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Saffire's Swan Song

But Their Solo Careers Go On

jazz & blues report

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On The Cover

Saffire the Uppity Blues Women photo, and the one at upper right on this page, courtesy of Alligator Records.

**Regular CD Review
Section Begins On Page 12**



"Buffalicious"

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

Saffire – The Uppity Blues Women One Last Recording...Together



Havin' The Last Word on Alligator

By Ron Weinstock

It's been twenty-five years since the trio of Gaye Adegbalola, Ann Rabson and Earline Lewis first started performing around Fredericksburg, VA and Washington, D.C.. This writer remembers catching them for the first time at a DC Blues Society charity concert at Georgetown University and picking up their self-produced cassette, "Middle Age Blues," mostly compiled from classic blues with a few originals, including "Middle Age Blues Boogie," which became the trio's theme song with its still memorable refrain "I want a young, young man." Having the chance to see them on a regular basis in Washington, I was delighted to find out they had signed with Alligator in 1989, I believe. Their debut Alligator disc, the eponymously titled "SAFFIRE - The Uppity Blues Women," was a surprising, but well deserved, success.

A story I did from interviews with them for the DC Blues Society newsletter was the basis for the first major story on them that appeared in one of the early issues of "Blues Revue." Along the way, Earline Lewis departed to be replaced by Andra Faye, who in addition to playing bass, also displayed a multi-instrumental talent on mandolin, guitar, fiddle and more. In the ensuing years they have performed countless times as well as continued to teach at blues workshop programs, mentoring a large number of modern acoustic blues acts. From the Washington DC and Tidewater, VA area, such groups as BluesWorks and MSG the Acoustic Trio mine traditional blues along with adding contemporary originals rooted in traditional sources. Undoubtedly the novelty of a trio of mature women performing acoustic blues itself was a source of appeal among a variety of audiences that went beyond the usual audience for Alligator's house-rocking electric blues bands. But their longevity is evidence that their music had so much more substance than what may have been an initial novelty to some.

"Havin' the Last Word" is their eighth album of new recordings for Alligator (this does not include the excellent compilation "Deluxe Edition") and first since 2001's "Ain't Gonna Hush." The title refers to the fact that this is the trio's swan song together with the ensuing performances to be among their final regular ones together. Each will continue the solo careers they have each been engaged in the past several years. Unlike their previous albums, there is only one classic blues revived here, "Kitchen Man," and the rest are fresh tunes composed by the three along with songs by EG Kight, and others. The opening song, Carla Daruda's "Going Down to the River" has all three trading verses about going to the river and



wash their troubles away with Ann holding the bottom together like Blind John Davis before Andra Faye takes a crisp mandolin solo. Its followed by Gina DeLuca's "Nothin' in My House," where Gaye delivers the sassy lyrics about let them say what

Cape Town International Jazz Festival Turns Ten

NEW YORK NY/CAPE TOWN ZA – On April 3-4, 2009, the Cape Town International Jazz Festival, which attracted 33,500 people in 2008, turns TEN. The festival has defied the skeptics who believed that this event, like other previous attempts at an annual international jazz festival on the African continent, would also fizzle out.

In its decade-long existence, the Cape Town International Jazz Festival has become an important event on the world jazz calendar. "It's not been easy, but we have now developed a winning formula, comprised of many elements. The presentation on five stages over two days, of 40 bands equally split between African and overseas artists, has given festival goers so much choice", says EspAfrika and festival director Rashid Lombard.

Over the years the festival has evolved into something more than a musical event. In addition to the music workshops and clinics that take place during the festival, most attendees revel in the whole experience of coming to and being in the beautiful city of Cape Town.

In its programming, the Cape Town International Jazz Festival creates a platform where jazz sits comfortably with other related genres such as Afro-pop, soul, funk, blues, Latin and hip-hop. 2009 headliners will include award-winning jazz vocalist **Dianne Reeves**, jazz-funk king **Maceo Parker** and smooth jazz guitarist **Peter White**. Legendary South African trumpeter **Hugh Masekela** will join the three as a headline act. His appearance at the festival forms part of his 70th birthday celebrations.

Those who prefer straight-ahead jazz sounds can look forward to John Coltrane's disciple **Dave Liebman**, Miles Davis' drummer **Al Foster**, the a cappella group **New York Voices**, local veteran drummer **Maurice Gawronsky Quartet** and Clint Eastwood's son, bassist **Kyle Eastwood**. To expose local talent, festival organizers have contracted vocalist **Emily Bruce** and bassist **Jonathan Rubain**, both from Cape Town.

One of the trademarks of the Cape Town International Jazz Festival is to honor iconic groups, as well as young African musicians who are making it big internationally. To be honored in 2009 for their staying power are **The Stylistics**, whose sound dates back to 1968; acid-jazz group **Incognito**, and **Loading Zone**, a Cape Town-based group that celebrates their twentieth anniversary in 2009. As for bands that currently hold the African flag high, there is a cappella quintet **Zap Mama**, South African master balladeer **Ringo Madlingozi**, indomitable **Freshlyground** and **Rus Nerwich's** collective imagination.

For more information on the Cape Town Jazz Festival as well as ticket pricing, visit online at <http://www.capetownjazzfest.com/>.

For more information on South Africa, a world-class destination, the ideal place for both business and leisure, contact South African Tourism at 500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2040, New York, N.Y., 10110; Tel: (212) 730-2929; Fax: (212) 764-1980; or visit www.southafrica.net.

they will, "if I want to honky tonk all night ... what do I care, I ain't got nothing in their house," with Ann adding a rollicking solo. Ann revives "Kitchen Man" from the pen of Andy Razaf and Edna Pinkard, with a stately piano and Andra Faye's complimentary mandolin. EG Kight & Tom Horner contributed "Somebody's Gotta Give," a song that Andra Faye belts out (and one can imagine easily being translated into a band format by Andra and her band The Mighty Good Man).

Other highlights include "Bald Headed Blues," an original by Gaye where she addresses consequences of chemotherapy and dancing with life and not death. Andra Faye adds fiddle to Ann's not completely reflective "Since You've Been Gone," while her own "Blue Lullaby" has a country flavor. EG Kight and Tom Horner collaborated with Ann for "Travelin' at the Speed of Love," a celebratory boogie with Andra Faye's fiddle adding a nice counterpoint to her jaunty piano. Gaye's "I Can Do Bad All By Myself" has a nice guitar solo from Ann while Gaye sings about how bad things have gone "so she needs to take a payday loan," but she does not need anyone else's help. Andra Faye is playful and celebrates her body on having "Too Much Butt," while Gaye's "Bald Eagle" is a lustful celebration of female sexuality with spirited mandolin and piano in the backing. Deanna Bogart's "I'm Growing Older" is a humorous song about the inevitable, as Andra Faye is quite comfortable about aging like fine wine and becoming a wilder woman. The album concludes with another Ann Rabson collaboration with Kight and Horner, "The Bad Times," with echoes of "Drown in My Own Tears" in its melody, noting that we have had bad and sad times, but held on to faith and through all these times, these words of wisdom that "bad times make the good times better, bad times make our love strong...good times will be here before long."

Saffire has provided many with some really good music over a quarter of a century that has given us good times to get past the bad and sad times. It is a cliché that all good things must come to an end, and while the musical partnership of Saffire - the Uppity Blues Women may be ending, their musical legacy is firmly established and will be enjoyed for many more years just as each of the members will establish more of their own legacy with their solo careers. Like Jim Brown leaving professional football, "Havin' the Last Word" has Saffire ending their run while still performing at the highest level.

Duke Ellington Jazz Festival Provided Jazz Band For Private Event for President-Elect Barack Obama During Inauguration



Pictured, left to right, Bassist Oscar Stagnaro, pianist Alex Brown, drummer Mark Walker, President Barack Obama, trumpeter Diego Urcola, piano tuner Paul Milesi and Duke Ellington Festival Executive Producer, Charles Fishman

Members of Duke Ellington Jazz Festival Artistic Advisor Paquito D'Rivera's Quintet performed at an early dinner buffet for President-Elect Barack Obama and his friends and family on Sunday evening, January 18, at the Blair House. The Obamas lived at Blair House prior to moving into the White House on Inauguration Day, January 20. The 2009 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival is coming up June 5-15 in Washington, DC, and will salute New Orleans with artists including Terence Blanchard, Irma Thomas, Rebirth Brass Band, Buckwheat Zydeco and Ellis Marsalis, who will be paid tribute in finale event at the Kennedy Center with big name New Orleans artists to be announced shortly.... Call 202-232-3611 for ticket information. For information on the festival, visit www.dejazzfest.org

Rock Hall Features 35 Years of Sepia Magazine Photography

CLEVELAND, OH- The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is honoring Black History Month and the African-American influence on rock and roll with a new photography exhibit. The *Sepia Magazine* Photo Archive - 1948-1983: 35 Years of the African-American Experience in Music opened on January 19, 2009 in the Museum's Ahmet M. Ertegun Main Exhibit Hall's Circular Gallery.

The opening day, also Martin Luther King, Jr., day, was a free admission day at the Rock Hall.

The *Sepia* exhibition contains more than 40 images originally featured in the magazine during its 35 years of publication – some not seen since their original printing – of African-American musical figures that shaped not just black culture, but the entire world. The exhibition will make its national debut at the Rock Hall and

will be open until April 12, 2009.

Photographs that will be showcased in the exhibition include those of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductees James Brown, Ruth Brown, Ray Charles, Mahalia Jackson, Bob Marley and Jackie Wilson, as well as such other influential artists as Erroll Garner, Dizzy Gillespie, The Sugarhill Gang, and more.

"*Sepia* magazine was a vital voice in the African-American community for many decades," said Howard Kramer, curatorial director of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

"The knowledge and information it presented spoke much about its audience, and its audience cared about and loved music," Kramer added.

First published in Fort Worth, Texas in 1947 by George Levitan, *Sepia* magazine often exposed the obstacles facing African-Americans but more importantly, it celebrated their accomplishments.

By way of its popular photojournalistic style, the magazine closely focused on various aspects of the culture including politics, lifestyle and music. Especially during the civil rights era, *Sepia* was a clear and steady outlet of the African-American community to express its views and highlight its accomplishments.

"The images in this exhibit depict the diversity of the music, the artists and the times which we lived," said Carole L. Anthony of Diversified Funk an Urban Mosaic and curator of the *Sepia* exhibit. "Every music genre we now know was either created or evolved during *Sepia*'s 35 year span. Based on the origins of rock and roll steeped in blues, gospel, country and jazz, the Rock Hall is the definitive venue for these amazing photographs to make their national debut."

