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2010 SUMMER FESTIVALS

PART ONE

jazz & blues report

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2010 SUMMER FESTIVALS

PART ONE

By Ron Weinstock



James Moody

Photos by Ron Weinstock

There are frankly too many jazz and blues festivals to preview all of them, but it would seem appropriate to highlight 'some' of the more significant ones taking place in the US and Canada this summer.

June 3 to 6, the Western Maryland Blues Festival returns to Hagerstown with Hamilton Loomis and Bernard Allison on Friday June 4; Kenny Neal, Eric Lindell, Trombone Shorty, Michael Burks and Tommy Castro on Saturday June 5; and a family Picnic with Eden Brent and Corey Harris & Phil Wiggins on Sunday June 6. The shows take place downtown Hagerstown, Maryland except the Sunday picnic at City Hall Park. For more information, check out <http://www.blues-fest.org>.

The DC Jazz Festival (formerly the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival) returns to the Nation's capital with events taking place between **June 1 and June 13**. The Festival will have concerts through the city as well as partner with clubs and museums for various events. There will be a stellar line-up of talent from around the globe including such celebrated artists as Paquito D'Rivera; Dianne Reeves; the Eddie Palmieri Latin Jazz Band;



Roy Hargrove



Roberta Gambarini

the Roy Hargrove Big Band; James Moody; Claudio Roditi; Edmar Castaneda; Michael Philip Mossman; Akua Dixon and Quartette Indigo; the Berklee World Jazz Nonet; Roberta Gambarini; the Marshall Keys Quartet; the Marian Petrescu Quartet featuring Andreas Oberg; Tony Madruga, Uri Gurvich; and many others.

Among signature performances will be Janine Gill at the Phillips Collection on June 3 for a special Phillips Collection After 5. June 4, as part of the Jazz in the Hoods will feature Trumpeter Thad Wilson at the Madison Hotel; the Felicia Carter Quartet at the Mandarin Oriental; and Stanley Clarke with Hiromi at Blues Alley.

June 6 and 7 will be Jazz'n'Families Fun Day at the Phillips Collection with featured performers including the Berklee World Jazz Nonet, Brad Lind, George V. Johnson, Janelle Gill, Reginald Cyntje, the DC Jazz Collaborative, Susan Priester, and Victor Provost, as one can listen to jazz and view Renoir, Pablo Picasso, Georgia O'Keefe, Marc Rothko, and many others.

Tuesday, June 8, the Festival presents A Tribute to Oscar Peterson at the 6th and I Historic Synagogue by Marian Petrescu Quartet w/ Special Guest Andreas Oberg.†

Thursday, June 10th will be one of the signature events at the Lincoln Theater, NEA Jazz Masters Live Concert with All-Star tribute to James Moody featuring the Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars,†and special guests Regina Carter, Roy Hargrove, Roberta Gambarini & NEA Jazz Masters Kenny Barron and Paquito D'Rivera.

Friday, June 11 will feature Jazz Under the Stars at the Carter Barron Amphitheatre with some great Latin jazz including the world - renowned Poncho Sanchez Latin Jazz Band and Colombian Jazz harpist Edmar Castaneda, with special guest Paquito D' Rivera.

Saturday June 12, they highlight will be two shows at George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium: a free afternoon show with Claudio Roditi Quartet (Brazil) & the Eddie Palmieri Latin Jazz Band and an ticketed evening show with Dianne Reeves and the Roy Hargrove Big Band, with special guest Roberta Gambarini. On Sunday, the signature Festival event will be two performances at the Kennedy Center, Paquito D'Rivera Presents The Jelly Roll Morton Latin Tinge Project with Paquito D'Rivera, Michael Philip Mossman, Akua Dixon & Quartette Indigo and Pernell Santurino. Pat Martino is at Blues Alley and the Dizzy Gillespie All Stars with Cryus Chestnutt, are at Bohemian Gardens this weekend part of the many shows under the Jazz in the Hoods umbrella For more information, contact the Festival's website, <http://www.dcjazzfest.org>.

That same weekend, the Washington area hosts the **Tinner Hill Blues Festival** in Falls Church, Virginia. Thursday night, **June 10**, at the State Theatre in Falls Church the Festival opens with Chuck Brown Sings The Blues, where the King of Go Go will join the stage with DC's Blues Legend Bobby Parker. Nadine Rae will open.

Other vents include a panel on Saturday Morning, June 12, at City Hall Park, near the Cherry Hill Farmhouse, Red, Black and Blues: Native Americans, African Americans and their shared blues musical tradi-

tions with Dr. Ron Welburn, Elaine Bomberly, Pura Fe. Lee Gates, Murray Porter and Corey Harris. Starting at 1:00PM will be a free festival in the Park with Patty Reese; M.S.G. The Acoustic Trio; Murray Porter; Corey Harris & Phil Wiggins; Big Daddy Stallings, Pura Fe and Clarence 'Bluesman' Turner. There will be showings of the film "John Jackson: A Blues Treasure" and a cd release party for the Smithsonian-Folkways release of John Jackson's Rappahannock Blues, culled from hundreds of performances. Sunday, June 13 will be a Blues Brunch and Jam at Bangkok Blues. For more information, visit <http://www.tinnerhill.org/blues>.

