known for the personal attention that students receive from instructors, and students who use these connections wisely have gone on to perform with artists such as Chick Corea, Jeff Beck, Lifehouse, Ricky Martin, Hilary Duff, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, The Calling, Sepultura and Airtro.

For more information, contact Iris Alba at LA Music Academy by calling 800-960-4715.

LA Music Academy in Pasadena, a suburb of Los Angeles, CA, offers an intimate and friendly, yet serious and rigorous contemporary music education to male and female students 18 and over through its vocal, drum, bass and guitar programs. Founded in 1996, the Academy is accredited by the National

Association of Schools of Music and has provided a solid musical foundation for more than 1,000 international and domestic students. LA Music Academy's 35 instructors immerse students in practical courses. The Academy offers a significant number of real world playing situations with professional musicians, not just peers, setting the school apart from other prestigious music institutions. LA Music Academy gives its students the skills necessary to apply their learning in a wide variety of professional situations in the music industry.

Global Sound Conference Brings World's Top Sound Researchers, Technologists and Musicians to L.A. for Four Day Symposium

LOS ANGELES – The Global Sound Conference announced today its second annual event bringing together the world's top sound researchers, technologists and musicians will take place May 9 - 12 at the Marina Del Rey Marriot in Los Angeles. Anchored by a visitor-friendly exhibition hall showcasing the latest in sound-based health technologies, the event features a comprehensive program of lectures and panel discussions that explore the many ways in which sound affects our lives - medically, emotionally and spiritually - and how we can use the power of sound to improve our world. Nightly concerts featuring musical superstars Sheila Chandra, Yungchen Lhamo, Rickie Byars Beckwith with the Agape International Choir and others will put a festive exclamation point on each day's events.

With the goal of presenting a 360 degree overview of the latest developments in the study of sound, this year's event examines aural trends in the areas of music therapy, motion picture sound design, rehabilitative audiology, acoustics, musical performance techniques and more. Participants include luminaries from across a broad range of disciplines including jazz legend Stanley Jordan, psychoacoustic expert and Through a Dog's Ear author Joshua Leeds, top Hollywood sound designer Alan Howarth (The Spiderwick Chronicles), The Mozart Effect author Don Campbell and researcher Marilyn Schlitz of the Institute of Noetic Sciences.

"Sound impacts us on such a primal, unconscious level that we often overlook or take for granted the role it plays in our health and mindset on a daily basis," said Alex Theory Ph.D., founder and director of the Global Sound Conference. "While sound has been used for decades as an established medical treatment in specific applications such as ultrasound, it's only been recently that Western science has begun to produce studies establishing how sound and music influence us in other ways, particularly on a neurological level. We're looking forward to a lively mix of cutting edge research and traditional wisdom in our discussions of how we can use sound as a tool to create practical and effective solutions to many common issues."

For early risers, the conference kicks off each morning at 7:30 AM with an hour of guided meditation led by world renowned yoga instructor Shiva Rea in the main exhibition hall. The exhibits open at 9 AM with highlights including voice biofeedback machines, which are used (among many applications) to help the deaf improve speech quality through visual representation of correct vocalizations; and vibroacoustic sound tables, which stimulate oxygen flow within our bone marrow and are used by NASA to keep bones from weakening during space travel. There will also be food, music and personal sound healing tools such as tuning forks and crystal bowls available for purchase.

Tickets to the Global Sound Conference are available on its Web site at www.discoverysound.com and offer various levels of participation - from an all access show pass to tickets for

the individual concerts and workshops. Passes for individuals and families looking to spend a day viewing the exhibits on the show's main floor will be available pre-sale online and at the door for adults \$20.00, and kids under 12 free.

For additional information on the Global Sound Conference and a complete list of participants and panels, please visit www.discoverysound.com.

The Global Sound Conference is a unique event bringing together key individuals from the music, film and television industries with pioneers in the areas of sound healing and integrative medicine to explore the many ways that sound affects our lives. Contributing to the event is a distinguished lineup of doctors, scientists, musicians and media visionaries who will address the various components of sound in the areas of health, science, entertainment and technology.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release Blues.... Iron Man- Michael Burks; Don "Sugarcane" Harris- Sugar Cane's Got the Blues; Mike Bloomfield- Live at the Old Waldorf; David Honeyboy Edwards- Roamin' and Ramblin'; Guy Davis- On Air; Moreland & Arbuckle- 1861; Etta James- Live in New York- Marcia Ball- Peace, Love and BBQ; Steve Guyger- Radio Blues; Various Artists- Blues Roots of the Rolling Stones; Robert Cray- Live at the BBC; David Gogo- Vibe; Bugs Henderson- Still Flyin'; Jon Dee Graham- Swept Away; Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King- Blood Brothers; Anthony Gomes- Live; Eddie Clearwater- West Side Strut; Bernard Allison- Chills & Thrills; The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue- Command Performance; Albert Collins- Live at Montreux 1992; Eric Bibb- Get on Board; Mike Morgan and the Crawl- Stronger Every Day; Elmore James Jr- Daddy Gove me the Blues; Paula and the Pontiacs- Louisiana Bride; Zito- Today; Watermelon Slim & the Workers- No Paid Holidays; JW Jones-Bluelisted; Kelly Richey Band- Carry the Light; The Mystix- Blue Morning; Bonnie Bramlett- Beautiful; Maceo Parker- Roots & Grooves.... **Festival blues.... When the sun finally pokes its head out of the snow clouds you know it won't be long until the season some call summer and blues fans call festival time!! Here's a few on the early summer horizon with a special look at some southern festivals that you might want to work into your spring break plans: **April 4-6, George's Music Springing the Blues-** Jacksonville Beach, FL. For info call 903-249-3972 More info at www.springingtheblues.com; **April 11-13, French Quarter Festival,** New Orleans, LA. More info at www.fqfi.org; **Whitney Bank Tampa Bay Blues Fest.** More info at www.tampabaybluesfest.com; **April 12, Maple City Blues Fest,** Laporte, IN. More info at www.elwoodsplintersbluesband.com; **April 18-20, Juke Joint Festival,** Clarksdale, Mississippi. More info at www.jukejointfestival.com; **April 25-27 and May 1-4, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.** More info at**

www.nojazzfest.com; **May 2-4, Beale Street Music Festival,** Memphis, TN. More info at www.memphisinmay.org. There are plenty of other festivals throughout the spring, summer and fall that will be detailed in future columns. Meanwhile, closer to home, make sure to reserve **June 5-8** for the 25th annual **Chicago Blues Festival** (www.chicagobluesfestival.us), **July 10-12** for the Annual **Kalamazoo Valley Blues Festival.** (www.kvba.org) and **August 8-9** for the **Cowpie Blues Festival,** Alaska, MI (www.cowpiebluesfestival.com). That's it for now. See ya!

Festival International de Jazz de Montréal Announces Latest Additions

Return to Forever Now Included In 2008 lineup

MONTREAL CANADA – If the first concert announcements promised a vintage 29th edition of the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, get ready for the next legendary artists on the 2008 roster. It is the Festival's great pleasure to welcome James Taylor, new darling Katie Melua in a grand opening concert, the luminous Dee Dee Bridgewater, and a stunning reunion of the legendary Return to Forever featuring Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, Al Di Meola and Lenny White. This musical event will be presented by General Motors in collaboration with Rio Tinto Alcan, from June 26 to July 6 in Montreal. Tickets for these concerts are on sale now.

The Latest Additions

- **Return to Forever** with Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, Al Di Meola and Lenny White - Friday, June 27, 7 p.m., Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, PdA (*Pleins feux General Motors series*)

This is a reunion that already qualifies as the jazz event of the year. When Chick Corea (piano), Stanley Clarke (bass), Al Di Meola (guitar) and Lenny White (drums) reform the group that blazed through '70s jazz-rock and announce their intention to tour, the jazz world returns the salute. According to founder Chick Corea, the quartet has one goal: take songs from four classic albums that altered the musical landscape, and play them until that landscape shakes. And when the musicians of Return to Forever make that promise, the heart of the jazz world skips a beat.

- **James Taylor** and his Band of Legends - Sunday, July 6, 7:30 p.m., Bell Centre

James Taylor, fresh from celebrating his 60th birthday, assembles a "big band" of musicians who have marked his career and embarks on a North American tour that brings him to the Festival. For those who missed the last 40 years of pop music, it's an opportunity to discover the masterpieces that put James Taylor in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Fans will swoon anew to the unmistakable voice behind *How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved by You)*, *Carolina On My Mind*, *Fire and Rain* and, of course, *You've Got A Friend*, and discover what a singer of this magnitude can do with classics from the eternal songbooks of Chuck Berry, Big Mama Thornton and Junior Walker.

- **Katie Melua** - *opening concert* - Thursday, June 26, 7:30 p.m., Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, PdA (*Pleins feux General Motors series*) *Her first major North American concert.*

1984: Katie Melua is born in Georgia, SSR. 2003: the world bends an ear to her first single, *The Closest Thing To Crazy*. 2005: now a British citizen, she is the top-selling female artist in the UK for a second consecutive year. 2006: she is the top-selling European female artist *in the world*. 2007: her 3rd album, *Pictures*, confirms her global star status, bewitching millions of fans with her remarkably warm voice. 2008: the Festival welcomes Katie Melua and her new songs with a special opening concert-her first major North American performance. An irresistible concert event.

• Dee Dee Bridgewater, *Red Earth: A Malian Journey* - Thursday, June 26, 6 p.m., Théâtre Maisonneuve, PdA (*Voix du monde* series)

The Festival darling explores new horizons, traveling the red earth between her native Memphis and Bamako, the capital of Mali. A quest for identity and a return to roots make for perhaps her most luminous album, and one that floored the critics. It's a full-colour show fusing jazz and traditional Malian music, with 10 musicians onstage. Those lucky few who've caught her onstage speak of a kind of magic... and a transcendent groove.

Previously Announced Shows

Add the above concerts to those already announced as part of the 29th program of the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, tickets already on sale (visit montrealjazzfest.com for info): Aretha Franklin / Steely Dan / Leonard Cohen / Saxophone Summit with Joe Lovano, Dave Liebman and Ravi Coltrane / Coral Egan / Omara Portuondo / Charlie Haden Quartet West / Ladytron, as well as the *Battle of the Bands* featuring the Glenn Miller Orchestra and the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. And don't forget

the all-new *Guitarmania* concert series, part of the Montreal Guitar Show from June 26 to 29 (visit montrealguitarshow.com for info): Erik Mongrain / Michel Haumont and Jean-Félix Lalanne / Jordan Officer / Antoine Dufour / John Jorgenson / Jake Shimabukuro / Andy McKee / Don Ross / Martin Taylor / Gareth Pearson / Jim Hall and Pierre Bensusan.