The archive is owned by the African American Museum in Dallas. For more information on current and upcoming exhibits at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, please visit rockhall.com/exhibits.

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 Museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. On Wednesdays, the Museum is open until 9 p.m. Museum admission is \$22 for adults, \$17 for seniors (65+), \$13 for youth (9-12), \$18 for adult residents of Greater Cleveland. Children under 8 and Museum members are free. The Museum is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. When you become a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, the world of rock and roll becomes yours to explore.

Call 216.515.1939 for information on becoming a member. For general inquiries, please call 216.781.ROCK or visit www.rockhall.com.

jazz-blues.com

7th annual St. John Blues Festival



ST. JOHN, USVI – Steve Simon presents The 7th Annual St. John Blues Festival with 12 live Blues shows over 5 days beginning on Wednesday, March 18th and running through Sunday, March 22nd.

The Festival's main concert will be held on Saturday evening, March 21st at 7:00 pm in the Coral Bay Ball Field on St. John and stars 2008 Blues Music En-

tertainer of the Year Janiva Magness, XM Radio's Best New Artist of the Year Zac Harmon, the 2008 International Blues Challenge winners Trampled Under Foot and Detroit's greatest Blues Band the Rusty Wright Blues Band.

"This year's Blues festival is going to rock St. John with some of the highest energy Blues artists in the business", stated festival founder and producer Steve Simon.

The 2009 St. John Blues Festival is honoring BLUZAPALOOZA, the world-renowned celebrity Blues concert tours that have been entertaining our troops at war in Iraq.

"I am so very proud to be taking America's greatest Blues artists overseas to entertain America's greatest troops", Simon said. "And during the entire 2009 St. John Blues Festival we will be raising money and awareness to keep this amazing mission alive".

And, for the first time in the history of the St. John Blues Festival there will be a professional film production company filming the entire festival.

The 2009 St. John Blues Festival is brought to you by Johnny Walker, The Lumberyard Retail Complex, the USVI Department of Tourism, Merchants Commercial Bank, Theodore Tunick & Company, Holiday Homes, First Bank, The Inn at Tamarind Court, Shipwreck Landing Restaurant, Sun Dog Café, Gecko Gazebo, The Beach Bar, Aqua Bistro Restaurant & Bar, Island Blues, Sunny FM, Isle 95, Pirate Radio, and Steve & Helen Simon.

For further information and the complete schedule, visit www.stjohnbluesfestival.com

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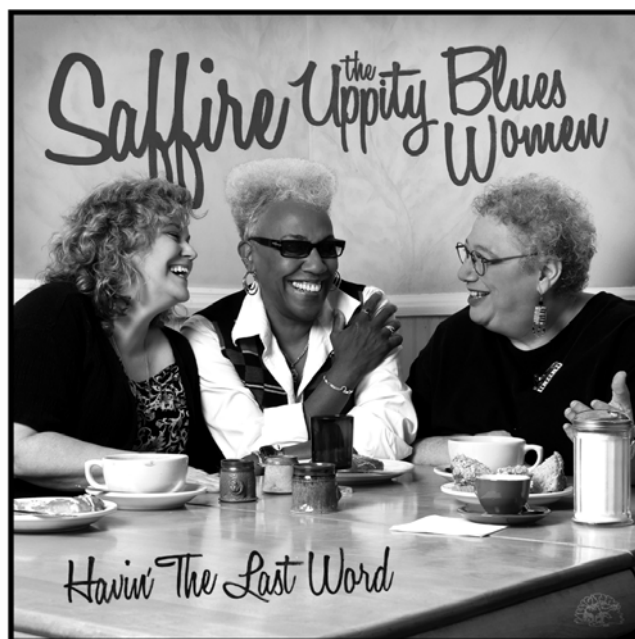
www.jazz-blues.com

Mustard Mud & Music Festival with Live Jazz, Wine Tasting Returns to Napa Valley Town of Calistoga March 7 and 8

CALISTOGA CA – Mustard madness reigns supreme as the Napa Valley town of Calistoga again hosts the award-winning Mustard, Mud & Music Festival on March 7 and 8, from 1 to 5 pm. Live jazz, wine tasting, an art show, and dishes prepared by local eateries featuring the spicy yellow condiment are all part of activities visitors can enjoy during the weekend-long festival.

Jazz and tastes from two dozen of the town's world-renowned wineries will be available at many of the popular restaurants, galleries and shops in walkable downtown Calistoga on both days. "Jazz Packs" are \$20 per person per day and include a souvenir glass and three tasting tickets. A Weekend Pass is \$35 per person and includes a souvenir glass and six tasting tickets, with admission to both days. Both types of passes are available at the Calistoga Chamber, 1506 Lincoln Avenue, Calistoga, California 94515, and can be purchased in advance by calling (707) 942-6333. Additional tasting tickets are \$2 each and are available from friendly volunteers on event days. Beer lovers will be able to purchase Bud, Bud Light and American Ale for a separate price at the Calistoga Chamber on both

"A rollicking joyride of infectious blues energy...smart and sexy, soulful and sassy." -Chicago Sun-Times



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days.

The wine tasting portion of the festival gives visitors a chance to sample wine from many of the area's smaller artisan wineries as well as some of the best-known winery destinations. Participating wineries include: August Briggs, Bennett Lane, Calistoga Cellars, Casa Nuestra, Castello di Amorosa, Dutch Henry Winery, Envy Wines, Lava Vine Winery, Madrigal Vineyards, Merryvale Vineyards, Salvestrin Winery, Sterling Vineyards, Terisa Winery, Terra Caliente, Tudal Winery, Twomey Cellars, Vincent Arroyo Winery and more.

Calistoga is also known as a town that embraces jazz. During the Festival, the town will offer a lively mix of renowned veterans and strong up-and-comers from around the Bay Area. Musicians include Herb Gibson & Friends, Grammy-nominated vocalist Vernelle Anders, Susan Sutton Trio, E & E Duo, Josh Workman, Dick Conte, Diamante Band, Layce Baker & The Black Diamond Band, David Neft and many more.

Also included is the Second Annual Mustard Arts Fete, presented by the Calistoga Arts Center, which starts on Friday, March 6 and runs through Sunday, March 8. The Fete is a members' art show of paintings and photographic works celebrating the presence of mustard in the Napa Valley. Viewers can vote on their favorite works in four categories plus Best of Show after viewing the works at the Art Center in the Calistoga Chamber, 1506 Lincoln Avenue. For more information, visit calistogaartcenter.org.

Calistoga's chefs are getting into the act as well, creating special dishes with mustard as a starring ingredient on their menus over the weekend. By popular demand, Calistoga's gourmet market, Cal Mart, will host a mustard tasting and feature mustard-themed products on March 7.

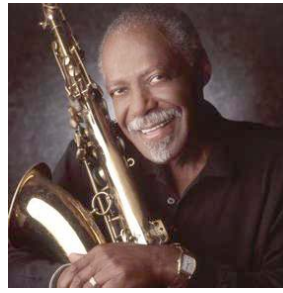
This event is sponsored by Budweiser, Calistoga Spa Hot Springs, Dr. Wilkinson's Hot Springs Resort, 1440 AM KVON/99.3 FM THE VINE, and Silverado Ace Hardware.

For more information on the Mustard, Mud & Music Festival, please go to CalistogaVisitors.com, or call the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce at (707) 942-6333.

David "Fathead" Newman February 24, 1933 – January 20, 2009

David "Fathead" Newman, legendary saxophonist/flutist and composer who was a prominent member of the Ray Charles band in the fifties and the sixties and a renowned bandleader in his own right thereafter, passed away on January 20, 2009 in upstate New York, succumbing to the pancreatic cancer that he heroically battled for the past year. He was 75 years old.

David Newman was born in Corsicana, Texas on February 24, 1933 and soon moved with his family to Dallas, where he graduated Lincoln High School, following which he attended Jarvis Christian College where he studied theology and music on a scholarship while working in local bands. After two years of college, Newman went on the road full time with fellow Texan Red Connor's group which featured Ornette



Coleman and with the band of Charlie Parker's mentor Buster Smith, playing dance halls, throughout the southwest. While on tour he met Ray Charles, who was working as a sideman with another group. The two bonded, both musically and personally and when Charles began leading his own

band in 1954, he called upon Newman to join the group, beginning a twelve-year association with the organization, helping to define the Charles orchestra's sound as its star tenor soloist.

Charles was instrumental in helping Newman set out on a solo career, bringing the saxophonist to his label, Atlantic Records, leading to his debut album as a leader in 1959, *Fathead: Ray Charles Presents David Newman*. The date included Newman's soulful rendition of Paul Mitchell's classic "Hard Times," with which he would be identified for the rest of his life. Newman would record numerous more records as a leader for Atlantic. His versatility on saxes and flutes also made him a first call session player and his presence contributed to studio dates by the likes Aretha Franklin, B.B. King, Dr. John, Joe Cocker, The Average White Band and Garland Jeffreys, as well as jazz greats Lee Morgan, Herbie Mann and fellow Charles alumnus Hank Crawford.

In 1980, Newman, determined to pursue his own musical identity, recorded several mainstream jazz albums for the Muse label. Artists such as Cedar Walton, Jimmy Cobb, Buster Williams, Louis Hayes and other fine NY musicians, helped round out the rhythm sections. He returned to Atlantic Records in the late eighties to record several more albums for the label that started out with. One of the recordings *Live at the Village Vanguard*, featured Stanley Turrentine and Hank Crawford. Newman's next recordings were on Herbie Mann's Kokopelli label, a beautiful CD in tribute to Duke Ellington, titled *Mr. Gentle, Mr. Cool* and another that he produced, *Under A Woodstock Moon*, the title referring to his move to upstate New York. Newman began a productive relationship with High Note Records at the close of the 1990s, releasing an impressive series of albums, including *Chillin'*, *Keep the Spirits Singing*, *Davey Blue*, *The Gift*, *Song for the New Man*, *I Remember Brother Ray* (a moving tribute to Ray Charles became the #1 Most Played Jazz Album nationwide), *Cityscape*, and *Life*. His latest album *Diamondhead* was released in 2008. David went into the Rudy Van Gelder studio for the last time in December, 2008 for what was to be his last recording, *The Blessing*, which will appear on HighNote later in 2009.

Newman appeared on many television shows including *Saturday Night Live*, *David Sanborn's Night Music*, *David Letterman*, and *Michael Jackson: Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration*. He appeared in Robert Altman's film *Kansas City* and did a national tour with the Kansas City Orchestra for Verve Records. He was portrayed by Bookeem Woodbine in the feature film *Ray*, the award-winning movie on the life of Ray Charles star-

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

KIDS DON'T GET ENOUGH

ART THESE DAYS. So you can see why some of them might accidentally confuse a jazz legend named Duke with royalty named duke. But it's finally time to set the record straight.