The Chicago Blues Festival takes place June 11 to 13th in Grant Park, put on by the Mayor's Office of Special Events and this year will celebrate the centenaries of Howlin' Wolf and Sunnyland Slim. The free festival will have performers on June 11 that include Henry Gray, Jimmy Dawkins with Tail Dragger, Big George Brock, Grady Champion, Sam Lay, Howlin' Wolf Alumni, Otis Taylor, James Cotton with special guest Matt Murphy. Saturday June 12 the acts include, Nora Jean, Andre Williams, Sugar Blue, Sonny Rhodes, Honeyboy Edwards, Nellie 'Tiger' Travis, Bobby Parker, and Chicago Blues a Living history with Billy Boy Arnold, Billy Branch, John primer, Lurrie Bell and special guest Carlos Johnson. Sunday, June 13 the performers include: Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Guitar Shorty, Roy Roberts with Barbara Carr, Jimmy Duck Holmes & Terry 'Harmonica' Bean, Bobby Rush, Homemade Jamz, Elwin Helfer's Chicago Boogie Woogie Ensemble, Vivian and Vance Kelly and the Chicago Blues Reunion with Barry Goldberg, Corky Siegel, Nick Gravenites, Harvey Mandel, Sam Lay and Charlie Musselwhite. For more information on the world's biggest Blues Festival see <http://www.chicagofestivals.net/category/city-of-chicago-festivals/blues-festival>.

CareFusion New York Jazz Festival takes place at venues throughout New York City between **June 17 and June 26**. Highlights include June 17 Keith Jarrett, Gary Peacock, Jack DeJohnette at Carnegie Hall; Sun Ra Arkestra directed by Marshall Allen at The Studio Museum in Harlem and Craig Taborn at the Jazz Gallery.

Friday June 18 has The Jazz Gallery All-Stars with Roy Hargrove, Claudia Acuna, Ambrose Akinmusire, Lage Lund, Gerald Clayton, Ben Williams and Pedro Martinez Peter Norton Symphony Space and Bitches Brew Revisited, part of Celebrate Brooklyn! Performing Arts Festival at Prospect Park Bandshell. Saturday,

June 19 highlights include Howard Alden, Anat Cohen, Marion Felder, David Ostwald, Randy Sandke at the Louis Armstrong House Museum and The Drumheads with Ben Monder, Jaime Affoumado, Diego Voglino Victor Bailey Group Alex Blake Quartet Puppets Jazz Bar.

Sunday, June 20 includes Father's Day Celebration with Winard Harper Group at The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

On Monday, June 20, the John Tchicai Group will be at Zebulon while on Tuesday June 21, Jon Faddis

with Howard Alden, Gene Bertoncini, Romero Lubambo, Russell Malone at Peter Norton Symphony Space, Eddie Palmieri Y La Perfecta II at City Parks Foundation's Soundview Park and The Genius of Joao Gilberto at Carnegie Hall.

Wednesday June 23 will have McCoy Tyner Quartet featuring Ravi Coltrane, Esperanza Spalding and Francisco Mela / Stanley Clarke Band featuring Hiromi City Parks Foundation's Central Park SummerStage, Sidney Bechet Society Presents An Evening in New Orleans with Evan Christopher, John Allred, Ari Roland and Eli Yamin and Leonard Nimoy Thalia @ Peter Norton Symphony Space and Charles Gayle Trio at Zebulon.

Thursday June 24 highlight is the Carnegie Hall Herbie Hancock, Seven Decades: The Birthday Celebration Herbie Hancock with special guests Terence Blanchard / Bill Cosby / Joe Lovano / Wayne Shorter.

Friday June 25 the festival will present Harlem Stride: Henry Butler Osmany Paredes at the Harlem Stage Gatehouse.

Saturday June 26 Anat Cohen is at the Jazz Standard. More information can be found at <http://www.carefusionjazz.com/> which also has information on the August 6-8 Carefusion Newport Jazz Festival.

In Canada

Many of Canada's major cities have concurrent jazz festivals between late June and early July. Many performers will travel to several of these events.

TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival (June 24-July 4) will Remember Rob McConnell and have performances by Maceo Parker, Herbie Hancock, Harry Connick, Jr., Taj Mahal Trio, Allen Toussaint, Keith Jarrett, Gary Peacock & Jack DeJohnette, Nikki Yanofsky and Roy Hargrove Big Band. For more information check <http://torontojazz.com>.

The Calgary Jazz Festival is from June 21-27 and performers include Cedar Walton, Terry Clarke Trio, Poncho Sanchez, JP Carter, Andre Leroux, Chick Corea, the Budos Band with Toshi Reagon. For more information check <http://www.calgaryjazz.com/schedule>.

The Edmonton International Jazz Festival runs June 25 through July 4 and performers include Chick Corea, Nicky Yanofsky, John Pizzarelli, Joshua Redman, Bill Frissell, Andre, Edmonton Jazz Orchestra and Leroux, and Tomasz Stanko. For more information see <http://www.edmontonjazz.com/cms/Home/tabid/1757/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival from June 25 through July 4 with performers including Sonny Rollins (a prelude concert on June 23), Raul Midon & Toshi Reagon, Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials; Roy Hargrove Quintet with guest Christian Scott, Marco Benevento Trio; Bill Charlap and Renee Rosnes, Terence Blanchard & the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra,

Cedric Burnside and Lightnin' Malcolm, and Nikki Yanofsky. For more information see <http://www.jazzwinnipeg.com/home>.