Tickets are on sale now and are available at the main box office at Metropolis (59 Ste. Catherine St. E.). Tickets for concerts presented at Place des Arts will be available at Metropolis as well as Place des Arts (175 Ste. Catherine St. W.) at 514 842-2112 or lplacedesarts.com and from Admission, at admission.com or at 514 790-1245. Tickets for the James Taylor concert at the Bell Centre will be available at Admission, at 514-790-1245, or at geg.ca.

The complete indoor concert program for the 29th edition of the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal will be announced on May 6, while the program for the free, outdoor concerts will be made public on June 3. To get the jump on the crowd, sign up for the Spectra Newsletter and have the scoop on the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, the SIMM and the Montreal Guitar Show emailed to your inbox. For further information, call the Bell Info-Jazz Line at 514 871-1881, toll-free at 1 888 515-0515, or visit montrealjazzfest.com.

Tampa Bay Blues Festival Returns April 11-13

TAMPA BAY, FLA – Each year since 1995 the Tampa Bay Blues Festival has been staged at beautiful Vinoy Waterfront Park in downtown St. Petersburg. The park is located on the shores of scenic Tampa Bay, with the famous St. Petersburg Pier providing a brilliant backdrop for the festival. With its acres of plush grass and palm trees, Vinoy Park is the perfect tropical setting for this fine blues festival.

The Tampa Bay Blues Festival has established itself as one of the world's preeminent blues music events, having presented over 195 of the world's greatest blues performers. Past artists include Buddy Guy, Taj Mahal, Robert Cray, Delbert McClinton, Little Feat, Jonny Lang, Jerry Lee Lewis, Koko Taylor, Jimmy Vaughan, and others. The festival has duly become a destination event, with fans travelling from throughout the United States and Europe to enjoy this celebration of music.

This year's festival is scheduled for Friday, Saturday, & Sunday, April 11, 12 & 13, 2008. A state of the art P.A. system and lighting will be provided to insure the very best sound and entertainment.

This year's lineup is:

• Friday, April 11 - Billy Gibson, Nick Moss & the Flip Tops, Lucky Peterson, James Hunter and the Robert Cray Band.

• Saturday, April 12 - Trombone Shorty, Tutu Jones, Tab Benoit, Walter Trout and Los Lonely Boys.

• Sunday, April 13 - Tad Robinson, California Blues Showcase (featuring Chris Cain and Janiva Magness), Rod Piazza & The Mighty Flyers and Robben Ford.

For more detailed information, visit anytime online at www.tampabaybluesfest.com

LIKE JAZZ & BLUES PHOTOS?



This photo of Deitra Farr captured by Ron Weinstock at the 2007 Pocono Blues Festival is just one of hundreds of Ron's photos you can view online at www.flickr.com/photos/novaron

Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland Salutes The American Classics

CLEVELAND, OH – Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland celebrates its 29th year with a Tribute to American Classics, April 17-27. Lifetime works of Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday and Marvin Gaye are among the wide range of jazz music to be showcased during the ten day festival. Tri-C JazzFest is recognized, both nationally and internationally, as a premiere educational jazz festival with extensive offerings of performances, clinics, workshops and educational programs.

The festivities kick off on Thursday, April 17, with a parade featuring the Shaw High School Marching Band at Tower City and Public Square in downtown Cleveland. Later that evening, the House of Blues is the venue for the sixth installment of “Jazz Meets Hip-Hop, a creative fusion of old-school jazz with the contemporary rhythmic beats that will feature Q-Nice, DJ Rob Swift and Bill Ransom.

John Pizzarelli and The Cleveland Jazz Orchestra will Salute Frank Sinatra and headline the main stage of the Allen Theatre at Playhouse Square on Friday, April 18. The multifaceted jazz guitarist, vocalist, bandleader and radio personality is internationally known for classic standards, late night ballads, and his cool jazz flavor. Nnenna Freelon gets the evening off to a great start as she pays homage to Billie Holiday with a refreshing take on the work of the legendary jazz songstress.

In a full day of jazz, Jazz of Kids will brighten up the morning on Saturday, April 19 at The Children’s Museum of Cleveland with an educational and entertaining perspective of jazz designed to get the youngest imaginations excited about jazz and music. At the top of the day the “Women in Jazz” concert at the Mt. Zion Congregational Church showcases the talents of some of the area’s top female jazz artists including Evelyn Wright, Erin Kufel, Helen Welch and others.

The Ernie Krivda Trio will heat up the stage of East Cleveland Public Library on Sunday, April 20 in what promises to be an inspiring performance lead by the long-established saxophonist.

On Tuesday, April 22 Cleveland’s own living legend, Eddie Baccus, Sr. will perform at Karamu House filled with inspiring organ favorites, reflective of his decades of jazz experience.

The Tri-C Metro Campus Auditorium plays host to the electrifying sounds of saxophonist Joshua Redman on Thursday, April 24.

An Evening of Natalie Cole on Friday, April 25 will showcase the range of the eight-time Grammy Award winning singer as she explores her soulful roots of R&B, jazz-based pop and standards.

The collaboration between trumpeter Rick Braun and saxophonist Richard Elliot has been in the making for over a decade and fans will have an opportunity to enjoy these two artists on Saturday, April 26.

Closing out the festival is the Marcus Roberts Trio on Sunday, April 27 at the East Cleveland Public Library. This free concert fills the Greg L. Reese Performing Arts Center to capacity each year.

For more information, see page 22 of this issue or visit www.triczjazzfest.com.

The 35th Annual Adams Avenue Roots & Folk Festival

SAN DIEGO, CA – The 35th annual Adams Avenue Roots & Folk Festival will take place on Saturday, May 3, 10 am to 8 pm, and Sunday, May 4, 10 am to 6 pm, on Adams Avenue, located in the Normal Heights community of San Diego. The festival is open to all-ages.

This year’s Adams Avenue Roots & Folk Festival will include more than 40 musical acts performing on seven stages. Music aficionados will enjoy a variety of music, including blues, folk, bluegrass, klezmer and roots rock.

Headlining in a special ticketed concert will be mandolin virtuoso David Grisman and his band, the “David Grisman Bluegrass Experience.” They will perform on Saturday, May 3 (Ticket price details to come). The rest of the Adams Avenue Roots & Folk Festival performances will be free to the public. Artists performing include; Yale Strom, Sara Petite, Robin Henkel, Anna Troy, The Brombies, Gregory Page, Cindy Lee Berryhill, Tomcat Courtney, Nathan James & Ben Hernandez, Joey Harris, Los Alacranes, and Peter Bolland. In addition to the amazing music, there will be two beer gardens, children’s activities, and more than 200 food, arts and craft vendors selling their specialties throughout the festival venue.

The Adams Avenue Roots & Folk Festival is hosted by the Adams Avenue Business Association, a non-profit organization, whose mission is to promote and increase commercial activity within the Adams Avenue Business District.

For further information, please call (619) 282-7329, or visit us on the web at www.AdamsAveOnline.com.

French Quarter Festival: New Orleans April 11 – 13

NEW ORLEANS, LA – The French Quarter Festival amplifies the good times in the Vieux Carre with three days of free entertainment including more than 150 performances on 15 stages. Held annually in mid-April, great food, second-lines, impromptu performances, special events, and some of Louisiana’s greatest jazz and blues musicians make this one of Louisiana’s top festivals.

The fact that the festival is scattered throughout New Orleans’ most famous neighborhood is what makes it so appealing. Visitors can stroll from stage to stage, take in the Quarter’s historic architecture, stop in at an art gallery or grab a bite to eat at dozens of restaurants. The French Market is always a great place for souvenir shopping while the riverfront is usually packed with thousands of people

**For extensive previews of the
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival
as well as
Ponderosa Stomp,
see the March issue.
Download it at
www.jazz-blues.com**

sprawled out on blankets in front of the main stages. Attracting a large mix of locals and visitors, there's no better time to experience the true heart and soul of New Orleans than to visit during this festival.

With a true dedication to supporting the local music community, the French Quarter Festival only schedules local musicians. Over the years, performers have included young fiddle sensation Amada Shaw; jazz trumpeter Kermit Ruffins; renowned bluesmen Coco Robicheaux, Little Freddie King and Walter "Wolfman" Washington; and Latin singing sensation Fredy Omar.

It would almost be a crime to celebrate anything in New Orleans without great food so the fest ensures its legitimacy with 60 food and beverage booths throughout the fair. Making up the "World's Largest Jazz Brunch," the booths serve such local delicacies as Cajun meat pies, oyster patties, alligator sausage, gumbo, red beans and rice, and jambalaya.

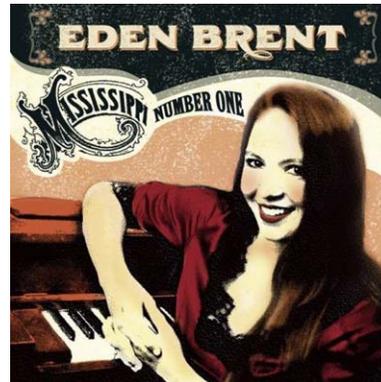
French Quarter Fest is also filled with fun events for children. McDonough 15 School hosts a "Family Friendly Fest" with children's entertainment, activities, art workshops, a visual art sale, and puppet shows.

Founded in the '80s, the French Quarter Fest has grown to be the largest free outdoor festival in Louisiana and attracts upwards of 400,000 visitors every year. The festival takes place in Jackson Square, Woldenberg Park, the U.S. Mint and numerous places throughout the French Quarter.

For more information and a schedule of this year's performances, visit www.fqfi.org/frenchquarterfest/.



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EDEN BRENT
Mississippi Number One
YELLOW DOG

Winner of The Blues Foundation's solo/duo category at the 2006 International Blues Foundation, singer-pianist Edén Brent brings plenty of depth to her music. Yellow Dog Records has just issued the new album by the Greenville, Mississippi native, "Mississippi Number One." As a singer she sings with the authority of the late Esther Phillips, if a bit less nasal, while displaying the sassiness of a Denise LaSalle and a bit of Bobby Gentry's country soul. She certainly can pound out some strong barrelhouse rooted piano as well as more in jazz vein. Much of this is comprised of originals penned by her and late mother, Carole. The opening 'Mississippi Flatland Blues,' is a rollicking number with her barrelhouse playing backed just by bass and drums.