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

powerfully on the piano, but it was the full orchestra that he considered his most compelling instrument. He introduced improvisation to his compositions — a process unheard of using a 15-piece orchestra. The result was a different approach to jazz that sparked a revolution and an evolution.



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

His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady," "In a

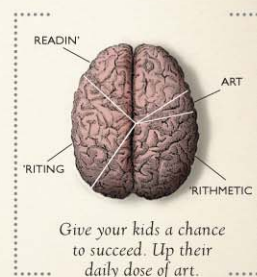


A piano player. A composer. An orchestra leader.
 Duke Ellington reigned over a land called Jazz.

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can really transform lives.

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



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NAMM
 Foundation

ring Jamie Foxx.

David Newman is survived by his loving wife and manager of twenty eight years, Karen Newman, four sons, eight grandchildren, three great grandchildren, an uncle and an aunt and a father-in-law who was his best friend, Izzy Goldstein. Memorial services are to be announced in the near future

Courtesy of High Note Records

2009 Florin Roebig Tampa Bay Blues Festival March 20, 21, & 22

TAMPA FLA – The Florin Roebig Tampa Bay Blues Festival returns to Vinoy Waterfront Park in downtown St. Petersburg, Florida, on Friday, Saturday & Sunday, March 20, 21, & 22, 2009. This internationally renowned, three day music festival has been staged for the past 15 years on the sunny shores of Tampa Bay and features spectacular waterfront views, a tropical atmosphere, and the finest blues music. The event draws visitors from throughout the United States and Europe and is regarded as among the better blues festivals in the world.

The festival is also pleased to announce that the law firm of Florin Roebig is the Title Sponsor for the 2009 event. Florin Roebig was founded in 1985 and enjoys a reputation as one of Florida's preeminent trial law firms. The firm handles cases involving medical malpractice, nursing home abuse, employment discrimination, product liability, pharmaceutical liability, auto negligence, and toxic tort liability. The partners at Florin Roebig have long been friends of the festival and are highly committed to supporting community events, charity, and the arts. The firm's website can be found at www.florinroebig.com.

The festival will feature a large concert stage and state of the art P.A. system. Multiple food vendors will be providing Florida foods, seafood, Cuban foods, and a variety of Festival treats. Beer & wine is also sold on site, together with sodas and beverages. Patrons may not bring alcoholic beverages or coolers to the event. Blankets and lawn chairs are encouraged, and re-entry to the park is allowed with a hand stamp.

Proceeds from the Florin Roebig Tampa Bay Blues Festival will benefit our charity partner, Pinellas Association for Retarded Children. PARC has been our primary charity for the past 15 years, and its work is critical to the welfare of the Tampa Bay community.

The price for a three day pass is \$75. Individual ticket prices are \$30 each day.

Backstage passes (includes festival admission) may be ordered for \$350 for all three days or \$150 per day. These backstage passes are limited, and patrons are encouraged to place their orders as early as possible. Tickets may be purchased on-line at www.tampabaybluesfest.com. Tickets and passes may also be purchased by sending a check, payable to Tampa Bay Blues Foundation, Inc., along with a business-size, stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Tampa Bay Blues Foundation, Inc., 1535 Dr. M.L. King Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33704.

FESTIVAL LINE UP

Friday, March 20

12:30 to 2:00 p.m. Robin Rogers
2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Lurrie Bell
4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Curtis Salgado
6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Coco Montoya
8:30 to 10:00 p.m. The Fabulous Thunderbirds

Saturday, March 21

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Teresa James & the Rhythm Tramps
1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Eric Lindell
3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Ruthie Foster
5:30 to 8:00 p.m. The Legendary Rhythm and Blues Revue featuring The Tommy Castro Band, Ronnie Baker Brooks, Magic Dick and Deanna Bogart
8:30 to 10:00 p.m. Delbert McClinton

Sunday, March 22

1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Seth Walker
2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Tinsley Ellis
4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Darrell Nulisch
6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Bernard Allison
8:30 to 10:00 p.m. Irma Thomas and the Professionals

Gates open approximately 30 minutes before the first artist each day.

Free Shuttle service on 1st Street NE from parking lots at Al Lang Baseball Field (Progress Energy Field), Bayfront Center Parking lot, and Baywalk garage in downtown St. Petersburg is provided. Please publicize this shuttle service, which will help us facilitate parking for the Blues Festival.

Official "After Hours" Parties

Nova 535 will host the Official "After Hours" Parties each night after the festival on Friday & Saturday, March 20 & 21, 2009. Doors open at 9:30 p.m. On Friday, guests will enjoy the music of Robin Rogers and Coco Montoya, with special guest Kim Wilson. Saturday's show includes Teresa James & the Rhythm Tramps, with special guest Eric Lindell, and The Tommy Castro Band. All artists have been invited to attend this special event. Tickets are \$20 and are available online and at the door. Nova is an upscale special events venue located at 535 Dr. M.L. King Jr. Street North, in St. Petersburg, Florida, just 5 minutes from Vinoy Park. Nova's website is www.nova535.com.

For more information on the Tampa Bay Blues Festival, visit www.tampabaybluesfest.com.

jazz
& blues

www.jazz-blues.com

Apollo Theater to Celebrate its 75th Birthday: Special Anniversary Programming Across Harlem, New York, and the Nation

NEW YORK – To celebrate its 75th birthday, the Apollo Theater today unveiled anniversary programming designed to illuminate the vital impact the landmark Theater has had on American culture and audiences nationwide, and to showcase its role as a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the nation. Since it opened its doors in January, 1934, the world-famous Apollo Theater has been a pioneer in presenting the cultural contributions of black and Latino communities and in launching and nurturing the careers of seemingly countless legendary performers, including Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Michael Jackson, Lauryn Hill, and Alicia Keys.

From January 2009 through the beginning of 2011, the Apollo's 75th Anniversary Season will be celebrated in Harlem and across the country and will include special performances and programs as well as a wide range of national and community offerings. Among the season's many highlights are:

- A series of special 75th anniversary performances, including: the national launch of **Dreamgirls**; a series of events in conjunction with *Honor!*, a festival celebrating African-American culture in partnership with Carnegie Hall and curated by celebrated soprano *Jessye Norman*; and an intimate evening with soul music superstar John Legend.

- A special edition of the Apollo's signature **Amateur Night**, its longest-running franchise, under the leadership of new producer Marion J. Caffey on January 28. The event included special guests, Amateur Night alumni, and a birthday cake.

- A national, touring exhibition in collaboration with the *Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture* to explore the history and impact of the Apollo and its role in shaping music and culture around the world. The exhibition—the first of its kind—will draw upon the Apollo Theater Archive to showcase rarely seen Apollo photographs, video clips, and other artifacts and memorabilia, and will open in April 2010 at the *National Museum of American History* in Washington, D.C., with an accompanying **book** to be developed and published in partnership with the *Smithsonian Institution Press* and the *National Museum of African American History and Culture*.

- The launch of a music and performing arts celebration, **Inspired!**, in October 2010, which will feature artists across generations learning from one another and performing together.

- The Apollo will hold Open Houses in February and October 2009 featuring tours of the theater led by in-house historian *Billy Mitchell*, film screenings about the Apollo's history, and a mini exhibition featuring photos of key Apollo figures and legendary performers at milestone moments.

- Plans for a documentary film co-produced by Emmy

Award-winner *Charles Hobson* and directed by noted filmmaker *Stanley Nelson*, as well as a television special to be produced by the legendary Ron Weisner.

"Since 1934, the Apollo has had an enormous impact on American culture, and has been the launching pad and nurturer of literally thousands of performers, many of whom have gone on to become legends," said Jonelle Procope, President and CEO of the Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc. "This is the very stage where Ella Fitzgerald invented scat when she performed in Amateur Night. This is the very place where James Brown discovered that he had soul, and that taught Aretha Franklin to properly curtsy. Our anniversary season has been designed to reflect our extraordinary role as one of America's most important cultural resources. New talent will continue to stretch our boundaries, legendary performers will continue to grace our stage, and our incredibly rich history will be magnified through the lenses of our many program partners."

"The Apollo has always been about 'what's next,'" said Richard D. Parsons, Chairman of the Apollo Theater's board.

"Since our founding, Apollo artists and audiences have transformed the taste of the American public. From the days of Ella Fitzgerald inventing scat, to the emergence of rap and hip hop, our discriminating audience has had a critical role in making history. With the 75th Anniversary Season, we're celebrating our mission of innovation in the next 75 years by looking ahead. We have and will continue to push the boundaries of new

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

art forms in American popular culture," Parsons added.

The Apollo is operated by the Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit institution currently in the midst of a \$96 million capital campaign, more than half of which has already been raised. The funds will be used to complete a phased project to enhance, upgrade and expand the legendary theater's facilities and to support future programming. The Apollo has been a driving force in shaping America's music and cultural landscape for 75 years. Throughout that time, the Apollo has been one of the few American venues where the tradition of discovering and promoting amateurs is as important as presenting established stars, making it an exceptional community of musicians and artists.

New School for Jazz Presents Tribute to Charles Mingus

NEW YORK NY —The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music celebrates Black History Month with performances honoring the legacy of American jazz legend Charles Mingus directed by faculty members Diane Moser (February 11) and Andy McKee (March 26), and featuring alumni Becca Stevens and Lenart Krecic, as well as special guests Marcelino Feliciano, Vic Juris, Idris Muhammad and Ivan Renta. New School Jazz also continues its fifth anniversary celebration of Monday Nights at Sweet Rhythm, its weekly performance series at this Greenwich Village jazz club, with performances by Andy Milne and Gregoire Maret, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, and others.

NEW SCHOOL JAZZ PRESENTS: (TRIBUTE TO CHARLES MINGUS) - The New School Jazz Performance Space (5 West 13th Street, 5th Floor - General Admission: \$10; Students with valid ID and seniors: Free. For more information contact 212.229.5488 or visit www.jazz.newschooll.edu. Dates and performers are as follows:

Wednesday, February 11, 8:00 p.m. (IN THE SPIRIT OF MINGUS) (In the first of two concerts in tribute to Charles Mingus, faculty member Diane Moser directs the New School Jazz Composers Big Band, with Diane Moser on piano, guest vocalist Marcelino Feliciano, and guest composer and New School alumnus Lenart Krecic. The Composers Big Band also features New School Jazz faculty member Andy Eulau, bass; Scott Neumann, drums; Larry Maltz, guitar; Ed Xiques, Tom Colao, Rob Middleton, Marty Fogel, Barbara Cifelli, saxophones; Erick Storckman, Ben Williams, Matt Haviland, Dennis Argul, trombones; Mike Spengler, Jim Cifelli, Steve Jankowski, Rob Henke, trumpets; and Schiller Desgrottes, video.

