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Buckwheat Zydeco

jazz & blues report

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On The Cover

Buckwheat Zydeco performed at the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival, and will be at the Pocono Blues Festival. Check out the review and preview.



Photo: Ron Weinstock

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18th Pocono Blues Festival

preview

By Ron Weinstock



Buckwheat Zydeco, center, pictured here performing at the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival in Washington DC, will be at this year's Pocono Blues Festival. That is Paquito D'Rivera to the right joining in with Buckwheat that day. Photo by Ron Weinstock

The Pocono Blues Festival returns to Big Boulder Resort in Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania, Friday July 24 through Sunday July 26. The Festival has developed a reputation for its focus on real deal blues as opposed to the blues-rock guitar slingers that dominate at some 'Blues' Festivals. The 18th Pocono Blues Festival has a terrific line-up that will include such blues legends as James Cotton with Eddie Clearwater, Buckwheat Zydeco, Bernard Allison, Shemekia Copeland, Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials and Saffire-the Uppity Blues Women. With two main stages at the foot of two of Big Boulder's ski slopes and a tent stage for more intimate performances, this Blues Festival brings a wide variety of blues for the connoisseur.

Friday Night July 24, the Festival opens up with three performers in the tent stage. Paul Oscher, the one-time Muddy Waters harmonica player has become a triple threat on guitar, piano as well as harmonica, and shows his mastery of

the blues tradition whether playing a rollicking boogie or acting as a one-man band. He will be followed by James Armstrong, who brings an incisive guitar style to match his thoughtful originals based on his own painful life experiences. Closing the evening will be Eddie Turner, who some will know from his time playing with Otis Taylor and subsequently emerged as a powerful solo performer with a scorching guitar style that melds blues, rock, Afro-Cuban rhythms and gospel.

Saturday, July 25, guitarist Melvin Taylor opens the day with his mix of Chicago West Side blues with elements of Jimi Hendrix, Wes Montgomery and George Benson. Also on the main stage will be Terry Evans, a powerful Mississippi born vocalist who some first became aware of from his work with Ry Cooder, and later studio stints with John Lee Hooker, Boz Scaggs, Pops Staples, Joan Armatrading and Maria Muldaur. After teaming up with singer Bobby King (the pair did a couple of albums together), he now has been fronting his own music. The Bonedog Record Review will present Tommy Brown,

Git Shorty, and Stephanie Wellans. I am not familiar with the last two, but Tommy Brown may be among the last of the blues shouters. He recorded a variety of singles for a number of labels including the powerful "Remember Me" for Cobra, which featured some great harmonica from Walter Horton. His Bone Dog album "Remember Me" includes a remake of that song along with a cover of Big Joe Turner's "Chains of Love," that show he can still belt out the blues. This is one performer I'm really looking forward to seeing. Brown will have a new recording out this summer on BoneDog.

Up next on the outdoor stages is Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue will bring their vital mix of New Orleans brass, jazz, and funk to the Big Boulder stage. Then Shemekia Copeland brings her soulful blues with an edge followed by another second-generation blues performer, Bernard Allison, who will mix his soulful vocals with some blistering guitar. Finally Mr. Superharp with West Side bluesman, Eddie Clearwater will conclude a very full day. Clearwater will bring his understated vocals and guitar in the vein of Magic Sam to the stage to join the always-popular Cotton for a set of rollicking Chicago styled blues.

At the tent stage on Saturday, Cedric Burnside and Lightnin' Malcolm will play two sets of their hard rocking North Mississippi Hills styled blues. Shemekia Copeland & friends will be performing a tribute to her father, the late Johnny 'Clyde' Copeland, and there will also be sets by Melvin Taylor, Terry Evans and Trombone Shorty; the later certain to raise the roof off the tent stage.

Sunday July 26, the Pittsburgh Gospel Lights open the outdoor stages with some sacred sounds. Up next is Texas Johnny Brown, who will bring his urbane blues guitar and vocals. A great songwriter (He wrote "Two Steps From the Blues" for Bobby Bland) and musician, his Quality Blues Band is also first-rate. I have seen him twice in the past year and he was one of the best blues acts I have seen in that period. Ruthie Foster brings her mix of folk, soul, gospel and blues next with a riveting voice and some terrific songs with a message to challenge things as they are and to uplift one's spirit. Little Ed & the Blues Imperials come on with their exhilarating slide guitar blues for the FezHeads (or is that EdHeads) everywhere. The final act on the outdoor stages is Buckwheat Zydeco, celebrating thirty years of the best in zydeco as well as supporting the new Alligator recording, "Lay Your Burden Down." Buckwheat's high-energy music will keep the crowd on its feet.

The Sunday Tent show will feature three acts. Harrison Kennedy and Fruteland Jackson will bring some strong acoustic blues. Kennedy, from Hamilton, Ontario is a former member of Detroit's Chairmen of the Board vocal group, but was always blues -rooted and brings a soul-gospel edge to his songs. Fruteland Jackson specializes in performing acoustic blues, from contemporary to traditional, from the blues of early field-holler songs and work songs to Delta and Piedmont Blues, as well as his own original works; and in addition to his wonderful performances is a gifted storyteller, oral historian and educator, renown for his Blues in the

Schools programs. Both artists have new albums on Electro-Fi. Son of Baton Rouge bluesman Tabby Thomas, Chris Thomas King is a renaissance man of the blues, able to perform traditional delta blues, Louisiana swamp blues, as well Hendrix inspired blues-rock. He has incorporated hip hop into his musical stew as well as gospel and, among his movie roles, played "Tommy Johnson" in the movie "Oh Brother Where Art Thou?." His album "Rise" after Hurricane Katrina was one of the most moving musical statements arising from that catastrophe and he has a new EP, "Nawlin's Callin'," where he is accompanied by jazz masters bassist Roland Guerin and drummer Jason Marsalis. Finally in the tent is Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women who are in the midst of their final tour together after twenty-five years of making terrific music. What I said about their most recent recording, "Havin' the Last Word," stands: "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." Their second set is scheduled to start at 8 PM when Buckwheat Zydeco's set ends, so it will conclude a truly remarkable weekend of blues.

More information can be obtained from the Jack Frost and Big Boulder website, www.jfbb.com/events/2009/07/23/pocono-blues-festival.

5th Annual Duke Ellington Jazz Festival

reviewed

By Ron Weinstock



Nicholas Payton and Esperanza Spalding performing at the 5th Annual Duke Ellington Jazz Festival. All photos by Ron Weinstock

The 5th Annual Duke Ellington Jazz Festival saw this multi-venue event move from autumn to early summer. This year's festival was a salute to the New Orleans, the City from which jazz emerged and the Festival expanded to 11 days, spanning the first two weekends in June. Sunny Sumter, once of the most beloved vocalists in the Washington DC area, had joined the production team that includes Executive Producer Charles Fishman, former manager for Dizzy Gillespie; and Artistic Advisor Paquito D'Rivera, the celebrated saxophonist and clarinetist.

The Festival opened with a Prelude on Thursday June 4 at the Phillips Collection with Washington pianist Allyn Johnson performing works by Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Moreau Gottschalk along with original compositions inspired by artist Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series (half of which is housed at the Phillips Collection). While I was unable to attend this show, I was able to attend the two Jazz 'N' Families Fun Days, also held at the famed Phillips Collection Art Gallery where persons could attend a number of jazz performances along with viewing the Museum's significant art collection.

I got there on Saturday, June 6 to hear the opening performance by the Deal Middle School Jazz Combo playing some Duke Ellington numbers, "The Saints," and other musical numbers with considerable enthusiasm with several members of this big band showing considerable promise. With the exception of violinist

David Schulman playing in one of the galleries, inspired by the paintings, the remaining performances this day were in the Music Room. Initially Alona Lee did some storytelling about Jacob Lawrence and his artwork. She was followed by Janelle Gill, a marvelous pianist and later the marvelous saxophonist Antonio Parker, followed by trombonist Reginald Cuntje and his trio whose set included several numbers associated with saxophonists. One could listen in the crowded museum and then explore the Phillips Collections' marvelous holdings. The Fun Day on Sunday June 7 brought more wonderful music to the Phillips as drummer Felix Conteras led a fascinating group that included violinist Schulman. Other performances included vocalist Jilian Hipkins, vibraphonist Chuck Redd (performing solo in the Auditorium) and finally saxophonist Brian Settles and his trio. This was some very entertaining and intriguing music that worked well in the intimate museum setting.

The Festival encompassed a wide variety of events from spoken word and music, and bands playing a variety of venues throughout DC including well known venues like Twins Jazz and Blues Alley, the Jazz at the Madison series at the Hotel Madison, the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center, a concert by Afro Blue at the National Gallery of Art's Sculpture Gallery, and a concert by Nasar Abadey and the Supernova Chamber Orchestra at the Atlas Arts Performing Center.