She takes things a bit more in a Stax-tinged vein on her original about a two-timing man, 'He'll Do The Same Thing To You,' with organ and horns added to the mix before she changes gears the solo rendering of 'Darkness on the Delta,' and her mother's marvelous ballad, 'Love Me 'Til Dawn,' with a leaner delivery and some nice alto saxophone by Kevin Lewis. On the jaunty 'Fried Chicken,' her sassy vocal is simply and effectively supported by Rick Chancery guitar and harmonica. The title track is her spirited salute to the two-lane road that takes one to her childhood road, that cuts through the Delta, with Mimosa trees, with some rollicking piano in the vein of Jerry Lee Lewis.

She shows her interpretative abilities on solo performances of 'The Man I Love,' 'Careless Love,' 'Why Don't You Do Right,' and 'Trouble in Mind, thoughtfully delivering these well known songs and embellishing them very nicely. Oddly the latter number is credited in the booklet to Amos Milburn and not its composer Richard Jones. Another uptown R&B number is 'Meet You Anywhere,' with tinges of Crescent City funk, while her late mother's "Close That Door," as she tells one that she is tired of his wrong

EDDY "THE CHIEF" CLEARWATER WEST SIDE STRUT

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doing way so he should close the door and walk away, as she is through with heartaches.

This marvelous recording concludes with 'Until I Die,' a lyric that can be interpreted both in a secular and spiritual vein with a bit of church added by Rich Steff's organ and the vocal choir.

Eden Brent is marvelous as a songwriter, singer and pianist and listening to this, one can understand why she has impressed so many. "Mississippi Number One" is a stunning recording of blues, jazz and soul that will have many waiting for her next recording. **Ron Weinstock**



CARIBBEAN JAZZ PROJECT

Afro Bop Alliance HEADS UP

The Latin Jazz collective of vibraphonist Dave Samuels, steel pan drummer Andy Narell and saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera has a lengthy history of issuing dazzling albums and this nine-tune project featuring CJP founder Samuels (without Narell and D'Rivera) and the CJP rhythm section joined by the Maryland-based Afro Bop Alliance, is no exception.

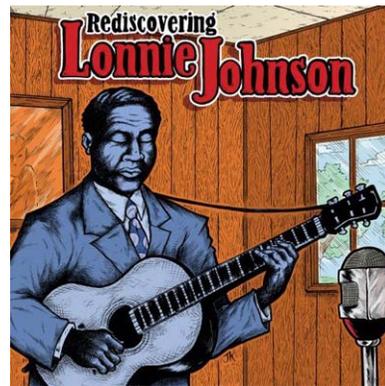
Samuels solos with assuredness, contributes five originals and arranges tunes written or made famous by John Coltrane, Oliver Nelson and Thelonious Monk. Dan Drew, lead trombonist from Afro Bop, also did the big band orchestrations.

Musicians are too numerous to mention here but you'll agree their collective and individual contributions are top notch. Highlights abound. The upbeat 6:11-minute version of Coltrane's "Naima" and the catchy, brassy 5:20-minute take on the Latin classic "Soul Sauce," are toe-tapping delights.

Arrangements for Nelson's "Stolen Moments" and Monk's "Bemsha Swing" achieve revitalized, ear-pleasing treatment. "Five for Elvin," one of Samuels' lively, melodious originals (and one of my favorites), launches with riffing piano chords and percussion before the front-line horns add to the energy.

The collaboration of the Grammy Award winning CJP with the brassy, energetic Afro Bop band is an ingenious idea and continues the innovative and exciting path begun by CJP in the 1990s.

There's plenty to like about this disc—engaging tunes, extraordinary arrangements, solid musicianship, brassy power, and innovative solos. **Nancy Ann Lee**



BLUES ANATOMY

WITH JEF LEE JOHNSON

Rediscovering Lonnie Johnson

RANGE RECORDS

It is easy to underestimate the influence and impact of Lonnie Johnson in the realms of American vernacular music. Robert Johnson was influenced enough as to model several recordings on Johnson's originals, and claim to be a cousin of him.

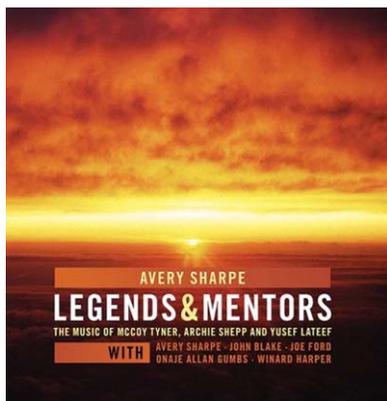
Andrew Luis Levinson has brought together a number of musicians including the Philadelphia band, Blues Anatomy, along with special guest, guitarist Jeff Lee Johnson, for a tribute to him, "Rediscovering Lonnie Johnson" an affectionate, spirited tribute that hopefully will lead many to discover for themselves this legendary blues and jazz guitarist.

Blues Anatomy opens the album with an electric jazz-blues rendition of 'St. Louis Blues,' with Eddie Davis handling the vocals while Steve Jankowski's growling trumpet stands out along with Jef Lee Johnson's sizzling guitar. Jef Lee then is showcased on one of several Johnson instrumentals, 'Swing out Rhythm' that he interprets, patterned after the original, but perhaps a bit more emphatic in how he laid down his single note runs than Johnson on his original.

Louis Armstrong's 'I'm Not Rough' includes a nice acoustic break again evoking Lonnie Johnson's playing on the original classic. '6/88 Glide' is another fresh instrumental with Mike Suchodolski's solid piano providing a strong foundation for the raggy-flavored guitar solo and followed by Geoff Muldaur handling the vocal behind a rock-tinged Chicago blues treatment of 'He's a Jelly Roll Baker.'

A couple of duets Lonnie Johnson recorded with Eddie Lang are included, 'Have to Change Keys to Play These Blues,' and 'Bullfrog Moan.' Jef Lee's playing dominates the first, while Joe Mass provides a second guitar lead voice for 'Bullfrog Moan.' Mass also does an original instrumental using slide, "Ben Franklin Hotel Blues," named after the hotel he was a porter at when 're-discovered.' It follows a nice modern blues interpretation of 'Careless Love,' with another soulful vocal from Eddie Davis.

The album closes with Blues Anatomy's rendition of 'Tomorrow Night,' which was perhaps his most famous recording to the average person, which concludes this marvelous tribute on a high note. For more information check <http://www.rangeentertainment.com/>. **Ron Weinstock**



EVERY SHARPE

Legends and Mentors: The Music of McCoy Tyner, Archie Shepp and Yusef Lateef JKNM RECORDS

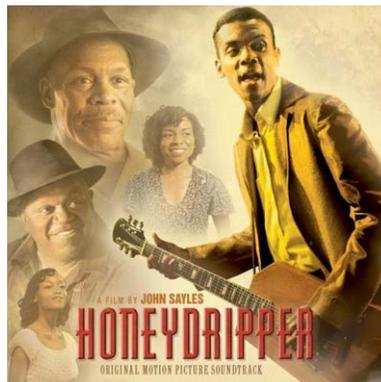
Bassist Avery Sharpe is perhaps best known for his lengthy tenure with the great McCoy Tyner who he joined in 1980. A varied career, he has worked with such significant artists as Art Blakey, Archie Shepp, Dizzy Gillespie and Pat Metheny in addition to his long tenure with Tyner. He has also recorded a number of highly praised albums that showcase his original compositions. He has recently issued "Legends and Mentors: The Music of McCoy Tyner, Archie Shepp and Yusef Lateef," on which he plays homage to them, first performing an original dedicated to each as well as two compositions by each. For this disc he has brought together a band that includes John Blake on violin; Joe Ford on saxophones as well as flute; Onaje Allan Gumbs on piano; and Winard Harper on drums. Blake and Ford are both also alumni of Tyner's band.

The first trio of tunes is Sharpe's "Big Mac", his salute to Tyner followed by "Ballad For Aisha" and "Fly With the Wind." "Big Mac" brings together distinctive voicings of Blake's violin and Ford's alto along with strong solos. Tyner's "Ballad For Aisha" has a Middle-Eastern flavor which Blake's violin brings to the fore with Gumbs maintaining the flow after which Ford enters on soprano sax followed by Sharpe taking center stage. Sharpe launches "Fly With the Wind," which one assumes Sharpe, Ford and Blake played numerous times with Tyner. The exhilarating composition never grows stale. "The Chief" is the tribute to Archie Shepp, and its stately melody also features one of Ford's strongest solos here, with Sharpe's solo serving as a bridge to Blake. Shepp's "Steam" is a lovely waltz while "Ujaama" hits a hot tempo with Ford back on alto and Blake's solo is followed by Gumbs and Ford, with Sharpe solidly anchoring the performance. "Gentle Giant", a performance that features changing tempos opens with some marvelous flute from Ford, while Sharpe takes an unaccompanied solo followed by Harper's thoughtful drum solo. Lateef's slightly exotic "Morning," with its delicate, dance-like rhythms is a strong feature for Ford on tenor while the uptempo "Because They Love Me" is an exhilarating romp with Ford again on tenor. Blake and Gumbs are both impressive here.

Lateef's music perhaps has not remained as much in the forefront of the jazz world as that of Tyner and Shepp, and this trio of performances hopefully will rectify that.

"Legends & Mentors" is a loving tribute by Sharpe and his colleagues of three of the past century's major jazz artists who are done proud by the performances here.

Ron Weinstock



HONEYDRIPPER

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack RHINO

John Sayles new movie, Honeydripper, is in theaters now and he describes the setting of the movie in the booklet accompanying the soundtrack to the movie, "American music has always had the ability to absorb and transform different traditions, to dig in the past and the present, to constantly reinvent itself. Honeydripper is set at a musical crossroads, 1950, in the semi-mythic town of harmony, Alabama. A peek at the jukebox from that time and place reveals a rich mixture of blues, swing, R&B, gospel, country & western, pop ballads, and something new that contained elements of all of these, something that in a few years would be labeled rock'n'roll."