TD Canada Trust Ottawa International Jazz Festival from June 25 through July 4 featuring Trombone Shorty, Etienne Charles and Folklore, Bill Frisell, Herbie Hancock, Dick Hyman -Peter Appleyard Duo, Dave Sanborn Trio featuring Joey DeFrancesco, Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra Featuring Ingrid Jensen, Kenny Garrett, Robert Glasper, John Scofield and the Piety Band, Modeski Martin & Wood, Globe Unity Orchestra, Jo Lovano UsFive, Roy Hargrove Big Band, George Benson, Javon Jackson with Les McCann, Fred Hersch, Dave Brubeck, Christian Scott and Richard Bona. For more Information see <http://ottawajazzfestival.com>.

TD Vancouver Jazz Festival from June 25 to July 4 with featured acts including Barry Guy/ Michel Gagne - Fixed Fragmented Fluid, Susanna & The Magical Orchestra and Samuel Hallkvist Center, Karin Plato Trio, Van Django, George Benson, Alex van Schlippenbach Trio with Evan Parker and Paul Lovens, Chick Corea, Terry Clarke Trio, Globe Unity Orchestra, Bill Frisell, Toshi Reagon, Acoustic Trio with Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne, Dawn Pemberton, Nicole Mitchell/ Lisa Kay Miller/ Peggy Lee, Tomas Stanko, Tord Gustavsen, Stanley Clarke with Hiromi, Scott Hamilton, Meshell Ndegeocello, Nikki Yanofsky, John Pizzarelli, and Geoff Muldaur & Jim Kweskin. For more information see <http://www.coastaljazz.ca>.

TD Victoria International JazzFest from June 25 to July 4 with such acts as George Benson, Kellylee Evans, Maureen Washington, Joshua Redman, Bill Charlap/Renee Rosnes, Susanna and the Magical Orchestra, Cuica Nova, Franca Masu, Raul Midon, John Scofield, Barry Guy Maya Homburger Duo, Bill Frisell, Toshi Reagon, Stanley Clarke with Hiromi, Mike Stern, Bria Skonberg, Andre Leroux, Nikki Yanofsky, and John Pizzarelli. For more information check out <http://jazzvictoria.ca>.

Festival International de Jazz de Montreal (Montreal Jazz Festival) will mark its 31st Edition from June 25 to July 6. Performers include Gil Scott Heron, Lionel Ritchie & Cassandra Wilson (as part of the Gala), Vija Iver, Bitches Brew Revisited, David Sanborn Trio featuring Joey DeFrancesco, Paulo Fresu & Ralph Towner, Manhattan Transfer, David Sanchez, Nikki Yanofsky, Houston Person featuring Julie Lamontagne Trio, An Evening with Sonny Rollins, Mike Stern Band, Herbie Hancock, Harry Manx, Marco Benevento, Smokey Robinson, Viv Vogel, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Taj Mahal, Roy Hargrove Big Band with Roberta Gambarini, Wallace Roney, Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra Featuring Ingrid Jensen, François Bourassa, Geoffrey Keezer, Gypsy Planet, John Zorn, Terence Blanchard, Corky Siegel's Chamber Blues, George Benson, Robert Glasper with Terence Blanchard, David Reinhardt, Laurie Anderson, Lou Reed and John Zorn, Jack DeJohnette, Ahmad

Jamal, John Scofield, Robert Glasper Quartet with Bilal, Keith Jarrett Gary Peacock & Jack DeJohnette, Tord Gustavsen, Allen Toussaint (solo), Gipsy Kings, Steve Miller Band, Dave Brubeck, Allen Toussaint, Bright Mississippi with Nicholas Payton, Don Byron and others. At the time this was written the outdoor blues, jazz and other concerts had not been announced which includes world legendary acts. Also, an exhibition, We Want Miles, Miles Davis vs Jazz will be in a middle of a run at the Musee du Beaux-Arts de Montreal (It runs through August 8). This is the first major North American multimedia retrospective devoted to the jazz legend and icon. For more information, <http://www.montrealjazzfest.com/default-en.aspx>.

17th Festival International du Blues de Tremblant (Tremblant International Blues Festival) takes place July 9 to 18, in Mont Tremblant, Quebec, about an hour and half drive north of Montreal. Performers for the featured shows include Anthony Gomes, Bernard Adamus, Bobby Bazini, Janiva Magness, Mark Hummell & Mike Morgan, Ronnie Baker Brooks, Roy Rogers & the Delta Rhythm Kings, Tommy Castro and Zachary Richard. This multi-stage event has yet to announce the full line-up. For more information check <http://www.tremblantblues.com/home>.

Back in the USA...

The 26th Mississippi Valley Blues Festival takes

the devil is an angel too

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place July 2 to 4 at the Davenport, Iowa riverfront. One of the oldest continuous blues festivals it is put on by the Mississippi Valley Blues Society. This year's festival will feature 28 acts over three days. Performers scheduled include Li'l Ed and the Blues Imperials, Ana Popovic, Zac Harmon, Vasti Jackson, Rosie Ledet, Ruthie Foster, Billy Branch and the Sons of the Blues, Shawn Kellerman, Lucky Peterson, The Legendary Blues Cruise Revue featuring Tommy Castro and Debbie Davies, Dave Riley and Bob Corritore, and The Nighthawks with Hubert Sumlin. It opens Friday July 2, will be a tribute to descendants of blues legends, featuring Mud Morganfield, Bernard Allison, Little Pink Anderson, Caroline Shines, Lurrie Bell, and Shirley King. For more information check out <http://mvbs.org/> and the festival site, <http://mvbs.org/fest>.

Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival takes place July 2 through July 5 in Portland, Oregon. The Festival is the Oregon Food Bank's major fundraiser and over the course of the Four Days will feature a wide range of performers including Taj mahal, John Mayall, Booker T, Bobby Rush, Galactic with Cyril Neville, JJ Grey & Mofro, Chris Thomas King, Commander Cody, Curtis Salgado, trombone Shorty, Michael Burks Band with Lucky Peterson, Walter Trout, Cedric Burnside & Lightnin' Malcolm, Moreland & Arbuckle, Super Chikan, Janiva Magness, Paul Cebal Curely Taylor & Zydeco Trouble, Corey Ledet, Andre Thierry and much much more. There are also Delta Music Experience Cruises associated with the Festival and much more. For more information, see <http://www.waterfrontbluesfest.com>.

The 19th Pocono Blues Festival takes place at Big Boulder Resort in Lake Harmony PA, July 23-25. One of the premier blues events it presents 20 real deal blues acts including World Class Headliners, acts that rarely come to the Middle Atlantic and Northeast and other lesser known acts on two mountain stages and a tent stage. Friday evening July 23 will present Jimmy 'Duck' Holmes, Johnny Rawls and Lady Bianca. Saturday July 24 will present Wanda Johnson, Marquise Knox, Veronika Jackson, Roy Roberts Barbara Carr &



Mavis Staples

AJ Diggs, Chick Willis, Johnny Bassett, Theodis Ealey, CJ Chenier, and the Chicago Blues Legends (Pinetop Perkins, Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith, Bob Stroger, Hubert Sumlin and Bob Margolin). On Sunday, July 25 one will see The Campbell Brothers, Diana Braitwaite with Chris Whitley Band, Alabama Mike, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Joe Krown Trio (Walter 'Wolfman' Washington and Russell Batiste), Homemade Jamz, and Mavis Staples. With the ski slopes serving as the backdrop, this is my favorite blues festival with its mix of blues and a wonderful setting. For more information check www.poconoblues.com.

We will have information on more festivals in the next issue of Jazz & Blues Report.



Chick Willis

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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 rified

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.

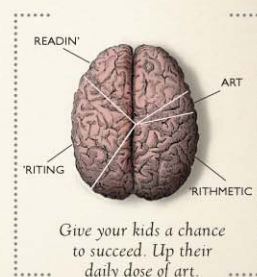
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And they wear crowns.



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BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release blues.... Magic Slim & the Tear-drops- *Raising the Bar*; **Robert Cray-** *Authorized Boot-leg: Austin, Tx 5/25/87*; **Jon Spencer Blues Explosion-** *Dirty Shirt Rock' N Roll: The First Ten Years*; **Shakura S'Aida-** *Brown Sugar*; **Jason Elmore & Hoodoo Witch-** *Upside Your Head*; **Jeff Healey-** *Last Call*; **Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King-** *Have Blues Will Travel*; **John Mayall-** *Blues Express*; **John Nemeth-** *Name the Day!*; **Elvin Bishop-** *Red Dog Speaks*; **Mick Taylor-** *Live In Leverkusen*; **Mississippi Heat-** *Lets Live It Up!*; **Rick Derringer-** *The Three Kings of the Blues*; **Mark Hummel-** *Retroactive*; **Tad Robinson-** *Back In Style*; **Mel Waiters-** *Live in England*; **Watermelon Slim-** *Ringers*; **Buddy Guy-** *DJ Play My Blues*; **Peter Parcek-** *Mathematics of Love*; **James Blood Ulmer-** *inandout*; **Karen Carroll-** *Talk to the Hand*; **Steve Freund-** *Lonesome Flight*; **Jeff Turmes-** *Five Horses, Four Riders*; **Harper-** *Stand Together*; **Jason King Band-** *Blue Skies & Black Shoes*; **The Bluesmasters featuring Mickey Thomas**; **Jimmy Warren Band-** *No More Promises*; **Phil Gates-** *Addicted to the Blues*; **Julius Pittman and the Re-vival-** *Bucket List*; **Rocky Jackson-** *Testify!*

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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



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SHAKURA S'AIDA Brown Sugar RUF RECORDS

Born in Brooklyn, raised in Switzerland and long a resident in Toronto, Ontario, Shakura S'Aida, is an international artist whose involvement in the Canadian music scene has been ongoing for the past 30 years, enriching the jazz, blues and classic R&B communities with her soulful voice, enthusiastic personality and commitment to music as an art form. Recently signed to Ruf Records, she has a new disc, "Brown Sugar," that certainly will establish her as a significant vocalist.

Her strengths as a singer are immediately evident on "Mr Right," as she sings about her man "Can't be my Mr. Right, cause you doing me wrong." Her voice and phrasing is spot on, soulful with a somewhat dry delivery and little vibrato. More can be heard on the next track, "Walk Out That Door," where her jazzy background is evident in her seemingly off-the cuff approach which serves to highlight when she belts out a line. And she is backed on this by a terrific band of guitarist Donna Grantis (what a first-rate player she is), Lance Anderson on organ, Rick Steff on keyboards, Steve Potts on drums, and Dave Smith on bass. Grantis, like S'Aida, is a revelation, who has a wonderful tone and who's playing works off S'Aida's vocals, like on the brooding "Gonna Tell My Baby."