Wednesday, June 10, La Maison Francaise at the French Embassy in Washington hosted a gala perfor-



Dr. Michael White, left, with Paquito D'Rivera joining him at the French Embassy performance on June 10

mance, *Vivre La Nouvelle Orleans*, with Dr. Michael White and the Original Liberty Orchestra. This event occurred on the day of the horrible shooting at the Holocaust Museum which made traffic in Washington DC more miserable than usual so the performance went on a little later than originally scheduled. The program opened with some awards to several DC elected officials with short speeches from (among others) the French Ambassador; Charlie Fishman, the Festival's Executive Producer; and former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial (current head of the National Urban league) who introduced Dr. White noting that he had taught Morial Spanish.

Then the evening belonged to clarinetist White and his marvelous band consisting of Gregory Stafford on trumpet and vocals, Lucien Barbarin on trombone, Detroit Brooks on banjo, Steven Pistorious on piano, and Kerry Lewis on bass and Herman Lebeaux on drums. This is a classic line-up for groups playing traditional New Orleans jazz and from the opening moments of "Shake It, Break It," the Original Liberty Jazz Band entertained with their marvelous music, played at a relaxed tempo and lacking the frenzy and hyper-ness of some "Dixieland jazz." The contrapunctual playing during the heads, the marvelous solos with Stafford adding his husky vocals and the crisp rhythmic pulse made the entire evening a delight. Included were classic New Orleans numbers like Sam Morgan's "Bogalusa Strut," and originals based on their own experience, but rooted in the New Orleans tradition like "Come Together," one of the selections to feature Stafford on vocals. White was featured on a superb rendition of "Summertime," inspired by Sidney Bechet's hit recording for Blue Note seventy-odd years ago. A hot original second line number had Paquito D'Rivera join the ensemble adding his contrasting clarinet style to White's before a marvelous take of Duke Ellington's "Black & Tan Fantasy."

With dozens of performances at various venues during the 11-day period of the Festival, the centerpiece of the Festival was the free afternoon concerns at the Sylvan Theater near the Washington Monument. The Rebirth Brass Band, with their funky brand of Brass Band music, started the afternoon for tens of thousands



The Rebirth Brass Band

on the glorious sunny day, with their high stepping brass and second line grooves of such numbers as Fats Domino's "I'm Walking," Professor Longhair's "Mardi Gras in New Orleans," the modern brass band classic "Feel Like Funkin' it Up," the Valentino's "It's All Over Now," and "Go Shorty." The mix of brass band with street raps and grooves has made the modern New Orleans Brass Band's sound exhilarating and gets folks off their feet and dancing. Rebirth has been an important part of the modern revival of this music, and decades after first starting they remain at the core of the music.

Bob French's Original Tuxedo Band followed with a set of traditional New Orleans Jazz. French, one time rhythm and blues drummer, took over leadership of the Tuxedo Band from his father Albert; a band that traces its roots to the early part of the twentieth century. French led an aggregation that included Paul Longstreth on piano, Freddie Alonzo on trombone, Orange Kellin on trumpet, Andrew Bayham on trumpet, Mitchell Player on bass and vocalist Renata Wilson. The set opened with Ray Charles' "Hallelujah I Love Her So," followed by "On the Back Porch," a feature for trombonist Alonzo, who is among New Orleans most in demand musicians for traditional jazz. A nice relaxed "Sweet Georgia



Bob French



Little Freddie King

Brown" was followed by "Bye Bye Blackbird" and "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans," with a nice trumpet solo from Bayham and a spirited "Down by the Riverside."

New Orleans downhome blues from Little Freddie King followed. King, originally from Mississippi, is an entertaining performer rooted in a more downhome style. With his backing band providing sympathetic support he opened with the Junior Walker instrumental "Cleo's Back," followed by a Lazy Lester styled instrumental before launching into a swamp blues-styled "Greyhound Station Blues." A bit of North Mississippi blues flavor followed on his rendition of John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Chillum," with a take on "Hideaway Next." The highlight was his "Down on the Farm," with his chicken scratching effects from his guitar and vocal and his showmanship on guitar. It was then followed by a rocking "Walking with Freddie," his rendition of a Frankie Lee Sims classic before closing with "Licking Stick."

More traditional jazz followed from Don Vappie & the Creole Serenaders, another jazz orchestra focusing on classic jazz of the twenties and thirties along with originals in that style. His own "Spend a Little Time With Me" is a notable example followed by a splendid rendition of King Oliver's "Riverside Blues," with strong clarinet, alto saxophone and open trumpet. His banjo playing is influenced by Caribbean rhythms and he led the band into an original "Flying Horses," inspired by the Carousal in New Orleans City Park. "Bucket's Got

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Terence Blanchard

a Hole in It" was another marvelous performance as Vappie sang about it "Can't Hold No Beer." Tragedy indeed with the performance taken a lazy tempo that many would be unable to sustain followed by the humor of Sam Morgan's "Short Dress Gal."

Closing out Saturday's program was trumpeter Terence Blanchard with his excellent quintet that included Brice Winston on saxophone, Fabian Almazan on piano and Kendrick Scott on drums. Blanchard had recently won Grammy Award for "A Tale of God's Will — A Requiem For Katrina." He premiered music from his upcoming release "Choices," including the recorded narration of Dr. Cornell West from the recording that addresses the choices we all make in life - both as a society and on a personal level. The album was recorded in New Orleans and will be coming out in August on Concord. The performance this day indicates how powerful and moving this recording will be.

Sunday, June 14 brought another day to display the variety of New Orleans music. It's been thirty years since Stanley Dural has assumed the mantle of Buckwheat Zydeco and has been playing the Creole music throughout the world, extending the musical base that Clifton Chenier, his one-time employer, created. His band included his son Reginald on frottoir (the rubboard), Paul 'Lil Buck' Sinegal (also a veteran of Clifton Chenier's Red Hot Louisiana Band) and Olivier Sciaze on guitar, and Lee Allen Zeno on bass. Buckwheat Zydeco got the crowd rocking and dancing with his opening "Party Down," followed by a nice "Walking



Donald Harrison faces off with Paquito D'Rivera

to New Orleans," on which a member of the audience got to help him play the accordion. Paquito D'Rivera on alto saxophone joined the band for a rousing "Hot Tamale Baby," while Buckwheat laid down the accordion for a rousing B-3 organ instrumental. Then he followed with the title track of his new CD "Jackpot," with its refrain "I've Always Been Lucky, I Hit the Jackpot With You." There was also a reggae-tinged groove on "Why Can't We Live Together," with its plea for love and happiness. A really nice set by one of the standard bearers for zydeco.

The King of Nouveau Swing, Donald Harrison followed with a fine band including pianist Victor Gould, drummer Joe Dyson, bassist Max Moran and guitarist Detroit Brooks with guest appearances by Nicholas Payton and Paquito D'Rivera and percussionist Bill Summers. Harrison noted he started playing rhythm and blues before he joined Art Blakey, and his late father was head of a Mardi Gras Indian tribe so he has touched a lot of bases in his music and at the age of fifty plays whatever he wants to. He opened with a strong modern jazz original before Paquito and Nicholas joined for "Nouveau Swing," and there was a lovely rendition of Ellington's "It Don't Mean a Thing." Harrison has such a marvelous tone and Brooks, who played banjo with Michael White, showed what a fine jazz guitarist he is. Bill Summers added some pep to a 'smooth jazz' number before Harrison took up the vocal mike to sing the Meters' Mardi Gras celebration "Hey Pocky Way."

Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews is a double threat on trombone and trumpet and comes from a musical family. Brother James had stints with the Tréme Brass Band and was the original leader of the New Birth Brass Band besides recording "Satchmo of the Ghetto" for Allen Toussaint's NYNO label. Troy, who had broad experience in his hometown, came to notice in one of the Katrina benefit television broadcasts. His own band Orleans Avenue is one of several groups that take the modern brass band as inspiration for a riveting mix of traditional jazz, funk, and soul with a touch of hip hop. He opened up with a brass band favorite that his brother James has recorded, "I Want My Money Back," with



Trombone Shorty

guitarist Pete Murano using an effective hard rock riff while saxophonist Trixie wailed. Introducing "Rats and Roaches Around My Home," Andrews alluded to DC's Go Go Beat while Big D added some interesting accents on congas. A nice change of pace was the rendition of "It's a Wonderful World," with just Andrews and guitarist Murano. The set closed with his own take on "The Saints," which opens with a modern trumpet styled reading of the theme before they funkied it up with Shorty walking into the crowd, and then the band members all switched instruments as guitarist Murano ended up on sax and Shorty on drums. What a rousing set of music that just tore things up and really got the crowd up and dancing.