Thursday, March 26, 8:00 p.m. (MINGUS AH UM) (New School Jazz faculty member Andy McKee directs this tribute to Mingus, celebrating his legendary album "Mingus Ah Um." The performance features Andy McKee on bass, New School Jazz faculty member Vic Juris on guitar, Idris Muhammad on drums, New School Jazz alumna Becca Stevens on vocals, and Ivan Renta on tenor saxophone.

This series is made possible by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts; drum kits provided by Yamaha.

NEW SCHOOL JAZZ AT SWEET RHYTHM (Mondays, February 2, 9, 16 and 23. Sets at 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. (Sweet Rhythm, 88 Seventh Avenue (between Bleecker and Grove Streets) (\$10 cover + \$10 food ... drink minimum. For information, contact Sweet Rhythm at 212.255.3626. Dates and performers are as follows:

February 2 - Andy Milne and Gregoire Maret - A performance featuring New School Jazz faculty member and pianist Andy Milne, and New School Jazz alumnus Gregoire Maret, harmonica. Milne is one of the most important and respected young voices in jazz today. Maret has recorded and performed with some of the legends and upcoming stars in jazz and contemporary music. Some of his performing and recording credits include recordings with Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny, and Max Roach.

February 9 - The New School Jazz Charles Mingus Ensemble, directed by Andy McKee - New School Jazz faculty member Andy McKee directs an ensemble featuring Jack Ramsey, piano; Brian Kesley, bass; Darrell Smith, drums; Justin Matthews, guitar; Richard Savage, tenor saxophone; Paolo Sapia, alto saxophone; and Montana Agte-Studier, flute.

February 16 - The New School Jazz Rhythm and Blues Ensemble, directed by Bernard "Pretty" Purdie - New School Jazz faculty member drummer Bernard "Pretty" Purdie directs an ensemble featuring Mike Stein, piano; Thana Pavelic, vocals; Brianna Thomas, vocals, Annette Lovtangen, vocals, and others.

February 23 - Melanie Charles Quintet - New School Jazz student Melanie Charles and her Quintet perform Negro spirituals, gospel, jazz, and rhythm ... blues.

The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music is the musical manifestation of The New School and its legacy. Steeped in progressive tradition while moving forward into new frontiers of sound and experimentation, New School Jazz is a rarity among conservatory music schools. For more information, visit www.jazz.newschooll.edu.

All events are subject to change. For more information, the public can contact The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music at 212.229.5896 x4591 or visit www.jazz.newschooll.edu.

Sean Costello Memorial Fund for Bi Polar Research Benefit Concert

ATLANTA, GA - The Sean Costello Memorial Fund for Bipolar Research will hold its first benefit concert Sunday, March 1 at the North Atlanta High Center for the Arts.

Sean was a beloved blues musician from Atlanta, who was internationally acclaimed, and in his honor, fellow musicians Lurrie Bell [2008 Living Blues Awards for Blues Artist of the Year and Most Outstanding Guitarist], Jason Ricci [Muddy Waters Award for most promising new talent], The Wood Brothers, King Johnson, Felix and the Cats with Jon Liebman and the Soul Shakers will lend their time and talent to this cause.

Doors will open at 4p.m. for review of silent auction items with entertainment to follow at 4:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30 and will be available online and at the door.



Food and beverages will be available for purchase. Donations are tax deductible.

The benefit emerges as the first project of The Sean Costello Memorial Fund for Bipolar Research, an organization founded by his mother, Debbie Costello Smith, upon Sean's untimely passing.

Sean was acclaimed for his musical prowess at a very early age. He was designated the Beale Street Blues Society Best Performer at age 15; was nominated for a W.C. Handy Award for his album *Cuttin' In* in 2000; was voted Best Blues Band in *Creative Loafing* and *Atlanta* magazine; was featured on the cover of *Blues Revue* in February of 2002; and was named the Best New Act by the French Blues Feste in 2003. Most recently, Sean was nominated for two Blues Music Awards: Best Contemporary Blues Album and Best Contemporary Blues Male Artist of 2008.

Sean resided in Atlanta, but was known throughout Europe and the U.S. as a talented, but humble musician who readily shared his talent with young and old. He played with musical greats BB King, Buddy Guy, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Hubert Sumlin, Elvis Costello, Etta James, Pinetop Perkins, Bo Diddley, Little Jimmy King, Nappy Brown, Bob Margolin, and many others. He formed special and lasting relationships with Felix Reyes, Donnie McCormick and Levon Helm. Sean had the honor of playing for James Cotton's birthday, as he was Mr. Cotton's favorite band.

Sean passed away suddenly in April last year on the eve of his 29th birthday, after quietly battling depression and anxiety for more than 10 years.

It was only a year before his passing that Sean was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. At the time of his passing, he was in treatment to overcome the debilitating symptoms of this mood disorder and the often associated self-medication.

The Sean Costello Memorial Fund for Bipolar Research is a non-profit organization that has attracted a dedicated Board of Directors and an Advisory Board of renowned clinical researchers as a direct result of Sean's reputation as an artist, an exceptional person and friend. In creating the fund, the board hopes to increase research for treatment, develop and support education for early diagnosis and intervention, and eventually create a program for musicians and artists seeking holistic support in their effort to lead functional, healthy lives.

For more information, or to make a donation, please visit <http://www.seancostellofund.org>

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BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release Blues.... This is the time of year you should be supporting the blue by going to see them live in the clubs. But, if you're stuck in a snow bank, here's some options for you: **Various Artists-** *Best of Chess: Original Versions of Songs in Cadillac Records*; **North Mississippi Allstars-** *Do It Like We Used to Do*; **Chris Duarte-** *396*; **Triple Trouble-** *Tommy McCoy*; **Ruthie Foster-** *The Truth According to Ruthie Foster*; **Little Willie John-** *Nineteen Sixty Six: The David Axelrod & HB Barnum Sessions*; **Chris Whitley-** *On Air*; **Beausoleil-** *Alligator Purse*; **Spirit-** *California Blues Redux*; **Damon Fowler-** *Sugar Shack*; **Christine Ohlman & Rebel Montez-** *Re-Hive*; **Mark Hummel-** *Mark Hummel's Blues Harmonica Blowouts 'Still Here and Gone' 1993-2007*; **Willie Clayton-** *Soul and Blues*; **Saffire: The Uppity Blues Women-** *Havin' The Last Word*; **Paul Rishell & Annie Raines-** *A Night in Woodstock*; **Cousin Joe-** *I Never Harmed an Onion*; **Doc Pomus-** *Blues in the Red*; **Dave Thompson-** *Deep in the Night*; **Jimmy Hall-** *Brothers of the Southland*; **John**

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Primer- *All Original*; **Various Artists-** *Blues on the Rocks Vol. 6, A Tribute to Eric Clapton*; **Leadbelly-** *The Definitive Leadbelly*; **Sonny Boy Williamson-** *The Later Years 1939-1947*; **California Honeydrops-** *Soul Tub!*; **Steve Howell-** *My Mind Gets to Ramblin'*; **William Clarke-** *Vol 1- Early Years*; **Donnie Ray-** *Caught by the Cat*; **Various Artists-** *Delmark- 55 Years of Blues...* **New Orleans Blues....** Now that the Recording Industry has announced the annual **Grammy** nominees, which tend to be loaded up with sentimental favorites, its always good to see what others think. The definitive New Orleans music and entertainment magazine, *Offbeat*, has named the following as nominees for its annual "Best of the Beat" Awards: **Best Blues Band or Performer-** Tab Benoit, David Egan, Little Freddie King, Sonny Landreth and Irma Thomas; **Best Blues Album-** David Egan: *You Don't Know Your Mind* (Independent); Sonny Landreth: *From the Reach* (Landfall) Eric Lindell: *Low on Cash, Rich in Love* (Alligator); Kenny Neal: *Let Life Flow* (Blind Pig) and Irma Thomas: *Simply Grand* (Rounder). Other categories of interest to blues fans include **Best R&B/Funk Band or Performer-** Big Sam's Funky Nation, Bonerama, Jon Cleary and the Absolute Monster Gentlemen, Porter-Batiste-Stoltz and Trombone Shorty and Orleans Ave; **Best R&B/Funk Album-** Big Sam's Funky Nation: *Peace, Love & Understanding* (Independent); Henry Butler: *PiaNOLA Live* (Basin Street) Dr. John: *City That Care Forgot* (429/Savoy); Joe Krown, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Russell Batiste, Jr.: *Live at the Maple Leaf* (Independent) and Walter "Wolfman" Washington: *Doin' the Funky Thing* (Zoho Roots); **Best Zydeco Band or Performer-** Jeffery Broussard and the Creole Cowboys, Leon Chavis and the Zydeco Flames, Geno Delafosse & French Rockin' Boogie, Travis Matte and the Kingpins and Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience; **Best Zydeco Album-** Jeffery Broussard and the Creole Cowboys: *Keep the Tradition Alive!* (Maison de Soul); Leon Chavis and the Zydeco Flames: *Holla @ Me* (Independent); Travis Matte: *Hip Hop Zyde-Rock* (Mhat); Earl "Washboard" Sally: *Home Grown* (Catfish Zydeco); **Best Country/Folk/Roots Rock Band or Performer-** Susan Cowsill, The Iguanas, Paul Sanchez, The subdudes and The Zydepunks; **Best Country/Folk/Roots Rock Album -** Bobby Charles: *Homemade Songs* (Rice 'N' Gravy); The Iguanas: *If You Should Ever Fall on Hard Times* (Yep Roc); Paul Sanchez: *Exit to Mystery Street* (Independent), Amanda Shaw: *Pretty Runs Out* (Rounder) and The Zydepunks: *Finisterre* (Independent)..... **Meanwhile, back in Memphis, the Blues Foundation** has announced the annual nominees for this year's Blues Music Awards to be handed out on May 7th. Notably, Elvin Bishop, B.B. King, Buddy Guy and Irma Thomas, have all been nominated by both the recording academy and the Blues Foundation. Congratulations to all the nominees. For a listing of all the nominees, visit www.blues.org/bluesmusicawards/nominees.php4. That's it for this month. See ya!

