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McCoy Tyner

Duke Ellington Jazz Festival Reviewed

2008 Holiday Gift Guide

jazz & blues report

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On the Cover

The great McCoy Tyner at the piano at the
2008 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival.

All DEJF photos by Ron Weinstock.



"Buffalounious"

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

The 2008 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival



A Review By Ron Weinstock

I was planning to attend several of the shows at this year's Duke Ellington Jazz Festival at the Nation's Capital, Washington DC, but a severe sinus infection limited me. It cleared up finally so I could attend the free Sunday afternoon concert at the Sylvan Theatre at the foot of the Washington Monument on the National Monument on October 5. I am aware from local press of some inspired music. The Israeli-born saxophonist and clarinetist, Anat Cohen, performed at the Museum of Women in the Arts, and was joined on stage by Paquito D'Rivera for what turned out to be quite an exciting clarinet battle while the D.C. Bass Choir's performance with guest Christian McBride, as part of the annual NEA Jazz Masters concert, was highly regarded as well.

I arrived at the Sylvan Theatre in time to watch the marvelous acapella vocal group from Howard University, Afro Blue. Their marvelous voices sang vocalese, jazz classics, standards and show tunes, and old spirituals including "Sometimes I'm Happy," "Surrey With a Fringe On Top," "There Will Never Be Another You," "His Eyes Are on the Sparrow," "Keep on Pushing," "Abide With Me," and "Spain." During their performance, alumni of the group joined in, with one of the singers evoking the great Donny Hathaway, but all of the singers were wonderful and it was magical listening to them. They have a CD available on cdbaby.com, and certainly they left a warm impression on all those who heard them.

After a lengthy intermission (they were having problems setting up an electric piano), Taj Mahal and his trio (bassist Bill Rich and drummer Kester Smith) came up for a set of blues and related music. Despite taking a long time to set up, Rich's bass seemed a bit loud and muddled the sound a bit. Oddly enough, during the second song of Taj's set photographers were told that he had requested no photography during the performance, and members of the Festival staff even went into the crowd, not simply the photographer's pit. Also, most of the television cameras that enabled the performance to be seen on the large screen adjacent to the stage were turned off. This was curious because every other time I have seen Taj there were no issues as to photographers shooting his performance, whereas I am aware of jazz artists often being more restrictive. As far as the music went, it was a varied set that proved Taj's statement that "Blues Make You Feel So Good." Performances included "Checking On My Baby," "Annie Mae," and "Easy Rider Blues." In honor of Duke Ellington he sang a jazzy ballad, "Baby Your My Destiny," and then performed an Afro-Beat tinged "Zanzibar." Taj had been performing world beat music for decades, long before it became common fashion. Another song, "Good Morning, Ms Brown," suggested a Robert Johnson melody and was followed by such favorites of his repertoire as "Fishin' Blues," and "Queen Bee." He played guitar and then some



Three members of Afro Blue piano before picking up a banjo and getting into a hot breakdown.

Bassist Christian McBride's Band followed after a short break and set change. His quartet (Geoffrey Keezer on piano, Ron Blake on saxophone and Terreon Gully on drums) has been together for some time and the empathy they have for each other is quite high. The set featured a number of songs from his "Live at Tonic" recording, opening with a spacey number that mixed straight-ahead and more electronic jazz into a swinging blend. Blake soared, Keezer romped and Gully kept the groove going, while the leader switched between a double bass and a bass guitar as they handled his "Technicolor Nightmare," Keezer's "Hibiscus," Blake's "Sonic Tonic" and Gully's "Say Something" before closing the set with Joe Zawinul's "Boogie Woogie Waltz." Moving from spacey Pink Floyd tinged psychedelia to sharp hard bop, this was quite a vibrant band.

Trombonist Conrad Herwig's Latin Side followed with



Taj Mahal



Paquito D'Rivera

a set that featured Latin jazz reworkings of songs from Miles Davis and John Coltrane (Herwig's Latin Side has issued acclaimed records "Latin Side of John Coltrane," "Another Kind of Blue: The Latin Side of Miles Davis" and more recently "Sketches of Spain y Mas"). During his set, festival director clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera joined saxophonist Craig Handy and trumpeter Diego Urcola as part of the fine band that also included Bill O'Connell on piano, Reuben Rodriguez on bass, Johnny Rivero on congas and Bobby Amin on drums. There was a hot opening rendition of "Seven Steps to Heaven" and Trane's "Lonnie's Lament" before D'Rivera joined for selections from Herwig's "Another Side of Blue" for exhilarating renditions of "So What" and "All Blues." Herwig, Handy, and Urcola, as well as D'Rivera were first-rate.

There was a longer delay between sets as they tuned the piano for McCoy Tyner's set, with the great pianist joined by Gary Bartz on alto sax, Gerald Cannon on bass and Eric Kamau Gravatt on drums for a propulsive set that had many highlights, with the uplifting feel of Tyner's "Fly With the Wind" and the rocking version of Duke Ellington's "In a Mellow Tone" standing out. It was during Tyner's set that I eased out and headed home, not wishing to push my immune system to far. The festival schedule was ambitious, and probably a bit more time might have been allocated between performers. Tyner was still playing at a point when closing act Dee Dee Bridgewater was supposed to be near the end of her set. I understand she totally captivated the audience. Other than the performances starting and running late, and remember this is a free concert, it was yet another marvelous day in the sun in the Duke's hometown. The Festival continues to present such a varied schedule of events and I understand that next year's festival will have New Orleans as a theme. I am certainly looking forward to it.

All photos by Ron Weinstock

Rock Hall to Open Annex in New York City

CLEVELAND OH – This fall, New York City's love of music will hit a high note. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum will open a 25,000 square foot ANNEX location in the heart of Soho at 76 Mercer Street. This experiential, technologically advanced exhibition will focus on the greatest moments in rock history and will resonate with everyone from the casual music fan to the seasoned rock enthusiast.

The Annex will take visitors beyond the typical museum experience, and engage people in a dynamic and immersive music journey that recalls some of the defining moments in rock and roll history through the artists that changed our world. Visitors will discover the moments ignited by music revolutionaries like John Lennon, Madonna, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Dylan. The exhibits will highlight rock and roll's impact on music, allowing visitors to discover, or rediscover, their connection to it all.

"New York City has a longstanding reputation as the land of opportunity for aspiring artist and musicians, and as a result some of the most internationally-celebrated musical performers of this Century have had their start right here on our streets," said Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "It's only fitting that the role our City has played in launching the careers of so many of the world's most talented artists be recognized and honored with the opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Annex.

The Annex will showcase selected artifacts from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum's vast collection. The Annex will also extend the Museum's mission to honor key cities that have helped shape the history of rock and roll.

"Establishing outposts like these is becoming a strategy of other major institutions," said Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum CEO Terry Stewart, citing the Guggenheim Museum of New York, Britain's Tate Modern and the Louvre in Paris as examples. "These projects allow museums to extend their reach, but also provide space to travel exhibits and allow curators to display some of our priceless artifacts for the first time outside of Cleveland."

The iconic Museum in Cleveland, designed by I.M. Pei, is the centerpiece and starting point for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's telling of the story of rock and roll. The 150,000 square-foot facility celebrates the history and impact of rock music with exhibits, films, interactive kiosks, education programs and public events.

"Rock and roll is embedded in the history of our times and has changed the world around us," said co-founder of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and editor and publisher of Rolling Stone Magazine Jann Wenner. "The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and now its extension, the Annex, help us to illustrate in a tangible way music's impact on the cultural, social and political history of the modern era."

The experience begins as soon as visitors enter the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Annex.

- **Hall of Fame:** This initial area pays tribute to each and every artist inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and introduces, ignites and primes the audience.

- **Immersive Theater:** An engaging and dynamic movie experience that uses immersive audio and visual technology to highlight some of the most explosive performance moments in rock history including Bob Dylan, The Beatles, Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, The Who and Patti Smith.

From this point on, visitors will receive a set of high-quality PX200 Sennheiser stereo headphones and a state-of-the-art wireless audio system. As visitors walk freely around the exhibit, they will hear only relevant music specific to the gallery zones they are experiencing.

- **Roots ... Influences:** A visual and musical discovery of how yesterday's music legends have influenced the chart-toppers at the forefront of today's music scene; bringing to life musical timelines of genres such as R...B, Hip Hop and Blues Rock. Hear how the best selling albums of 50 Cent and Notorious B.I.G. have been shaped by the genius of James Brown, and how Velvet Underground has guided Coldplay's expressive style.

- **Moments to Movements:** This area within the Annex will take visitors on a journey of the musical moments that created and defined powerful movements, and showcases many exciting and rare rock items. Examples include a white Vox electric guitar from The Beatles that has never been showcased elsewhere, the necklace Jimi Hendrix wore at Monterey Pop Festival in one of the most notable live performances ever, and the handwritten lyrics to 'U.S. Blues' by The Grateful Dead. An electrifying soundtrack brings these items to life throughout this gallery.

- **New York Rocks:** As an ongoing homage to a city that has been so integral in music history, the Annex will have a permanent "New York Rocks" exhibition that will include an oversized interactive map to highlight key locations around Manhattan that have musical significance, including Studio 54 and The Chelsea Hotel. The gallery also includes the notebook in which Billy Joel wrote all the lyrics for "The Stranger" album, the 'Big Suit' worn onstage by David Byrne in Talking Heads, and many of the physical elements, including the front awning and cash register, from the recently closed CBGB, the infamous club that is so entrenched in New York rock history.

- **Cleveland Rocks:** The Annex will include special exhibits and displays that give visitors a taste of the larger experience at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. These exhibits will showcase elements of the Cleveland Museum's collection and engage in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame experience via visitation, membership, online participation and/or philanthropic support.

Other highlights throughout include an untitled, handwritten poem by Jim Morrison, Elvis Presley's motorcycle jacket, Michael Jackson's velvet jacket from "We Are The World", John Lennon's Record Plant Piano, Bruce Springsteen's 1957 Chevy and much, much more. About the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Mu-

seum

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is the nonprofit organization that exists to educate visitors, fans and scholars from around the world about the history and continuing significance of rock and roll music. It carries out this mission both through its operation of a world-class museum that collects, preserves, exhibits and interprets this art form and through its library and archives as well as its educational programs.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Annex NYC is proudly sponsored by Best Buy, Diesel for Bloomingdales, Citi and Gibson. Additional supporting partners include Sony, Sennheiser, Klein + Hummel, Kohler and Brocade Home.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame ANNEX NYC will open in November at 76 Mercer Street in Soho. Advance tickets will be available through www.RockAnnex.com

Abu Dhabi Jazz Festival

ABHI DHABI UAE – Chillout Productions is to bring back the Abu Dhabi Jazz Festival with a breath-taking compilation of jazz artists to heavily sway the capital.

The long awaited comeback of the festival will gratify the fans with quality music and live entertainment, taking place at the venue that originally hosted this exclusive happening in 2002, the Beach Rotana Hotel in Abu Dhabi.

The 5th edition of the Abu Dhabi Jazz Festival is to be identified for its extension of days; the riposte is to offer three days of live performances with the participation of 12 internationally recognized bands.

The audience will enjoy what the convivial venue has to offer in terms of casual set-up, the hospitable treat and the oceanic scene in the rear of the vibrant stage.

The festival is to start on November 20 and tie up on the November 22.

“The festival is revived intensively due to the high demand from fans in the capital and the appreciation of quality entertainment that our audience has. We are excited about the “to be announced” line-up since it is going to be a great attraction and amazement for many” said Anthony Younes, Managing Director of Chillout Productions, founders and organizers of Abu Dhabi Jazz Festival.

Tickets are on sale now on boxofficeceme.com and will be available at all Virgin Megastores, selected Hallmark, Spinneys and Cellucome outlets. Ticket for each night is sold separately at AED 200.

Abu Dhabi Jazz Festival 2008 is brought to you by Network International, Beach Rotana Abu Dhabi and Thomsun Yamaha and with the media support of Gulf News, Radio 2, What's On, TLC Media and City 7 TV.

For further information, please log on to www.abudhabijazzfest.com.

Chillout Productions, founders, and organizers of the Skywards Dubai International Jazz Festival, the Abu Dhabi Jazz festival and the Abu Dhabi Latino Fiesta.

International Songwriting Competition (ISC) Extends Deadline Until December 1

NASHVILLE – The International Songwriting Competition (ISC) has extended its submission deadline until December 1, 2008. ISC will continue to take online, mail-in, and MySpace entries until this date. All entries must be postmarked or uploaded online on or before December 1, 2008. So, if you have not already entered ISC and wish to do so, you still have time to enter.

ISC gives away over \$150,000 in cash and prizes to 62 winners in 20 categories. The Overall Grand Prize includes \$25,000 (US) in cash - the largest cash Grand Prize of any songwriting competition in the world. ISC is open to all levels of amateur and professional songwriters throughout the world.

For more information and an entry form, go to www.songwritingcompetition.com.

A total of 55 high-profile music icons and industry executives have joined together to judge the 2008 ISC. Consistent in its tradition of having such esteemed judges, ISC continues to raise the bar for songwriting competitions. The opportunity to have these judges hear ISC entrants' songs offers an unprecedented chance to access these hard-to-reach, influential decision-makers - the movers and shakers in the music industry.