He notes that the soundtrack reflects this range of sounds and discusses many of the selections and the performers. Not having seen the movie, this writer can only comment on the music presented here which indeed does cover a broad swatch of American music of the period. Mixing in new recordings that evoke some of the period recordings with a few choice licensed recordings, the soundtrack on its own is a pretty entertaining compilation of music. The Aces of Spade, with McCabe on piano and Gordon Beadle on sax open with a hot honking instrumental, "Honeydripper Lounge", that evokes those classic Big Jay McNeely and Joe Houston instrumentals, followed by a harmonica number "Tall Cotton," that starts as a lonesome country wail before picking up steam as a hot Sonny Terry styled wail. Mabel John, backed by Sonny Leyland's piano and Jerry Portnoy's harp, evokes the era of Alberta Hunter, Ida Cox and Sippie Wallace with the hokum-flavored Tampa Red classic "No Matter How She Done It."

Two marvelous field gospel recordings by the New Beginnings Ministry sandwich Hank Williams' immortal "Move It On Over," Lil Green's "Why Don't You Do It Right," and Keb' Mo's reworking of "Stack O Lee", although I found the rearrangement less satisfying than if he had patterned it on Furry Lewis' rendition. Actor Danny Glover does a surprisingly nice rendition of "Goin' Down Slow," followed

by Memphis Slim's doomy "Bertha May." Three tracks then showcase the talents of Gary Clark, Jr., a relatively youthful Texas singer-guitarist: a nice rendition of "Good Rockin' Tonight," the unusual "China Doll," and "Blue Light Boogie."

Clark accounts himself well (He has two very good CDs that should be available on cdbaby.com) with a band that includes the tuff down-home harp of St. Louis' Arthur Lee Williams as well sax from Eddie Shaw. Barrence Whitfield capably provides a fitting frantic rock vocal for "Music Keeps Rollin' On", before the closing track, Ruth Brown's final recording, a very nice cover of Tampa Red's "Things About Coming My Way," with some strong piano from Sonny Leyland, and interesting trad jazz flavoring from the horns.

Despite some original skepticism about this project, this writer was more than pleased with this most enjoyable compilation of blues and roots which stands up even for those who have not seen the movie. **Ron Weinstock**



JANE IRA BLOOM
Mental Weather
OUTLINE

With this disc, soprano saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom returns to her original LP label launched when she began her career in New Haven, Ct. Joining her on this outing are Mark Helias (bass), Matt Wilson (drummer) and, newcomer from Seattle, Dawn Clement (piano, Fender Rhodes).

Containing nine electro-acoustic tunes (total time 48:32), this recording is number 13 for Bloom as leader. All compositions, except for a portion of the finale (a medley that includes the Rodgers-Hammerstein ballad "This Nearly Was Mine") are tangy originals that confirm Bloom's inventiveness. Her melodies are consistently fresh and original, spiked with alternating tempos, haunting harmonics, and soaring solos. Her cohorts are with her every step of the way.

Each tune moves in unexpected directions and contains nuggets of surprise in melody, harmony or tempo. Among the highlights are "Multiple Choice," a time-shifting, engaging foray (6:13) that features a fine solo from Helias, and "Ready for Anything," which conveys a sense of waiting with its ticking piano and cymbal riffs, while Bloom stretches out on top of the beats.

Bloom has triumphed once again. Her fans should find that this disc ranks among her best recordings. The CD also features an MP3 downloadable version of the music played as one continuous set, the way the band performs in concert. **Nancy Ann Lee**

DENNIS GRUENLING

I Just Keep Loving Him- a tribute to Little Walter BACKBENDER

If one has read the kudos for Dennis Gruenling's harp work, but not yet checked him out, this disc provides all the backup needed for the heaps o' praise this East Coaster has garnered. Even with most capable pals Kim Wilson, Rick Estrin and Steve Guyger sharing the chores, it's Gruenling's blowing that makes for the standout stuff on this exceptional set. His command of technique and sense of the groove are ideally suited to celebrating the man who took blues harmonica to the next level.

Adding to this set's exceptional character is Gruenling's selections from Walter's catalog. Well-worn, high-profile tunes such as "Juke" and "My Babe" are passed over in the name of lesser-known gems. The rhythm section, while shifting personnel, is consistently solid both in "up" and "down" modes. Estrin does a great Muddy Waters mimic on his vocal cameo and vocalist Gina Fox delivers nicely underplayed sultriness on her features. The spotlight, however, rarely strays from Gruenling and, with his chops, it's well deserved. **Duane Verh**

DUKE ELLINGTON

Live In Zurich Switzerland

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Live In Zurich Switzerland

TCB RECORDS

TCB Music calls itself The Montreux Jazz Label™ and has several different series that can be distinguished by the color of the CD spine. Red is devoted to bebop, hardbop and postbop, green is devoted to the Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series and has vintage jazz concerts recorded by Swiss radio (I have heard an excellent live Art Blakey set), while blue is devoted to the music of the forties and fifties in general. Two of the recent productions in the blue series present Duke Ellington & Orchestra and Louis Armstrong All Stars.

Live in Zurich, Switzerland presents a May 1950 performance by Ellington in Zurich that certainly will be welcomed by fans of the Duke. The Orchestra this day included trumpeters Harold Baker, Ernie Royal and Ray Nance; trombonists Lawrence Brown and Quentin Jackson; saxophonists Jimmy Hamilton, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Jimmy Hamilton and special guest Don Byas; the Duke and Billy Strayhorn sharing the piano chair, Wendell Marshall on bass, and Butch Ballard sharing the drums with Sonny Greer.

In addition to Don Byas' appearance here, the program is quite fresh opening with "Suddenly It Jumped" before going into "Ring Them Bells." "Creole Love Call" features Kay Davis' remarkable vocalizing while Harry Carney gets to showcase his baritone on "Paradise." "Air Conditioned Jungle" showcases Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet, while Byas shines on "How High the Moon," which opens as a ballad for two or so minutes before the band kicks up the tempo first moderately, then ratchets it up into hyperdrive before Byas slows it down for its ending. "The Tattooed Bride," which was a relatively recent composition of the Duke, is the lengthiest performance here

with Lawrence Brown's trombone and Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet prominent. Strayhorn takes the piano chair for the band's current radio theme, "Take the A Train," while "Frankie and Johnny" features a healthy dose of rollicking stride piano from the Duke, and some violin from Ray Nance and more from Hamilton.

More piano can be heard in the introductory portion of "Rockin' in Rhythm." Johnny Hodges' alto is featured on the tone poem "Violet Blue," and the hot blues "Jeep is Jumping." It likely is Ray Nance handling the vocal on W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues," while Ernie Royal is showcased on "S'Wonderful," opening first using a mute before launching into his bop-inflected saxophone. This is a very welcome addition to the Ellington discography with its interesting personnel and the very good selection of material. The sound of this live recording sounds pretty good as well.

Louis Armstrong's Live in Zurich, Switzerland, dates from October, 1949 and features (I believe) the original All Stars lineup of Armstrong, trumpet and vocals; Jack Teagarden, trombone and vocals; Barney Bigard, clarinet; Earl Hines, piano; Arvell Shaw, bass, Cozy Cole, drums; and Velma Middleton on vocals.

There is nothing too fancy or surprising with the repertoire. These tunes and this band helped define the 'Dixieland' repertoire such as "That's A Plenty," "Basin Street Blues" (a feature for Teagarden's relaxed singing and trombone before Armstrong adds his magic); "Royal Garden Blues," Armstrong's classic "Struttin' With Some Barbecue," Fats Waller's "(What Did I Do To Be So) Black & Blue" and "Honeysuckle Rose," "High Society" and "Do You Know What it Means (to Miss New Orleans)."

Plenty of highpoints here as Armstrong is particularly poignant on "Black and Blue," with some brilliant piano from Earl Hines behind the horns and Armstrong's vocal. "Velma's Blues" is a mid-tempo blues that features Ms. Middleton trading a variety of traditional blues stanzas, while Fatha Hines is featured with his unique piano style on "Honeysuckle Rose" and more rollicking playing on "Fine and Dandy." "Body and Soul" opens with some very nice playing from Bigard for the first two and a half minutes before the All Stars kick up the tempo a notch, which is typical for many renditions of this standard that are not modeled on Coleman Hawkins' classic rendition.

"Back 'O' Town Blues" is a vocal feature for Louis with Teagarden adding some verbal comments as well as his bluesy trombone solo before Louis takes off in flight which he follows with a spirited "High Society," with marvelous clarinet by Bigard, although the tempo may be a bit too hot. Teagarden and Armstrong handle the vocals on "Do You Know What It Means" before the All Stars close on "The Huckle-Buck," with Ms. Middleton taking the mike.

A very enjoyable collection of performances and valuable for documenting a live performance of the Armstrong's early Allstars. *Ron Weinstock*

EDDY "THE CHIEF" CLEARWATER

West Side Strut

ALLIGATOR

It's been said that youthfulness is more an attitude than a physical condition. And on his new disc, the venerable Mr. Clearwater makes a strong case for this viewpoint. Partnered up with his nephew, the Windy City's most exciting "new school" bluesman- Ronnie Baker Brooks, Mr. C delivers an energized, inspired-sounding set that speaks well for a pair of musical generations.

Clearwater's seasoned vocals and guitar merge well with the present-day rock/blues sonics provided by Brooks' production and backup band and the quality of the mostly-original material is strong throughout. Standouts on the set include The "Chief"'s duet with Brooks' celebrated daddy, Lonnie, on the upbeat "Too Old To Get Married" and the minor-keyed "Do Unto Others" which gets a star treatment as Otis Clay and Jimmy Johnson share vocal chores.

Duane Verh

RON BLAKE

Shayari

MACK AVENUE

Saxophonist Ron Blake is certainly a versatile musician, having recorded with a diverse group of musicians including Christian McBride, Roy Hargrove, Joey DeFrancesco, Art Farmer and the Latin pop group Yerba Buena...not to mention his three year stint with the Saturday Night Live Band which continues on today.

His latest disc as a leader finds him still on the Detroit-based Mack Avenue label for a third outing with some very talented guests. The songs, thirteen in all, feature Blake and pianist Michael Cain with one of the three guests, making each track a trio outing. One, Blake & Cain's "Of Kindred Souls," finds the two with violinist Regina Carter. Two are performed with bassist Christian McBride. Three feature the pair with only percussion played by Gilmar Gomes. The remaining five feature master drummer Jack DeJohnette. Most of the songs are originals, with eight either written or co-written by Blake and two from Cain. The remaining three include Sammy Cahn's sweet ballad "Please Be Kind," Bobby Hutcherson's "Teddy," and Ivan Lins' "The Island."