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BLUE NOTE 7 Mosaic BLUE NOTE

The legendary jazz label Blue Note Records is currently celebrating its 70th anniversary. It was founded in 1939 by Alfred Lion with the help of Francis Wolff, both of whom had escaped from Nazi Germany. Together, their hard work and determination, along with an incredibly strong passion for jazz, they crafted a record company which would become the music's premier label, signing most of the finest jazz musicians in the country. Just a short list of some of the artists who have recorded for the label would include Bud Powell, Sidney Bechet, Fats Navarro, Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, Dexter Gordon, John Coltrane, Art Blakey, Grant Green, Larry Young, Hank Mobley, Lee Morgan, Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Horace Silver, McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones, Jimmy Smith, Cannonball Adderley, Eric Dolphy, Sam Rivers, Sonny Clark, Ornette Coleman, Freddie Hubbard, Duke Pearson, Bobby Hutcherson, Blue Mitchell and Stanley Turrentine...and yes – I know I missed a lot more of them here.

In more recent years players such as Joe Lovano, John Scofield, Bill Charlap, Diane Reeves, Norah Jones, Van Morrison and others have been releasing albums on Blue Note.

As part of its 70th anniversary celebration, Blue Note has assembled a seven-piece band which kicked off a 50-city tour on January 7 consisting of Bill Charlap/piano, Nicholas Payton/trumpet, Ravi Coltrane/tenor sax, Steve Wilson/alto sax & flute, Peter Bernstein/guitar, Peter Washington/bass and Lewis Nash/drums. This group also recorded this album, a tribute to Blue Note Records which was released on January 13. *Mosaic* features eight songs, connected with classic Blue Note artists, which were released by the label over the years. They settled on Cedar Walton's "Mosaic," which was a classic Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers vehicle, Joe Henderson's "Inner Urge," McCoy Tyner's "Search For Peace," Bobby Hutcherson's "Little B's Poem," Thelonious Monk's "Criss Cross," Herbie Hancock's "Dolphin Dance," Duke

Pearson's "Idle Moments" and Horace Silver's "The Outlaw." Must have been quite a task trying to pick eight songs out of the label's massive output. But the live tour will feature many more songs from the Blue Note years covering many more artists' recordings.

Not only are these excellent compositions, but, although the band did fresh arrangements, they pretty much stayed true to the originals, while not at all trying to sound like the original artists. Let's face it, a tenor player trying to mimic Henderson, or a pianist doing the same with Tyner would pretty much have made this more like a novelty album.

It is far from that, as the seven players, all sounding great in their own styles, pay a fantastic tribute to some of the finest artists, and the finest compositions in jazz.

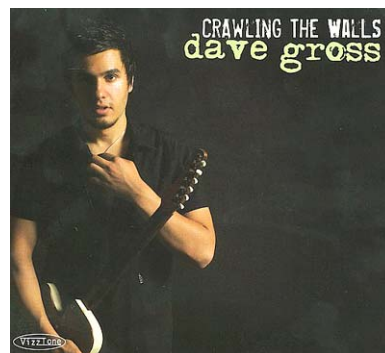
It would be a lot more enjoyable, in fact, listening to many of the albums released by today's new jazz artists, and seeing them in live performance, if they would play a lot more of the classic mainstream and modal jazz compositions such as these and many others by people like Henderson, Hancock, Tyner, Monk, Coltrane, Wayne Shorter and a long list of others rather than hearing a set of originals, many of which are generally just not very well written and end up coming off more like ego basking giving the listener a feeling that the musicians are playing for themselves. It is a personal pet peeve, and is also a complaint I hear from many other jazz listeners today.

This set is so well crafted with respect to both the choice of material and performance that it certainly makes one want to seek out one of the Blue Note 7's live concerts on the current tour. I'd guess it would be as enjoyable as the Monterey Jazz Festival 50th Anniversary Band tour was in 2008 for sure.

Mosaic is definitely an album to recommend. And in doing a bit of web snooping, I found that Amazon has its own exclusive special edition which is a 2-CD set which they are currently (as of this writing) selling for the same price they are selling the single CD. The second disc features digital remasters of the original songs by the original artists, mostly from Rudy Van Gelder Editions. Now that my friends makes for an incredible package, because, in the end, there is nothing like the real thing. This way you get them both.

To find out where the Blue Note 7 is stopping on the current tour, visit www.bluenote.com, go to artist, select B, go to Blue Note 7. There is also a tour link on the Amazon.com page for both the single and double disc versions of the CD. Oh, and yes...Happy Birthday Blue Note. I don't know where we'd have been without you all these years.

Bill Wahl



DAVE GROSS

Crawling the Walls

SWING NATION / VIZZTONE

Singer-guitarist Dave Gross' new disc on the VizzTone group's SwingNation Records should solidify his reputation. Only 24, he shows he has listened and absorbed a lot in this disc that provides a wide palette of sounds ranging from gypsy jazz to storming Chicago blues.

He certainly is worthy of some of the praise that Bob Margolin lays on him, especially his marvelous musicianship. His vocals perhaps come off at times as flat and other times a bit over-the-top, but he sounds better than on his last disc. This aspect of his music should mature along with him. One would expect him to continue to grow as a singer.

The album opens with his remake of an early Bobby Bland recording, "It's My Life Baby," channeling Clarence Holliman in his work. It's followed by "Rock in My Shoe," a piece of rock'n'roll that echoes some mid-fifties' Specialty rock recordings with a blistering solo. Ike Turner's "Cubano Jump" offers him more chance to showcase his driving guitar.

The title track is an original in the vein of twenties and thirties era speakeasy blues with some nice growling trumpet from Jon-Erik Kellso and clarinet by Gerry Niewood, although Mike Bram's drums are way too prominent. "Inspiration Blues" is a hot take on T-Bone Walker's recording with Niewood blasting on tenor and Gross sounding strong playing in a Walker-inspired vein. It is followed by his own midnight blues-ballad, "You're Not the One," with Kellso growling before Gross starts off as Pee Wee Crayton reborn before taking the solo in his own direction.

Margolin's point in the liner notes that Gross "always adds a creative trick or twist to classic licks and tones," is nowhere better illustrated than here. Back to the twenties with Clarence Williams' "Baby Won't You Please Come Home," with drums replaced by banjo and Scott Robinson on bass sax with Kellso blasting, playing without mute but adding some bluesy smears, followed by Gross, on acoustic guitar, taking a nice solo with tinges of Eddie Lang before pianist Canal Fowkes takes the lead with some stride and Robinson struts on the bass sax on a nice classic Chicago jazz performance.

"Don't Take Too Long," with Dennis Gruenling on harmonica, conjures up the sound of the classic Willie Dixon produced Cobra recordings of Otis Rush, while "Find Yourself Another Man" is a pastiche of classic Muddy Waters band, again with Gruenling wailing on harmonica. This performance reminds me of some of Bob Margolin's re-

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cordings in the same vein, and like Margolin is not as convincing vocally.

"It Was Born in the 20's," is a stunning acoustic guitar feature with Gross paying tribute to Django Reinhardt (and Matt Munisteri providing crisp rhythm in this delightful small group jazz performance as well taking a nice solo) with Kellso's trumpet and Niewood's clarinet providing atmospheric support. Gross' acoustic guitar solo, "A Little Love, A Little Kiss," revives an Eddie Lang guitar solo from the twenties, and like he does throughout this recording, honors those who inspired him by not imitating and replicating his influences, but rather extending them and displaying his own musical personality.

While his vocals may not be his strength, they do not detract from the overall high level of the music that makes "Climbing the Walls" a welcome release. **Ron Weinstock**



SHAREL CASSITY

Just For You

DW RECORDS

An Oklahoma City native, saxophonist Sharel Cassity has become a presence on New York City's scene, having obtained Degrees in Music from The New School and Julliard. She has been honored by the IAJE's Sisters In Jazz and Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead programs and her compositions have won Downbeat Music Awards and ASCAP's Young Jazz Composer Award. She is an educator as well as working with such small groups as Harry Whitaker, Ingrid Jensen and Mark Whitfield to DIVA and Jimmy Heath Big Bands.

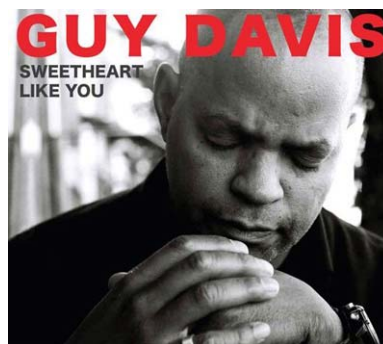
Looking at the cover of her CD, one does not know what to expect. Once the music starts, one is taken by the clarity and focus of her alto playing (although she plays multiple saxophones). It is produced by Michael Dease (who also contributed three originals to the seven song program) who has brought together some of the musicians she regularly works with in the New York club scene. These include Tom Barber on trumpet (who contributed one number) and flugelhorn, Pete Reardon-Anderson on tenor sax, Adam Birnbaum on piano, Paul Beaudry on bass, and Vincent Ector on drums.

Cassity really draws attention with her bluesy tone which will suggest Sonny Stitt as much as Charlie Parker with a bit of Lee Konitz tossed in. Dease's "Phibe's Revenge," is a brisk hard bop number that kicks off this release. The bouncy title track has a dreamy flavor before Cassity enchants with her chops and tone followed by Barber's "Irazu (Wish You Were Here);" again, more

standout playing from her along with the marvelous ensemble work. The rhythm section supports her so well and the full ensemble playing is tight. On the quartet rendition of Ram Ramirez's "Lover Man" her tone is a bit drier with less Charlie Parker and more Lee Konitz. It is followed by Lennie Tristano's "Wow," with its intricate interplay between the horns as well as intriguing solos.

Dease's "Roditi's Dream" has a Latin accent, before the album concludes with her tearing into "Cherokee," with shorter spots allotted to her bandmates, but throughout the superb music here, she burns the brightest on this fantastic album of hard swinging bop. Sharel's website is www.sharelcassity.com, and this disc is available from cdbaby.com, amazon.com and other better retailers.

Ron Weinstock



GUY DAVIS

Sweetheart Like You

RED HOUSE RECORDS

Guy Davis has never worried about musical categories. While blues remains the anchor of his performances, his latest Red House release due out February 10 also brings his affinity for the music of Bob Dylan to the fore as evident on his reading of the title track, a Dylan composition, and whose gruff, raspy vocal and harmonica style Davis evokes here. It's followed by a bouncy original "Slow Motion Daddy," inspired by a Utah Phillips story with sprite guitar and banjo along with whooping harp in the backing. "Follow Me Down," with twelve-string guitar and harp and a jaunty vocal, is one of two selections derived from the Leadbelly songbook. "Sweet Hannah," is a bluesy Dylan-styled original with plaintive harp while a Piedmont blues flavor is exhibited on "Bring Back Storyville," with a nice fingerstyle accompaniment. "Down South Blues" is a radical folk-blues reworking of a Son House recording that itself was inspired by Blind Lemon Jefferson's "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean."