Candace Avery, Founder and Director of ISC, states, “ISC judges really enjoy discovering new talent and helping aspiring artists move to the next level in their career. Many of our judges have reached out to entrants and helped them to achieve their aspirations. Also, ISC is particularly excited about the recent signing of ISC's Grand Prize winner Gin Wigmore to Islands Records (in Australia and New Zealand) and Universal Records (in the USA). We are thrilled that Gin's success is a direct result of her winning ISC.”

ISC judge Robert Smith, lead singer of The Cure, talks about his participation in the competition. “Judging the competition, I was astounded at the quality and range of abilities on show - the originality, honesty, and depth of so many of the words, the charm, vivacity, and catchiness of the tunes, and the often staggering energy, skill, and intensity of the performances - the talent left me at times breathless! Judging ISC was a real pleasure.”

The complete ISC judging panel includes recording artists Rob Thomas (Matchbox 20); Chaka Khan; Tom Waits; KT Tunstall; Robert Smith (The Cure); Ricky Martin; Loretta Lynn; Neil Finn (Crowded House); Buckcherry; T-Pain; James Cotton; Jerry Lee Lewis; Craig Morgan; Ray Davies (The Kinks); McCoy Tyner; Darryl McDaniels (Run DMC); Michael W. Smith; Chris Hillman (The Byrds); John Scofield; Mario; Black Francis (The Pixies); Youssou N'Dour; John Mayall; DJ Tifsto; Paul Van Dyk; Jon Secada; Natalie Grant; Jeremy Camp; Matt Thiessen (Relient K); Pitbull; Angelique Kidjo; “Weird Al” Yankovic; Sandra Bernhard; and David Brenner.

Also judging are industry executives Monte Lipman

(President, Universal Records); Nick Burgess (Head of A&R, Virgin Records UK); Angel Carrasco (Sr. VP of A&R, Latin America Sony BMG and President, Discos 605); Cameron Strang (President, New West Records); John Echevarria (President, Universal Music Latino); Rick Krim (Executive VP Talent and Programming, VH1); Amy Doyle (Sr. VP of Music and Talent, MTV); Kim Buie (VP of A&R, Lost Highway); Jon Pikus (Director of A&R, MySpace Records); Mitchell Cohen (VP of A&R, Verve Music Group); Bruce Iglauer (Founder/President, Alligator Records); Dan Storper (President, Putumayo World Music); Rene Bell (Executive VP A&R, Sony BMG Nashville); Peter Strickland (Senior VP, Jack Records/Warner Bros.); Steve Lillywhite (Producer - credits include U2, The Rolling Stones, Morrissey, Peter Gabriel, and more); Douglas C. Cohn (Sr. VP, Music Marketing & Talent, Nickelodeon); Cory Robbins (Founder/President, Robbins Entertainment); Betty Pino (DJ, WAMR Miami); Paul Majors (CEO/Founder Majors Music); Leib Ostrow (CEO, Music for Little People); and Dr. Demento (Radio Host of The Dr. Demento Show).

ISC Sponsors include: Luna Guitars, Berklee College Of Music, Shure, D'Addario, M-Audio, Griffin Technology, Hear Technologies, Po Boy Drums, Thayers, Disc Makers, ASCAP, Phase One Studios, Stuph Merch, Sonicbids, Sam Ash, Alphabet Arm Design, Shari's Berries, Taxi, George Stein, Esq., The Music Business Registry, SongU.com, Sibelius, and Onlinegigs.

Blue Note Records Kicks Off Global 70/25 Celebration

NEW YORK – In 2009, Blue Note Records—one of the world's most legendary labels—will celebrate two milestones when it commemorates both the 70th anniversary of the label's founding by Alfred Lion, as well as the 25th anniversary of the its re-launch in 1984 under current President Bruce Lundvall, with a global celebration. In events befitting a label known for offering *The Finest In Jazz Since 1939*, the coming year will feature the music, imagery and legend of Blue Note with a range multi-media offerings, including live concerts, special digital and physical re-issues and new releases, *The Blue Note 7*; an all-star tribute band of current jazz luminaries, book releases, festival honors, merchandise and much more.

Since its very first recording session on January 6, 1939, Blue Note has grown from a small independent label to become the world's premiere and longest-running Jazz label. Today, Blue Note boasts a legendary catalog that includes such Jazz icons as Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Horace Silver, Art Blakey, Jimmy Smith, Grant Green, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner, Donald Byrd, Andrew Hill and Ornette Coleman. The label's current Jazz roster keeps the tradition going, and includes many of today's most important voices such as Patricia Barber, Terence Blanchard, Bill Charlap, Robert Glasper, Lionel Loueke, Joe Lovano, Wynton Marsalis, Jason Moran, Aaron Parks, Dianne Reeves,

Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and Cassandra Wilson. And under Lundvall's watch, Blue Note has tastefully broadened its music pallet beyond jazz to include such acclaimed artists as Priscilla Ahn, Anita Baker, Al Green, Norah Jones, Amos Lee, Willie Nelson and the bird and the bee.

More offerings will be announced throughout the year, but following is a hint of what's to come:

Events will kick off January 7 with the start of a worldwide tour by *The Blue Note 7*; an all-star tribute band comprising pianist Nicholas Payton, alto saxophonist Steve Wilson, tenor saxophonist Ravi Coltrane, guitarist Peter Bernstein, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Lewis Nash. The tour will hit 50 U.S. cities capped off with a week-long run at Birdland in New York April 14-19. A European tour is planned for October-November. On January 13, the septet will be releasing *Mosaic: A Celebration of Blue Note Records*, an eight-song collection of re-envisioned Blue Note classics.

On January 27, Blue Note will kick off a month-long invasion of New York City's clubs and music halls with two Blue Note legends—Lou Donaldson and Dr. Lonnie Smith—at Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola* at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Other artists already confirmed throughout the month of February include Anita Baker, Terence Blanchard, Bill Charlap, Robert Glasper, Norah Jones, Joe Lovano, Lionel Loueke, Wynton Marsalis, Jason Moran, Willie Nelson, Aaron Parks, Dianne Reeves and Cassandra Wilson. Venues will include the Blue Note Jazz Club, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Jazz Standard, Town Hall, and the Village Vanguard.

In addition to the continuation of Blue Note's long-running *RVG Series* (for which the legendary recording engineer Rudy Van Gelder remasters his classic sessions) and *Connoisseur Series* (featuring lesser-known gems from the catalog), the label will also begin reissuing its core *RVG Series* titles as vinyl/CD combos. The label will also be making special digital initiatives available on www.bluenote.com and via digital retail partners around the world. In addition, during the Spring-Summer 2009 clothing company Friend or Foe will also present a line of their vintage-look, luxurious-feel t-shirts featuring classic Blue Note cover artwork and many other brand licensing efforts in multiple categories are in the works as Blue Note furthers its efforts of developing Blue Note as a premium lifestyle brand with licensing agent Fusion

Throughout 2009 several major Jazz festivals will be paying tribute to Blue Note Records. The 6th Annual Portland Jazz Festival in Oregon (February 13-22) will dedicate itself to a celebration of the label—*Somethin' Else: Blue Note Records at 70*—featuring performances from Blue Note's past and present roster, as well as panel discussions about the label's legacy with Bruce Lundvall, Michael Cuscuna, and various Jazz artists, writers and historians. In addition, the Blue Note Records Festival in France (March 30-April 11) will be showcasing talent from around the world. Other festivals paying tribute to Blue Note will include the JVC Jazz Festival in New York, Festival International de Jazz de Montreal, Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island,

and multiple festivals in Europe to be confirmed.

Acclaimed author Ashley Kahn (*Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece*, *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album*, *The House That Trane Built: The Story of Impulse Records*) is penning *Somethin' Else: The Story of Blue Note Records and the Birth of Modern Jazz*, the definitive label biography to be published by Viking in Summer 2009. Blue Note will also be releasing a companion 2-CD compilation that spans the label's 70 years. A photography collection that presents Francis Wolff's iconic images from Blue Note's early period alongside Jimmy Katz's documentation of the current era will be published by JazzPrezzo.

It took the joining of many natural forces to create and define one of the greatest Jazz labels there has ever been: Jazz-loving German immigrants on the run from Nazism (Alfred Lion & Francis Wolff), a New Jersey optometrist moonlighting as a recording engineer (Rudy Van Gelder), a classical music-loving commercial designer (Reid Miles), and slews of the most incredible musicians that have ever walked the earth (too many to name them all here). The elements that each brought to the table—impeccable A&R instincts, elegant and insightful photography, sterling sound quality, strikingly original cover artwork, and consistently transcendent music—were all essential to the label's early success. Together they created a vivid Blue Note identity. The whole could not have existed without each of the parts.

Blue Note's legendary catalog traces the entire history of the music from Hot Jazz, Boogie Woogie, and Swing, through Bebop, Hard Bop, Post Bop, Soul Jazz, Avant-Garde, and Fusion. The label's stars from the early years form a true Who's Who: Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Horace Silver, Art Blakey, Jimmy Smith, Grant Green, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner, Donald Byrd, Andrew Hill, Ornette Coleman.

After a brief dormancy from 1981-1984 during which producer/historian Michael Cuscuna kept the label's legacy alive with a series of reissues on EMI, Blue Note returned reinvigorated by the leadership of Bruce Lundvall and has since established itself as the most respected Jazz label in the world. The label is still home to some of the most prominent stars and cutting-edge innovators in Jazz today, and at the same time has broadened its horizons to include quality music in many genres.

Over the past 25 years, Blue Note has seen its share of commercial successes from Bobby McFerrin, Stanley Jordan, Dianne Reeves, Cassandra Wilson, Us3, Medeski Martin & Wood, Norah Jones, Al Green, Anita Baker, Willie Nelson and Wynton Marsalis. The label has also remained a haven for the most creative voices in Jazz over the past quarter-century including Patricia Barber, Brian Blade, Terence Blanchard, Don Byron, Bill Charlap, Eliane Elias, Kurt Elling, Robert Glasper, Stefon Harris, Charlie Hunter, Lionel Loueke, Joe Lovano, Pat Martino, Jason Moran, Greg Osby, Aaron Parks, Michel Petrucciani, Gonzalo Rubalcaba,

John Scofield, Jacky Terrasson, and Chucho Valdes.

Blue Note has also begun a series of newly-discovered long-lost archival gems such as *Thelonious Monk Quartet With John Coltrane At Carnegie Hall*, *Charles Mingus Sextet With Eric Dolphy: Cornell 1964*, and *Horace Silver Live at Newport '58*.

Singles Travel International's Smooth Jazz Charter Cruise, January 31 – February 5

BOCA RATON FL — The Smooth Jazz Charter Cruise is Single Travel International's backstage pass to sail the Caribbean with smooth jazz music stars like Norman Brown, Nick Colionne, Boney James, Acoustic Alchemy, and many more. This luxurious, five-star experience aboard the beautiful Celebrity Century, ranked one of the world's best cruise lines by Conde Nast Traveler, is a specially chartered cruise. Included are exclusive singles events and access to your favorite smooth jazz performers aboard this cruise vacation. Leaving Miami, the cruise sets sail to Key West, Nassau, and Coco Cay (for a private beach party) and features afternoon and evening performances every sailing day. The cruise leaves Miami and sails January 31 – February 5, 2009 and starts at \$1,849, including gratuities, all taxes, government fees and fuel charges, with no hidden fees.

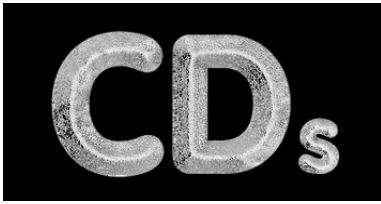
Smooth Jazz Cruise host Norman Brown will introduce live jazz performances by Nick Colionne, Boney James, Mindi Abair, Larry Carlton, Heather Headley, Acoustic Alchemy, Greg Adams, Marlon Meadows, Steve Cole, Shilts, Steve Oliver, Chieli Minnuci, Michael Lington, Alan Hewitt and Althea Rene, among others. Daily performances are scheduled in the afternoons and all evening, and all musicians will perform their show at least twice during the cruise to accommodate all guests.

Autograph and interview sessions, as well as late night jam sessions are part of the jazz experience. Exclusive Singles Travel International amenities include a \$50 shipboard credit, welcome aboard party with open bar, breakfast and happy hour club each day, singles seating for dinner, and farewell party. And Singles Travel International invites all single guests to the big game party on February 1 for football's greatest game of the year.

With over 25 years experience in travel consulting and a 75% repeat clientele, Singles Travel International is an industry leader in providing worry-free travel for single travelers. Singles Travel offers age-specific excursions, short and long trips to close-by destinations and distant and exotic locations for all budgets— from frugal to luxury. Trips include themed singles cruises (money management, dancing) as well as adventure travel. Hallmarks of Singles Travel International trips are personalized service, special singles events, and flexibility. People can choose to participate in group activities or spend time relaxing and exploring on their own.