The music, as expected from the instrumentation, is sparse throughout. Since there is only a bass player on two songs, the others figure out a creative way to make up for it, such as some low notes on a drum with a mallet. Blake's full, rich tone lends itself well to the proceedings, most of which is quite pretty and laid back, although there are some more energetic, improvised moments such as "Atonement" after it gets going and "Hanuman." The opening track, "Waltz For Gwen," harkens back to some of Pharoah Sanders' more melodic late '60s - early '70s Impulse recordings due to Gomes' percussion work alongside Blake's deep tenor sound.

In all, an extremely nicely done recording from Ron Blake and his special friends. *Bill Wahl*

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

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

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

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



Royal dukes are squaresville. They have no rhythm. And they wear crowns.

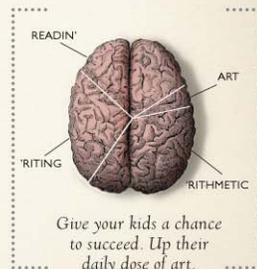


A piano player. A composer. An orchestra leader. Duke Ellington reigned over a land called Jazz.

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

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



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ERIC BIBB

Get Onboard

TELARC

Since the early '90's a new generation of African-American musicians have emerged sporting a reinvigorated sense of their blues roots. Artists such as Corey Harris, Keb' Mo' and Alvin Youngblood Hart dove deep into their musical heritage and found their individual voices there. NYC-bred Eric Bibb has managed to masterfully merge this legacy with first-rate singer/songwriter skills and has dropped one more solid effort as evidence.

Get Onboard calls upon gospel and blues in roughly equal measure and Bibb's use of both sounds both confident and respectful. His seeming bias towards inspirational and "up" moods is ever-present. He'd rather inspire than incite his audience and his lyrical skills can make point after serious point without being preachy. And his songs never fail to work simply as *songs*, delivered in his sturdy, bluesy baritone. Established fans should not be disappointed and newcomers should be impressed.

Duane Verh

HORACE SILVER

Live at Newport '58

BLUE NOTE

Pianist Horace Silver (b. 1928) leads a cohesive group featuring Louis Smith on trumpet, Junior Cook on tenor saxophone, Gene Taylor on bass and Louis Hayes on drums, recorded live on Sunday, July 6, 1958 at the Newport Jazz Festival.

Their previously unreleased performance launches with a 13:10 minute version of the Silver original, "Tippin'," a swinging number that grants everyone moments in the spotlight. "The Outlaw" is a time-shifting 11:48-minute piece with a 16-bar Latin vamp. Silver's "Senor Blues" is probably one of his best-known compositions and the team does justice to the bluesy Latin tune. The finale, Silver's "Cool Eyes," was initially introduced on his 1956 Blue Note recording, *Six Pieces of Silver*, which also included a version of "Senor Blues."

This is a rare recording because Smith left the group three months later to return to teaching and Silver replaced him with Blue Mitchell. Hayes left the band in 1959 and was replaced by Roy Brooks. That version of the Silver band went on for more than five years.

Producer Michael Cusuna discovered this documented concert in the Library of Congress' tape archives of the

Voice of America broadcasts and ferreted out the professionally recorded three-track master in Columbia Records' vaults. This recording is part of the informal Blue Note series of valuable previously unreleased recordings. It's a 44-minute gem that should satisfy Silver's fans.

Nancy Ann Lee

TOM PRINCIPATO BAND

RAISING THE ROOF

POWERHOUSE

Tom Principato is one of those musicians who has won countless awards in his region of the country (in this case the Washington D.C. area) but has for the most part failed to click with national audiences. As the winner of 22 Washington Area Music Association "Whammy" Awards for his numerous discs as well as his prowess on guitar and vocals he is clearly doing something right. While one would be tempted to chalk off this impressive track record as "a big fish in a small pond" anyone familiar with the music scene of the Potomac knows that it is not only intensely competitive but is where the North meets the South with gritty rock from Boston, Jersey and New York clashing head on into both big band sophistication and southern soul blues producing a musical hybrid that doesn't really exist elsewhere.

Jump blues bands like Big Joe and the Dynafloes play alongside guitar innovators like the late, great, Danny Gatton or hard rocking guitar slingers like Jimmy Thackery and his former band the Nighthawks. Ironically, this musical diversity is both a blessing and curse for someone like Principato.

On the one hand, his mastery of the numerous styles of blues necessary to play alongside these varied performers has given him a rich and varied career. On the other hand, it has kept him from having a clearly identifiable sound like, say, Stevie Ray Vaughan or Buddy Guy and is likely the reason his name doesn't evoke knowing nods outside of his home base. Simply put, he's too diverse to be easily slotted into a neat blues category.

This disc won't change that with its inclusion of everything from reggae grooves, *In the Middle of the Night*, to guitar and horn driven blues, *Lock and Key* to straight out funk with a dollop of greasy organ, *Too Damn Funky*, to roots rock by way of J.J. Cale's, *Lies*, and even a bit of Jump blues with a reworking of Louis Jordan's classic *Fish Fry*. While it is the top notch musicianship that will keep this disc in rotation, the hilarious *They Called for "Stormy Monday" (But "Mustang Sally" is Just As Bad)*, where Principato name checks the songs every working musician dreads to hear called out in the middle of a set, (*Freebird* anyone?) is alone worth the price of this disc.

Each of these cuts is well done, but the overall mix is more a musical juke box than a blues disc leaving blues fans with the uneasy choice of abandoning their comfort zones in the Delta, Chicago, Memphis or Texas in order to take a chance on someone unique. The shame of all of this is that unadventurous blues fans are left out in the cold with no clue what a treat they are missing by not taking Principato's discs for a spin.

Take a chance. You'll agree this disc is worth the adventure

Mark Smith

From the Editor:

Some of you have noticed that a number of the reviews from the past year are not in our searchable database. We were undergoing some problems, but have been in the process of replacing reviews that "disappeared". Indeed, it is taking some time, and will continue to do so. So please, bear with us!

-Bill Wahl

JAZZ
& blues

CHRIS BYARS

Jazz Pictures At An Exhibition of Himalayan Art SMALLS RECORDS

Saxophonist Chris Byars is a visually inspired musician who follows up his 2007 release, *Photos in Black, White and Gray*, with nine originals stimulated by a Himalayan art exhibit at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City. Byars' band – John Mosca (trombone), James Byars (oboe, English horn), Ari Roland (bass), and Stefan Schatz (drums, percussion) – performs as a tight unit.

Byars wrote all of the nine compositions, which range from about 4-1/2 minutes to nearly 11 minutes. Although Byars claims (in the press release) that the music includes sounds and concepts of Asian culture, much of their studio performance sounds like jazz from New York City, with a couple of exceptions. "Buddha Shakyamuni," a pretty 9:20-minute bluesy ballad, features Byars on soprano sax. One of the most Asian-sounding tunes is the reverent "Chakrasamvara," featuring Byars on flute and tenor saxophone.

Byars' solos are attention grabbing and there's enough musical variety to keep the listener engaged. The liner offers no notes but features nine images from the Himalayan art exhibit in an 8" X 14" liner poster, which contains photos of the musicians on the reverse side.

Nancy Ann Lee

THE LEGENDARY RHYTHM & BLUES REVUE

Command Performance DELTA GROOVE

The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue takes its name from the fact that the group of musicians came together on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise, not that any of them are legendary performers.

Brad Kava, who penned the liner notes, refers to the aggregation of Tommy Castro, Ronnie Baker Brooks, Deanna Bogart and Magic Dick as 'a new super blues group.' Back in 1969, they got Otis Spann, T-Bone Walker, and Big Joe Turner in a studio with George 'Harmonica' Smith and Ernie Watts for the album *Super Black Blues*. That was a super blues group. With all due respect, the performers in the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue do not meet that hype.

This is not to say they do not produce some very good and entertaining music, which this recording illustrates.

Castro's Band serves as the backing band and performs its role solidly with saxophonist Keith Crosnan adding much with his raspy tenor. Guest appearances are made by Curtis Salgado and Marcia Ball, but the main focus is on the four who the Revue centers around. Ronnie Baker Brooks fares pretty well with the four tracks featuring his vocals. *Can't You See*, is a hard bluesy rocker, and he reprises Muddy's *She's Nineteen Years Old* strongly, but it is his soulful blues-ballad, *See You Hurt No More*, which arguably is the single finest performance here.

Castro himself ably delivers the vocals in a Delbert McClinton vein on a jump blues revival, *I Feel That Old Feeling Coming On*, his soulful *If I Had a Nickel* and the

rocker, *High on the Hog*. He also delivers a capable rendition of the Bobby Womack classic, *Lookin' For a Love*, but with horns and Magic Dick's harp the rendition comes off as good but pale compared to Ryan Shaw's recent scorching treatment of the song.

Magic Dick reworks his feature with J. Geils, *Whammer Jammer* as well as capably revives Little Walter's *Tell Me Mama* (although the composer credits should be Robert Brown aka Washboard Sam, not Little Walter).

Deanna is heard on many of the tracks, with her original *Still the Girl in the Band*, a good song with a very nice vocal and some varied piano playing in her solo that shows her range from a strong, if generic boogie woogie pianist to a sophisticated jazz-tinged blues player.

The remake of Billy Preston's *Will It Go Round In Circles* is adequate, but it is not nearly funky enough a groove. There is a nice rendition by Curtis Salgado of the late Jimmy Rogers' *If It Ain't Me*, and Marcia Ball handles the vocal (and Deanna switches to sax) on the closing track, Frankie Ford's *Sea Cruise*, although the accompaniment lacks the New Orleans groove of the Ford 45.

There's nothing poor and there is some very good music, although little here is really exceptional. The most direct appeal of this will be to fans of the Delbert McClinton styled roadhouse rock that Castro's music is not far removed from, but most blues fans will really enjoy this.

On a five star rating system I would probably give it 3 1/2 or 4 stars which is a pretty good rating after all.

Ron Weinstock

ERIC Lindell
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RICH in LOVE

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JACOB FRED JAZZ ODYSSEY

Lil' Tae Rides Again

HYENA

Their new offering may put off those looking for the JFJO's rock-solid jazz chops and smarts. Those who are more into this most distinctive outfit's minimalist instincts, however, may find more to chew on.