Trumpeter Nicholas Payton also comes from a musical family as his father Walter played with numerous rhythm and blues and traditional jazz groups. Payton is another of the "young lions" who has embraced a wide spectrum of jazz transversing some Armstrong inspired to the electronic fusion that Miles Davis initiated, all the while playing with style and fervor. He has a remarkable band anchored by Espernaza Spalding on bass with Kareem Riggins on drums and Taylor Eigsti on piano. They opened with "The Backward Slip," with vocals by Payton and Spalding before the quartet lit into a scorching "Straight, No Chaser." "Triptik" had a spacey feel of some of Miles Davis' latter recordings from Eigsti's electronic keyboard and Payton's playing. After a number that Spalding sang on, Payton closed his strong performance with a funky number that had a



Irma Thomas

heavy dose of a second line groove to it.

Last but not least this afternoon was the Soul Queen of New Orleans, Miss Irma Thomas and her band, The Professionals. During a good part of the festival I was hanging with a bunch of folks from the Crescent City or Louisiana (seemed like plenty of LSU alumni there). This one gentleman, like myself, a federal government employee, grew up when Preservation hall was first starting and remembers Irma Thomas playing high school dances. She always had a wonderful delivery and while she had some minor hits on the R&B charts, it has only been since her twenty odd year association with Rounder Records that she has become recognized as one of the finest singers of vernacular music, winning Grammy Awards and being inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame. She still sounds remarkably youthful and after several performances of songs from her recent recordings she did revisit some of her memorable tunes from the sixties such as "You Can Have My Husband (But Please Don't Mess With My Man)," "It's Raining" and "Ruler of My Heart." The clarity of her delivery is still a touchstone of her music, which had the thousands enthralled and provided a strong ending to two days of New Orleans music that filled the air in the Nation's Capital.

The Festival concluded on Monday with two events that received considerable media coverage that I was unable to attend. First Lady Michelle Obama hosted a jazz in the classrooms type program at the White House with members of the Marsalis family and Paquito

D'Rivera, with students from several DC area schools. That night was the Festival's closing event, "Celebrating a Jazz Master" Ellis Marsalis," at the Kennedy Center. This program honored the veteran pianist, composer and educator with the Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award. It also marked a rare occasion for Marsalis' children, Wynton, Bradford, Delfeayo and Jason to play on stage together along with special guests Harry Connick, Jr., one of Ellis Marsalis' students, and Dr. Billy Taylor, who is the Artistic Advisor for Jazz at the Kennedy Center. It ended a remarkable eleven days of music. Next year's Duke Ellington jazz Festival is scheduled for July 3 to the 13.

1st Vermont Blues Festival

Mike Cloeren and others who have produced the Pocono Blues Festivals are putting together the First Vermont Blues Festival at Mount Snow in Vermont the weekend of August 21 to 23.

Mt. Snow, like the Big Boulder site of the Pocono Blues Festival is part of The Peak Resorts, a leading operator of ski resorts.

The Festival starts with a Friday evening program and then shifts to two day long concerts with such acts as Mississippi Heat, Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials, Elvin Bishop, Mavis Staples, Shemekia Copeland and Magic Slim & the Teardrops.

The Festival features a stage at the foot of the main slope for Mount Snow as well as a tent stage. Friday night they will host a soul-food dinner and present music from Samuel James, Studebaker John and Mississippi Heat. Saturday the Festival opens with the soulful Johnny Rawls who will be followed by Wallace Coleman's harmonica blues.

Zydeco Queen Rosie Ledet follows and then Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials will play their houserocking Chicago slide guitar blues. Closing Saturday will be Elvin Bishop, who will help proclaim that the blues rolls on. Sunday's lineup opens with Lil Dave Thompson's intense Albert King influenced blues, followed by the entertaining acoustic blues from Guy Davis, a gifted singer, guitarist and storyteller. The legendary Mavis Staples follows with her gospel and truth songs, after which Shemekia Copeland will perform.

The Festival concludes with Magic Slim & the Teardrops with their non-stop Chicago blues'n'boogie sound.

This promises to be another fine festival. For information call 800-498-0479 or visit Mt. Snow's website at www.mountsnow.com/bluesfestival.html.

Ron Weinstock

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30th Annual Long Beach Blues Festival September 5 & 6

LONG BEACH, California — Bobby Womack, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Mavis Staples and the Funky Meters will be among the performers at the 30th annual Long Beach Blues Festival, set to take place Saturday and Sunday, September 5 & 6 at Rainbow Lagoon Park, adjacent to the Long Beach Marina, in downtown Long Beach.

Tickets for the festival are on sale now, with ticket information available at www.jazzandblues.org.

The festival is the flagship event and an important revenue generator for KJAZZ 88.1 FM, the #1 full-time jazz and blues radio station, and one of only five remaining, in the country.

Young guitar master Kenny Wayne Shepherd tops the bill on Saturday, September 5 along with New Orleans' Funky Meters featuring original members Art Neville and George Porter Jr. Also appearing Saturday are Texas blues/rock guitarslinger Johnny Winter; soul singer Betty Lavette, whose recent albums for Anti-Records have received high critical marks; the Home-made Jamz Blues Band, the youngest band ever to be nominated for a Blues Music Award; and Hill Country Revue featuring Cody Dickinson and Chris Chew of the North Mississippi Allstars.

The line-up on Sunday, September 6 includes recent Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee Bobby Womack, known for such hits as "Lookin' For a Love," "It's All Over Now," "Across 110th Street" and "That's the Way I Feel About Cha"; and Mavis Staples, long the lead voice of the Staple Singers ("Respect Yourself," "I'll Take You There") who has forged a vital solo career in recent years.

Also on the Sunday bill are the Blind Boys of Alabama, purveyors of rockin' gospel since 1939; Louisiana slide-guitar wizard Sonny Landreth; four-time Blues Music Award nominee Diunna Greenleaf, from Houston; and the Andy Walo Trio, whose guitar-wielding frontman accompanied the late Junior Wells for many years.

In its three decades of existence, the Long Beach Blues Festival has become one of the nation's pre-eminent blues celebrations. As a major fundraiser for publicly supported radio station KJAZZ, the event serves not only as an annual weekend devoted to a classic American music form, but to help keep jazz and blues on the air all year long.

Over its long history, the Long Beach Blues Festival has featured a who's who of influential blues and soul artists including Chuck Berry, Booker T, Taj Mahal, Dr. John, Little Richard, Jerry Butler, Bobby Blue Bland, Otis Rush, Etta James, Charles Wright & the 103rd Street Rhythm Band, Robert Cray, Bo Diddley, Little Milton, Otis Rush, Albert Collins, Jimmy Smith, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Joe Liggins & the Honeydrippers, Big Joe Turner, Lowell Fulson, R.L. Burnside, John Mayall, Charlie Musselwhite, Eddie Floyd, Lonnie Mack, The Blasters, Son Seals, Irma Thomas, the Allman Brothers Band and the Black Crowes.

According to co-producer Bill Silva at Bill Silva Presents, "Once again, we are thrilled to be involved in the 30th anniversary of the Long Beach Blues Festival at the Rainbow Lagoon Park. We couldn't be more pleased with the array of artists we have scheduled to appear at this gorgeous site."

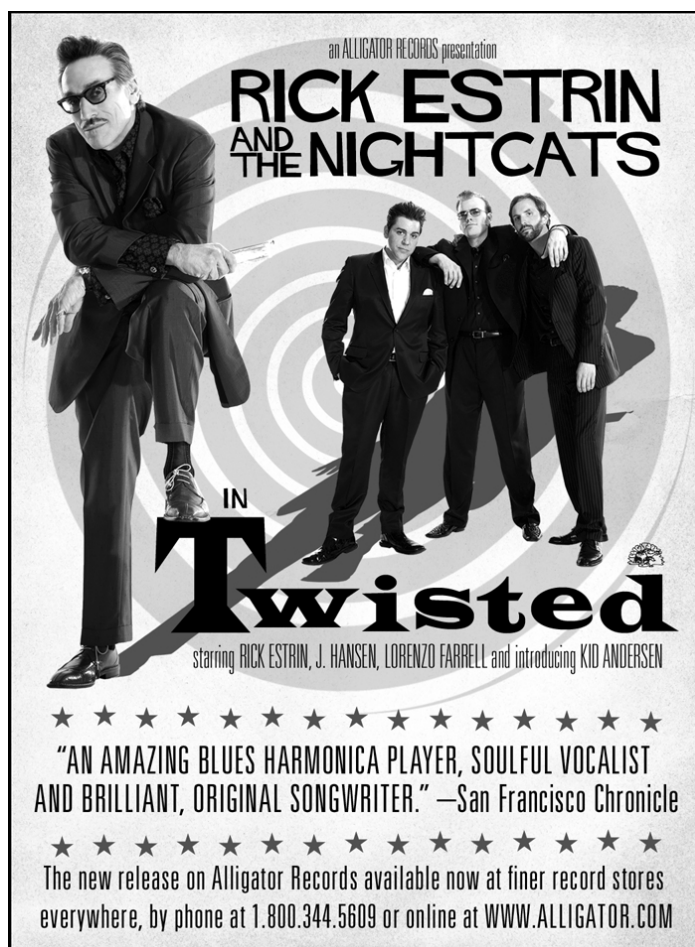
Rum & Humble's Martin Fleischman adds, "It's always a privilege and a pleasure to spend Labor Day weekend with a full complement of world-renowned blues and soul artists on hand. This is our heritage and the Long Beach Blues festival has allowed us to nurture and celebrate it every year for 30 years now."