A small-group performance of Muddy Waters' one-time theme, "Hootchie Kootchie Man" is not as satisfying as the live recording of "Can't Be Satisfied" with Guy on banjo and Mark Murphy featured on bass, or Davis' haunting slide guitar and vocal on Big Joe Williams' "Baby Please Don't Go." Gary Davis' "Angels Are Calling" is the subject of a thoughtful rendition that does not echo Davis' stride guitar style, while "Going Back to Silver Spring" is a cross of Piedmont blues with Robert Wilkins distinctive blues style on an original about this lass he met near the nation's capital.

Closing with an ensemble adaptation of a Leadbelly

field holler, Guy Davis concludes this quite engaging, varied collection of performances in a fashion that shows that he continues to put his own stamp on his music no matter what the original source.

Ron Weinstock

GIANLUIGI TROVESI

Profumo Di Voletta (Trovesi all'opera)

ECM

As odd- and outright funny- as it may seem, a number of musicians over time (including Claude Debussy) have bemoaned the overabundance of vocals in opera. Italian jazz clarinetist/alto saxophonist Trovesi here responds to this issue with an engaging suite drawing from a number of Italian operas. Backed by a traditional *banda*- a winds-and-percussion ensemble found in the genre, Trovesi and his backup trio alternately embrace and attack the source material; the usually romantic solo spots occasionally replaced by blasts of free-form fire.

For jazz fans' purposes- those with no grounding in opera- the most convenient handle with which to grab on here is perhaps the large ensemble work of Carla Bley; the humor and melodrama found in abundance here is very reminiscent of Ms. Bley's approach. Trovesi's inspired playing is likely to win over those who might usually approach this fare with trepidation and this set is one that can easily grow upon those willing to chance it.

Duane Verh

THE NIGHTHAWKS

American Landscape

POWERHOUSE

Much like the Washington monument, the Nighthawks have been in Washington, D.C. forever, but the variation is the band stays in one place musically. And I don't necessarily mean on the road either, as *American Landscape*, their God-knows-what number disc in their career, ventures into some new territory while staying familiar enough not to scare the longtime fans away from it.

Overall *American Landscape* is a sedate effort compared to some past band releases, but the funky Steve Cropper-penned "Don't Turn Down Your Heater" comes on strong and stays all night long. *American Landscape* is mostly cover tunes including two Bob Dylan standards, the subtle "She Belongs To Me" and the more energetic "Most Likely You Go Your Way And I'll Go Mine." Bassist Johnny Castle does get a couple originals on board, the better of the pack being the roots laden "Where Do You Go" as his "Jana Lea" has some juice to it also, but seems to be a real close relative of an old 1960's TreeStumps tune "Jenny Lee." Real close next of kin as in Siamese twin perhaps.

The band is always good about bringing back forgotten treasures with Marvin Gaye's 1964 #15 charter "Try It Baby" getting the prize this time via Mark Wenner's shining harp solo. And, just to show the band has their humor intact, they finish off the proceedings with a playful, two-minute version of the theme from the ancient Andy Griffith TV show.

A tad more subdued than your usual Nighthawks release, the fans will love *American Landscape* and there is enough on here for the casual listener to wrap their ears around too.

Peanuts

ELIANE ELIAS

Bossa Nova Stories

BLUE NOTE

Vocalist/pianist Eliane Elias celebrates the 50th anniversary of the bossa nova with a mix of 14 Brazilian and jazz standards. She's backed by full orchestration on seven tracks and plays piano and sings with a small band featuring guitarist Oscar Castro-Neves, drummer Paulo Braga and bassist Marc Johnson. Guitarist Richard Vogt augments two tracks. Toots Thielemans plays harmonica on two tracks and Ivan Lins sings with Elias on his original, "I'm Not Alone (Who Loves You?)."

Tunes are by Antonio Carlos Jobim, Ivan Lins, George & Ira Gershwin, and others, launching with the orchestrated chestnut, "The Girl From Ipanema." Other highlights include her velvety take on the familiar "Estate (Summer)," spotlighting Thielemans, and her refreshed duo version of "Day In Day Out" with Vogt. Included in the Brazilian-flavored fare are: "The More I See You," "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "Too Marvelous For Words," and "Day By Day."

This album warms your heart. It may be Elias' best recording yet. With her stellar musicians or added strings, Elias infuses each swaying tune with intimacy and tenderness. Her soft mid-range vocals, in Portuguese and English, and her expressive piano playing create a soothing mood that carries the listener along on this melodious south-of-the-border journey.

Nancy Ann Lee

JJ GREY & MOFRO

Orange Blossoms

ALLIGATOR

Florida based JJ Grey & Mofro are billed as a blues band but that is more marketing than reality on this disc, released in August of 2008. Instead, the band travels the funky, soul-infused trail blazed by the likes of Delany and Bonnie, Leon Russell & the Shelter People, the Black Crowes and Delbert McClinton. While this path has been travelled before, it's not so well worn that the band can't leave its own mark along the way.

With JJ Grey on vocals and guitar, Daryl Hance on guitar, Adam Scone on bass and Hammond b3, Art Edmaiston on sax, Dennis Marion on trumpet, Anthony Cole on drums and a host of guests on backup vocals and strings, the band plays with a steamy, low key restraint, that is more powerful than if it simply rocked out.

Kicking things off with a groove straight out of Muscle Shoals on the title track the band then adds some bass-heavy funk on *The Devil You Know* where a turncoat friend gets a major tongue lashing. The lecture continues on *Higher You Climb* where a dope dealing acquaintance, who lets money get in the way of his roots, gets the age old physics lesson that the higher you climb the further you fall. The funky groove continues with the sinewy *On Fire* and gets even more heat from the slinky background vocals on *Move it On*.

The infidelity tale, *Everything Good is Bad*, gets its steam from the horn accents and Shelter People style choir wailing in the background. Elsewhere, the band chills with the string drenched *The Truth* and the ice-cold b3 pow-

ered *She Don't Know*. The pace picks up considerably on *WYLF*, which plays like a 70's soul classic, and on *Ybor City* where the rocking beat is as insistent as Grey's belief that he'll get a warm homecoming from all the women on the street. Closing things out is the ballad *I Believe in Everything* which reveals Grey's inner Delbert McClinton with its impassioned vocals.

While the blues are not a significant part of the menu, there is much to like about this disc. **Mark Smith**



JANE MONHEIT

The Lovers, The Dreamers and Me CONCORD

On her second Concord release, vocalist Jane Monheit delivers a mellow, romantic 13-tune menu of wide-ranging, contemporary songs by Fiona Apple, Corinne Bailey Rae, and Paul Simon, as well as classics from Cole Porter, Jimmy Dorsey, Leonard Bernstein and others.

Accompanied by longtime associates (pianist Michael Kanan, drummer Rick Montalbano, bassist Neal Miner) and a varying array of all-star musicians in settings from duos to a dozen, Monheit sings in her smoky, sophisticated style.

With the exception of one or two tracks, these may not be familiar tunes you'll hum along to but, nevertheless, are lovely ballads that haunt the listener. With such polished accompaniment, Monheit rises spectacularly to the occasion.

She surely knows how to deliver a song, her honeyed voice injecting emotion into each tune, notable especially on her slowly decanting version of Apple's "Slow Like Honey."

Highlights include her versions of the popular gems "This Girl's In Love With You," "I'm Glad There Is You," and "Lucky To Be Me." Backed by a quartet, Monheit's swinging (Kanan-arranged) version of Porter's "Get Out of Town," is significantly enhanced by solos and fills from tenor saxophonist Seamus Blake.

Vibist Stefon Harris graces Gil Goldstein's arrangement of Paul Simon's "I Do It For Your Love," a gorgeous version featuring a 12-musician ensemble, including strings and woodwinds.

This may be 30-year-old Monheit's best, most mature project since her debut album in 2000. She steps out of her comfort zone to tackle lyrics she claims are a bit beyond her life experiences and she succeeds magnificently!

Nancy Ann Lee



JOHN NÉMETH

Love Me Tonight

BLIND PIG

Vocalist and harmonica player John Németh returns to the CD shelves with this new Blind Pig album. His Blind Pig debut (he had a couple of prior independent releases) "Magic Touch" received considerable acclaim and he produced this follow-up with his band of Bobby Welsh on guitar and keyboards, Dmitry Gorodetsky or Kedar Roy on bass, and one-time Robert Lockwood sideman June Core on drums, with Elvin Bishop guesting on a couple tracks.

The present album is comprised of ten originals and demonstrates the band's versatility.

About the earlier album and Németh, I wrote, "He is simply a wonderful singer that to this listener suggests Junior Parker mixed with Bobby Radcliffe and is an equally superb harp player." This opens with the title track that has a slight funk groove followed by a mid-tempo hot groove, "Just Like You," where Németh sings about knowing he done his woman wrong and adds some harp along with Welsh's sharp slide solo.

"Fuel For Your Fire" is a nice ballad performance with an uplifting lyric, while "Daughter of the Devil" has an intriguing tempo and use of echo on the vocal and some atmospheric trebly guitar perhaps from Elvin Bishop who is on this track, but the vocal comes off a bit strident. "My troubled Mind" has a bit more relaxed and contemplative feel, while a high point of this session is "She's My Heart's Desire," a Benny McCain & the Ohio Untouchables vehicle (in their pre-Ohio players days) with Welsh recreating Robert Ward's distinctive Magnatone flavored guitar style.

"Love Gone Crazy" again is a showcase for Welsh's fresh, fiery guitar along with a nice harp solo by the leader. Elvin Bishop returns on guitar for the solid "Country Boy," which also finds Welsh pounding away on the piano and more nice, driving harp from the leader. Németh takes up the chromatic harmonica for the atmospheric, late-night feel on "Blues in My Heart," with Welsh adding some moody organ in addition to his stinging guitar fills.

It's a nice way to close this release that undoubtedly will please those who enjoyed "Magic Touch."

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com

TONY DESARE

Radio Show

TELARC

On the followup to his 2007 Telarc release, *Last First Kiss*, vocalist/pianist/composer Tony DeSare emulates the golden era of radio with this 13-tune set interspersed with voices of radio announcers for some tunes, including former *Saturday Night Live* comic and radio personality, Joe Piscopo. Special musician guests include singer Jane Monheit (one track) and trumpeter Dominick Farinacci (two tracks).