Most of this CD are originals from the pens of S'Aida and Grantis and maybe its because the performances are so good, but when she tears into the soulful ballad "Break Your Heart," one knows things are special. With so many musical peaks here, the highpoint may be "Angels on High," as she sings about needs to find faith and find a new start as she asks them to help her stop and cry and know when it is all right again." She is donating proceeds of downloads of this track to benefit Haitian earthquake relief.

This is among the best recordings this writer has heard

so far in 2010. I have already mentioned the superb musicians here and the fine material. Kudos also need to be extended to Jim Gaines for his overseeing this terrific recording that display what a fabulous singer Shakura S'Aida is and a voice that fans of the blues and related musical genres will becoming familiar with soon.

Ron Weinstock



BLUESLAND

A Portrait in American Music

Masters of American Music
EUROARTS DVD

Euro-Arts has reissued on CD the 1993 documentary, **Bluesland** that was part of the American Masters series. A mix of performances (some in short clips), interviews and commentary from pundits Robert Palmer and Albert Murray, was an exploration of

blues music as both a musical idiom and it's transformation as a way of coping with the things in everyday life that give one the blues.

The mixing of quotes from Willie Dixon and Otis Spann, clips of performances and recordings and the pundits interpretations (and Murray and Palmer have very distinct perspectives). Palmer terms W.C. Handy the father of the blues industry while Murray refers to him as father who helped the music spread and regards it as part of jazz. This perspective can be discerned by their writings on blues as well as their comments here. Palmer deals with the facts of the people playing blues while Murray is more about the allegorical aspects of blues.

The ideology is tied together by a narration from actor Avery Brooks and has bits and performances from Bessie Smith, Lonnie Johnson (great blues ballad from TV) and recordings from Charlie Patton and Louis Armstrong. The classic recording of the latter's "West End Blues," precedes Murray distinguishing folk art and fine art in the blues idiom, which leads to minimizing the achievement of the "folk" bluesman. So Basie epitomizes the blues as fine art, as a video of "One O'Clock Jump," is shown, but at the same time the Basie Band and vocalist Jimmy Rushing (seen singing) had a definite impact on B.B. King.

The perspectives of Murray and Palmer have points of agreement as opposed to those of disagreement, both making cogent observations. Palmer, noting some blues is described as primitive suggests that Mozart, with its very simple rhythm, might be called primitive, segues into Murray's discussion of African talking drums. Regardless of whether one is more sympathetic to Murray or Palmer, "Bluesland," provides an enlightening overview of blues music and it's expression within jazz. It remains fresh and educating over a decade and a half after it's initial broadcast. Recommended. *Ron Weinstock*

COUNT BASIE

Swingin the Blues

Masters of American Music
EUROARTS DVD

Among the recent reissues from the Masters of American Music video series is one "Swingin' the Blues," devoted to Count Basie, the great big band leader and pianist. Issued by EuroArts on the Lower 5th imprint, it presents the near hour appreciation of Count Basie with some choice video clips and interview recollections by Harry 'Sweets' Edison, Al Grey, Illinois Jacquet, Jay McShann, Buddy Tate, Earle Warren, Claude Williams, Joe Williams and Albert Murray (who co-authored Basie's autobiography), along with a number of interview clips of the Count himself.

Additionally, there are a number of performance clips from Basie himself from several periods of his career which feature Joe Williams, Jimmy Rushing, Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis, and Lester Young. The sources range from the soundies (an amusing Rushing performance of "Take Me Back Baby," a film short (the clip of Young is from the classic film "The Blues"), and television (Basie with Judy Garland).

The mix of recollections and oral history with the clips helps us understand the development of the Basie sound as Basie remembers how he came to Kansas City and gradually put together his own band and Jay McShann remembers Basie and his band and the impact they had. Earle Warren, Edison, Williams and Tate recall there time with the band (Williams ironically recalling that John Hammond had him let go from Basie at a time when Claude was highly regarded as a guitarist) and the personalities including Lester Young, and Buck Clayton as well as how Basie could set the tenor of a number with just one note, the use of the two tenors, and the All American rhythm section. Murray adds his own perspective on Basie's place in the music.

This documentary then traces how Basie had to disband the big band for a sextet before gradually bringing back the big band and the new personnel and sounds with arrangements from the likes of Neal Hefti, Frank Wess and Frank Foster and numerous new legendary soloists like Lockjaw Davis and Al Grey.

Joe Williams recalls how Basie asked him to join the band, which he agreed to so long as he did not to do any of Jimmy Rushing's material. And he brought Basie an old Memphis Slim tune, "Everyday I Have the Blues," that helped reignite Basie's profile. And that led to more commercial successes as well as partnerships with Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., and others.

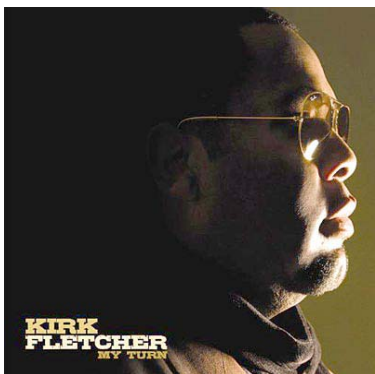
Like others in the Masters of Modern American Music series, "Count Basie; Swingin' the Blues," fleshes out a musical icon in a most entertaining and informative manner.