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We only bring you
the Cream of the Crop!



TAJ MAHAL

Maestro HEADS UP

With a career that has passed the four decade mark and with countless albums and a couple of Grammys to his credit, Taj Mahal is a bona fide icon of American music.

This wide-ranging disc is another stellar part of his legacy and includes guest appearances by a number of "A" list bands and performers as well as frequent collaborators The Phantom Blues Band.

Kicking things off with the soulful *Scratch My Back*, a track most often associated with Otis Redding, Mahal moves easily through Reggae on *Never Let You Go* (featuring Los Lobos) and *Black Man Brown Man* (featuring Ziggy Marley), funk, *Dust Me Down*, (featuring Ben Harper), R & B, *Further On Down the Road* (featuring Jack Johnson), complex African rhythms, *Zanzibar* (featuring Angelique Kidjo and Toumani Diabate), blues, *Diddy Wah Diddy* (featuring the Phantom Blues Band) and *TV Mama* (Los Lobos) and percolating New Orleans second line grooves on the Fats Domino classic *Hello Josephine* and *I Can Make You Happy* (both featuring the New Orleans Social Club).

The broad range of material allows Mahal to try on different voices ranging from the Omar Dykes style gut bucket growl of *I Can Make You Happy* and *Strong Man Holler* to the smooth, laid back drawl that makes him almost undistinguishable from Jack Johnson on *Further On Down the Road*. The breadth of Mahal's talent is evident as he moves through these various vocal styles, genres and musical pairings without ever sounding out of place.

You would think that he's spent his life with this material rather than just visiting it on his way to another musical frontier. Let's hope the journey continues.

Mark Smith



ANAT COHEN

Notes From the Village ANZIC

One of the many prominent Israeli born jazz artists to come to our attention, Anat Cohen has been receiving critical kudos from the jazz press as well as making her mark. The first female horn player to headline the Village Vanguard, she has opened eyes and ears with her marvelous reed playing.

This writer was captivated by her performance as part of the United Jazz Orchestra led by Paquito D'Rivera at the 2007 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival. Her latest album is the marvelous "Notes From the Village," and has her backed by Jason Lindner on piano; Omer Avital on bass; and drummer Daniel Freedman, with guitarist Hekselman appearing on three of the eight performances.

This is lively and uplifting music from the start with the opening "Washington Square Park" incorporating Latin elements along with modern and traditional jazz. The music sings and it's hard to resist the urge to dance with this, including Hekselman's twisting, lively solo and Cohen's serpentine soprano sax playing.

It's followed by Cohen's lovely ballad "Until You're in Love Again," with its echoes of Gordon Jenkins' "Goodbye," with her lovely woody clarinet tone evoking Goodman's legacy before taking the song into a new direction.

It is as indicative as any track here showing the freshness of her music and playing. Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona's "Siboney" features an arrangement by Lindner, which fuses elements of tango with the Afro-Cuban foundation as Cohen's horn sings again here. She plays bass clarinet on the lovely, wistful rendition of Coltrane's "After the Rain," with Lindner taking a nice solo.

"J Blues" is a lively original with her playing mesmerizing, while her interpretation of Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come" opens with a work song like tempo as emphatically laid out by drummer Freedman, while her playing is both soulful and thoughtful.

A playful rendition of Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz" takes this out on another high note with a very fresh, effervescent arrangement by Cohen and her sax weaving its magic throughout.

This is music rooted in the past and present yet looks forward to the future and certainly will add to the many kudos she already has received and surely will be on some Best of 2008 lists.

Ron Weinstock



IKE & TINA TURNER

Sing The Blues
ACROBAT MUSIC

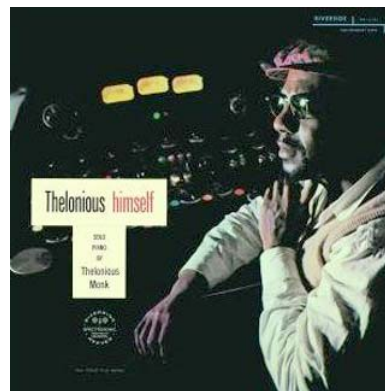
Among its initial releases, the American Acrobat Music has issued this Ike & Tina Turner album. It is compiled from the two albums that they had issued on Blue Thumb, "Outta Season" and "The Hunter," but unlike a Spanish reissue of the two albums of a few years back, this release only makes available 11 of the 13 songs on the first album and 7 of the 9 on the second release, which is unfortunate, since the full contents of both do fit on a single CD. One other serious shortcoming is that the liner notes make no mention that Albert Collins, not Turner, was guitarist on much of "The Hunter," which is not to say that Turner's own guitar work is not worthy of praise as he was a first-rate and distinctive string bender as well as bandleader and svengali. That all said, the music still resonates as fresh as it was four decades ago (I still have my vinyl LPs).

Tina was, and remains, a superb singer, able to touch one's gut with her expressiveness whether it's her nailing Otis Redding's "I've Been Loving You Too Long," or her take of "Three O'clock in the Morning Blues," taken from B.B. King's recording with some terrific guitar around her vocal from Ike, or her down-in-the-alley take of "Five Long Years." "Grumbling" is an instrumental where Ike evokes Freddy King's "The Stumble."

Tina's vocal shines even more brightly on the spiritual "I Am a Motherless Child," with its spare backing. Albert Collins' stinging guitar should be immediately recognizable on her strong take of the Albert King blues, "The Hunter," and it certainly sounds like Collins, although somewhat restrained in the solo, on the Jimmy Reed classic "Baby What You Want Me to Do," titled here as "You Got Me Running." Ike is on guitar on the funky "Bold Soul Sister," but Collins is laying it down on his Telecaster for the Bobby Bland classic "I Smell Trouble," and also on "Early in the Morning," a version of Junior Parker's "Mother-in-Law Blues."

I already mentioned the two main flaws in this reissue, its omission of songs and inaccuracies in its annotation. However, the music that is made available on this is compelling and highly recommended. **Ron Weinstock**

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THELONIOUS MONK

Thelonious Himself
RIVERSIDE/CONCORD

One in the reissue series of classic albums produced by Orrin Keepnews, this widely acclaimed 5-star recording features pianist Thelonious Monk in a reflective mood, performing solo the eight tunes from the original release along with seven bonus tracks of alternate takes.

Monk (b.10 Oct 1917; d. 17 Feb 1982) reinvents five Tin Pan Alley standards, including "April In Paris," "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," "I Should Care," "(I Don't Stand) A Ghost of a Chance (With You)," and "All Alone." Monk originals include the stride-inflected "Functional," a 6:44-minute take of one of his most familiar compositions, "Round Midnight," and "Monk's Mood," which features Monk performing with tenor saxophonist John Coltrane and bassist Wilbur Ware.

Many people thought Monk was an inferior pianist because he had an unusual technique and left lots of space in his rhythmic solos. Monk had recorded with Blue Note, Vogue, Verve and Prestige before joining Riverside in 1955. In 1957, he was booked into New York's Five Spot club for a lengthy engagement that brought him wider acclaim from critics and fans.

In his original liner notes, which are included in the 16-page liner booklet along with new notes and historic photos, Keepnews tags this relaxed 1957 recording as an "album of undiluted Monk." That it is. **Nancy Ann Lee**

2008 Holiday Gift Guide Part 1

Begins on Page 16

Spread out over this issue and December, we've listed some recent releases that would make good choices for gifts for your friends who are jazz & blues fans, and some for those who are not! We've been doing it every year for longer than we care to remember.

MITCH KASHMAR

Live At Labatt
DELTA GROOVE

California harp-meister, Mitch Kashmar, has a very easy to listen to new release here that should appeal to fans of the West Coast harp blues such as put down by Rod Piazza and the late William Clarke. Recorded at the Labatt's Edmonton Blues Festival by the CBC in August 2007, the solid harp and authoritative vocals of Kashmar is backed by former Clarke guitarist, John Marx; drummer Tom Lackner; bassist Steve Nelson; and pianist Jimmy Calire.

From the opening with the hot shuffle "I Got No Reason," to the closing instrumental romp, Al Sears' "Castle Rock," Kashmar, Marx and the rest get the groove a kicking and Kashmar brings off these soulful and ebullient performances. There is no pretense about extending the blues here, as this is nothing but the blues, not re-badged rock. The music has that relaxed intensity characteristic of most of the best blues. Even when the tempo is very hot, the music never gets overly frenzied, and when they get into a shuffle groove, as on Kashmar's "Dirty Deal," it is simply a joy to listen to, dance to or however one grooves to the blues.

He is pretty eclectic in his song sources, including a nice, slow "Whiskey Headed Woman," credited to alto saxophone bop legend, Lou Donaldson; "Evil Man Blues," a retitled version of Leonard Feather's "Evil Gal Blues," that was a smash for Dinah Washington (not Bessie Smith as Kashmar wrongly credits); Horace Silver's "Song For My Father," with nice chromatic harp and piano; "Sugar Sweet," from Muddy Waters' repertoire; Jimmy Rogers' "You're the One," taken at a loping beat with Marx taking a swinging solo; and Roy Brown's jump blues, "Lollipop Mama," which is done as a tribute to William Clarke ("We drank a lot of afternoon beer with that man") and Kashmar and the band rock like tomorrow will never come.

After Kashmar's relaxed shuffle, "Wake Up and Worry," he closes out with another jazzy instrumental that was an R&B hit for the legendary Johnny Hodges, "Castle Rock." It is hard to find any fault with the music here. Sure, it doesn't break any new ground, but it is a mighty fine blues album and that should be more than enough to recommend it to many.

Ron Weinstock

JOVINO SANTOS NETO & WEBER IAGO

Live at Caramoor
ADVENTURE MUSIC

Brazilian pianists Jovino Santos Neto and Weber Iago appear together for the first time in this live-recorded, nine-tune performance that culminates with Joe Lovano playing soprano saxophone on the Antonio Carlos Jobim tune, "Wave."

Recorded on July 28, 2007 at the Caramoor Jazz Festival in Katonah, New York, the pianists perform solo and in tandem their originals as well as standards by Brazilian composers Jobim, Hermeto Pascoal, and Pixinguinha.

Composer-arranger-musician Neto has been twice nominated for Latin Grammy Awards and label mate Iago is a stalwart jazz performer, composer, arranger who has recorded and opened for Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter,

Dianne Reeves and others, as well as leading his own group, Zen Blend. Both musicians blur the boundaries between jazz and world music and their classical training, playing hand-crafted Fazioli concert grand pianos brought in specially for this event.

Although their music rarely swings, but mostly soars, jazz piano fans should find this recording an appealing listen for the keyboard expertise exhibited by these two masters.

Nancy Ann Lee

CEDRIC BURNSIDE & LIGHTNING MALCOLM

2 Man Wrecking Crew
DELTA GROOVE

If the Black Keys opened peoples' ears to blues-tinged guitar-and-drums duos, this pair can bring those folks further down the path to the roots. Drummer Burnside, grandson of the late Mississippi blues growler and indie-blues hero, R.L. Burnside, and guitarist Malcolm here dish out a set of original, primal blues and retro-fitted ballads that make for some of the most vital sounding music the genre has produced in recent times.

The twosome's energy is complimented by the tasty variation in the tracks. Both men craft fresh and diverse material out of tried-and-true blues makings. Tracks of note include the leadoff dedication "R.L. Burnside", the minor-keyed "Nobody Else" and the Howlin' Wolf-like "Fightin'". It seems that one of the best blues albums of '08 slipped in close to year's end.

Duane Verh

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JAMES GALWAY & TIEMPO LIBRE

O'Reilly Street
RCA RED SEAL

Sir James Galway, the world's leading flute player, joins forces with the Miami-based Cuban music group Tiempo Libre to perform 12 tracks melding exhilarating Latin jazz and Cuban son. The album title comes from the Irish General O'Reilly, a key military strategist in Cuba who had a street in Havana Vieja named after him.

Tiempo Libre includes pianist/leader Jorge Gomez, percussionist Leandro Gonzalez, bass guitarist Tebelio Fonte and drummer Hilario Bell. The band, which tours widely, has performed with legendary artists such as Cachao, Arturo Sandoval and others.

Galway, approaching his 70th birthday (December 8, 2008), was born in Belfast, Ireland, studied in London and Paris, performed with orchestras until 1975 when he launched his solo career. He has won numerous awards and accolades and has recorded more than 60 albums and sold over 30 million albums worldwide. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II knighted him in 2001 for his services to music.

The session launches with reinventions of seven pieces from Claude Bolling's "Music from Suite for Flute and Piano." That familiar suite, originally recorded with Jean-Pierre Rampal, was a huge classical/jazz crossover hit that remained at the peak of the charts for years. Galway had wanted for many years to record this suite, but with an updated sound. He admirably achieves that goal with Gomez and team on this disc.

Gomez contributes four brief tunes: the bustling "General O'Reilly," the time-shifting "Tica-Tica" with its familiar riff, the romantic "Soncito," and the spirited "Contradanza." He also arranges and performs on the reworked 3:09-minute J.S. Bach movement, "Badinerie," from the Orchestral Suite No 2 in B minor for flute and strings (BWV 1067).