"Year in, year out, the Blues Festival has proven to be one of the largest events for Cal State Long Beach," said President F. King Alexander. "We are very pleased to be able to share the success of this two-day event with the city of Long Beach and our community."

Advance tickets are \$49.50 per day or \$80 for a weekend pass through Ticketmaster, at World of Strings in Long Beach and at West L.A. Music in West Los Angeles and Universal City.

In addition, the Festival offers several VIP package rates, all of which include a donation to benefit KJAZZ. VIP ticket packages are available directly from KJAZZ by calling (310) 478-5061 or online at www.jazzandblues.org/events/lbbf/2009/microsite/.

The Long Beach Blues Festival is produced by Bill Silva Presents and Rum & Humble. Executive producers are the California State University Long Beach Foundation and Global Jazz, Inc.



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HighNote Records Wins the Most Spins on Radio at JazzWeek Awards

NEW YORK, NY, – The JazzWeek Awards has announced that HighNote/Savant Records has won the Most Spins on Jazz Radio Award for the second consecutive year. The total number of spins was nearly double that of Blue Note, who placed second, and more than five times the number received by the tenth place label.

Ed Trefzger noted that HighNote and Savant placed jointly but that even if taken separately, HighNote would have been #1 and Savant would have placed in the top ten. Ed Trefzger is editor and co-founder of JazzWeek, a weekly jazz radio and music industry trade publication which publishes the national radio airplay charts for jazz and smooth jazz radio.

Other jazz labels which placed in the Most Spins category were Blue Note (second), Concord (third), Heads Up (fourth) and others.

Before the creation of the Most Spins Award, HighNote Records received the unofficial award as the most-played label on jazz radio for five consecutive years and had the most-played record on jazz radio in 2005 with the late David "Fathead" Newman's *I Remember Brother Ray*.

HighNote Records is an independent jazz label

based in New York City. An outgrowth of Joe Fields' Muse Records, founded in 1973, it has been a major force in the jazz industry for more than 15 years. Over the years, HighNote Records has assembled and recorded a stable of artists that include Eric Alexander, Cedar Walton, Tom Harrell, David "Fathead" Newman, Joey DeFrancesco, Houston Person, Freddy Cole, Dave Valentin, Wallace Roney, Ernestine Anderson, Larry Willis and others. The label releases 25 to 30 new recordings each year.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

Summer! Blues, BBQ and... fill in the blank here _____ for your perfect combination of summer fun. While you are thinking about that, here's a few new releases to occupy your time as you wait in line to enter your favorite festival: **Ana Popovic-** *Blind For Love*; **Johnny Winter-** *The Woodstock Experience*; **Ronnie Earl-** *Living In Light*; **Joanne Shaw Taylor-** *White Sugar*; **Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers Blues Quartet-** *Soul Monster*; **Duke Robillard-** *Stomp! The Blues Tonight*; **Buddy Guy-** *Playlist: The Very Best of Buddy Guy*; **Rick Estrin & The Nightcats-** *Twisted*; **Michael Bloomfield-** *Live at Bill Graham's Fillmore West: 1969*; **Muddy Waters-** *Authorized Bootleg: Live at the Fillmore Auditorium- San Francisco, November 4-6, 1966*; **Mick Fleetwood-** *Blue Again*; **Roy Rogers-** *Split Decision*; **Deanna Bogart-** *11th Hour*; **Muddy Waters-** *The Johnny Winter Sessions, 1976-1981*; **Candye Kane-** *Superhero*; **Fiona Boyes-** *Blues Woman*; **John Hammond-** *Rough & Tough*; **Marc Benno and the Nightcrawlers** featuring **Stevie Ray Vaughan-** *Crawlin'*; **The Home-made Jamz Blues Band-** *I Got Blues For You*; **Rick Derringer-** *Knighted by the Blues*; **Champion Jack Dupree-** *Early Cuts from a Singer, Pianist and Songwriter*; **Matt Schofield-** *Heads, Tails & Aces*; **Zora Young-** *Sunnyland*; **The Radio Kings-** *Radio Kings*; **The Delta Groove All-Stars-** *Live at Ground Zero, Volumes 1 & 2*; **Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters-** *Living in the Light*; **Louisiana Red-** *Back to the Black Bayou*; **James Luther Dickinson-** *Donosaurs Run In Circles*; **Alvin Jett & the Phat Noiz Blues Band-** *Honey Bowl*; **John Primer-** *All Original*; **Big James and the Chicago Playboys-** *Right Here Right Now.... Well, the sun is finally shining.... That's it for this month. See Ya!*

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

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

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

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



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.

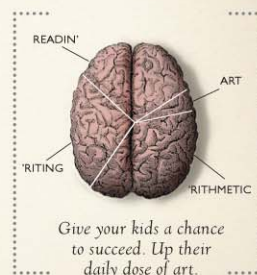
Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

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.



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



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RADAM SCHWARTZ
Blues Citizens
SAVANT

Organist Radam Schwartz certainly has the blues in mind on his new Savant recording "Blues Citizens." The blues has always been fertile ground for Hammond B-3 combos and that is true on this disc produced by drummer Cecil Brooks III, who anchors Schwartz along with the alto sax of Bruce Williams, the tenor of Bill Saxton and the guitar of Eric Johnson.

Not that the music is mostly built on twelve-bar numbers, but it is blues-related. Schwartz's original that opens it is a burner "Dem Philadelphia Organ Blues," which was apparently inspired by Don Patterson who called the City of Brotherly Love home for several years. "Driftin'" is a strutting performance of a Herbie Hancock composition on which guitarist Johnson shines. Schwartz's bluesy dirge "Grief But Be Brief" was inspired by listening to Ossie Davis eulogize Betty Shabazz, but became even more relevant when his son died in a motorcycle accident. It is a moving duet between Saxton and Schwartz that is followed by the full band on the title track, with its march like cadence.

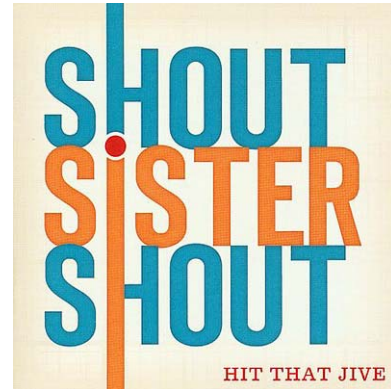
Brooks helps drive things along whether he's keeping the march like tempo on "Blues Citizens" or the walking groove over the very familiar "Misty," with more fine playing from all involved. Kice is added to the shuffle blues groove of "Pay Up," with his rap about not letting money take over our lives with Schwartz laying down the bass vamp groove and the saxophones adding their interludes around the rap and Johnson playing some nice bluesy lines.

"I Don't Stand a Ghost of a Chance" shows just how good a ballad player Saxton is, while the horns sit out the marvelous interpretation of Jimmy Hughes deep southern soul classic "Steal Away." Producer Brooks contributed the hot "Hanging With Smooth," for which the two horns are trading eights and then fours before solos from

organ and drums.

The closing "Eighth Wonder" is Schwartz's ripping salute to the legendary Jimmy Smith with the leader pulling out the stops. "Blue Citizens" is, simply stated, a terrific album that should appeal to fans of hard-swinging, straight-ahead jazz, not just simply fans of the Hammond B-3.

Ron Weinstock



SHOUT SISTER SHOUT
Hit That Jive
MC RECORDS

The quintet Shout Sister Shout took its name from a Sister Rosetta Tharpe song and brings together an enthusiasm for the music of the thirties and forties. MC Records has issued "Hit That Jive" which is a slightly enlarged version of a self-produced CD that has been available on cdbaby.

The Michigan based quintet is comprised of Rachel Davis on vocals; Joe Wilson on trombone, steel guitar and vocals; Andy Wilson on Harmonicas, trumpet and flugelhorn; Dominic John Suchyta on upright bass and vocals; and Joshua Davis on guitar and vocals. While it's obvious when Ms. Davis sings, the male vocal on Louis Jordan's "No Sale," is not identified, but that track does feature some nice steel guitar. There is a bit of retro flavor to some of the performances, which goes with the repertoire. This is not to say they get overly campy and don't show respect to the music.