Ron Weinstock

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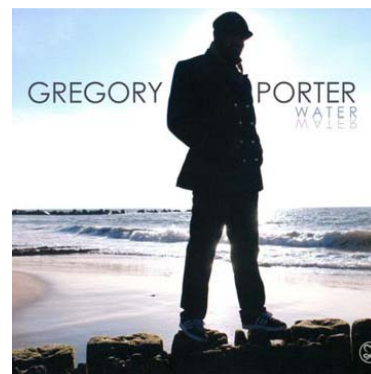
KIRK ELI FLETCHER

My Turn ELECTRO GROOVE

At the relatively young age of 35, Kirk Fletcher certainly has established himself as a blues guitarist. He may be familiar to some from his recent stint with The Fabulous Thunderbirds, or perhaps some know him from his work with Janiva Magness, Charlie Musselwhite or Lynwood Slim, or as a member of The Manish Boys. Originally mentored by Al Blake of the Hollywood Fats Band he also was taken under the wing by veteran guitarist Junior Watson. He debuted on CD on a JSP album, followed by a 2003 release, "Shades of Blue" that Delta Groove reissued in 2004. Now in 2010, he has a new recording "My Turn," on Delta Groove's "Electro Groove," subsidiary that shows his growth as a guitarist who continues to display a crisp, dazzling attack but who has matured and incorporated more elements into his playing, but the foundation is a blues core.

From the opening rocking "El Medio Stomp" he and his studio band kick things off and his twangy, twisting lines ride the groove. He sings some here, such as the very amiable take on Jimmy Reed's "Found Love," but also saxophonist Paulie Cerra takes the vocal on Jimmie Johnson's rousing shuffle "Ain't No Way," sounding somewhat like Finis Tasby. Travis Carlton, son of guitarist Larry Carlton, plays bass on three tracks, including the funky title track that he penned with Cerra and keyboardist Luke Miller, with Cerra getting things going with some greasy sax before Fletcher takes flight with his guitar. Cerra takes the vocal on Sonny Landreth's "Congo Square," which is credited as traditional with Fletcher as arranger. Fletcher does take the tempo down slightly from other renditions, and this again gives him a chance to stretch out. Taylor Carlton joins again on bass for The Crusaders' "Way Back Home" (Larry Carlton played on the original), which opens with a terrific bit of soul-jazz sax from Cerra, before Fletcher takes his thoughtful solo that fits in with the relaxed groove of the performance. "Blues For Antone," starts acoustically before Kirk plugs in and is some hot blues guitar in the vein of Stevie Ray Vaughan and others. Kirk takes a turn at Sly Stone's "Let Me Have It All," singing as well as playing tough guitar with a smoldering backing that would have done the Family Stone proud. The Hendrix inspired, somewhat spacey "Continent's End," closes this album. Fletcher describes this as "my idea of Hendrix meets Sonic Youth." It's an intriguing sonic exploration that concludes this latest, impressive sampling of Kirk Fletcher considerable talents.

Ron Weinstock



GREGORY PORTER

Water MOTEMA MUSIC

Vocalist Gergory Porter makes his solo recording debut with this Motema disc that Porter says is "an album of love and protest." All but three of the tunes are Porter originals and he surely writes the stuff of standards!

Adding excitement and peak musicianship in various settings are pianist Chip Crawford, bassist Aaron James and drummer Emanuel Harold or Chuck McPherson, augmented on assorted tracks by Melvin Vines (trumpet), Curtis Taylor (trumpet) Yoske Sato (alto sax), James Spaulding (alto sax), Kafele Bandele (trumpet) and Robert Stringer (trombone).

Porter's influences—Nat King Cole, Joe Williams and Donnie Hathaway—come through in his phrasing and he sounds a little like singer Kurt Elling in his tonalities and how he bends and shapes a tune. His originals are rich and varied and his soulful style infuses jazz with funk, R&B, blues and gospel. Porter injects plenty of passion into two standards. He refreshes "Skylark" to the max and delivers a sizzling uptempo version of Wayne Shorter's "Black Nile." His most political numbers is his original "1960 What?" which tells the story of riots in Detroit following Martin Luther King's assassination—"The Motor City is burning y'all." With riffing pulsing bass lines, fiery drumming and perfected horn solos, the 12-plus minute exhilarating tune is the lengthiest and best of Porter's originals on the disc.

Born in Los Angeles and raised in Bakersfield, California, Porter now makes his home in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn. When he's not touring or performing on Broadway, Porter's frequently a guest performer with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and holds a long-standing gig at S. Nick's Pub in Harlem. He's recorded with Hubert Laws and appeared on national television shows. Porter has a penchant for ballads but is equally at ease on uptempo numbers and scat singing. This is an impressive debut.

Nancy Ann Lee

LIL' BAND O' GOLD

The Promised Land DUST DEVIL MUSIC

"I won't leave Louisiana, Louisiana my home sweet home" echoes a line in David Egan's "Spoonbread," the opening song on "The Promised Land" (Dust Devil Music) – the new album by Lil' Band O' Gold.