This alluring listen is destined to have crossover appeal for jazz, classical and Latin music fans.

Nancy Ann Lee

MORRY SOCHAT & THE SPECIAL 20S

Swingin', Shufflin' Smokin'
SPECIAL 20

Harmonica player and vocalist Morry Sochat named his band, The Special 20s, after a type of Hohner harmonicas. Morry and his band, a traditional Chicago blues-styled group, has a new release, "Swingin', Shufflin' Smokin'" that is a mix of covers and traditionally styled originals. With his band of guitarists Jim St. Marie and Shaoji Naito, bassist Ted Beranis, keyboardist Dave Ross and drummer Kenny Smith, Sochat has a tight, swinging band that rocks a shuffle at the right tempo.

Several tracks, including the opening shuffle "1955," have Nick Krebs on harmonica. Nick Moss produced this session. The title track provides the group's focus, which is to play the blues like they were back in Chicago in 1955. Sochat does a credible remake of George 'Harmonica' Smith's "Rockin'," with some fine harp. He doesn't force his vocals, but is not compelling to these ears. "Mean and Evil Blues" is a slow blues that finds him on chromatic harp as he sings about his woman's "mean, evil ways," with solid playing behind his singing. "Both Sochat and

Krebs play harp on Naito's funky instrumental, "Humboldt Slide," while the group does a pretty faithful cover of Muddy Waters' "Standing Around Crying," with Krebs on harp, which is followed by a lazy shuffle, "I'm in Love."

"Signifying (I'm a Man)" is an updating of "Hootchie Kootchie Man" and "Mannish Boy" has Morry telling his woman off when she is talking about Morry being a fool. Next comes Muddy's "Young Fashioned Ways" and the Tiny Bradshaw stomper "Train Kept-A Rollin'," and Little Walter's "Can't Hold Out Much Longer."

These are all marvelously played but Sochat does not quite pull these off vocally. It's a very listenable date if not an exceptional one, wonderfully played by a group of Chicago blues traditionalists.

Ron Weinstock

TOBIAS GEBB & TRIO WEST

An Upper West Side Story
YUMMY HOUSE RECORDS

Drummer Tobias Gebb and his piano trio, Trio West, derive their name from being from New York City's Upper West Side, which is reflected by the title of the trio's new recording, "An Upper West Side Story." The trio provided a fresh take to "Poinciana," done as a tribute to Ahmad Jamal. It opens with pianist Eldad Zvulun playing a rather deliberate tempo while bassist Neal Miner and Gebb both play at different, faster tempos yet everything holds together. Gebb's original "Brasil Bela," is a light bossa nova, followed Gebb's "The Barnyard," opening with some animal effects, on a lively blues burner that features some strong tenor from guest Joel Frahm, but also benefits from the trio's restraint.

It is followed by a lovely rendition of Billy Strayhorn's "Star-Crossed Lovers" with nice brushwork from Gebb. Saxophonist Frahm guests again on "Autumn Serenade," with a light tango feel and a lovely vocal from another guest, Champion Fulton. Neal Hefti's "Cute" was part of Basie's book in the 1950's and Zvulun's restrained, thoughtful piano is quite appropriate as Miner and Gebb keep it swinging nicely. Gebb rigged up castanets for the marvelous trio rendition of "Will 'O the Wisp," whose melody will be familiar from Miles Davis' classic orchestral album, "Sketches of Spain," while Fulton and Frahm return for a modern take on "What a Little Moonlight Will do." Fulton does not try to emulate Billie Holiday, rather injecting her own style and then scatting and trading fours with saxophonist Frahm with the trio pushing things along. "Two By Two" is an original slow ballad with the trio's members playing off each other.

Seamless tempo shifts is one intriguing aspect of the rendition of Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is the Ocean," while Gebb's "The Monument" marks Frahm's final appearance here on an intriguing melody that is a tribute to the Upper West Side New York Sailors and Soldiers Monument. A cha cha beat provides a fresh take to Lennon and McCartney's "And I Love Her," and further demonstrates the trio's thoughtful invention and marvelous interplay throughout.

Not listed on the album cover or the liner notes is a bonus track (at the end) of animal effects (sounds like some sick geese), "Bird Sounds," which one can easily skip.

"An Upper West Side Story," is a recording which will get more retellings from my CD player. It is available at cdbaby as well as their website, www.triowestmusic.com/home.html.

Ron Weinstock

PAGE ELEVEN

FIONA BOYES/MOOKIE BRILL & RICH DELGROSSO

Live From Bluesville
BLUE EMPRESS RECORDS

This "live in the studio" recording featuring guitarist Fiona Boyes, stand up bass/harmonica player Mookie Brill and blues mandolinist Rich DelGrosso, was laid down in a scant four hours with the direction of the recording being driven solely by the groups' collective muse. With the musicians having barely played together prior to the session, they understandably focused on well known blues gems but did find their way through three originals by Boyes and two by DelGrosso.

While this is an ensemble effort, the group rotates lead vocal and instrumental duties from song to song which helps keep even the well worn classics sounding fresh. Sonny Boy Williamson's *Early in the Morning* is done raw and right with Brill's plaintive harmonica and low key vocals leading the charge. Howlin' Wolf's classic *Smokestack Lightning* gets the gut bucket treatment with Brill's swooping bass lines and Boyes' suitably raspy vocals.

Boyes is also the featured vocalist on Magic Sam's *Easy Baby* which moves along at an unhurried pace with DelGrosso and Boyes alternating lead until the bridge where they take each other on with some fine string bending. DelGrosso's *Hard to Live With* features his fleet fingered fret work and story teller's vocal style. He also leads the charge through Lightnin' Hopkins' *Shotgun Blues* which features ample doses of the too often overlooked mandolin which DelGrosso is helping bring back into the vocabulary of the blues. Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup's *My Baby Left Me* is one of the highlights of this set with Brill's earnest vocals and bass driving the group into an acoustic frenzy.

Other cuts of particular note include Boye's ribald tale of the *Two Legged Dog*, JB Lenoir's eerie *Mississippi Road* and DelGrosso's *Get Your Nose Outta My Bizness!* which features DelGrosso and Boyes trading gruff vocals that belie the fun they were obviously having during the recording. While the group breaks no new ground their enthusiasm for this material is contagious.

Mark Smith

JACKIE RYAN

You and the Night and the Music
OPENART PRODUCTIONS

This new album served as my introduction to the artistry of San Francisco vocalist Jackie Ryan. A fascinating, and often compelling voyage through the American songbook, Ryan impresses with faultless pitch, phrasing, and musicality.

The anchor of her backing here is the trio of pianist Tamir Hendelman, bassist Christoph Luty and drummer Jeff Hamilton. They are joined on several of the selections by saxophonist Red Holloway, harpist Carol Robbins and guitarist Larry Koonse, with Robbins and Koonse each joining Ryan for a duet. From the opening moments of "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," with Hendelman's insistent piano and Holloway's emphatic tenor, to the lingering notes of the duet with guitarist Koonse, "While We're Young," she displays not only her broad vocal range, but, as importantly, her extensive, expressive range as she belts out the opening number or equally convinces on the marvelous, intimate duet with Robbins, "You Are There." Her relaxed vocal on Ray Noble's "The Very Thought of You," is complemented by Holloway's empathic tenor.

Her mother was Mexican and sang Spanish folk tunes to her when she was growing up, and she sings "Besame Mucho" in Spanish with her pleasing vocal complimented by Koonse's striking acoustic guitar, which Hendelman's spare piano effectively complements. In addition to Ryan's vocal and Holloway's potent playing, bassist Luty has a strong solo playing with the bow on "Let There Be Love." "The Best is Yet to Come" may be best known from Frank Sinatra's classic recording, but Ryan, with her trio accompaniment, gives this classic a fresh take.

One would have to stretch to find anything to even quibble about on this truly excellent disc by a vocalist that so many have rightfully taken notice of, and much more can be expected from her in the future. **Ron Weinstock**

SCOTT ELLISON

Ice Storm
EARWIG

The Tulsa Oklahoma native Scott Ellison grew up when that city was a rock and blues hotbed. Later touring with Conway Twitty's daughter and then Gatemouth Brown, Ellison eventually relocated to Los Angeles playing and touring with the likes of The Box Tops, The Shirelles, The Drifters, The Coasters and others before forming his own blues band in the 1990s. A prolific songwriter as well as a singer-guitarist, he recorded several albums that Dennis Walker produced. His new album is "Ice Storm" and is a set of original 'rocking blues.'

At times, his vocals reminded me of the late Sean Costello, and he sings forcefully with a raspy grit, although a limited range. The songs are standard fare about relationships and party to the blues. His guitar playing rocks out at times and fans of guitar pyrotechnics will find much here to enjoy. The opening "Steamin'" is a rocker with Ellison singing about how his woman's moves and kisses are getting him steaming and ready to explode. The opening of "Big Blue Car" evokes "The Thrill is Gone," before he talks about riding around the funky town looking for his

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woman with horns effectively added to the backing, before launching into the hard rock "Pride," with slide guitar in the backing.

A heavy backbeat and driving slide guitar launches "4th of July," with Ellison barking out a gravelly vocal. It is followed by "King of the Blues," thankfully taken at a lower level as he sings about partying with his guitar but hung up about his lady which is making him the "King of the Blues." "I'm in Trouble," is a down in the alley tune about being "lost in these blues again," where he pulls out all the stops on guitar. The title song is a nifty instrumental with a strong tenor sax solo in addition to Ellison's jazzier playing here.

While Ellison is clever with a phrase here and elsewhere, the songs generally don't stand out, although some with a taste for rocking blues guitar and blues-rock in general may find these performances more satisfying than this reviewer does.

Ron Weinstock

ROBIN MCKELLE

Modern Antique

CHEAP LULLABY

A Berklee alumnus Robin McKelle has just issued a new album titled *Modern Antique* on Cheap Lullaby. It is at least her second album and she performs a number of standards along with some intriguing and unusual material backed by a big band; sometimes horn driven and other times strings dominated.

Quite a good singer, if occasionally coming off as cute, and sultry in her delivery, McKelle at times reminds me of Streisand, with a bit jazzier delivery. Things kick off on a terrific start with a hard swinging rendition of the surprising opening number, Steve Miller Band's "Abracadabra." Kudos to the very imaginative arrangement of this song, which is followed by a hot Latin groove for her take of "Come Love." The ballad "I Want to Be Love," with strings and reed accompaniment, is done as a torch song and some might suggest she overdoes her singing here.

"Lover Man" opens and is built around a funky bass riff that sets the groove, whereas she returns us to Heaven with a Basie-like arrangement for "Cheek to Cheek." Strings frame her singing for the lovely ballad "Day By Day," followed by the Buddy Johnson blue ballad "Save Your Love For Me," a rendition that contrasts to Ella Johnson's original recording with brother Buddy's orchestra, but not as satisfying as Charles Brown's suave interpretation of this marvelous song.

Other noteworthy performances include the sprite "Lullaby of Birdland," and "Make Someone Happy," with strings and nice trumpet and her fine delivery of the lyric that perhaps evokes Streisand the most. The album concludes with McKelle's own "Remember," with her piano and the strings for accompaniment, a lovely song of lost love.

Special commendation goes to Willie Murillo, who produced this and contributed several of the arrangements. When I saw McKelle in Montreal, she was backed by a combo; but she certainly is not overpowered by the full accompaniment she receives here. It's a marvelous and rewarding recording.

Ron Weinstock

B.B. KING

B.B. King and His Orchestra Live

ACROBAT MUSIC

Acrobat Music, a European label that I am familiar with from some of their public domain reissues of jazz and vintage rhythm'n'blues, has issued their initial batch of releases with their American affiliate of the same name. Among the releases is "B.B. King and His Orchestra Live," a 1983 performance at the MIDEM trade fair in Cannes as part of a jazz concert with Dave Brubeck and Pat Metheny. Outside of identifying trumpeter Calvin Owens as leading the band, the rest of the personnel are unidentified.

It opens with a barn-burning "B.B.'s Theme," after which the tempo slows down and Owens brings B.B. to the stage. Perhaps because of the setting he launches into instrumental versions of "Why I Sing the Blues," and "Darling You Know I Love You." On the former song B.B. opens up with a rocking solo with punching horns framing the funky bass guitar solo before King takes the tune down as he slows down the tempo, and interjects some lines from "Dueling Banjos" before getting into a call and response with the horns. It is rather unusual to hear these staples of his repertoire done without vocals, but, again, perhaps he was responding to this being a jazz concert.

The rendition of "Sweet Little Angel" opens with a lengthy guitar introduction before he launches into his vocal. It is followed by "Everyday I Have the Blues," with a lengthy piano solo to take it out. Labeled as "All Over Again," there is a powerful treatment of "I Got a Mind to

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Give Up Living (and Go Shopping Again),” with King’s impassioned vocal smartly supported by the orchestra here. Nothing surprising with “The Thrill Is Gone,” but B.B. follows with a good rendition of “Caldeonia,” then closes with a fervent “Paying the Cost to Be the Boss.”