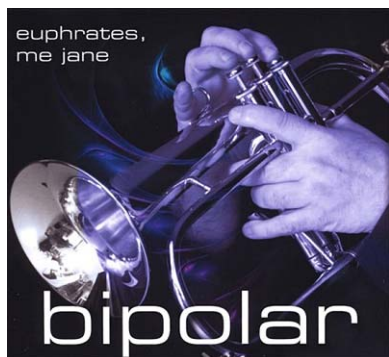
Ms. Davis is certainly easy to listen to and does a marvelous job on the Louis Jordan evergreen "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," as well as the standard "Moonlight in Vermont," with nice steel guitar and harmonica in the accompaniment. "It's a Sin to Tell a Lie" has a bit of a campy feel in the backing, although there is some nice trumpet and steel guitar again before Davis' straightforward vocal. "Carolina Moon" has a bit of campfire country flavor with steel guitar in the backing and country flavored harmonica.

Other selections include some from the discography of Billy Holiday "Ms. Otis Regrets" and "God Bless the Child," the latter having more trumpet. She accounts for herself well, although not in Lady Day's league as a singer (few are). Andy Wilson's harmonica leads off "It's Only A Paper Moon," where one the men (Joshua Davis?) shares the vocal with the rhythm strutting behind the singers. On "Don't Let Your Eyes Go Shopping For Your Heart"

Ms. Davis' lovely vocal is backed marvelously by Joshua Davis' restrained guitar. "You Rascal You," one of the two tunes added to this edition of the recording, has some nice tailbone trombone and the closing "Hit That Jive Jack" features an ensemble vocal.

Also included is a short behind the scenes video of clips of them recording and talking about themselves. "Hit That Jive" may not be profound, but it certainly is a delightful recording that provides a refreshing change of pace for listeners.

Ron Weinstock



BIPOLAR

Euphrates, Me Jane
TWO MINDS MUSIC

The quintet Bipolar brings together an intriguing repertoire with a clean, crisp and refined sound ranging from cool originals, reworked classical themes and new arrangements for classic jazz compositions.

Jed Feuer on trumpet and flugelhorn is the group's founder and leader, and the other members include Stephanie Long on saxophone and flute, Craig Swanson on piano, David Ostrem on bass and James Windsor-Wells on drums. "Euphrates, Me Jane" is the quintet's debut album and opens with an eponymously named title, a peppy number by Feuer, which introduces us to their sound with a flavor of chamber jazz. It's followed by pianist Swanson's nifty arrangement of Debussy's "Killer Beau (Soir)," with a crisp, slow marching tempo, crisp piano, muted trumpet solo by Feuer, and lovely flute from Long with just Swanson's piano accompanying her before the full ensemble comes back in and interpolates Benny Golson's "Killer Joe" as the number closes out.

Swanson's "9-13" is a lively tune with some more nice playing. Feuer favors the mid-range while Long often employs a dry tone without much vibrato. Feuer casts Beethoven's "Opus 130 (Presto)" with a Latin tinge for a lively romp that opens with some scatting and driven by Windsor-Wells' crisp drumming. Swanson's "Closed (Due to Fire)" opens with some moody piano before the full band engages in a walking groove as Long states the theme with Feuer punctuating it with some sharply defined phrases before soloing using the mute. Feuer's arrangement for "Bach Prelude (Well-Tempered Clavier Book 1 #24)" retains the composition's flavor and is followed by a rendition of the ballad "I'm a Fool to Want You," with a similar flavor as the performance of the Bach composition.

The group imparts a nice feel to both Bill Withers' "Just

the Two of Us," with the muted delivery of the two horns matched by the understated, complimentary accompaniment, and Lennon and McCartney's "And I Love Her," with Long enchanting listeners with her flute. The album concludes with the lively title track that closes this session with the same crisp and refined ensemble playing and soloing that make this release such a complete delight.

Bipolar's website is www.bipolarjazz.com and this can be obtained from itunes, amazon, and cdbaby.com.

Ron Weinstock



CANDYE KANE

Superhero
DELTA GROOVE

Candye Kane has always been a survivor of sorts with a mile wide rebellious streak, a youthful pregnancy and stints in the adult film industry filling her resume before she found her voice as a blues singer who took up causes as diverse as the "full-figured" and the gay, lesbian and transgender communities.

With a strong sense of conviction, a healthy dose of wit and a bawdy stage presence, she defied the odds and found a way to connect with the mainstream blues audience. In early 2008 she was thrown the challenge of a lifetime in the form of pancreatic cancer that required immediate surgery and the cessation of the touring and recording that kept her economic engine running. While her prognosis was grim her determination was stronger and now, a year later, she's once again emerged on top.

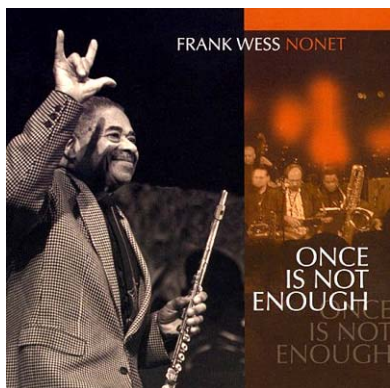
This disc is her proud proclamation of victory. The title track is a buoyant survivor's tale about not taking bad news lying down while *Hey! Toughen Up!* reveals some deathbed thinking about not focusing on the small failures without being grateful for all the other things that are going right. And what use is victory if you can't enjoy it? On *Til You go Too Far* Candye promotes the wild ride that goes along with discovering your outermost limits while she extols the virtues of love in all its carnal forms on her saucy duet with Mitch Kashmar, *I Like 'Em Stacked Like That*, on the rollicking *Throw It In the Trash Can Love* and on the Willie Dixon classic, *You Need Love*, which she successfully wrestles back from Led Zeppelin.

As with past releases, Kane is too, well, big, to stick with the straight blues. *I Didn't Listen To My Heart* is straight out of the 50s' doo-wop book with its too cool sax and cha-cha beat. *I Put A Hex on You* has a cool mysterious groove and lyrics about Voo Doo Queen Marie

Laveau while *Picture of You* heads close to Patsy Cline territory with its loping beat and longing vocals.

While long time fans might find the content here a bit tame compared to some of the lascivious material of her past, Kane's brush with fate hasn't dimmed her sense of fun or her willingness to tell it like she sees it.

Mark Smith



FRANK WESS NONET

Once Is Not Enough LABETH MUSIC

Saxophonist Frank Wess assembled an all-star team and contributed six of the nine tunes for this June 2008 studio set recording.

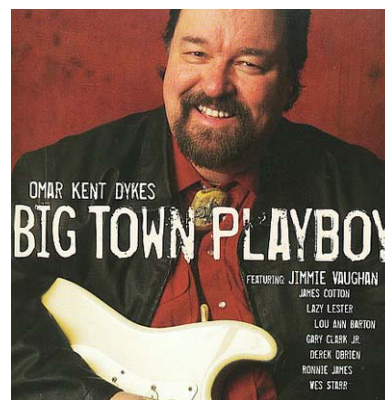
Musicians include: Frank Green and Terell Stafford (trumpets; Steve Turre, (trombone); Ted Nash (alto sax, flute); Scott Robinson (bass, bari saxes, flute); Gerald Clayton (piano); Peter Washington (bass); Winard Harper (drums). Special guests are pianist Michael Weiss and bassist Rufus Reid.

The full band, which debuted mid-year 2008 at Dizzy Club Coca Cola in New York City, swings with verve. The set begins with the title tune written by Wess for the nonet.

The lengthiest tune (8:22 minutes) is the bluesy swinger "Sara's Song," a tightly blended number also arranged by Dennis Mackrel. Things slow down for Wess's "Dementia, My Darling" (one of two ballads on the disc), performed in quartet format. The standards include "Sweet and Lovely," "Lush Life" and "Fly Me To The Moon (In Other Words)."

This is the first time Wess has recorded leading a nonet. As would be expected from the personnel on this outing, solos and section work are excellent and Wess's playing is prime.

Nancy Ann Lee



OMAR KENT DYKES

Big Town Playboy RUF

It's always nice when your kids find a new playmate and it is someone they get along with well.

That's the situation here as "Big Town Playboy" is the second teaming of vocalist Omar Kent Dykes with guitarist Jimmie Vaughan, best known as the co-founder of the Fabulous Thunderbirds. Last get together for these two was a tribute a couple years back to the music of Jimmy Reed. This time around, the pair went shopping at the historical variety store and came out with a bag of Eddie Taylor, Jimmy McCracklin, Jimmy Reed and John Lee Hooker tunes among the goodies.

If a fan of the Mississippi saxophone aka the harmonica, you hit the jackpot as Big Town Playboy is filled with offerings from Lazy Lester, James Cotton and Gary Clark, Jr. Lester leads the core players out on the dance floor via Jerry West's "Hello Mary Lee" as Omar takes on "Man Down There" and gives us the "back door man" situation from another perspective. "Mary Mary" gets Omar's growl in gear while Lou Ann Barton does her vocal duets with Dykes during "Think" and "Close Together," to the point on the latter you want to yell "get a room already."

Another solid teaming effort of these two Texas talents, "Big Town Playboy" has enough going for it that it would make Hugh Hefner green with envy.