JFJO's collaborator and producer here is electronica personality Tey Meyulks and it's that genre's preoccupation with atmosphere that is this disc's governing aesthetic. Sometimes stark, other times serene and most often engaging, the synthetic sonic paintings of *Lil' Tae* suggest more a departure than a development for this most innovative outfit.

Duane Verh

LUTHER ALLISON

Underground

RUF RECORDS

Luther Allison was a relatively young artist, probably in his late twenties, when he recorded the eight tracks on this new release.

Ruf Records, on its website, has disavowed Art Tipaldi's incredible liner notes which erroneously cast this as Luther's debut in 1958. One of the eight songs, a cover of Ricky Allen's "Cut You Loose," was recorded in the mid-sixties, which should have tipped off Tipaldi. Anyway, it was likely recorded in 1969 or 1970, and Luther was selling it in Spring of 1971 as if it was a bootleg (plain white album cover with cut out in center to see the record label). The original vinyl album is quite rare (I have one of the copies). It sounds intermediary between his Delmark album and his first Motown album (and a few songs here would be on the Motown disc) and is pretty good showing a bit of influence of Freddie King on the opening "Hideaway" (Allison's usual opening number at the time) and Magic Sam on "Easy Baby."

This is pretty straight blues, and not rocked out as some of his later recordings are and a bit more restrained than those who have heard his more well known recordings may be used to hearing, but musically it is good and shows what a good vocalist he was. Bobby Rush produced this recording, and shared the bass duties on it.

Ron Weinstock

MARCUS MILLER

Marcus

CONCORD RECORDS

Marcus Miller is among the top electric bassists on the scene, and his albums continue to find him moving in many different areas. I saw his band live at a jazz festival last year and there can be no question they put on a hell of a show. Many of the songs here were part of his set, including a fresh reworking of Miles Davis' "Jean Pierre," a song he played on during his nearly decade-long stint as an integral member of Miles' band. Two others are a sweet version of "When I Fall In Love," with Miller playing bass clarinet, and a version of Stevie Wonder's "Higher Ground."

He opens with "Blast," a song with a middle-eastern

feel, which features a very healthy dose of Miller's funk basswork. Many of the other songs are funk vehicles, some featuring vocals by Miller. He has some guests, such as Corinne Bailey Rae who sings on "Free," one of the songs you should be hearing on both R&B and smooth jazz airwaves. Keb' Mo' adds lead vocals and guitar to another funk tune, "Milky Way," and Lalah Hathaway, daughter of the late Donnie Hathaway, sings on another R&B funk piece, "Ooh."

While "Jean Pierre" and "When I Fall In Love" are probably the only songs that will get airplay on jazz stations, the smooth and R&B outlets should have plenty to choose from, and Marcus' fans will have plenty of his basswork to digest here.

Michael Braxton

MIKE MORGAN

& RANDY MCALLISTER

Stronger Every Day

SEVERN RECORDS

Mike Morgan & the Crawl have been around for a number of years, first recording for Black Top with Darrell Nulisch's vocals fronting the band, later replaced with Lee McBee. For the past two decades he has been putting forth what he describes as 'Classic Blues With a Modern Attitude.' Initially inspired by Stevie Ray Vaughan, he soon developed into anything but a SRV clone, and his band is named after a gritty Goldband single by Guitar Jr. (Lonnie Brooks).

His latest finds him backed by a trio on most of it with organ added on 5 of the 14 tracks. Morgan handles four vocals while McBee adds three and McAllister sings on five tracks. He takes things off in a Stevie Ray groove on the opening shuffle, 'All Night Long,' as he forcefully delivers his tale about crying for his woman and walking the floor all night long, before laying out his solo with a cluster of fast repeated single notes as bassist Drew Allain provides the repeated bass shuffle groove to anchor this performance. McAllister provides a soul-tinged vocal on an R&B flavored message number about stop the killing, 'Where's the Love,' with Morgan's guitar taking on a different tenor.

A bit of swamp blues and Guitar Slim is evoked by Lee McBee's raspy vocal and Morgan's guitar on 'Sweet Angel'. McBee also delivers a superb vocal on the down and out blues, 'I Cried For My Baby.' Morgan takes a nice vocal on a Chicago-styled shuffle for 'You're The One (I'll Miss The Most)' on which McBee adds some nice harp in the vein of Rice Miller. McAllister handles the vocal on the title track, which is a lovely swamp, pop soul ballad, while 'When I Get Back Home,' is more of a classic southern soul ballad. 'The Birthday Song,' is a jaunty song from the point of view of the Birthday Boy that Morgan delivers in a crisp, lively fashion. Morgan shines on a couple instrumentals including an appropriately bouncy 'Okie Dokie Stomp.' As McBee takes the vocal on the closing rocker, 'Time', Morgan takes it out to a very satisfying conclusion for a well-balanced program of blues with roots touches that adds to his body of music that merits more attention than he has generally received.

Ron Weinstock

SABERTOOTH

Dr. Midnite - Live at The Green Mill
DELMARK

Sabertooth is a two-tenor organ group that has been holding down a weekly gig at Chicago's The Green Mill jazz club. Saxophonists Cameron Pfiffner and Pat Mallinger along with Pete Benson on the Hammond B3 and Ted Sirota on the drums hold forth Sunday in the wee early hours (2-5 AM) at The Green Mill.

Sabertooth has held forth there since 1990, and on June 23, 2007, Delmark was there to tape the night and the result is this new CD that captures the two-tenor organ combo in high flight. Delmark likens the two to such past celebrated two tenor tandems as Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis & Johnnie Griffin and Gene Ammons & Sonny Stitt. These two players have been at it together for such a long time, and their empathy certainly shows here, as does the stellar support they also receive from Benson and Sirota.

The two open the disc on flutes for a hint of Scottish flavor before the dig in for Mallinger's 'Blues For C Piff', which quickly illustrates their contrasting styles. Pfiffner comes across to me as showing a bit of Sonny Rollins flavor in his playing while Mallinger is more Coltrane-ish. After each takes their solos, Benson takes a shift before the horns come back, again hinting at taking us to the Scottish highlands, before finishing this solid medium blues number. The melody of 'It's Surely Gonna Flop If It Ain't Got That Bop' may allude to Ellington's 'It Don't Mean a Thing ...,' before the two take flight on this bop flavored original with Mallinger on alto and Pfiffner on soprano, and a nice drum solo by Sirota.

Next up is a marvelous rendition of the Harry Belafonte calypso, 'Mary Anne', with Pfiffner evoking Sonny Rollins as he opens up this marvelous performance with Mallinger on alto again, and the joint passages spiced up by Mallinger alto acting as a commentator to Pfiffner's work here. The title track, a Pfiffner composition, opens with a spoken introduction by him, is a slightly spacey number and followed by a fairly familiar, although unexpected rendition of the theme from the classic television show, 'Odd Couple.' What delightful way they set up the melody before Mallinger opens up on tenor set against a buoyant rhythm, before they start singing 'Don't You think It's Odd' to ride the song out.

The Grateful Dead's 'China Cat Sunflower' closes the album and the music perhaps is a bit less focused, but hardly unlistenable. If I was living in Chicago, I suspect hearing this record would make me want to be well rested on a Saturday night, because Sabertooth is obviously worth staying up for.

Ron Weinstock

SAMUEL JAMES

Famed For Sorrow And Joy
NORTHERN BLUES

Samuel James is a twenty something pre-war blues guitarist hailing from Maine. Coming from a broken family and earning his keep by touring as a tap dancer in his teens, and by busking on the streets of Ireland, he has a relatively rich well of experience to draw upon for this, his second disc.

With a voice that often recalls folk troubadour Greg Brown, James weaves wild tales about colorful characters like *Big Black Ben* who was always one step ahead of the law, *One Eyed Katie*, who "is all woman but no lady" and Sugar Smallhouse who is just ahead of the ladies (and their jealous men!), *Sugar Smallhouse Heads for the Hills*. He also takes a first person look at heart-break, *Mid-December Blues*, and two timing women *Love & Mumbly -Peg*.

Not content to suffer silently he embarks on a multi-year quest for a killer cactus to give to his errant lady on *Sugar Smallhouse and the Legend of the Wandering Siren Cactus*. With a buoyant guitar line segueing into an ominous, angry backdrop you know this one isn't going to end nicely. On *Sunrise Blues* he leaves matters of the flesh and heart behind and tells the chilling tale of a man waiting helplessly for the noose.

When he's not weaving tales with his lyrics he lets his national resophonic do the talking with dark, hypnotic strumming morphing into intricate finger-picking on *Woowoooo Rosa* and on the slicing, slide fueled, *Runnin' From My Baby's Gun*, *Whilst previously Watchin' Butterflies From My Front Porch* which, along with *The "Here Comes Nina" Country Rag Time Surprise* and *Big Black Ben*, appeared on his independent debut, *The Return of Sugar Smallhouse*.

This is a terrific disc for those who enjoy an occasional foray into pre-war finger-style blues but who can't really relate to the too often told tales of picking cotton in the Delta heat.

Mark Smith

MYRA MELFORD,

MARK DRESSER, MATT WILSON

Big Picture

CRYPTOGRAMOPHONE

Pianist Myra Melford emerged during the late 1980s and has since appeared on 10 recordings as leader out of more than 30 recording dates. She has been forging ahead with her avant-garde style of jazz that draws from myriad sources, including the blues and boogie-woogie of her Chicago hometown, musical elements of India and Eastern Europe and influences of her studies with Don Pullen and Henry Threadgill.

On this seven-tune disc, Melford performs with like-minded bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Matt Wilson, who both have recorded as leaders. Named "Trio M," the band played their first gig together in January 2006. Each musician contributes original tunes to this December 2006 session. One of the most ear-catching tunes is Wilson's perky, "Native Art," with some arco basslines, a little blues trill on the piano and a childlike, time-switching experi-

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mentation on the drums. On her 13-minute title tune, Melford injects a bit of sweeping Pullen-like keyboard swirls, while Dresser and Wilson react to her with fierce energy and abatement. Dresser's gem is "Modern Pine," a bluesy inside-out piece that shifts tempos.

In addition to leading other groups, Melford is currently Assistant Professor of Improvisational Performance and Compositional Practices in the Music Department at University of California—Berkeley. Dresser has been on the music scene since 1972 and has worked with an array of free-jazz artists. He is a professor of music at the University of California—San Diego. Wilson currently works out of New York, where he has collaborated with Lee Konitz, Tim Hagans and others and where he leads his Arts & Crafts band.