This is an enjoyable recording, as if B.B. and his first-rate band were capable of less, and the instrumental renditions of some classic numbers make this an unusual release, although there is so much live B.B. King out there as good, if not better than this. **Ron Weinstock**

HOUSTON PERSON

Just Between Friends

HIGHNOTE

While he may not be the most earth shattering or innovative saxophonist, when it comes to handling a program of ballads, blues and other classics from the American Songbook there are few I would want to listen to before Houston Person.

His newest HighNote disc is an album of duets with the great bassist, Ron Carter, and the two spin their magic over the ten selections. The performances are more like conversations between friends with such classics as “How Deep is the Ocean,” “Darn That Dream,” “Blueberry Hill,” “Lover Man (Oh Where Can You Be?),” “Lover Come Back to Me,” and “Alone Together.” Person “sings” the songs with his warm tenor tone, as if reciting the lyrics before launching his improvisations anchored by Carter’s solid playing, and Carter himself has several solo opportunities.

“Just Between Friends” is not a disc to overly analyze, but rather sit back, listen and savor. Recommended.

Ron Weinstock

HANS THEESSINK & TERRY EVANS

Visions

BLUE GROOVE

Dutch acoustic bluesman Hans Theessink is a virtual mirror image of J.J. Cale with his laid back vocals and unadorned, yet catchy picking. This disc pairs him up with Terry Evans who is perhaps best known for his work, along with Bobby King, as vocalists for Ry Cooder. With Theessink singing the low parts and Evans soaring above him the two take on a few of their own tunes plus a handful of covers and cook up a wonderful roots music stew. Even though the instrumentation is kept relatively spare, the two cover a pretty broad range of sounds.

Got to Keep Moving is driven by a dark, slinky percolating groove that would be at home on a Tony Joe White disc while their take on the Fats Domino cut *Let the Four Winds* blow is all sunshine and light. *Mother Earth* and *Come to the River* have a gospel feel while *Going Back Home* and the J.B. Lenoir classic, *Talk to Your Daughter* are pure blues. Dan Penn’s *At the Dark End of the Street* moves along at a meditative pace that is a stark contrast to the driving beat of Willie Dixon’s *You Can’t Judge a Book By the Cover*, which gets added punch at the end from Bo Diddley who encourages the duo to keep up the beat.

Vicksburg is my Home, while written by Theessink, gets

its power from Evan’s soulful vocals about going home. While many acoustic blues discs can be somber affairs, this is an often upbeat release that clearly was a labor of love for Theessink and Evans: the twinkle in their eyes is never more evident than on their upbeat take on *Glory of Love*. **Mark Smith**

CHARLIE PARKER

Washington D.C. 1948

UPTOWN RECORDS

Uptown Records, who not to long ago issued a legendary Town Hall (NYC) concert by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, have another surprise that will be welcomed by jazz lovers. “Washington D.C., 1948” is a release of Charlie Parker’s contribution to a May 23, 1948 concert produced by Willis Conover entitled ‘Dixieland v. Bebop,’ held at a long-closed venue, The Music Hall that was in Northwest Washington, near Howard University.

The booklet that accompanies this CD has extensive notes that chronicle the history of this event, the performers and the music. As indicated from the concert title, Parker came to Washington as part of a concert that presented Dixieland musicians in addition to a bebop group. The Dixieland musicians included Wild Bill Davidson, clarinetist Tony Parenti and trombonist Benny Morton who are only heard on one of the tracks on this disc, which is devoted to the surviving bebop oriented tracks.

In addition to Parker, the best-known musician here was the great drummer Buddy Rich. Others heard here include drummer Joe Theimer (who had been in the Navy band that included John Coltrane) on the opening number, tenor saxophonist Ben Lary, pianist Sam Krupit, bassist Al Phipps and trombonist Rob Swope.

The opening number here is “Tiny’s Blues,” before Rich, Phipps and Parker are brought up for “Bernie’s Tune” and the ballad “These Foolish Things,” followed by a lengthy “Scapple From the Apple.” After these three numbers, the band becomes simply a quartet for “Ornithology” and “KoKo” (Bird’s legendary transformation of “Cherokee”) and Parker is clearly at the forefront, with Rich swinging things along. Krupit takes an extended, slightly frantic piano solo on “KoKo” after which Bird and Rich trade fours before Rich takes a solo.

These two performances stand out with Bird’s brilliant playing and Rich’s charismatic percussion. After this is an abbreviated “C jam Blues” on which the three Dixieland horns joined the full band, but cut short when Davidson got angry at Parker’s very audible laughter offstage during a fine solo by Parenti. An unfortunate end to what sounded like a very promising performance that would have given more of a chance to display the common ground between alleged musical adversaries. The sound quality is adequate given the circumstances and one can certainly hear what was played without difficulty if not in highest fidelity.

The accompanying booklet includes insights and the evening’s history from Ron Fritts, Ira Gitler and Ross Firestone and adds to this valuable restoration of a piece of jazz history that will be essential to Charlie Parker aficionados as well as those who love classic bebop, especially given the unusual backing band for Bird heard here.

Ron Weinstock

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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

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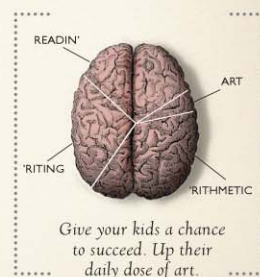
Sentimental Mood," and "Take the 'A' Train." His historical concert in 1953 at the Newport Jazz Festival has entered the lexicon of legendary live performances. There is no doubt about it, Ellington's brand of jazz has contributed significantly to the American songbook and to the lives of anyone who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

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

2008

We have been running our Holiday gift Guide for many, many years now. This year we have not seen as many box sets as in the past, but we do have a few here that would make excellent gifts, and we'll have some more next month. We generally focus on sets and DVDs for the Gift Guide, but we do have a couple of single CDs that just came out that fit in here. Of course, you can find many other CDs in the regular CD review section of this and previous issues. We also have several entries in the Jumping Genres section for your friends who may not share your enthusiasm for jazz and/or blues. Don't forget to look in our December issue for part 2 of the Holiday Gift Guide!

**SONNY ROLLINS
CANNONBALL ADDERLEY
RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK
LIONEL HAMPTON
OSCAR PETERSON
BILL EVANS
NINA SIMONE
JAZZ ICONS DVDS
SINGLES & BOX SET**

Holiday giving for jazz lovers this season got easier with Naxos' third series of Jazz Icons DVD releases. Produced by Reelin' in the Years Productions and licensed to Naxos, there are seven new DVDs available of European television broadcasts, mostly from the sixties and the seventies, that have been unseen (and in most cases, unknown) since their original broadcasts. The present set of seven include DVDs devoted to Sonny Rollins, Cannonball Adderley, Bill Evans, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Lionel Hampton, Oscar Peterson and Nina Simone. These can be purchased separately, or in a box set with an additional DVD with additional performances by Rollins, Kirk and Simone that is not available separately. Each DVD comes with a booklet that includes an introduction by a family member or a scholar, lengthy and thoughtful annotations, rare photographs, and a collage of photographs of album covers, magazine covers and assorted other media. The DVDs themselves do not contain Easter eggs or other additional material besides the concert performances, but the liner booklets have extensive annotation on the performers along with rare photos of the artists and memorabilia associated with the artists the likes of which we rarely see in DVD releases. Rather than go into lengthy dissertations of each, each will be dealt with briefly, describing the contents and the performances presented briefly.



Sonny Rollins Live in '65 & 68 features two concerts filmed for Danish television. Writer Joe Goldberg contributed the introduction for the booklet, and Ashley Kahn discusses Sonny's life and the two concerts captured with some of Sonny's recollections included, and Joe Lovano provides his appreciation of Sonny. The first, and the longest of the two performances is from fall of 1965 when Sonny was featured as part of a Best of Newport European tour, shortly after his famous stay at Ronnie Scott's London Club. To save money for the tour, George Wein hired Allen Dawson on drums and for some of the

dates, then 19-year old bassist Niels-Hening Orsted Pedersen and they are heard on the extended magical performances from October 1965 that opens with "There Will Never Be Another You," on which he allows the young Dane to take center stage early on. It's followed by "St. Thomas," a medley of "Oleo"/"Sonnymoon For Too," then "Darn That Dream" and Lester Young's "Three Little Words." The filming of the program is simple, to the point and effective, and even if one was simply listening to this, one would enjoy the marvelous playing. Three years later, Rollins returned for a half-hour program "Saxophone Colossus," backed by Pedersen, ex-patriate pianist Kenny Drew and drummer Albert 'Tootie' Heath on a program of "On Green Dolphin Street," "St. Thomas" and "Four." This DVD contains first-rate Sonny Rollins in performance.

Cannonball Adderley Live in '63 features a lengthy concert from Switzerland and a shorter performance from Germany, with Cannonball and Nat joined by one of their most renown groups of Yusef Lateef on reeds, Joe Zawinul on piano, Sam Jones on bass and Louis Hayes on drums. In the booklet, Cannonball's widow, Olga Adderley-Chandler, provides a brief memory of her illustrious husband while John Szwed provides the main discussion of these

performances in the context of his career, followed by a brief afterward from Ira Gitler. Both the longer and short sets open with Quincy Jones' "Jessica's Day." On the Swiss set, the Adderleys leave the stage for "Angel Eyes," spotlighting Lateef's flute. One of the Adderley classics, "Jive Samba," follows and then Oscar Pettiford's "Bohemia After Dark" and Ernie Wilkins' "Dizzy Business." Once again, Lateef takes the spotlight for "Trouble in Mind," unusual for his use of the oboe. The Adderleys return for another staple of their repertoire, Nats' "Work Song," followed by Sam Jones' "Unit 7." On the shorter broadcast, (actually recorded two days earlier), they follow "Jessica's Day," with Lateef's homage to John Coltrane, "Brother John," finishing with another spirited take of "Jive Samba."

Rahsaan Roland Kirk Live in '63 & '67 features three programs, from Belgium and Holland in 1963 and Norway in 1967. Few jazz performers benefit as much from watching them as the astonishing multi-instrumentalist Kirk. During the 1963 performances he is backed by pianist George Gruntz, bassist Guy Pedersen, and drummer Daniel Humair, while in Norway in 1967 his band is pianist Ron Burton, bassist Niels-Hening Orsted Pedersen and drummer Alex Riel. His widow Dorthaan, still keeping the jazz flame alive at WBGO in Newark, offers a loving introduction for the booklet, while Kirk's biographer John Kruth provides the overview of Kirk's life and music as well as discussing the specific performances. Kirk's performances were passionate and playful, as he could play the flute, get deep horn riffs going on the tenor, manzello and stritch at the same time, while bearing down on tenor, adding a nose flute or siren for effect. There are performances of his famous "Three For the Festival," "Yesterdays," "Lover Man," "Blue Rol," "Blues For Alice," "Bags' Groove," and "The Shadow of Your Smile" among the pleasures here. Rahsaan Roland Kirk's music attests to the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, and this DVD captures that magic.

Lionel Hampton Live in '58 presents a 1958 performance from Belgium. Hampton always carried a great band, although the names of his band members is perhaps less known today than earlier aggregations he had taken to Europe (that included Art Farmer, Clifford Brown, Quincy Jones, Clifford Scott and Clifford Solomon) with probably the best known members being alto saxophonist Bobby Plater, tenor saxophonist Andy McGhee, trumpeters Art Hoyle and Eddie Mullens, guitarist and vocalist Billy Mackel and vocalist Pinocchio Jones. Quincy Jones offers his memories of Hampton in the booklet, while John McDonough wrote the astute liner notes. Hampton and his band were brassy and showy. Hampton was not shy to stand on his drum set as well as to play a delicate vibes solo. In fact, the program opens with his lyrical vibes on Dimitri Tiomkin's "The High and Mighty," which Art Hoyle states insistently would have been the middle of the concert. It's followed by "Piano Blues," where he joins regular pianist Oscar Denard for some nice playing with solos from Andy McGhee and Eddie Williams before he returns to the vibes. The next four numbers represents a small history of jazz opening with "Traditional Blues" on which Ed Mullens makes a reference to "West End Blues," although this is one of the times the

filming is a bit haphazard. It is followed by "Hot Club Blues," whose title is likely a dedication to the Belgium Hot Club, and this medium blues showcased Hampton's blues singer at the time, Pinocchio Jones. "I Found a New Baby" is Dixieland tinged with more haphazard film editing, showing Mullens playing when it is clearly not him soloing. It's followed by a more modern "The Chase," a two-trumpet sprint. "Brussel Sprouts" is a flag-waver as is "Sticks Ahoy," with tinges of "Flying Home" and Hampton taking a showy Tom-Tom solo. Perhaps no genius like Rollins, but this is certainly a nice sample of one of the era's most endearing and entertaining big bands.