Lil' Band O' Gold is a group formed by some very notable Louisiana musicians, including guitarist and roots



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San Rafael Desert, Utah © David Muench

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rocker CC Adcock; Cajun accordionist Steve Riley; swamp-pop legend and drummer Warren Storm; and pianist and songwriter David Egan. Add steel guitar, and saxophones (with occasional fiddle) and one has a group that can touch on the blue-eyed soul that is at Swamp Pop's heart mixed with some Fats Domino piano triplets and some swamp country seasoning. The album accompanies the film of the same title about the distinctive Louisiana musical genre, swamp pop which I haven't seen, but it also provides fans of Lil' Band O' Gold with a new recording that showcases their versatile repertoire and compelling sources. With a band that includes steel guitar and saxophones, the performances provide a definite musical stew of influences that make for a wonderful musical blend.

I would not be surprised if in a blindfold test, an average listener might identify the opening "Spoonful," as a number by the Band, but its such a terrific performance with vocals being traded and great backing that it stands on its own. Next up is a great number by the late Bobby Charles "I Don't Want to Know," with Warren Storm's vocal almost matching the Late Johnny Adams as Riley adds a terrific accordion solo with Richard Comeaux contributing some piercing steel guitar. C.C. Adcock revives a Gene Terry & the Boogie Ramblers rockabilly-tinged "Teardrops," while Riley, accordion at the fore handles the vocal on a rocker with Adcock adding some hot guitar riffs with the saxophones wailing in support.

"Dreamer" is another Egan original with the steel guitar, the rhythm and the saxophones injecting some Tex-Mex flavor to Egan's reflective vocals. Warren Storm's vocal shines on the country flavored "Sunshine," that was penned by the great Mickey Newbury. Adcock penned the hard rock and rolling "Runaway's Life," that evokes classic 50s music with an insistent driving beat followed by Warren's wonderful haunting rendition of David Kitt's ballad "Faster and Faster." "Hold on Tight" "to your dreams," Steve Riley sings (including the verse in French) as his accordion and Kenny Bill Stinson's organ suggest the Sir Douglas Quintet in this imaginative reworking of an Electric Light Orchestra single. "Hard Enough," another Egan original is a superb old-fashioned piece of country soul with Storm's vocal complemented by Comeaux's weeping steel guitar. Swamp pop legend Tommy McClain guests on the tear-in-the-throat vocal on the low-key "Memories," while Riley revives Lawrence Walker's Cajun rock and roll, "Evangeline Rock. There is more country-folk flavor from Adcock on "The Last Hayride" before the closing "So Long," a nice rendering of an Allen Toussaint composition, with Storm leading the way on the vocal with the braying saxophones and the backing chorus adding to the mood. It is a terrific closer to a superb recording. It has been a decade since Lil' Band 'O Gold's debut recording, which has been frankly ten years too long. They are truly one of the great rock and roll bands today and "The Promised Land" is a superb disk that continues their loving embrace of the musical legacy of their home, Louisiana, which never gets mired in nostalgia but keeps pushing the music forward.

This is available in the United States from the Louisiana Music Factory in New Orleans (website is www.louisianamusicfactory.com). I am not certain about

availability outside the US, but it may be on iTunes in Australia.

Ron Weinstock

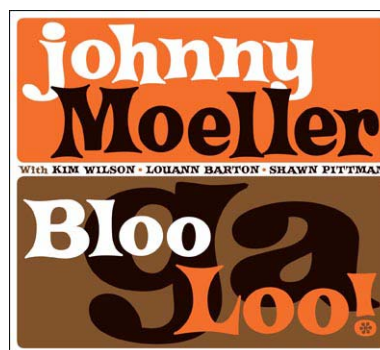


ALPER YILMAZ
Over the Clouds
KAYIQUE

It's not until the third track that electric bassist Alper Yilmaz steps out in front on his second release. But by the time his solo virtuosity is on display here, the Turkish-born, NYC-based Yilmaz has already made a notable mark as composer. Themes mostly run either urgent or elegant and, in their execution by very "game" lineups, all are an engaging mix of intellect and fire.

Alto saxophonist David Binney and guitarist Nir Felder are Yilmaz's primary voices of choice on terrain well mapped for each. A fluid, frenetic Binney is featured on the leadoff track "Yet". Felder rises to a classic fusion occasion on "Flughafen" and brings McLaughlin-esque flourishes to the previously-alluded-to Yilmaz feature "Misir with Grandma". Alternating drummers Bodek Janke and Volkan Oktem share equally in the highly-charged dialogue that prevails on this excellent set.

Duane Verh



JOHNNY MOELLER
BlooGaLoo
SEVERN

Johnny Moeller may be best known as guitarist with The Fabulous Thunderbirds, but this Dallas Texas area native has been turning heads with his raw, soul-funk blues guitar playing that comes across as a wild blend of Freddie King, Jimmy Nolan, John Lee Hooker and Frankie Lee Sims. Having an eclectic taste (the title of one of his early recordings was an homage to an Ohio Players recording "Funky Worm), he has shown this on his prior recordings. Now Severn Records has issued his latest recording

as a leader album, *BlooGaLoo* (Severn has used his guitar playing on many of recent recordings by Darrell Nulisch, Lou pride and Steve Guyger.

"*BlooGaLoo*" was recorded over four years and includes some originals along with covers. The backing band is Matt Farrell's keyboards, Steve Gomes on bass and Rob Stupka on drums with appearances by Shawn Pittman, Kim Wilson and Lou Ann Barton on vocals (Wilson on harp too), along with horns, background vocals, hollering and percussion.