In addition to five skillful DeSare compositions, tunes include standards from Harold Arlen, Hoagy Carmichael, Bob Dylan, Ray Charles, Chuck Berry and others. DeSare has a pleasing voice and his phrasing and delivery are impeccable, especially notable on his original, "To Touch A Woman," where he accompanies himself on solo piano. His rousing barrelhouse piano playing on "Johnny B Goode," proves he's more than just a dark-haired crooner with a pretty face. He also accompanies himself on a reverent version of Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin'," further demonstrating his versatility and ability to handle compositions from every decade. DeSare sounds most Sinatra-like in his phrasing on his romantic ballad original, "Dreaming My Life Away." Notable among the many side players are Brian Charette, who plays B3 organ on five tracks and guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli (four tracks).

Born in Glens Falls, New York, DeSare began singing and playing piano professionally at age 17. He had opened for touring headliners by the time he entered Ithaca College and his trio became a popular band, playing to sell-out crowds. He moved to New York City in 1999 and was shortly thereafter cast in the star role of the long-running Off-Broadway musical, *Our Sinatra*. He continues with NYC club appearances and will be touring internationally in 2009.

This is a superb album. DeSare's polished vocal style, his accomplished piano chops, the spectacular musicianship of his sidemen and the entertaining mixture of bouncy pop tunes and ballads grab and hold the listener.

Nancy Ann Lee

GINA SICILIA

Hey Sugar

SWINGNATION /VIZZTONE

This release by 23 year vocalist Gina Sicilia matches her with a well seasoned backing crew including Dave Gross on guitars, David Maxwell on keys, Scot Hornick on upright bass, Chris Rivelli on drums, Dennis Gruenling on harmonica, Jon-Erik Kellso on trumpet and Gerry Niewood on clarinet, tenor and alto sax.

This combination of youth and experience throws off a fair number of sparks and some occasional heat. Reveling in the varied musical palette offered by her band, Sicilia tries on numerous musical styles. Things start off strong with *Goin' Home Baby* and *So Attracted to You*, both of which feature a slinky, jazzy vibe and sly vocals from Sicilia. *Kissing in the Dark* marks a quick shift of gears with its raw, Chicago blues vibe propelled by Gross' stinging guitar work and Gruenling's always expert har-

monica. *Lowest of the Low* hits the same low down vibe but both drag on a bit too long. Compounding the problem is the fact that Sicilia's vocals get stretched almost to the breaking point by the low down dirty pace of both numbers and don't fit as well as on the other 11 cuts.

She redeems herself quickly on the torchy piano ballad, *I Pray Most Everyday* and does her best Maria Muldaur warble on *Jack & Jill*. Country makes an appearance on Dolly Parton's *Coat of Many Colors* and *What the Moon Could Never Do* while *Bad Years Comin' On* strikes a gospel tinged chord. *Hey Sugar* sounds like a girl band doo-wop number with its warm back up vocals and stacked guitar and piano crescendos. *Cherry Tree* and *Nobody's Darling but Mine* could both fit on kd lang's twang era discs with their aching vocals and loping beat. Overall, a disc that fares better on the non-blues numbers.

Mark Smith

BUJO KEVIN JONES & TENTH WORLD

Tenth World Live!

MOTÈMA

Percussionist Bujo Kevin Jones and his five band mates perform an energized live-recorded 2004 date captured at the Village Theater in South Los Angeles' Leimert Park.

The spirited concert performance features six tunes ranging from 7:08-minutes to nearly 13 minutes. Jones has chosen a solid team and performs with complete assurance. Composer-pianist Kelvin Sholar contributes four originals and his playing throughout proves his keyboard mastery. Tenor saxophonist Brian Horton, trumpeter Kevin Louis, electric bassist Joshua David, and drummer Jaimeo Brown skillfully navigate the selections.

Tunes range from traditional Afro-Cuban numbers to throbbing funk-laced gems such as "New Nation." Horton's original "Beautiful" is a waltzing jazz-funk number that features him trading and blending on the front line with Louis. Probably the best demonstration of individual and collective talent becomes apparent on the 7:28-minute finale, a remake of Mongo Santamaria's trademark tune "Afro Blue."

An Englewood, New Jersey native, Jones was exposed to jazz in his home growing up and is mostly self-taught since age 10. He later learned traditional African drumming and dance beats from various cohorts. His exposure to the New York-New Jersey Latin Soul sounds of the late 1960s and early 1970s influenced him as he became more immersed in Afro-Cuban drum studies.

He recorded eight records during his 13 years with the Isleys and his expertise can be heard on recordings by others. He's also performed live with an array of jazz and pop bands and has held teaching residencies with the Bronx Arts Ensemble and at college workshops. Jones founded Tenth World in 1999 with Brian Terry. Their self-titled recording debut in 2005 gained them wider exposure.

Bold and brassy, this album calls for a party.

Nancy Ann Lee

jazz-blues.com



THE BRUCE KATZ BAND

Live At The Firefly
BROWN BAG / VIZZTONE

The keyboards of Bruce Katz have been a most welcome ingredient to a variety of performers recordings, including, in recent years, Duke Robillard and Joe Louis Walker. With his current band of guitarist Chris Vitarello, bassist Rod Carey and drummer Ralph Rosen, he has a new disc on his own Brown Dog label (distributed by VizzTone) recorded at the Ann Arbor, Michigan club Firefly in April 2008. It's a collection of chicken-licking blues and jazz instrumentals that fans of Jack McDuff and Jimmy McGriff will love.

Opening with a straight blues groove on "Deep Pockets," Katz and Vitarello both display their chops and musical sense. An unusual choice is Charles Mingus' "Better Get It In Your Soul" and ambitious attempt with plenty of Katz' greasy Hammond B-3 to start things off with everybody swinging hard. Carey and Rosen certainly merit praise here, before a nicely paced solo from Vitarello. Katz switches to piano on a late night slow blues, "The Blue Lamp," that lets him rumble down in the alley as well as gives Vitarello a chance to show his electric blues chops. "Jump Start" is a funky groover with twangy guitar; "Ice Cream Man" is a playful funky blues, and the solo piano "Southern Route" has a country-tinge. "Marshall Country" evokes West Side Chicago to these ears, while "Crew of Two" is an ebullient shuffle. "Norton's Boogie Woogie" is a blistering boogie with hot piano and a rocking guitar solo followed by a hot solo piano interlude before the full quartet takes it out in jumping fashion.

It's followed by the atmospheric "Victoria," with Katz on piano, and this joyous disc concludes with a walking shuffle, "Brother Stevie," that closes it out on the high level that characterizes practically every second of this recording.

Ron Weinstock

JON HASSELL

Last night the moon came dropping
its clothes in the street

ECM

Layers of light, gauzy electronics, keyboards taking spatial cues from Miles circa *In A Silent Way* (and Joe Zawinul's extensions of the same), bass patterns that simmer and now and then spit like a volcano at rest, ostinato vamps underneath it all that cycle in slo-mo- these are typical elements of this latest offering from trumpeter/experimentalist Hassell; a brew he refers to as Fourth World. Further informed by Miles and Weather Report, Hassell's craft often stresses the mix of primitive and futuristic; of world music and worlds beyond.

Hassell's electronic, at times almost reedlike, horn and the Eastern-leaning violin of Kheir Eddine M"Kachiche are the primary voices atop highly atmospheric soundscapes; compositions that more evolve into the following one, suite style, than stand separately. Whether gently expanding into aural space or churning with activity at any given stratum in some multi-layered sonic scheme, Hassell's environments are always permeated by an overall sense of serenity. This is unquestionably positive territory.

Prior to collaborations with avantists such as Stockhausen, Terry Riley and Brian Eno, Hassell played for Stan Kenton and perhaps it's this old-school start to his creative journey that emerges briefly on "Blue Period", a distinctively ballad-like entry on this forward-looking set.

Duane Verh

JIM SUHLER & MONKEY BEAT

Tijuana Bible
UNDERWORLD

When the memory hits a bump, thank God for the J&BR search engine. I had to crank it up to find the last Suhler project I reviewed and it was his first one, *Radio Mojo*, back in April 1993. The Texas guitarist seems to be pumping away as *Tijuana Bible* doesn't only show Suhler's roots, but has many branches of note in his musical tree.

The slow and deliberate title cut leads us into a staggering, in more ways than one, presentation of Elvin Bishop's "Drunken Hearted Boy," which sets the table for AC/DC's "Up To My Neck In You," first heard on the latter's 1978 *Powerage* effort. "Long Hot Summer" has a spoonful of Bob Seger in the mix as the plaintive "Years Of Tears" packs its own punch as it expands.

Wet Willie's Jimmy Hall does background vocals on the Lightnin' Hopkins tribute "Po' Lightnin'" as the back-to-back "Border Rock" and "Mexicali Run" give you a nice, smooth road trip sound via I-35.

Suhler has influences from all over the world as Rory Gallagher's '72 gem "I Could Have Had Religion" makes a resurrection, thanks in part to the harp work of Cheryl Arena.

Not button-down, straight-laced Texas blues by any stretch of the definition, *Tijuana Bible* should get you off your knees and on the dance floor in a big hurry. This CD will be released February 17.

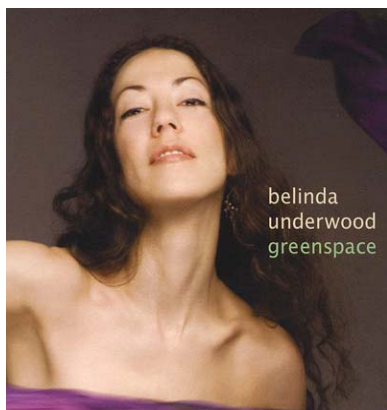
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BELINDA UNDERWOOD Greenspace COSMIC MUSE RECORDS

As the publicity for vocalist Belinda Underwood suggests, she is unique. After all, upright bass playing female vocalists are not that common, especially one also holding a degree in Astrophysics and holding a pilot's license. Based in Portland, Oregon, she has a delightful new release, "Greenspace" with some unusual covers and her originals, that sometimes are whimsical, fit the playfulness of some of the performances. Her alto voice has a bit of sassiness, yet also is quite playful, and enchants with her delivery and phrasing. She plays bass on several tracks, but for much of the disc, Phil Baker of Pink Martini handles the bass with Martin Zarzar, also of pink martini on drums. Benny Green is the pianist and on three tracks, Belinda's sister, Melissa is heard on saxophones. Nancy King adds her vocals to two selections and Egyptian Alfred Gamil adds violin to one track. Green is such a marvelous accompanist; no surprise from his tenure with Betty Carter and the rhythm is first-rate throughout.