Oscar Peterson Live in '63, '64 & '65 presents performances from Sweden, Denmark and Finland with his classic trio of Ray Brown on bass and Ed Thigpen on drums. The accompanying booklet is prefaced by his wife Kelly Peterson, who recalled first seeing Oscar perform in Rochester, NY and then later actually meeting him and marrying him, and the memories this DVD brings her. Doug Ramsey takes us on a tour of Peterson, his music and these performances that start with an April 3, 1963 segment filmed at a Stockholm TV station. Peterson, of course, had a dazzling technique and his music was rich in its invention. Opening with Milt Jackson's "Reunion Blues," Peterson also treats us to Ellington's "Satin Doll" before Roy Eldridge joins the trio for "But Not For Me." The following spring in Holland the trio launches into "On Green Dolphin Street," "Bags Groove," and "C Jam Blues," before closing with Peterson's own moving "Hymn to Freedom," which he had recently composed. In Helsinki, Finland, Clark Terry is a guest on a set that includes "Mack the Knife," Peterson's "Blues for Smedley," a lovely ballad, "Misty," and concludes with a brief visit from Terry's mumbling blues singing alter ego on "Mumbles." The interaction of Peterson and his trio of course is reflected in these performances.

Bill Evans Live '74-'85 has performances from shifting personnel over five dates and, unlike most releases in this series, includes sets of shorter duration that ordinarily would be included in the bonus disc, yet as the series producers state, they are included here to yield an 11-year portrait of Evans as a pianist. Also, the last two performances are in color. Evans' piano appears more thoughtful, introverted perhaps than Peterson, which is not to say who was a superior jazz artist as both left a major legacy. It's touching reading by his daughter Maxine in the preface recalling being taken to the Village Vanguard at the age of 8 and having a Shirley Temple, or going to Toronto, where the club literally tore down a wall so they could haul the old piano out and bring a new one in, as well as the tears from when her younger brother told her and family friends of his death. Robert Doerschuk wrote the liner notes for this, which starts with 1974 Swedish performances with Chuck Israels and Larry Bunker including a moving "My Foolish Heart." In 1965 he is accompanied by Niels-Hening Orsted Pedersen and Alan Dawson, opening with "Detour Ahead," before they are joined by Lee Konitz on alto sax for "Melancholy Baby." Five years later he is in Copenhagen with Eddie Gomez and drummer Marty Morrell for renditions of "Alfie" and "Someday My Prince Will Come." Another 1970 performance from Sweden with the band is noteworthy because

it is in color, although the color is somewhat faded. Also, the camera-work is a bit haphazard as instead of focusing on Evans and his trio or the audience during "Round Midnight," we are provided with short city night street scenes interspersed with the performances. Another rendition of "Someday My Prince Will Come" is also featured. The final performance from Denmark in 1975 has a more vibrant color, and, by this time Evans, in a bright red jacket, has a full beard and a bit lengthier hair. Gomez is still on bass with Eliot Zigmund on drums for "Blue Serge," "Up With the Clark," and the closing "Twelve Tone Tune Two."

Nina Simone Live in '65 & '68 is the last, but certainly not least of these DVDs. As her daughter, Lisa "Simone" Kelly writes in the preface to the booklet, "Mommy had a way of taking a song and making it her own in a way I've never witnessed since ..." Curiously, the producers note that the inclusion of Simone was controversial, as she was such a versatile artist that was so hard to classify and had strong opinions about being labeled a jazz artist. Yet her performances here interpreting the songs are so compelling. Classically trained as a pianist, her accompaniments (along with those of her bands) might be superficially described as functional, yet they are always perfect for her vocals whether discussing the nuances of prejudice and skin color on "Four Women," or her adaptation of Alex Comfort's "Go Limp," which she engages the audience to join her in a sing-along during the humorous lyric. These performances are from the 1965 performance in Holland which has a somewhat activist core including her rendition of Bob Dylan's "The Battle of Hollis Brown," as well as her own "Mississippi Goddam," written after the racist atrocities committed against Civil Rights activists and Negro school children, and as she repeats "Go Slow," the cry of some back then, the urgency of her call for social justice still sears us 40 years later. The 1968 English performance is from Granada Television and includes two segments, the latter half finding her in an African robe and headdress, with performances of "Backlash Blues," and "Go to Hell," mixed with her definitive reading of "Ain't Got No/I Got Life" from the musical hair, a short treatment of her reworking of Screaming Jay Hawkins' "I Put a Spell on You," and then "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," that she noted that the Animals had a hit with. These performances explain why she had become known as The High Priestess of Soul. The program concludes with "Why? (The King of Love is Dead)" that her bass player at the time wrote after Martin Luther King's murder. Four decades later, the charisma she had as a performer still comes across in these black & white performances that grip one still. I note that Rob Bowman fills in the details of Simone's career and the performances in the booklet accompanying this.

If this reviewer had to choose specific volumes, he would pick the Rollins and Simone followed very closely by the Kirk. Obviously, those who decide not to purchase the complete set of this third series of Jazz Icons DVDs will do so on personal preferences based on specific performers or styles. Still, it is easy to recommend this entire set. One advantage to that is it includes a bonus DVD with additional performances by Rollins, Kirk and Simone

that are taken from shorter broadcasts, but equal in quality to what is on the DVDs devoted to those performers. They are also packed together in an attractive box.

These latest volumes deserve the same level of success as the prior two series of releases, and hopefully next year we will have the fourth series of DVDs to enjoy.

Ron Weinstock



MILES DAVIS

Kind Of Blue: 50th Anniversary Collector's edition COLUMBIA/LEGACY CD/DVD/LP BOXED SET

Columbia/Legacy continues in its longstanding tradition of releasing a Miles Davis box set in time for the holidays. This year the focus is on one of the all time finest jazz albums, "Kind of Blue." Originally released in 1959, this album has been issued several times since CDs appeared on the market in the mid 1980s. While the original CD incarnation sounded quite awful, as most albums transferred to CD did back then, each subsequent release offered improved sound as technology advanced. This new release offers the best of today's sound technologies, plus a host of extra tracks.

Disc One contains the original five album selections – "So What," "Freddie Freeloader," "Blue In Green," "All Blues" and "Flamenco Sketches" followed by an alternate take of "Flamenco Sketches," which was previously issued on the first Columbia Miles Davis box set in 1988, "Miles Davis: The Columbia Years 1955-1985." Then there are what is known as 'studio sequences' for each of the five titles, and one 'false start.' These range from anywhere between 11 seconds to close to two minutes and give an insight into the way in which Miles and the musicians related in the studio as these songs were being recorded. Now these were not just ordinary musicians by any means. Anyone familiar with this album knows this was an all-star cast of musicians who remain legends of jazz today. Miles was joined by Cannonball Adderley on alto sax, John Coltrane on tenor sax, Bill Evans on piano, Paul Chambers on bass and Jimmy Cobb on drums. Wynton Kelly replaces Evans on piano for "Freddie Freeloader only."

Disc two contains six additional tracks with the same musicians. The first five are from a May 1958 studio session which were scattered over various albums, but were

issued together on the Legacy box set “Miles Davis & John Coltrane: The Complete Columbia Recordings 1955-1961” back in 2000. While Bill Evans and Cannonball were on those tracks, the final piece, track 6, has Cannonball out and Wynton Kelly replaces Evans on piano. This is an over 17-minute performance of “So What” performed live at the Kurhaus, Den Haag, Holland from April of 1960, and it is quite a blowout, with Coltrane really taking off. This is the first authorized release of this track, and it is quite the finish to this gem of a set of CDs.

The DVD included in the set is titled “Celebrating A Masterpiece: Kind Of Blue” and it incorporates material from the 2004 documentary “Made In Heaven.” It opens with a slew of musicians, producers and writers offering their views in one or two sentences on the greatness of the “Kind Of Blue” album, its impact on not just jazz, but music in general, its longevity, the music on the album, the musicians and the development of the songs. It offers black and white photos of the recording sessions, and very short excerpts of radio interviews with Bill Evans and Cannonball Adderley, both of whom have long passed on. Some of the people seen in the interview clips are Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, David Liebman, the late Shirley Horn and Jackie McLean, Horace Silver, Carlos Santana and hip-hop artist Q-Tip along with many more. There are also some very short clips of the band Miles’ band performing. Then there is a complete 26-minute black & white appearance on “Robert Herridge Theatre: The Sound of Miles Davis,” which was a CBS TV program broadcast in 1960. The first part features Miles, Trane, Cannonball, Kelly, Chambers and Cobb playing a 10-minute version of “So What” followed by three songs with Gil Evans conducting an orchestra which featured Miles, Trane, Chambers and Cobb. These songs, “The Duke,” “Blues For Pablo” and “New Rhumba” are heard on the “Miles Ahead” album in their original versions. The DVD closes with 17 photos of the “Kind Of Blue” sessions taken by Columbia staff photographer Don Hunstein.

This special collector’s edition also comes with the original 12-inch LP package with the record pressed on 180-gram blue vinyl. The set is packaged in a 12-inch slipcase box along with a 60-page ‘perfect bound’ book with essays, annotations, discographical data, photographs and an envelope with memorabilia. There is also a 33x33 foldout poster of Miles inside. I can’t really comment on the box itself, or the CD packaging as I am working off an advance copy with just the discs due to time constraints with the release date, but it is out now as you are reading this.

So, in closing, this special collector’s edition would make an excellent gift for any real Miles fans you might know. If you search the net, you should be able to find a decent price.

Bill Wahl



NINA SIMONE

To Be Free: The Nina Simone Story

RCA / LEGACY BOX SET

This just-released 3-CD plus 1-DVD box set will be a welcome gem for anyone who likes the late, great singer/pianist Nina Simone. With 51 tracks, eight of which have never been released until now, this set covers her recording years from 1957 through 1978, plus one from 1993, on several labels such as Bethlehem, Colpix, Philips, RCA, PM, CTI and Elektra. There are also nine more performance clips on the fourth disc, a DVD that is an Emmy-nominated overview of Nina’s music and career done back in 1970.

The music on the three CDs starts off with three songs recorded in 1957 for Bethlehem Records, including “Mood Indigo” and “I Loves You Porgy,” followed by four for the Colpix label recorded in 1959 and 1960. Then, after the first of the previously unreleased tracks, “When Malindy Swings/Swing Low Sweet Chariot,” which was recorded live at the 1963 Newport Jazz Festival, we hear seven tracks from her recordings for the Philips label in 1964-65; here she moves from jazz standards to songs such as “Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood” and Screamin’ Jay Hawkins’ “I Put A Spell On You,” some with arrangements that included strings.

In 1967 she began a lengthy association with RCA Records, which is represented with 24 tracks finishing Disc 1, covering most of Disc 2 and a good part of Disc 3. In the mid part of Disc 2 we are treated to four 1969 tracks from a German concert Nina did with a guitarist Al Shakman, bassist Gene Perla and drummer Don Alias, plus added percussionists on the last two, later released on Perla’s PM Records. After the fruitful RCA period, the third disc here ends with two previously unreleased tracks, “Nina” and “Zungo,” recorded at Philharmonic Hall, NYC on July of 1973. Then there is the song “Baltimore” from her 1978 CTI album, and “A Single Woman,” which she recorded for Elektra in 1993. Nina could take any song she felt like and make it her own unique vehicle. She was fantastic live, and would often change a particular song quite a bit from one performance to the next. Her repertoire included songs from several genres, from jazz to blues, R&B, gospel, folk, rock, pop, Broadway, movie songs, protest songs, French, African, Reggae and more. The fact that most of the tracks these discs are live makes this set an even more enjoyable experience. The previously unreleased tracks are treasures, including the songs mentioned above, plus her take on “Let It Be Me” and

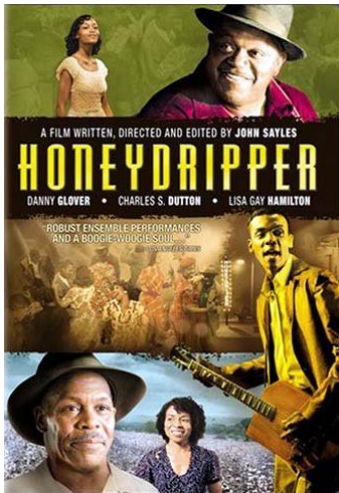
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Leonard Cohen's "Suzanne" and others.

Then when you consider the DVD with footage from several rare performance, either in a studio or at clubs, and clips from some interviews with Nina giving an insight into her unique personality, you have an absolutely first class box set that would make a perfect gift for anyone you know who enjoys Nina Simone. If you fit that bill, then go ahead and treat yourself as well. If you really want to make statement, pick up a copy of the Jazz Icons Nina Simone DVD reviewed by Ron Weinstock in this issue and give them both together.

Sadly, Nina Simone, an artist who was always way ahead of her time, passed away in 2003 at the age of 70 at her home in the town of Carry-le-Rouet in Southern France. This set is Highly recommended. *Bill Wahl*



HONEYDRIPPER

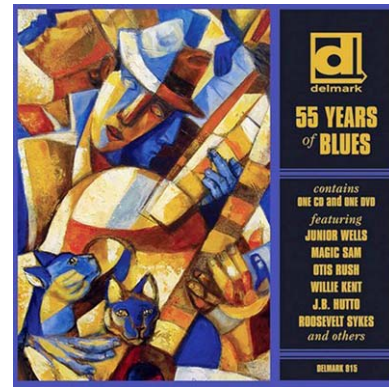
A Film By John Sayles
SCREEN MEDIA FILMS DVD

It's do-or-die for Tyrone Purvis's Alabama roadhouse club. The Honeydrinker can't draw flies lately (lately being sometime in 1950). The joint across the road packs 'em in with a jukebox loaded with the latest jive while The Honeydrinker's fare is Bertha Mae, an aged blues-beltin' diva out of step with the times. To save the club Purvis- also the house

piano man- must swallow his traditionalist pride and bring in superstar Guitar Sam, amplifier and all.