These are not tunes you'll hum to, but Trio M palatably keeps their music full of surprise and ingenuity.

Nancy Ann Lee

JESSY J

Tequila Moon CONCORD/PEAK

Smooth jazz has a new artist, and this one is going to be making waves (no pun intended). Jessy J is a young woman who plays tenor and soprano saxes and flute, and she plays them all very well. She co-wrote most of the tunes here with Paul Brown, who produced this album as he has many others which went on to become hits on smooth jazz radio. Paul lends his guitar work to most of the songs as well.

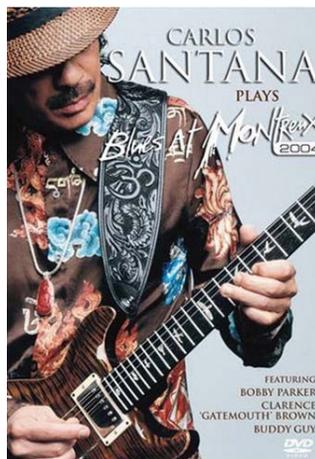
Although the album was just released in early March, the opening title track has been doing well on the smooth stations and the Billboard Contemporary Jazz Charts. It, like others here, is a very melodic Latin tinged pop/jazz song. Her tone, especially on tenor sax, is very rich and her thoughtful solos provide enjoyable listening throughout, such as on the sweet bossa nova "Sin Ti/Without You," one she co-wrote with Brown.

While many others in the smooth genre add their own vocal tracks to their albums with very mixed results, on songs often without much merit, just the opposite is true of Jessy. The two vocals she handles, and rather nicely, are sung in Spanish. One is Brazilian singer/songwriter Jorge Ben's bossa nova made popular by Sergio Mendes in 1966 titled "Mas Que Nada" (if the title does not ring a bell, the song certainly will) and the other, another bossa ballad, is the late Mexican songwriter Consuelo Velazquez' popular "Besame Mucho." Jessy sings in an airy, sweet, kind of innocent sounding voice which works well, especially on "Mas Que Nada." All the songs here are not ballads, as she does get into a bit of somewhat more energetic stuff such as an original, "Fiesta Velada," which gives her some stretching room on the tenor. Two other well-chosen and well-performed covers on the disc are Phoebe Snow's "Poetry Man" and Leon Russell's "Song For You."

Jessica Spinella, a girl who began playing piano at age 4 and has been performing before audiences of varying sizes ever since, grew up, changed her name to Jessy J and has released one of the finest debut albums in the smooth jazz arena I have heard in a long time. I would have to bet she is destined to head in only one direction...up. Very nice.

Bill Wahl

DVDs



CARLOS SANTANA Carlos Santana Plays Blues At Montreux 2004 EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

Last year we reviewed the three DVD set Carlos Santana Presents: Blues At Montreux 2004. That fine release presented Carlos sharing the 2004 Montreux Jazz Festival stage with three notable bluesmen: the late Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown was on one disc, Bobby Parker on another, and Buddy Guy on the third platter. It was certainly a music-filled package with countless moments to savor. But, at \$24.98 list, it may have been a bit more than some fans could spend.

Now Eagle Eye Media has issued a condensed version of that set on one DVD for a list price that is ten dollars less. Pretty much everyone I have talked to who has seen this concert on the three DVD set has a different opinion regarding which guest they like the best and in which order. But it really does not matter, as all three are not only very good, but also very different. And perhaps that is what makes it so enjoyable, while not growing tiresome at all...especially over the course of the three disc set. What you get here are four songs with Gatemouth, three with Parker and four with Guy, two of which are jam sessions. As with the previous set, singer Barbara Morrison deserves special mention for her contributions on some of the songs.

The three bluesmen featured were all influences on Santana, who states "All of these musicians paved the road for Eric Clapton, Michael Bloomfield, Peter Green, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page and me." And while Buddy Guy has enjoyed commercial success over the past years, blues fans should all be aware of all three. A fine set at a good price.

Bill Wahl

LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS



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DUKE ELLINGTON Duke Ellington at the Cote D'Azur with Ella Fitzgerald and Joan Miro Duke:

The Last Jam Session EAGLE EYE MEDIA

This two-DVD set adds to existing videos of the late bandleader-pianist Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Disc One was filmed on July 26 and 29, 1966 in the south of France and Disc Two in an

informal studio jam session on January 8, 1973.

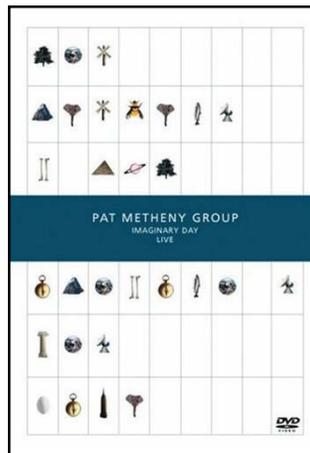
Disc One opens with sepia-toned moving and still shots of the seashore at Cote D' Azur. Near the end of this disc, Ella Fitzgerald sings three tunes with her trio (Jimmy Jones, piano; Jim Houghardt, bass; Grady Tate, drums) and the Ellington Orchestra. The peak of her performance is "Jazz Samba," a trio tune which features one of her all-time best scatting solos—full of cleverness and quotes. Ellington and his first-rate musicians perform five tunes in various venues (including a trio set at a museum with Joan Miro). One my favorites is the Ellington Orchestra performance of "The Old Circus Train Turn-Around Blues," because it spotlights a great solo by saxophonist Johnny Hodges (b. 1907—d. 1970). Solos by saxophonists Harry Carney and Paul Gonzalves; trumpeters Cat Anderson and Cootie Williams and others make viewing and listening enjoyable.

Disc Two, a previously unreleased video, features 73-year-old Ellington at the piano in an informal studio session with guitarist Joe Pass, bassist Ray Brown and drummer Louie Bellson. Among the Ellingtonia they play are "Squeeze Me," "Prelude to a Kiss," and "Cottontail." The bonus feature is an informal nine-plus minute interview, 25 years later, with Ray Brown.

This DVD set continues the "Norman Granz presents" series. You'll tend to forgive some of the editing annoyances on Disc one, where scenes jump from one venue to another with no fade or titles, because the music and videos are so terrific. Plus, most if not all of the musicians are gone now. The unstaged performance on Disc Two is so relaxed, you'll feel as if you are watching from the sidelines. The 12-page liner booklet includes notes from Jacques Muyal and Claude Carrière. Both DVDs are interesting to hear and watch and the set is affordable at \$19.95 retail.

Nancy Ann Lee

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PAT METHENY GROUP

Imaginary Day Live EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

Pat Metheny and this publication both come on to the scene in the mid seventies. When listening to Metheny's music I am often reminded, by that voice in my head that is, of when I printed a review of one of his first albums which I had not heard. I was still learning this end of the business myself, and trusted

what a rather new reviewer wrote. He basically said the music sucked. When I heard the album, I was not only quite angry, but also very embarrassed. And that was the end of that reviewer. Let's face it; Pat Metheny's music does not suck. In fact, it is about as far from that is it could get. The 1977 album The Pat Metheny Group is still one of the most uplifting albums I have ever heard. Pat's music continues to be very bright and uplifting today.

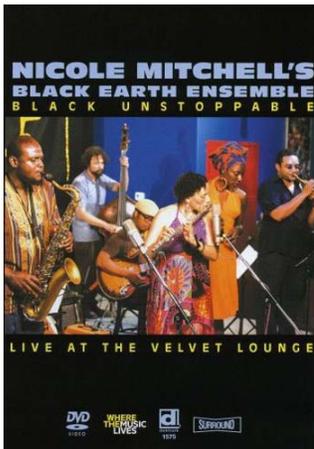
This concert, recorded and filmed in 1998 at the Mountain Winery in Saratoga, California, is simply another perfect example of just how good this band can pick up your spirit right from the very first notes until the last. This version of the band included Pat's longtime collaborator, pianist Lyle Mays, Steve Rodby/bass, Paul Wertico/drums, Mark Ledford/trumpet/vocals/percussion/guitar, Philip Hamilton/vocals/percussion/guitar and Jeff Haynes/percussion.

This performance was part of the band's tour in support of its 1997 album of the same name, and it contains roughly the same songs. It does not contain two songs they played on the CD, "Too Soon Tomorrow" and "The Awakening." But, on the other hand, the final three were not from that CD, but were featured on other Metheny albums; "Message To A Friend," "September Fifteenth" and Minuano (Six Eight)." It actually has ten songs while the CD has nine. As one would expect from the PMG, the music is performed and recorded incredibly well as they mix jazz with rock and classical and touch on a bit of outside stuff here and there, but always remain very much accessible. It is not the first release of this concert, as Pioneer issued it on DVD in 2001, and I cannot say if there is any difference not having seen that version. But the song order is the same.

The audio offerings are stereo, Dolby 5.1 and DTS. If your equipment will handle it, do the DTS. While, as mentioned, the sound quality is first class all the way, the only drawback to some will be the video work, which would be more suited for a Pink Floyd concert than a Metheny show.

But that aside, this is a *very* fine concert by a *very* fine band...and is *very* much recommended. *Bill Wahl*

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NICOLE MITCHELL'S BLACK EARTH ENSEMBLE

Black Unstoppable: Live at the Velvet Lounge DELMARK DVD OR CD

Flutist Nicole Mitchell's Black Earth Ensemble was founded in 1998 and is a large ensemble, generally consisting of five to nine players. For this performance, Mitchell leads David Boykin (tenor saxophone, percussion),

David Young (trumpet, flugelhorn), Jeff Parker (guitar), Tomeka Reid (cello, shakere), Josh Abrams (bass), Marcus Evans (drums), and, on three tunes, vocalist Ugochi Nwaogwugwu.

Mitchell is an accomplished and imaginative player, perhaps not as powerful as jazz flutist Holly Hoffmann but Mitchell's talents as composer give her an edge. Inspired by the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, of which Mitchell is co-president, she contributes all of the interesting, organic, original (often personal) tunes for this performance, a diverse collection of appealing new songs that dip into blues, R&B, classical tinges, and more.