Peanuts

HOLLY YARBROUGH

Mister Rogers Swings!: Holly Yarbrough Sings the Fred Rogers Songbook VINTAGE DISCS

Vocalist Holly Yarbrough has provided us with one of the most surprising recent musical delights on this new release out on Vintage Discs. She's backed by guitarist Richard Smith & pianist Lori Mechem Trio with contributions by the late Boots Randolph on sax, Roy Agee on trombone and George Tidwell on trumpet that make for a thoroughly captivating, swinging rendition of the songs from the classic television show.

The accompaniment is exquisite throughout due to a first-rate rhythm section of Mechem on piano, Roger Spencer on bass and Chris Brown on drums. Listening to her rendition of "Would You Be My Neighbor," with Smith's guitar, as well as the enchanting "You've Got to Do It," with nice breaks from pianist Mechem as well as the three

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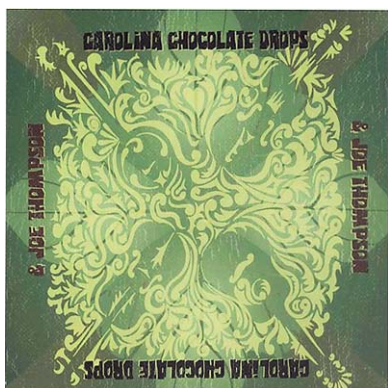


horns with some growling trumpet with Tidwell standing out.

Yarbrough is the daughter of the folksinger Glenn Yarbrough and has a marvelous delivery and voice. If one read some of the lyrics one would be astonished that this does indeed work and is more than a children's album, although I can see parents playing and singing this to their young children. But listening to "Sometimes People Are Good," with the trio backing and Smith's concise guitar break, or the duet with pianist Mechem "It's You I Like," one falls under her spell regardless of the lyrics. A samba groove with Tidwell's muted trumpet is present on "When I Think Of You."

This is not simply music for kids to grow up with, but music that continues to grow with repeated listening with her delightful delivery and the swinging backing. And one comes away with an appreciation of what a superior lyricist Fred Rogers was. This first-rate release is available from cdbaby.com, iTunes and amazon.com among other sources.

Ron Weinstock



CAROLINA CHOCOLATE DROPS & JOE THOMPSON

Carolina Chocolate Drops & Joe Thompson
MUSIC MAKER FOUNDATION

One of the real delightful surprises in the past few years has been the emergence of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, an African-American string band that embraces a dying tradition. African-Americans have been playing banjo and fiddle since slavery times well into the 20th Century. The Chocolate Drops were mentored by Joe Thompson, of North Carolina, the oldest and last known black traditional fiddler, and have recorded several albums of old time string band music with many songs that would be at home with a revivalist old-time string band. Their music led them to appear not only as blues events of the Music Heritage Foundation but on the Grand Ole Opry.

The Music Maker Foundation has just issued their most recent recording, which was recorded in April 2008 at MerleFest. While it's a short recording, it's spirited fun as they open with a bit of a jugband flavor on "Memphis Shakedown" before their rendition of "Cornbread And Butter Beans," an old timey number, and then they bring up Joe who leads off on the fiery "Dona Got A Ramblin' Mind," which was the title track on the Chocolate Drops' first album. The addition of bones here gives it a nice

feel, and it is followed by a lively "John Henry," with Thompson handling the vocal. A white banjo player who has been visiting Thompson for nearly four decades, Bob Carlin joins the group for the last five numbers, including "Old Joe Clark," and "Georgie (sic?) Buck" and the hymn "I Shall Not be Moved." They close with a lively rendition of the traditional "Goin' Down The Road Feelin' Bad."

The value of this live recording is enhanced by making available a sample of Joe Thompson performing, with friends, doing tunes he has performed for decades before a highly appreciative audience. This is available from the Music Maker Foundation's website, www.musicmaker.org.

Ron Weinstock

Delmark Reissues

ERIC ALEXANDER

Modes for Mables

ART HODES

Up in Volly's Room

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Blues Before Sunrise: Live Volume 1

LIN HALLIDAY

Where or When

Delmark Records has put back into circulation several CDs, some of which were previously reviewed in back issues. "Modes for Mables" was Eric Alexander's fourth disc for the label and the Mables in the title was pianist Harold Mabern. Back in November 1998 Chris Hovan reviewed this when it came out stating, "there's so much going on here it seems pointless to mention the highlights blow-by-blow. Suffice it to say this is serious hard bop that won't disappoint and should further solidify Alexander's position as one of the hottest tenor players on the scene." It sounds fresh a decade later.

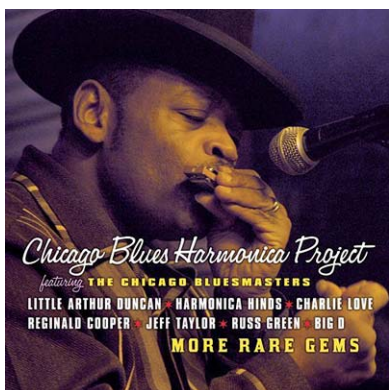
Art Hodes was a blues oriented pianist of the Chicago school of jazz that also wrote about jazz. He has numerous albums out of which "Up in Volly's Room" is a typically solid example. The Volly is clarinetist Volly DeFaut, a member of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. The date includes some band sessions featuring DeFaut (and drummer Barrett Deems) as well as some piano bass duets with Truck Parham and display Hodes' genial bluesy piano on "St. Louis Blues," along with "Tin Roof Blues." The quartet certainly has plenty of pep on "Struttin' With Some Barbecue," while "After You've Gone," showcases DeFaut's woody tone. George Brunis on trombone and Nappy Trottier on trumpet fill out the band for a couple tracks of an album that is wistful, lively and congenial.

I believe it was I who reviewed "Blues Before Sunrise: Live Volume 1" back in July/August 1997, the title referred to a long-time radio show that Steve Cushing hosted over WBEZ before becoming an independent show seeking sponsors. This disc is derived from a benefit show held in October of 1996 at Chicago B.L.U.E.S. I wrote back then that "Cushing, who produced this recording, is also a drummer and is among those playing behind the four featured artists, Big Wheeler, John Brim, Billy Boy

Arnold and Jimmy Burns on an unpretentious collection of traditionally-oriented Chicago blues performances. Albums like this often look better on paper than they sound, however this one not only serves to benefit Steve Cushing's radio program, but presents some spirited Chicago blues as well." Listening to this a decade later I am still impressed how good this is. Certainly its nice listening to John Brim reprise his vintage recordings such as "Tough Times" and "Ice Cream Man," or Jimmy Burns' compelling rendition of his signature number, "Leave Here Walking." BTW, the radio program is still available at public radio stations in many states from Alaska to Texas to Virginia.

The final CD is Lin Halliday's "Where or When." Halliday, a fine Chicago tenor player, was one of many players that never got the recognition that his playing deserved. While he was in groups led by Philly Joe Jones and Louis Bellson, as well as Maynard Ferguson's Big Band, he opted for the security provided by studio work. This did not prevent him from recording, and this 1993 session was his 3rd Delmark album. The cover has Ira Sullivan Presents Lin Halliday, and Sullivan contributes his tenor sax and trumpet to seven of the eight tracks with the marvelous pianist Jodie Christian anchoring a fine rhythm section for a terrific set of bop and ballads ranging from the superb rendition of Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady," Stan Getz's "Dear Old Stockholm," Roger & Hart's "Where or When," Harold Arlen's "Over the Rainbow" (where Sullivan plays a Miles-ish trumpet) and Sonny Rollins' "Pent-Up House." Charlie Parker and Rollins were both major influences on Halliday, and he brings forth his own hearty voice to these performances coaxed on by Sullivan's marvelous playing and the superb rhythm section. Halliday passed in 2000, and with a limited discography, having this gem back in print is certainly quite welcome.

Ron Weinstock



CHICAGO BLUES HARMONICA PROJECT More Rare Gems SEVERN

Severn Records has followed up his prior release of lesser known Chicago Blues Harmonica Players, Chicago Blues Harmonica Project: Diamonds in the Rough with "More Rare Gems."

It's another collection of lively performances by a variety of harp players who continue to ply their trade in the clubs and bars of the Windy City. Once again the back-

ing band is The Chicago Blues Masters: guitarists Rick Kreher and Illinois Slim; pianist Mark Brumbach; bassist E.G. McDaniel and drummer Twist Turner who provide solid idiomatic traditionally oriented backing throughout.

Seven performers are heard on this collection, as some come off stronger than others but all are entertaining. Reginald Cooper opens with a strong vocal on his rendition of a Z.Z. Hill recording, "Shade Tree Mechanic," with a simple harp solo. His other performance reworks Lightnin' Hopkins' "Give Me Back That Wig," with the band giving the song a Muddy Waters styled flavor with more harp.

He is a particularly expressive vocalist and his harp adds solid flavoring to these performances. Charlie Love really tears into his harp at the beginning of the extroverted and rollicking shuffle rendition of Howlin' Wolf's "Ooh Baby, Hold Me." His vocal perhaps is a bit melodramatic on the cover of Elmore James' "Twelve Year Old Boy," although the track sports more fine harp. What is interesting is that Love is known as a guitarist, and he obviously could put together an interesting album.