Things get sticky as the big night draws near and Sam ends up in the hospital but the arrival in town of a young drifter- his homemade guitar in hand- makes the outcome fairly easy to guess. Filmmaker John Sayles' ode to the post WW-II segregated South, and the black music that thrived in those troubled times, is much more the celebration of spirit than it is a complex story line. Dramatic performances are respectable all around, highlighted by those of Danny Glover as club owner Tyrone, Charles S. Dutton as his jack-of-all-trades sidekick Maceo and Keb' Mo' as a street musician whose blindness doesn't get in the way of his seeing life's truths. Stacy Keach adds color (no pun intended) as a sleazy redneck sheriff and, yeah, the young guitarist meets Tyrone's stepdaughter.

Musicians in the cast will likely be household names to only the most hardcore of fans, perhaps the best known being longtime Howlin' Wolf saxman/bandleader Eddie Shaw. Fans of early r&b (and modestly budgeted independent films) should find this a charming piece of work and one that will stand up to the occasional repeat viewing. *Duane Verh*



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Delmark Records 55 Years Of Blues

DELMARK CD/DVD SET

Celebrating 55 years, Delmark has issued this sampler CD/DVD package that, with its budget price, should be a no-brainer purchase. The thrust of this collection is not simply to celebrate the label's history and future, but also highlight notable releases.

After opening with Junior Wells' "Little By Little," from "Live at Theresa's," one then listens to Sleepy John Estes backed by a modern Chicago band that included Jimmy Dawkins' distinctive guitar work. The late Detroit Junior revisits his most famous song, "Call My Job," while J.B. Hutto rocks the slide taking that "Evening Train." Backed by Dave Spector, vocalist Barkin' Bill redoes Guitar Slim's "Sufferin' Mind," while Big Joe Williams' "Coffeeshouse Blues" takes us back to Mississippi as he pounds out his blues on his nine-string guitar as he celebrates his coffee grind. Syl Johnson brings together Memphis and Chicago on "Keep on Loving Me," followed by bassist Willie Kent's insistent shuffle, "Do You Love Me," followed by Kent and his Gents backing the Sweetheart of the Blues, Bonnie Lee, on Jimmy Reed's "Baby What You Want Me to Do," with Billy Branch adding harp behind her full-throated vocal.

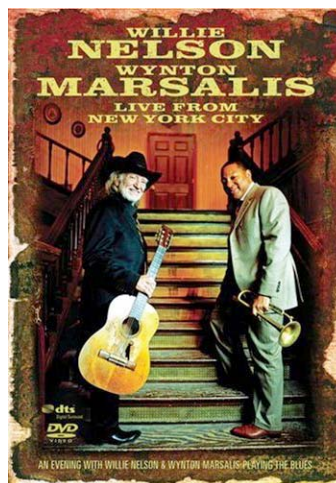
The late Floyd McDaniel takes us to the urbane Southside with a take of a T-Bone Walker recording, "Blue Mood," followed by a 1951 recording by arguably the greatest blues pianist of all-time, Roosevelt Skyes handling "Fine and Brown," a nice jump flavored number with Sax Mallard's vibrato-laden sax and Robert Nighthawk's heavy chords. Steve Freund's minor key blues "I'll Be Your Mule" evokes Otis Rush, who is himself heard on an impassioned live "Please Love Me," which then is followed by the barrelhouse piano of Speckled Red handling his brother Piano Red's "The Wright String But the Wrong Yo Yo." Little Milton's recording of Chuck Willis' "Feel So Bad" influenced many Chicagoans, including Jimmy Dawkins' blistering, insistent version here. Shirley Johnson, a veteran of the club scene is heard on the soulful, "Not For the Love of You," with nice guitar by Maurice John Vaughan, while the CD portion ends with Magic Sam's storming "I Don't want No Woman" from a live club recording. The purpose of this sampler is hopefully to induce listeners to check out the original CDs and the strong performances here will likely do that.

This release also includes a DVD sampler of performances from the various blues DVDs that Delmark has

issued (which also have CD versions as well). The DVD opens and closes with two solid performances by the Howlin' Wolf inspired Taildragger with some superb guitar by Lurrie Bell and harmonica by Billy Branch. Jimmy Burns distinctive R&B flavored Chicago blues follows with some nice slide guitar. Lurrie Bell and Carey Bell are featured next with Lurrie handling Big Joe Williams' "Baby Please Don't Go," with Carey on harp followed by an intimate performance at Lurrie's home of Carey handling "Broke & Hungry," just supported by Lurrie's guitar on what would be one of his last performances.

Byther Smith's "Judge Your Honor" is a terrific performance making his use of pick-up bands frustrating because he could be so much better known. Vocalist Sharon Lewis is backed by Dave Spector on the hot "In Too Deep," while Little Arthur Duncan's Little Walter influenced "Leaving Mississippi" is likable if not exceptional. "Cool Twist," by Mississippi Heat is a nice showcase for leader Pierre Lacocque's harp and Inez Visor's vocals with a nice mambo groove. Zora Young's "'Til the Fat Lady Sings" is from "It Ain't Over, Delmark's 55th Anniversary Blues Show," which is unissued as this is written (but scheduled for late 2008 release), and sports more cutting guitar from Lurrie Bell, with a band that includes Bob Stroger on bass and Kenny Smith on drums.

Simply stated, this is a terrific collection of both audio and video blues performances, independent of this being a sampler. Do yourself a favor. Buy several...one of yourself, and the rest as gifts. **Ron Weinstock**



WILLIE NELSON WYNTON MARSALIS

**Live From Jazz At
Lincoln Center NYC
EAGLE EYE MEDIA**

Many might be scratching their heads saying "Willie Nelson and Wynton Marsalis...together? Actually, Miles Davis was a fan of Willie Nelson, as are many other jazz musicians, and this DVD offering music from concerts over two

nights in January 2007 shows just why. Nelson may be country, but can certainly be a very jazzy country to be sure. Put him with jazz trumpeter Marsalis and a crack band and you have a collection of songs that are not only very different, but also very enjoyable to boot.

Willie, along with his incredibly beat up guitar, and Wynton share the stage with Mickey Raphael/harmonica, Walter Blanding/sax, Dan Nimmer/piano, Carlos Henriquez/bass and Ali Jackson/drums as the seven musicians deliver a total of 19 songs. While the small subtitle on the front of the DVD box states "An Evening with Willie Nelson & Wynton Marsalis Playing the Blues," that could be just a bit misleading, as it is not what most consider to be the blues. They are actually gently swinging right out of the box with "Rainy Day Blues," but they also do some jazz standards such as "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and "Stardust." They get into the New Orleans groove with songs like "Down By The Riverside," "My Bucket's Got A Hole In It" and "Basin Street Blues." And, of course there is some country flavor throughout courtesy of Willie Nelson, who sings the songs like only Willie can. The camera work and sound form the performance is just fine, but my only complaint is the clips of Willie or Wynton talking between some of the tracks, which, while interesting the first time out, can be annoying to some people on repeated viewings. It is preferable to have that kind of thing as an "Extra." If you could program the DVD's menu to just play the music, that would be a definite plus, but I don't believe I have seen that feature. But the music here is wonderful, and if you can deal with the talking clips it is well worth seeing for those jazz fans that like Willie Nelson, and for all fans of Willie for sure. It might be a sneaky but effective way for you to introduce a friend who listens to country to jazz. **Bill Wahl**

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

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CHICK COREA ELEKTRIC BAND

Live at the
Maintenance Shop
QUANTUM LEAP DVD

One of the most significant jazzmen of the past four decades, pianist Chick Corea has always pushed the edge with important musical projects. After his band Return To Forever disbanded, Corea formed his jazz-rock fusion group, The Elektric Band, in 1985 with drummer

Dave Weckl, bassist John Patitucci, guitarist Frank Gambale and saxophonist Eric Marienthal. That band made five recordings for the GRP label, including a 1986 self-titled disc that includes four of the five tunes from this DVD.

This remarkable live-recorded performance "circa 1987" features Corea laying down five tunes with Weckl and Patitucci at The Maintenance Shop at Iowa State University. DVD tunes include: "Sidewalk," "King Cockroach," "India Town," "Rumble" and "Malaguena." No composition credits are listed but one can assume that all but "Malaguena" are Corea originals.

No exact date is listed for this performance, but some online sleuthing reveals that Corea appeared in October 1986 and January 1987 at the Maintenance Shop in concerts filmed by the University in conjunction with Iowa Public Television, which broadcast the performances nationally on PBS and, in some cases, internationally. This DVD was originally released in 2005 in Australia only. (Quantum Leap is a UK company.)

As this may be the only existing DVD documentation from that era featuring these three musicians, it would thus have some historic value. Yet, while the sound quality and camera work are fine, production quality is not. The DVD is in 4:3 aspect ratio and color picture quality is not very crisp. Sloppy work such as an out-of-order play list on the jacket and a missing track on the disc menu detract somewhat from the finished product. Total time on the jacket is listed as "75 mins approx," but when you add up the times indicated for each tune, it totals around 50 minutes (The original PBS videotapes were one-hour programs). Bonus disc materials include bios on the band members and their discographies.

Still, despite some of the abovementioned drawbacks, Corea's fans should find this DVD a worthwhile purchase. And since it was just released October 28, it would be a good as well as timely gift choice for a Chick Corea Elektric Band fan.

Nancy Ann Lee



GEORGE BENSON

Absolutely Live
EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

George Benson became an international star with the release of his 1976 album "Breezin'," but before that he was well known in the jazz world as an incredible guitarist. Once he made the big-time, the guitar took a back seat to his rich vocals, but in recent years, especially in live performances, we have seen more and more guitar work popping up.

This concert from 2000 took place at Waterfront Hall in Belfast, Ireland and finds Benson in fine form in a number of settings. It starts off with three songs for which Benson is backed by the BBC Big Band as he sings straight jazz on "All Of Me," "I Only Have Eyes For You" and "Beyond The Sea," with no guitar strapped on. Next up he is backed by a smaller band, which includes pianist Joe Sample, as they work through three instrumentals, so Benson's guitar is front and center here on "Deeper Than You Think," "Hipping The Hop" and "Lately." Benson goes back to singing, as they get more into contemporary jazz/R&B with "The Ghetto" and "In Your Eyes," the latter of which adds a string group with members of the Ulster Orchestra. Sample is gone now but the small band continues with a different pianist as they switch back to straight jazz, with the small band and strings, for "Moody's Mood" followed by Benson doing a fantastic solo guitar version of "Danny Boy" that certainly revved up the Irish audience.

Now it is time for George to give the crowd some of his contemporary hits as he covers "This Masquerade," "Breezin'," "Love X Love" and "Turn Your Love Around" with the small band and little orchestra. Then they take it home with three more songs for which the small band is backed by the BBC Big Band and strings for "Never Give Up On A Good Thing," "Give Me The Night" and "On Broadway."

The sound is very good, especially in DTS Surround, and the camera work, while mostly featuring Benson, does spend some time on the crowd dancing, especially near the end; however, for some reason it was not really a distraction for me. This would make a fine gift for any George Benson fan out there.

Bill Wahl

THE CRUSADERS

Live At Montreux 2003
EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

Just released as a part of Eagle's Montreux Jazz Festival series, The Crusaders are featured in a 2003 concert. Originally formed in 1961, they were quite popular in the soulful, straight-ahead and hard bop vein when they were known as The Jazz Crusaders. When they moved in a new direction in the 1970s they shortened the name to simply The Crusaders. Joe Sample began playing the Fender Rhodes electric piano and they added an electric guitarist and forged their own soulful, funky style in what was known as jazz-fusion. The band's trademark sound comes from a perfect blending of tenor sax and trombone. The original tenor player, Wilton Felder, is on hand here, and is the only other remaining founding member here along with Sample.

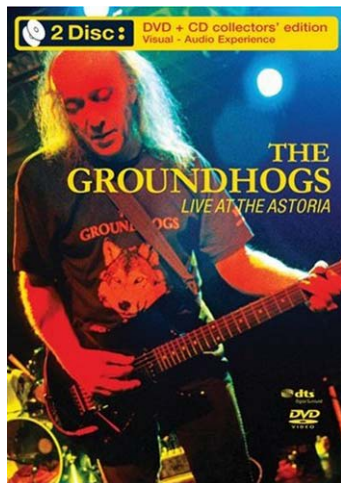
On this night in 2003 Sample and Felder were on

stage along with trombonist Stephan Baxter, guitarist Ray Parker, Jr., bassist Freddie Washington and drummer Kendrick Scott. Four songs feature the fine vocals of Randy Crawford. Baxter does a very good job of filling Wayne Henderson's shoes on trombone, and Ray Parker, Jr. is a perfect fit on guitar. Kendrick Scott has in recent years forged a very successful career of his own and shines throughout on drums. The band covers 12 songs overall, and plays "Spiral," "Viva De Funk," "Creepin'," "Way Back Home," "Carnival Of The Night" and "Put It Where You Want It" before bringing Randy Crawford onstage.