The program opens with Underwood and Nancy King scatting to John Coltrane's "Bass Blues," followed by her lovely reading of Stevie Wonder's "Secret Life of Plants," which is one of several songs indicating a concern for things natural, even if she expresses it sometimes unusually. "No Moon At All," is a playful waltz about falling in love with Green having a choice solo. An instrumental, "Seeing Red," on which she plays bass has a Latin rhythm with Green emphatically stating the theme before her sister comes in on tenor. Her lovely way with a ballad is exhibited on "Blue Gardenia," which is followed by her rendition of the bossa, "Estate," singing about Estate and how he bathes her in the glow of his caresses and turns her no's to tender yeses. "Polar Blue," has a playfully expressed, but sober lyric about global warming, how the icebergs are melting and wondering why no one cares about the plight of polar bears. It is followed by a whimsical song of chickens in the chicken coop, recalling their fearful youth and the "Midnight Creeper," the raccoon who snook into their Hen House. Her playful, vocal is matched by the delightful trio accompaniment. Then there is her demonstrative lyric about singing in odd time signatures, "Odd Meter Blues." A bit of middle-eastern flavor is added by Gamil's violin on "The Oasis." On this, Belinda plays the oud as well as bass while the rhythm conjures images of a camel caravan heading to a desert oasis.

There are plenty of pleasures on "Greenspace," from the songs, the wonderful playing and, most importantly, Belinda Underwood's delightful manner in delivering a song that results in these completely enchanting performances. "Greenspace" is available from her website, <http://www.belindaunderwood.com>, cdbaby.com, amazon.com, and iTunes and other discerning retailers. **Ron Weinstock**

Buckwheat Zydeco Signs With Alligator



Alligator Records has announced the signing of musical legend Buckwheat Zydeco. The Louisiana accordion master and vocalist began recording his debut for the label on January 10 at the famed Dockside Studios in Maurice, Louisiana with Steve Berlin (Los Lobos) producing. The multi-Grammy nominee will celebrate his 30th anniversary as a solo artist with the new CD and a lengthy tour.

RENOLDS JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Cube
SHANTI RECORDS

An international orchestra, Renolds Jazz Orchestra, led by Swiss reedman Fritz Renold with his wife Helen Savari-Renold handling the vocals (she is also the lyricist), is heard on a marvelous recording of the big band suite "Cube." Among the international cast on reeds (besides Renold) are Greg Tardy, Tommy Smith, Donny McCaslin, and Bernd Konrad. The trumpets include Willie Murillom, Randy Brecker, Barrie Lee Hall, Steve Bernstein and Amir El-Saffar. On trombones are Vincent Gardner, and David Taylor, while the rhythm section has Jamshied Sharifi on piano, Miroslav Vitous on bass, Adam Nussbaum on drums, with Willie Kotoun on percussion and Patrick Furrer conducting.

A myriad of musical colors underlay the performance of this suite, from Ellingtonian harmonies, Afro-Cuban rhythms and Middle Eastern exotic seasoning. "Grave Intrigues" opens as Helen Savari-Renold evokes the mid-east with her vocals before some Cootie Williams growling trumpet by Barrie Lee. Fritz Renold's twisting soprano, pianist Sharifi's piano interlude with a Latin groove under the solos from David Taylor and Barrie Lee (now playing without a mute) add to the shifting tempos and tone of the piece. The tempo picks up on "Caiaphas," a song about the high priest who brought Jesus to Pontius Pilate. It opens with Greg Tardy's serpentine clarinet solo, Steve Bernstein's crisp trumpet and Tommy Smith's hard bop tenor, while the band again conjures up an exotic flavor. "The Potter's Field" is meant to symbolize where people are exploited, manipulated and deserted as Helen's evocative moan, almost a call to prayer," is followed by Amir

Elsaffar's trumpet over a rhythm that seems to escape time, and Tommy Smith's soprano crying like a lost snake-charmer before Vituos takes a bass solo.

The contrasting tenor sax styles of Tommy Smith and Donny McCaslin spar on "Let This Blood Be Upon Us!" with the solos increasingly framed by Renold's arrangement before Vitous trades fours with saxes and brass prior to Sharifi's piano break with the transitions in tempo and musical tone seamless here as throughout this disc. "The Rooster Crows," where Helen sings about Apostle Peter's denying his friendship with Jesus, almost comes off like a big band blues as McCaslin tears into his solo. It is followed by "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani," opening with the rumbling, wailing bass clarinet of Bernd Konrad, with trumpet cries leading into the band with a flamenco accent climaxing prior to a vocal pondering the suffering of the crucifixion.

The remaining four pieces celebrate the Resurrection, the message of his regenerated life and ascension into heaven with the finale being the title track celebrating creation. McCaslin and Barrie Lee both take brilliant solos on the soaring "The Resurrection," while "The Great Commission," has a more contemplative flavor that caresses Randy Brecker's solo with flutes being imaginatively weaved in the arrangement.

The writing here is marvelous, and the musicianship is flawless and moving. In addition, Helen Savari-Renold's voice provides the perfect instrument for the delivery of the underlying story being retold. "Cube" is a big band

record that fuses elements of the entire spectrum of jazz along with threads from world music that results in a compelling listening experience. Highly Recommended, and it is available at cdbaby.com where you can sample some tracks.

Ron Weinstock

DAVID EGAN

You Don't Know Your Mind

RHONDA SUE RECORDS

David Egan is a Lafayette, LA piano man who covers a lot of territory on the 11 tracks collected on this, his second solo release, after a career playing for the likes of Lil' Band O' Gold, File 2 and Jo-El Sonnier.

While the title track has a straight forward cadence that would fit into a military March that only serves to highlight the second line groove of *You're Lying Again*, the boogie of *Money's Farm* and *Smile* and the rollicking good times of *Proud Dog*. While there isn't much here to tie the disc to its bayou roots, the influence of the area is inescapable. The funky *Love, Honor and Obey* has a strong percolating beat that would fit nicely on a Radiators disc while the horn grooves of *Sing It* and the second line feel of *You're Lying Again* reminds you that New Orleans is only a couple of hours over the horizon.

As a tunesmith who's written for Percy Sledge, Johnny Adams, Etta James, Joe Cocker and, most recently, for the Marcia Ball, Tracy Nelson and Irma Thomas collaboration, *Sing It*, Egan knows his way around the lyric sheet

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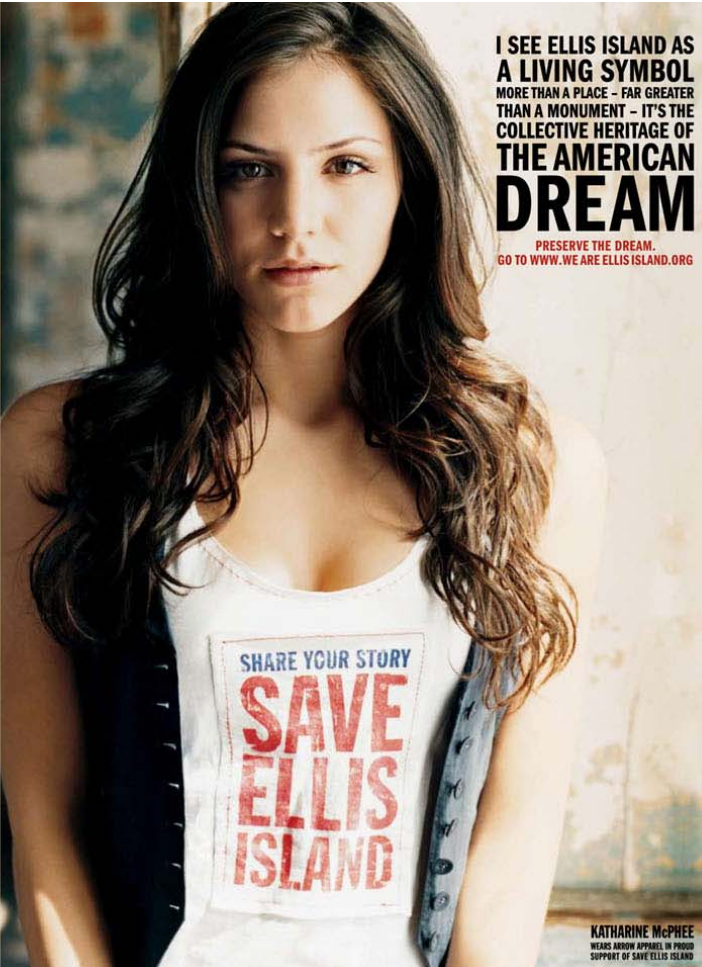
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as evidenced here by the 11 original tunes including, most notably the scathing indictment of an errant spouse on *Love, Honor and Obey* and the pep talk for the down and out on *Smile*. With a voice that morphs from the soulful croon of Charles Brown on *Bourbon In My Cup* to a light Louis Prima style duet with Jennifer Nicely on *If It Is What It Is (It's Love)* and then to a Paul Thorn style stuffy croak on *Best of Love Turned Blue*, Egan always finds just the right tone to get his point across.

Based on the strength of this release, Egan is an artist deserving plenty of attention. **Mark Smith**

DAVE FRANK

Turning It Loose!

JAZZHEADS

Dave Frank is a music educator as well as a jazz pianist who was an Associate Professor at the Berklee School as well as author of a best-selling Hal Leonard book and video series on Improvisation. His teachers included the legendary Lennie Tristano and Charlie Banacos. Having moved to New York, he now directs the Dave Frank School of Jazz offering private instruction.

His new album displays his strong, distinctive solo piano approach to a variety of standards. Opening with "A Night on Tunisia," one can hear echoes of a variety of pianists that he has obviously assimilated and his playing is first rate throughout with his musical explorations supported by his considerable dexterity on the piano. His technique is not the end but the means. From his boppish handling of Gillespie, he turns his attention to the ballads "Gone With the Wind" and "Alone Together," where his

improvisations sing. "Snow Falls on Fifth Avenue" opens wistfully and continues in a more reflective vein while "Star Eyes" opens with a simple statement of the melody before he playfully develops his improvisation. Each performance is its own little gem as he ruminates on the chords of "Indiana" before stating the melody and then as his bass lays down chords, races off with his right hand, before a short comical break into "The Man On the Flying Trapeze," before back to a breakneck close. "Without a Song," is a lovely, short slow rumination on the melody while the opening of "All the Things You Are" focuses on bass lines, before Frank develops a somewhat angular solo. "Prayer at St. Patrick's" is a reflective original while another original, "Musical Roots," opens with what sounds like piano exercises before launching into a free-flowing improvisation.

Dave Frank may be best known as a jazz educator, but as the superb performances here display, he is simply an exceptional pianist. His recordings are available at www.jazzheads.com and amazon.com, and are downloadable at emusic.com and iTunes. **Ron Weinstock**

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