Harmonica Hinds has recorded with Koko Taylor several years and has several self-produced albums. His harp playing is his strength as displayed on his original "Kill That Mouse," but his gruff vocals suffer from a somewhat stiff delivery despite his obvious enthusiasm.

The instrumental shuffle "Sunday Morning Blues" is a showcase for his musical strengths. The recordings by the late Little Arthur Duncan, perhaps the best known of those heard here, were his last and he turns in capable performances of "Can't Stand It No More," which sounds derived from Little Walter's "Hate to See You Go," and Muddy Waters' "Gone to Main Street."

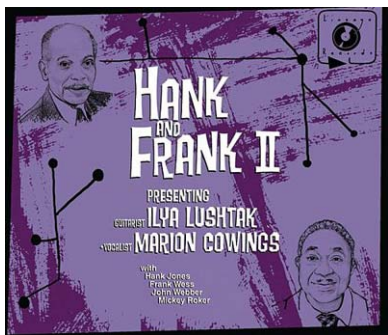
Jeff Taylor handles the vocal on "Gangster of Love," derived from a funkier uptempo spin that Johnny Guitar Watson sometimes gave the number. Russ Green's superb harp accompaniment helps make this performance one of the top choices here. Taylor takes up the harp for his rendition of Jimmy Reed's "Honest I Do," with his effective playing evoking Reed's simple harp style and kudos for whichever guitarist is adding the nice fills.

Big D is in his 20s, but his rendition of Slim Harpo's "I've Got to Be With You Tonight" shows a maturity in his relaxed vocal and smooth playing. It rounds the second sampling of lesser known Chicago harp players who have plenty to offer fans of Chicago and harmonica blues.

Ron Weinstock

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HANK JONES & FRANK WESS

Hank & Frank II LINEAGE RECORDS

This 15-tune set of timeless standards is a follow-up album to the critically-acclaimed album, *Hank and Frank*, and was recorded in November 2008. Featured with pianist Jones, tenor saxophonist Wess, drummer Mickey Roker and bassist John Webber are the talented Russian-born guitarist Ilya Lushtak and the fabulous New York-based male vocalist Marion Cowings (4 tracks).

Swinging from the gate, the New York studio set is a straight-ahead pleaser that includes recognizable gems such as "More Than You Know," "If I Were A Bell," "You Don't Know What Love Is," "For All We Know," "I'll Be Seeing You," and more. Most tunes are in the four- to five-minute range.

As two of the most revered elders of jazz, Jones and Wess perform impeccably throughout. Their cohorts continually rise to the occasion. This is one of those enjoyable albums where you'll want to kick off your shoes, settle back in your easy chair and soak up the warm and joyful moods.

Nancy Ann Lee

DUKE ROBILLARD'S JUMPIN' BLUES REVIEW

STOMP! The Blues Tonight STONY PLAIN

A fair definition of jump blues would be it is an upbeat, jazz-orientated version of the blues with horns leading the way. That's basically what Rhode Island guitarist Duke Robillard has put together here, using members of his present band and alumni of the act he used to front, Roomful of Blues.

With tunes like "Baby You Don't Know," you can easily transport yourself back to when rooftop beer gardens were in vogue and the brass that made them jump and jive all night long. One of Robillard's secret weapons here is female vocalist Sunny Crownover, who duets with him on "I Wanna Hug You, Kiss You, Squeeze You" and the even more jazzy "For You My Love," whose version by Nat King Cole and Nellie Lutcher inspired Robillard to take a whack at the song.

Since jump blues has a lot of brass to it, sax man Doug James leads the way with his strong solo on the old Helen Humes' chestnut, "Million Dollar Secret," and the instrumental take of the "Frankie and Johnny" standard. Also of note is piano man Bruce Bears who works his digit magic via "Do Me Right" and "Hands Off!" for two quick examples.

If a fan of Roy Brown, Wynonie Harris, Big Joe Turner or, like me, a Johnny Otis zealot, you are going to soak Stomp! The Blues Tonight up like caviar in a heavily guarded speak-easy of old.

Peanuts

KARRIN ALLYSON

By Request: The Best of Karrin Allyson CONCORD MUSIC GROUP

This 13-tune compilation, co-produced by vocalist Karrin Allyson and Concord VP of Jazz and Catalog A&R Nick Philips, includes tunes gleaned from some of the singer's 11 previous Concord albums from 1993 to 2007. The selections include one previously unreleased track, "Next Time Around (Soultrane)," from the 2005 *Footprints* album sessions.

Allyson sings standards such as "Night and Day," "Moanin'," "What's New," "Everything Must Change," "Nature Boy," "Cherokee," and others, originally recorded with an array of musicians.

The retrospective album includes ballads, bouncers and bossas, features fine musicianship, and showcases some of Allyson's best performances. It's a pleasing reminder of how talented Allyson is and could serve as an introduction to jazz fans that haven't yet discovered her.

Nancy Ann Lee

EDDIE C. CAMPBELL

Tear This World Up DELMARK

It's been a few years since Eddie C. Campbell, one of the few remaining masters of the West Side Chicago blues style, has had a new recording out. Not that he hasn't merited it, but his understated guitar and laid-back and witty vocals lack the immediate appeal to those more rock-oriented listeners of the blues.

His latest album "Tear This World Up," on Delmark, will be welcome to those of us that have been fans of him for decades, as well as those that want the real deal blues.

Dick Shurman, who produced Campbell's classic first album, "King of the Jungle" over three decades ago, has assembled a solid studio band including Dairy Golliday on bass, Marty Binder on drums and Karl 'Lil Daddy' Outten on keyboards. Mojo Mark Cihlar plays harp on several tracks and several other tracks have a full horn section. One thing that stands out is how uncluttered this recording sounds compared with so many recordings in recent months.

It is refreshing to hear someone handle the blues in such an unfrenzied manner whether the light lyrics of his opening "Making Popcorn," the rocking "Big World," a story about meeting this fine lady who wants to show Eddie her big world, and his remake of "Easy Baby," a tribute to his late friend Magic Sam. All are marked by Campbell's restrained, yet soulful vocals with his occasional effective employment of a falsetto, and his crisply played, snap and pop crackling guitar with just a bit of treble and echo.

His playing imparts a rockabilly tinge to Magic Sam's "Love Me With a Feeling," with some pretty impressive picking here. In contrast "Vibrations in the Air" has a lazy Jimmy reed styled shuffle that few today play with nice harp from Cihlar, who also added his atmospheric playing to Campbell's witty "Voodoo."

"Care" has a bit of a funk groove and is one several selections with a full horn section. Punching horns add

to the flavor of the easy walking instrumental shuffle of "It's So Easy," where Campbell's snapping guitar playing is also complemented by the organ of Mart Sammon, Buddy Guy's keyboard player.

Campbell turns Howlin' Wolf's "My Last Affair" into a compelling blues ballad with his genially pleading singing, followed by the rocking rendition of "I'm Just Your Fool," with horns and harp supporting his terrific rendition of the Buddy Johnson composition "I'm Just Your Fool," which is modeled after Little Walter's recording.

He evokes Link Wray and the Ventures before getting into another shuffle groove for his rendition of "Summertime," adding some jazzy fills, before closing the album with "Bluesman;" backed just by his guitar, Eddie sings about being a real bluesman, and having played with everyone from A and Z.

But as he sings, you can still hear them in his blues played so direct and honest which is why this recording is so appealing.

Ron Weinstock

RESONANCE BIG BAND

Plays Tribute To Oscar Peterson

RESONANCE RECORDS

Performing an 11-tune set of mostly Oscar Peterson originals, Romanian-born Marian Petrescu excels at the piano chair, backed by a rousing big band of Los Angeles musicians and a string quartet.

Petrescu has an elegant keyboard presence as he performs ballads and swingers with the band led by arranger/conductor Bill Cunliffe (other arrangements by Kuno Schmid and Claus Ogerman) and the string quartet.

The set launches with Peterson's "Waltzing Is Hip," a cleverly upbeat waltz for the big band and is followed by another Peterson original, "L'Impossible," a delicate Latin number for the big band. Tunes by Rodgers-Hart ("Little Girl Blue"), Lalo Shifrin ("Down Here On the Ground"), Henry Mancini ("Sally's Tomato"), Oscar Pettiford ("Tricotism") and Leonard Bernstein ("West Side Story Medley"), and other tracks give Petrescu opportunities to prove his proficient piano style. "Little Girl Blue," performed with the string quartet, is especially notable, featuring Petrescu's romantic, light two-handed approach.