Randy's vocals just add some icing to the funky cake as she sings "The Thrill Is Gone," "Soul Shadows," "Street Life" and a touching, almost whispery version of John Lennon's "Imagine." Randy leaves with some flowers and the band ends with "Rural Renewal" and "Ghostbusters."

The sound was just fine, especially DTS Surround (which seems to be my best choice for these music DVDs) and the camera work is clean, though it moves around quite a bit and kept coming back to two dancing robot dogs, which Randy grooved with. I am not sure what they were all about, but they are cute and, if they did some work around the house or washed the car it might be fun to have a couple of them. But, getting back on focus, Crusaders fans should be very pleased with this DVD.

Bill Wahl



THE GROUNDHOGS

Live At The Astoria

EAGLE VISION DVD/CD

Alongside John Mayall and Savoy Brown's Kim Simmonds, Tony (T.S.) McPhee is one of the great survivors of the '60's British blues scene.

Armed with one of the most "outside" approaches to blues guitar, embracing the primitive nature both of early blues and psychedelic rock, McPhee still shows plenty of fretboard fire

through this "live" 1998 set.

Played for an enthusiastic, visibly graying pack of hippie-era geezers, McPhee and his rhythm section- bass guitarist Eric Chipulina and drummer Pete Correa- evoke the golden era of '60's rock palace counterculture with extended versions of selections from all points along the Groundhogs' now four-decades old history.

McPhee's work covers sonic territory frequently far over the boundaries of conventional blues; Eastern-influenced scale runs and Adrian Belew-like twang bar shrieks are more likely than B.B. King or Elmore James.

The "Oh Wow!" stage lighting and added-on visual effects reinforce the time-warp quality of the gig and actually add a dimension of nostalgic fun to McPhee & Co.'s straight-ahead performance.

This package also includes a parallel audio CD. Brit blues fans should like this one.

Duane Verh

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DOWN THE TRACKS

The Music That Influenced Bob Dylan

EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

Fans of Bob Dylan might easily be interested in this recently released DVD that takes a look into the career of Dylan and many of the aspects of his development. It is a documentary with several people telling the story. The story is interesting, but it might not be quite so effective without the video clips and still shots with music snippets from some of his many influences, such as Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Willie McTell, Reverend Gary Davis, Mississippi John Hurt and others. The videos are especially nice, such as we see from Seeger, Leadbelly, Hurt and Davis. These, however, are not complete performances, but just sort clips presented as part of the overall story.

Also covered are some of the other things that affected Dylan, with chapters such as Country Roots, The Beats, The Appalachians, and Religion & Poetry. Dylan himself does not perform anywhere here, but one will certainly get a good idea of where he came from after watching this DVD. Another volume in Down the Tracks is due out soon featuring Led Zeppelin.

Bill Wahl

Some CDs

MILES DAVIS

The Miles Davis All-Stars

Featuring John Coltrane

Broadcast Sessions 1958-59

ACROBAT MUSIC

This single CD featuring live radio broadcasts of four different lineups of Miles Davis bands between May 17, 1958 and January 3, 1959 has just been released by Acrobat Music, a British label what has recently been making quite a statement with reissues in the U.S.

Tracks 1-4, "Four, "Bye Bye Blackbird," Walkin'" and an incomplete version of "Two Bass Hit" were recorded at Cafe Bohemia in New York with Miles joined by John Coltrane, Bill Evans, Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones. Tracks 5-7 were from the Spotlight Lounge in Washington DC with Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Red Garland, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb.

The next cut came from a performance at the Mosque Theatre in Newark, NJ featuring Miles with a nine-piece band that included both Cannonball and Nat Adderley plus Gerry Mulligan on baritone sax and two percussionists for a fast version of "What Is This Thing Called Love." I also hear a guitar here but none is listed. Tracks 9 and 10, "Bag's Groove" and "All Of Me" are back to a sextet with Coltrane, Cannonball, Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb.

This is a collector's item for sure, and the sound quality is amazingly good, especially given the age and the fact that these were radio broadcasts. For this reason, we decided to get it in to this year's Holiday Gift Guide. One note...in the booklet Nat Adderley is incorrectly listed as playing the clarinet on track 8; however Nat plays the cornet.

A very nice release, absolutely no question about that at all.

Bill Wahl

DAVE BRUBECK QUARTET FEATURING PAUL DESMOND

On The Radio: Live 1956-57
ACROBAT MUSIC

Acrobat Music's U.S. division has just released this 15-song collection of live radio broadcasts from two club gigs in February, 1956 and March, 1957 and offers some very fine music.

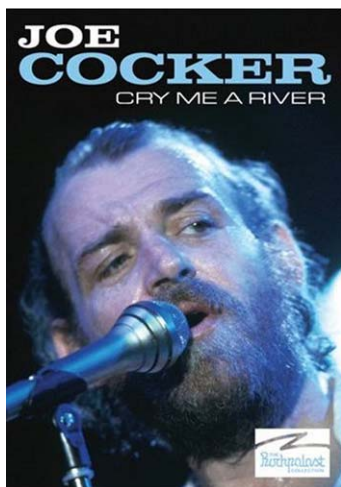
The first 12 songs were recorded at the Basin Street Jazz Club in New York City with pianist Dave Brubeck and alto saxophonist Paul Desmond joined by Norman Bates (no relation to the motel guy from *Psycho*) on bass and Joe Dodge on drums. Some of the songs heard are "Stardust," "In Your Own Sweet Way," "Love Walked In" and "All The Things You Are." The last three were performed at The Blue Note in Chicago with the man who would become Brubeck's best-known drummer replacing Dodge – Joe Morello.

As is the case with the Miles Davis release on Acrobat, this also has surprisingly good sound, and would make a fitting gift for any Brubeck fan given its collector's status and the fact that it has just been released.

Bill Wahl

Jumping Genres

Here are some non jazz or blues titles for people on your gift list who are into different styles of music.



JOE COCKER

Cry Me A River
EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

This newly released DVD captures Joe Cocker live in Germany at Berlin's Metropol in 1980, just about a decade after his Woodstock performance that launched him into stardom. Originally seen as part of the German WDR-TV's Rockpalast series, the concert finds Cocker in fine form with his band and three female backup singers as he

delivers an up take on "Cry Me A River" followed by his famous version of "Feelin' Alright" and nine more songs, including "With A Little Help From My Friends," "Sweet Forgiveness," "Hitchcock Railway," "The Letter," Billy Preston's "You Are So Beautiful," Procol Harum's "Whiter Shade of Pale," the Marvin Gaye hit "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" and more. As always, Cocker has a knack for taking other people's songs and making them little masterpieces of his own.

Although the video does look dated, let's face it – it is nearly 30 years old. The sound, though a bit heavy on the low end, is decent given some of what I have heard from other Rockpalast concerts on both VHS and DVD. With DTS surround it does give it all a nice boost. In short, any Joe Cocker fan should enjoy it.

Bill Wahl



TORI AMOS

Live At Montreux
1991/1992
EAGLE EYE MEDIA
DVD OR CD

Singer/songwriter/pianist

Tori Amos was rather new on the scene when she played her first concert at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1991. Coming just prior to her "Little Earthquakes" album, she played a set of ten songs, mostly concentrating on that album. Although the stage was loaded with band equipment, she came out playing solo, just accompanying herself on a Yamaha electric grand piano. If Amos was nervous, she was covering it up well, and one would expect her to be given that she was a new, non-jazz artist playing at such a legendary and prestigious jazz festival.

I was fully expecting some more bodies to walk onstage to take up the other instruments, but that never happened as she played the entire concert by herself and did a fine job of it. She even bailed herself out OK when she stated "...I forgot the words to my own song." The crowd clapped for an encore for which she sang Led Zeppelin's "Thank You," which she said is the song she "always used to make out to."

The second concert featured on the DVD is her complete set from the following year. By now, "Little Earthquakes" had already been released and she continued featuring the album's songs. Here she was alone on stage with a Steinway grand and both sounded and looked much more confident. Along with her set of originals she did two from Led Zeppelin, quite interesting versions of "Whole Lotta Love" and "Thank You," as well as one from Nirvana. There was an obvious maturing that took place in just a year. She again captured the crowd, except for a few who she scolded for talking which brought a round of applause from everyone else. The sound is excellent, especially in DTS, and the camera work is very well done.

There are certainly a lot of Tori Amos fans out there, so if you have one on your gift list this would be a very good choice, whether the DVD with 19 songs over 90 minutes, or the CD version which contains 16 songs – all 10 from 1991 and 6 of the 9 from 1992.

Bill Wahl

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COME TOGETHER

A Night For John Lennon's Words & Music

EAGLE EYE MEDIA DVD

Three weeks after the devastation of 9/11, a concert was performed at New York's Radio City Music Hall, which was dedicated to New York City and its people. The theme was the music of John Lennon, a peace loving man who loved New York, and was senselessly gunned down there in 1980. This was a star-studded concert, both onstage and in front of it, as many movie stars sat in the audience. A total of 16 John Lennon songs were performed that night, with the set kicking off with gospel singer Yolanda Adams and the late Billy Preston playing organ and singing backup for "Imagine." They were introduced by Kevin Spacey, the show's host, who said "John Lennon loved New York, and New York loved John Lennon." Dave Matthews was up next for "In My Life," with no band as he accompanied himself on guitar. Stone Temple Pilots followed with "Revolution" before Alanis Morissette offered a moving version of "Dear Prudence."

Sean Lennon, John's son, was heard on three songs, performing alone on "Julia," with Rufus Wainwright on "This Boy" and the two were joined by Moby for "Across The Universe." Natalie Merchant did a fine version of "Nowhere Man" and Cyndi Lauper was filmed outside doing "Strawberry Fields Forever."

The other songs performed were "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" by Marc Anthony, "Mother" by Shelby Lynne,

"Instant Karma" from Nelly Furtado and Dave Stewart, "Jealous Guy" from Lou Reed, "Come Together" by Craig David and Kevin Spacey himself sang "Mind Games," and he did quite a good job of it at that. The show came to a close with all the performers gathering for "Give Peace A Chance." I'd have to say some of my personal favorite performances came from Morissette, Merchant and Lynne.

Clips of John Lennon as well as still shots are interspersed between songs and the video of the performances is very clean and crisp. The audio is first rate as well, offered in Dolby Digital Stereo and Surround 5.1. A good choice for a John Lennon fan.

Bill Wahl

Look for Part 2 of the Holiday Gift Guide
in our December issue!

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release blues.... With the election just around the corner and your 401(k) account blasted by the on-going Wall Street nonsense, the blues are as real as they can be. Here's a few new ones: Taj Mahal- *Maestro*; Elvin Bishop- *The Blues Rolls On*; Marc Broussard- *Keep Coming Back*; Southside Johnny and Labamba's Big Band- *Grapefruit Moon: The Songs of Tom Waits*; Grayson Capps- *Rott 'N' Roll*; Susan Tedeschi- *Back to the River*; Chris Duarte- *Vantage Point*; Marc Ford & Neptune Blues Club- *Marc Ford & Neptune Blues Club*; Magic Slim & the Teardrops- *Midnight Blues*; Joe Louis Walker- *Witness to the Blues*; Martin Sease- *Who's Got the Power*; Seasick Steve- *I Started Out with Nothin' and I Still Got Most of it Left*; Rory Block- *Blues Walkin' Like a Man: A Tribute to Son House*; Slo Leak- *New Century Blues*; Byther Smith- *Got No Place to Go*; Denise Lasalle- *A Little Bit Naughty*; Jimmy Thackery & the Drivers- *Inside Tracks*; Earl Gaines- *Nothin' But the Blues*; Odetta - *Odetta Sings Dylan*; Papa John Creach- *Papa Blues*; Paul Reddick- *Sugarbird*; Bruce Katz- *Live! At the Firefly*; Luther Lackey- *I Should have Stayed Scared*; Scissormen- *Luck in a Hurry*; Paul Rishell and Annie Raines- *A Night in Woodstock*; Buddy Whittington- *Buddy Whittington*; Aynsley Dunbar- *The Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation/Doctor Dunbar's Prescription*; Peter Green- *Anthology*; Bobby Rush- *Look at What You Gettin'*; David Grissom- *Loud Music*; Mitch Kashmar- *Live at Labatt*; Big Dave McLean- *Got 'Em From the Bottom*; Willie "Big Eyes" Smith- *Born in Arkansas*; Eddie Floyd- *Eddie Loves You So*; Eddie Taylor- *I Got to Make This Money, Baby*; Clarence Spady- *Just Between Us*; Mark Hummel - *Mark Hummel's Harmonica Blowout (featuring Magic Dick, Lee Oskar, William Clarke, Paul delay, Rick Estrin, Carey Bell, James Harman, Lazy Lester, Sam Myers and others)*; Lil' Dave Thompson- *Deep In the Night....* See ya!



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