Her musicians are supportive and serve up satisfying solos in the spotlight, especially Young, whose talents seem to speak the same language as Mitchell, most notably on the tune, "Cause and Effect," a flowing 11:25-minute tune that finds everyone in peak form. One tune featuring Oguchi, "Life Wants You To Love," was written by Mitchell about her teenage daughter, with lyrics that begin, "Your body is a woman, but you mind is still a child..."

Mitchell was born in Syracuse, New York and moved as a youngster with her family to California where she later began formal study in classical flute and took private lessons from flutist James Newton, one of her earlier inspirations. She studied at Oberlin Conservatory of Music and in 1990 went to Chicago, where she settled permanently in 1993.

Five cameras captured this live-recorded concert at Fred Anderson's Chicago club on June 8—9, 2007. It's a visually stimulating and colorful venture, although the overuse of artsy techniques (slow motion, overlays, etc.) distract a bit from the music.

This is Mitchell's fourth recording, first DVD and her debut on Delmark. It is also available on CD, recorded at Riverside Studio. Her previous releases were for Dreamtime Records, a label she shares with David Boykin. The DVD also contains Mitchell's audio commentary and once you have watched the performance (without commentary), you should definitely watch again to just listen to her commentary, which reveals a lot about her.

The group members, the music, and more that is not included in the DVD liner notes by Kalamu ya Salaam. Mitchell is absolutely a talent deserving of widest exposure. This is an inspired performance. *Nancy Ann Lee*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Blue Note A Story Of Modern Jazz EUROARTS DVD

This very informative DVD written and directed by Julian Benedikt traces the label of labels in the history of jazz – Blue Note Records. Benedikt begins with Alfred Lion discovering jazz as a teenager in Germany and later bolting from Nazi Germany headed for America, where he founded Blue Note Records with his German friend, Francis Wolff in 1939.

Throughout this 90-minute movie, which was first released on VHS in 1997, you will hear from a slew of musicians raving and telling tales about the label, Lion and Wolff. Many are musicians who recorded for Blue Note, such as Freddie Hubbard; and many others did not, such as Carlos Santana. Nonetheless, the musicians, fans and others you hear from offer many a tale that most any true jazz fan will find of interest. There are also many live segments, not entire songs, but clips of Blue Note artists over the years, such as Hubbard, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Horace Silver, Sonny Rollins, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones and others. There is music going on just about all the time, whether from the live clips or beneath the tracks of the many speakers. And, of course a story on Blue Note would not be complete without touching on recording engineer guru Rudy Van Gelder, who also does a bit of talking himself. Then there is the sampling and remixes of Blue Note recordings, which has been going on in more recent years and has been very popular in European dance clubs. Oh, and yes, then there are those wonderful Blue Note album covers.

There is much more, but you don't want to hear it all now. Why spill all the beans and spoil the experience. This is just loaded with stories, facts, tales, tidbits, clips, Francis Wolff's classic photos and most of all, music. At \$28.98 list it may be a bit pricey for some, but a bit of Internet surfing should find you a good price. While I generally don't watch documentaries such as this more than once or twice, I have a good feeling this one will get many repeat runs. Perhaps sometime we will see a DVD released of some of the performances seen in clips here in their entirety...that would be sweet.

How can any fan of the music not love Blue Note Records? This DVD, which offers subtitles in English, German, French and Spanish, tells the story very well.

Bill Wahl

BIG GEORGE BROCK

Live At Seventy Five CAT HEAD CD Hard Times CAT HEAD DVD

Born in the delta where he sharecropped, later moving north he was a heavyweight boxer and the owner of St. Louis' Club Caravan. In recent years he has developed a following based on his somewhat raw, downhome style. Cat Head has just issued his most recent recording, *Live at Seventy Five* that was captured in performance at the Ground Zero Blues Club. Backed by his regular band of Riley Coatie Sr. and Bill Abel on guitar, Barry

Bays on bass, and Riley Coatie Jr. on drums, he belts out his folks and blasts some harp. Nothing too refined or subtle as the guitarists lay out their riffs, and Brock blasts some simple, effective harp. He has an affection for Howlin' Wolf's material as shown on *Forty-Four Blues* while *M For Mississippi* is a rocker with his simple harp riffs that sounds like only the drummer is accompanying him. Little Walter's *Everything Is Gonna Be Alright* benefits from his passionate singing although Brock does not display a level of fluency on the harp to support the claims of some that he is heavyweight blues harpist, but on a slow blues *Bring the Blues Back Home*, his vocals prove to be very formidable.

Cathead has also issued the DVD **Hard Times**, which includes both performances by Brock as well as interview segments and is very entertaining and illuminating. I found the music in the DVD stronger than his CDs, which may benefit by the fact that the documentary character of the DVD breaks up the performances. It is one of the better DVDs I have seen recently.

Brock's CDs and DVDs are available at amazon, cdbaby.com and better retailers. The Cat Head website is www.cathead.biz.

Ron Weinstock

books

GYPSY JAZZ: IN SEARCH OF DJANGO REINHARDT AND THE SOUL OF GYPSY SWING by Michael Dregni OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Michael Dregni, who authored the highly regarded biography, *Django: the Life and Music of a Gypsy Legend*, and co-author of *Django Reinhardt And the Illustrated History of Gypsy Jazz*, adds to the literature on the Gypsy Jazz tradition that emerged from Django's innovative music with **Gypsy Jazz: In Search of Django Reinhardt and the Soul of Gypsy Swing**. Its a historical chronicle of the music that was founded by Reinhardt and which thrives today with musicians still inspired by Django and extending his music with his modern musical descendants being as exhilarating and original as Reinhardt was seventy odd years ago.

Dregni centers the book around Django and his biography but weaves in the world he was raised in and how that world changed as he grew up. We are taken to the Gypsy Caravans, the world of Gypsies and their music and musicians, and the musical scene of Paris and France dominated by the accordion based musette. Django's biography is set forth as we are to the luthiers of Paris and the guitars that Django and his contemporaries used and the Pigatelle, which is where many of the bals and dance halls were. The threads of his life are presented from his learning violin, banjo and then guitar, as he worked in the Russian cabarets, and the dance halls, his early exposure to jazz and the near fatal figure that left his left hand disfigured and scarred and where he had only use of the index and middle fingers and had to learn new fingerings and chord forms.

There is the meeting with Stéphane Grappelli, the jams that led to the formation of the Quintette du Hot Club de

France and the recordings under the auspices of Charles Delauney, first rejected by a major label because they were viewed as too modern.

He traces how the Quintette became a sensation including a triumphant European tour cut short by the Second World War, and how music was Django's salvation during World War II, as his fellow Gypsies, like the Jews, were carted off to the death camps, as he played what the Nazi propagandists labeled 'degenerate music.' A new quintette was formed with clarinet replacing violin and a drummer added and in the midst of the horrors of the war, Django waxed two of his most famous recordings, the impressionist Nuages, and Les Yeux Noirs, or 'Dark Eyes'. After World War II, Django was affected by the new harmonies and rhythms of bebop and continued to evolve musically. He toured America with Duke Ellington, and in 1953 he died of a cerebral hemorrhage and his singular musical voice was stilled.

As Dregni makes quite clear, the story of Django Reinhardt was not the only story of Gypsy jazz. There were contemporaries of his that were working along similar lines in the era of what was revolutionary musical changes. And he introduces us to Django's contemporaries such as his brother Joseph 'Nin-Nin'; The Ferret brothers, Baro, Sarane and Matelo; legendary guitarist Tchan Tchou; Lousson Baumgartner (Django's son from his common-law wife); accordionist Gus Viseur (who made pioneering recordings with Baro including *Swing Valse*); and their musical descendants including Les Freres Ferré, Jean-Jacques Boulou' and Elié 'Elios', Stochelo Rosenberg, Birelli Lagrene, Dallas Baumgartner, Angello DeBarre, (Django's great-grandson); David Reinhardt (Django's grandson), and the American gypsies such as Johnny Guitar and Danny Fenders (Google his name and you will come across a you tube video that the author posted that will blow your mind).

This volume is far more than a litany of performer bios. Dregni brings the performers and their world to life. He takes us into their world, catching them at performances and welcomed into their caravans. He vividly describes the annual pilgrimage by the gypsies at Les Saintes-Marie-de-la-Mer with annual religious rituals and celebrations. He provides the cultural history and beliefs underlying this annual celebration, which also provides a period of fervent musical cross-pollination by different musical traditions brought together along with a certain craziness.

He describes a lesson in Django's style that David Reinhardt teaches him and takes us to a performance by Danny Fender and His Band of Gypsies at San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts Theater. In meeting Dallas Baumgartner, he is taken to the caravan of Dallas' grandmother, Madame Rose. There is the touching moment when he is sharing family pictures of Django (that had been collected by Charles Delauney) with, Madame Rose, who had never seen photos of Django as a young man, and when she sees him at 18 with Madame Rose's mother, Bella, and Rose has tears in her eyes as she had never seen a picture of her mother as a young girl. Dregni leaves the photo with her.

The author's passion for his subject can be infectious. This writer purchased **Django Reinhardt And the Illustrated History of Gypsy Jazz** after reading this pre-release copy, as well as a number of recordings that Dregni recommends here. A remarkable work that serves as a marvelous entrance into this fascinating and exhilarating music.

Ron Weinstock
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29th Annual TRI-C JazzFest Cleveland

A Tribute to American Classics 2008

- Thu., April 17** Kick-off Parade and Celebration
- Thu., April 17** Jazz Meets Hip-Hop, Part 6
- Fri., April 18** John Pizzarelli & The Cleveland Jazz Orchestra Salute Frank Sinatra with special guest Nnenna Freelon
- Sat., April 19** Jazz for Kids
- Sat., April 19** Women in Jazz
- Sat., April 19** Jason Miles: Celebrating the Music of Marvin Gaye and Motown
- Sun., April 20** The Ernie Krivda Trio
- Sun., April 20** Debut Series – The JD Allen Trio
- Tue., April 22** Eddie Baccus, Sr.
- Tue., April 22** Debut Series – The Amina Figarova Sextet
- Wed., April 23** The Vijay Iyer Quartet
- Thu., April 24** Tri-C JazzFest Showcase
- Thu., April 24** The Joshua Redman Trio
- Fri., April 25** An Evening of Natalie Cole
- Sat., April 26** R N R featuring Rick Braun and Richard Elliot
- Sun., April 27** Jazz Brunch with Dominick Farinacci
- Sun., April 27** The Marcus Roberts Trio

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