Petrescu (b. 1970) began piano lessons at a young age. Inspired by an Oscar Peterson television performance, Petrescu pursued classical and jazz studies in Sweden and Finland, where he now lives. By age 15, he debuted at the Pori Jazz Festival. Petrescu is also inspired by pianists such as Art Tatum, Kenny Barron, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Michel Petrucciani and others. He's performed throughout Europe as a soloist and with an array of prominent jazz artists and has been hailed by Marial Solal as "the Horowitz of jazz piano."

Petrescu shows plenty of promise. His marvelous performances, the well-chosen selections, superb arrangements and the support and solos from fine studio musicians (especially timekeeper Joe La Barbera) make this a very listenable CD. Included in the set is a bonus DVD on "The Making of Resonance Big Band Plays Tribute to Oscar Peterson."

Nancy Ann Lee

J.C. SMITH BAND

Defining Cool

COZMIK RECORDS

Hailing from the San Francisco Bay area, the J.C. Smith Band is a versatile six piece outfit (J.C. Smith on guitar and vocals, Donnie Green on drums, Paul Smith on B3 and keys, Robert Green on bass, Tommy Maitland on trumpet and Abraham Vasquez on tenor, alto and baritone sax) that can handle everything from straight guitar driven blues, *Bluezeman*, to saxophone and B3 fueled funk, *Rite on Time*, to jump/swing on the Roy Brown classic *She Walks Right In*, to mid-tempo scorches care of Duke Robillard, *Lonesome Blues/Duke's Blues* and Louis Jordan, *Outskirts of Town*, to groove heavy reworks of the oft covered Don Nix tune *Going Down*, to a guitar and piano driven version of Albert King's *I Walked All Night Long* to a slide laden version of Muddy Water's *Satisfied*.

What holds this wide ranging set together is Smith's powerfully elastic voice that swoops and glides with ease through not only the low down gritty numbers but also the ones that push the high end of his vocal chords. While this set is heavy on covers there are a couple of well done originals and the band adds enough new instrumental spark to the rest to make it an enjoyable listen.

Mark Smith

ROD PIAZZA & THE MIGHTY FLYERS

BLUES QUARTET

Soul Monster

DELTA GROOVE

Kicking things off with the greasy, funky, instrumental title track that sounds like Booker T & the MGs but with harmonica instead of B3 leading the charge, Rod Piazza and crew seem poised to take their sound on an exciting trip outside the confines of the West Coast blues that have been their stock in trade.

That changes all too quickly on the next three tracks featuring a throw away original, *Cheap Wine*, and covers of Jimmy Reed's *Can't Stand to See You Go* and Big Bill Broonzy's *Key to the Highway* that have more mileage on them Willie Nelson's tour bus. Even though the change in direction doesn't really materialize, the balance of the disc is a better representation of the band's talent.

Piazza's smoking read on mentor George Smith's *Sunbird*, is a first class harmonica showcase and also features the hard charging piano work of Miss Honey. The Jimmy Liggins little big band number, *That's What's Knocking Me Out*, likewise features Rod and Honey's undeniable instrumental prowess and bandstand chemistry and will likely be filing dance floors every time the band pulls it out on stage. *Tell Me About it Sam* is an homage to the late, great Sam Myers and the night he busted Piazza for not knowing the words to his own song.

Mixing things up, the distorted vocals on *Queen Bee* add an interesting counterpoint to Rod's crisp runs up and down the harmonica and guitarist Henry Carvajal's earnest vocals and the easy, loping beat send *Talk to Me* straight back to the 50s. The disc even features saxophonist Jonny Viau on a couple of cuts which is virtually unheard of on a harmonica driven disc. He acquits himself well though and Piazza seems to revel in the freedom

of the extra dimension added to the mix.

The change in Miss Honey's role is less successful. While she has been showcased frequently over the course of the band's many discs, her new task of playing all the bass lines as a result of the departure of long term bassist Bill Stuve leaves her primarily in the background, as the boys have all the fun up front. Not a problem when the band stretches its wings a bit, but her piano is sorely missed when the band plays straight bread and butter blues.

Bottom line: a good but not great disc. Next time, let's hope the retreads are left in the studio and Miss Honey gets more room to shine.

Mark Smith

RED HOLLOWAY

Go Red Go!

DELMARK

Delmark has just issued the label's debut recording by the veteran tenor saxophonist Red Holloway. A contemporary of Von Freeman and the late Johnny Griffin at Chicago's fabled DuSable High, he came up under the tutelage of Captain Walter Dyett, who advised his students to practice outside to develop their sound. Particularly important influences on Holloway were Ben Webster and Sonny Stitt, leading to his big, rich tone and fleet agility which certainly did not inhibit his ability to straddle the blues and jazz worlds growing up. He played on a number of classic Chicago blues sessions as well as jazz dates. His career has run the gamut from backing Charles Brown in the studio in the late sixties (with Charles calling out Red by name on a choice tenor solo) to the 1989 "Locksmith Blues," date for Concord co-led with Clark Terry.

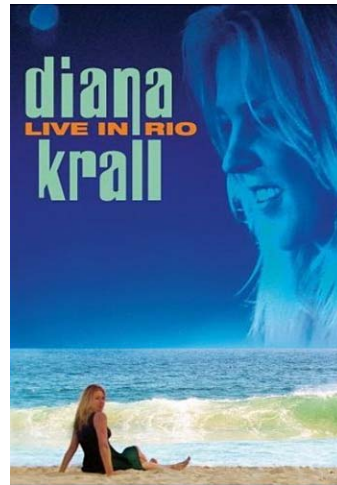
"Go Red Go!" finds him blowing with vitality backed by organist Chris Foreman and his trio (guitarist Henry Johnson and drummer Greg Rockingham). It's a swinging, buoyant date opening with a lively "Love Walked In." Legendary guitarist George Freeman takes over the chair for Holloway's late night blues, "I Like It Funky." The title track is a retitled rendition of an Arnett Cobb sax sender as he takes off at rugburning tempo, followed by the more romantic feeling of the standard "Deep Purple," a prime vehicle to display his sensuous ballad playing with his vibrato evoking Webster.

Holloway also provides his own take on "Stardust," one of the ballads Webster was most associated with. Sonny Rollins classic calypso "St. Thomas" is an unusual choice perhaps, but Foreman's solid unison playing and chording underneath his dancing solo adds to its charm, and Johnson takes a nice solo here as well. There are strong interpretations of "Bags Groove" and Antonio Carlos Jobim's bossa nova classic, "Wave. Guitarist Freeman rejoins him for the delightful reworking of Roosevelt Sykes, who he used to play for, "Keep Your Hands Off Yourself," that closes this album as he enthusiastically delivers the vocal with Foreman anchoring the performance and getting greasy during his solo that precedes the solos by Holloway and Freeman.

Holloway may not be a great singer, but the entire performance here is simply too much fun and ends a finger snapping, toe tapping recording of first rate jazz for lovers of tenor sax and organ jazz. He ain't getting older; he's just aging marvelously.

Ron Weinstock

DVDs



DIANA KRALL

Live In Rio

EAGLE VISION DVD

Pianist/vocalist Diana Krall kicks it with her quartet and a full orchestra on this 18-tune concert performance DVD filmed live in Rio de Janeiro. Guitarist Anthony Wilson, bassist John Clayton and drummer Jeff Hamilton provide first-rate accompaniment and solos. Many of the tracks are from Krall's 12th studio CD release, *Quiet Nights*

(Verve) but re-imagined here with the breadth of her influences.

The quartet launches the array of standards with a rousing, upbeat version of "I Love Being Here With You," with everyone taking fine solos and Krall bending the lyrics. "Let's Fall In Love," starts as a slow ballad with guitar-vocal melody head before the tempo shifts to a bouncy beat when Clayton and Hamilton join in with Krall at the keys. The quartet also plays "Frim Fram Sauce," "Cheek to Cheek," "Let's Face the Music and Dance," and others. The foursome also plays the Brazilian standard "So Nice," with Krall singing the lyrics in English. The audience joins in, singing the Portuguese lyrics to "The Girl/Boy from Ipanema."

Backing Krall's soft vocals, the Rio Di Janeiro Orchestra—conducted by Rurik Duprat with arrangements by Claus Ogerman—enhances gems such as "Where Or When," "Too Marvelous For Words," "I've Grown Accustomed to His Face," "Walk On By," "You're My Thrill," "Every Time We Say Goodbye," and more.

Some of the quartet performances will remind you of the Ray Brown quartet's swinging grooves. Camera work is excellent, geared to the moods of the songs and aptly capturing the action with close-ups. Interspersed with performance shots are Rio beach scenes, panoramic views of landscapes, urban street and night scenes, and more. A very informative bonus feature, "Conversations," includes interviews with the musicians, detailing their stay in Rio de Janeiro, Krall's attraction for the Latin jazz styles, a discussion of the bossa nova, Krall's early influences, and other topics. The DVD also includes a new video for "The Boy From Ipanema."

This is one of the best performance videos to come across my desk – a true keepsake that's as visually exciting as it is aurally. It's available on both DVD and Blu-ray.

Nancy Ann Lee



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