The opening track begins with a Jimmy Nolan-ish riff before turning into an instrumental that could have been an unreleased Freddie King instrumental with plenty of funky, nasty guitar. Pittman handles the vocal for the funky "I'm Movin' On Up" with a chugging rhythm before Pittman encourages the number one guitar player in the land with some searing playing. Moeller may not be a great singer, but he certainly puts plenty into his vocal on Earl King's "Trick Bag," with a hyper kinetic rhythm section and imagination use of a tape loop of a baby and taking a hot, brief break. Matt Farrell's organ is really strong here as well as lends it a greasy flavor. Kim Wilson handles the vocal on the racing shuffle rendition of Jesse Anderson's "I Got a Feelin'," with Wilson playing some Sonny Boy Williamson-ish harp and Moeller rocks out on his break.

Lou Ann Barton adds her voice behind Moeller on a nice funky duet, "I'm Stuck on you," and takes the lead on the slow blue ballad "Everybody's Got to Cry Sometime," where Moeller rips off single note runs that creates tension with the emphatic slow-drag rhythm here. "Theme From the One-Armed Swordsman" is a moody instrumental with plenty of hard chords mixed with single note bursts against a walking tempo.

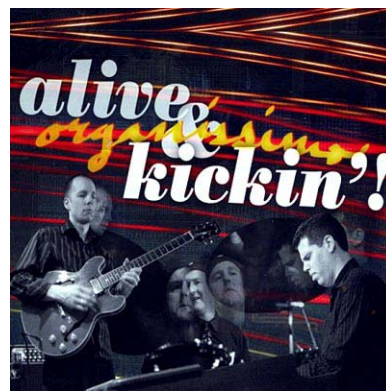
Wilson takes a nice vocal telling his woman he is leaving her on the uptempo the shuffle "Well Goodbye Baby," with another hot solo. "Shufflin' Along" is a medium tempo-ed guitar rocker followed by the surprising closing performance, a strong cover of an early John Lee Hooker recording, "Teasin' Baby," where he certainly evokes the great, early solo boogies recorded by the late great bluesman six decades ago.

Fans of raunchy blues guitar mixed with heavy doses of funk and rock n' roll will certainly find this latest effort by Johnny Moeller much to their taste. He certainly has shown himself as a distinctive and strong guitarist as a sideman, and this release will certainly enhance that reputation and add to the fact he is a credible vocalist.

Ron Weinstock

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ORGANISSIMO

Alive & Kickin'

BIG O

For their fourth recording, the three-man Organissimo—featuring Jim Alfredson on Hammond Suzuki XK3/XK System and synths, Joe Gloss on guitar and Randy Marsh on drums—is captured in live performances for WKAR-TV at Michigan State University and at Founders Brewing Company. At the same time the CD was recently released, the television performance DVD, *Backstage Pass*, was also released.

Together for a decade, the musicians work tightly together and excel at any tempo. The nine-tune CD project showcases this talented crew that infuses their music with varied influences that set them apart from most organ groups. All tunes are by Organissimo except Frank Zappa's "Blessed Relief." The five-plus minute foray, "Smokin' Section," is the shortest tune on the disc. "Jimmy Smith Goes to Washington" is one of the album highlights, swinging like mad for 7:19 minutes and building to a crescendo midway through. The enjoyable 18:20-minute finale, "Pumpkin Pie," changes moods and tempos and builds to a churchy soul summit.

All three musicians are Michigan-born and Marsh (b. 1951) is the senior member of the group. Big O Records, which has issued all four of Organissimo's recordings, was formed by organist and Root Doctor guitarist Greg Nagy.

With their unique sound, their musicality and interesting originals (some that groove and some that don't), Organissimo should continue to challenge and satisfy the ears of their fans.

Nancy Ann Lee

DWAYNE DOPSIE AND THE ZYDECO HELLRAISERS

Up In Flames

SELF-PRODUCED

One of the sons of the late Rocking Dopsie (Alton Rubin), Dwayne 'Dopsie' Rubin is one of several sons that followed their legendary father into zydeco music and in the years since his father's passing has established himself as one of zydeco's relative young guns. This writer had the pleasure of seeing him at a Blues Festival some years ago in Maryland and was impressed then. He has continued to grow and stylistically his brand of zydeco strikes this listener as more in the vein of Clifton Chenier, Buckwheat Zydeco and Nathan Williams with his heavy

rocking blues and R&B styled sound in contrast to the music of the late Beau Jocque or Boozoo Chavis, with more focus on vamping on a chord or two, although numbers like "Better Go Get It" on his new Sounds of New Orleans release "Up in Flames," show he and his band hit a groove and really rock it hard.

Ben Sandmel, in his liner notes, compares Dopsie's singing to Howlin' Wolf as well as Beau Jocque. There is a raspiness in his voice that evokes their vocal styles, but Dopsie is a striking singer on his own. His band consists of Alex McDonald on rubboard; Shelton Sonnier; Dion Pierre on bass; Calvin Sam on drums; and Carl Landry on saxophone and with Dopsie's strong accordion and vocals they kick butt. Rhythmically they are tight and in addition to Dopsie's accordion playing, Landry may be as good as sax player in an zydeco band I have heard since Blind John Hart was with Clifton Chenier and Rockin' Dopsie.

"Up in Flames" has a wonderfully diverse set of tunes starting with the opening "I'm Gonna Walk," with its hint of "Don't Mess With My Tu Tu." It is followed by another hard rocking number, "Feel So Good," with a melody similar to the classic R&B number "You Can't Sit Down." On "I'm a Fool For You" the band comes off like the Red Hot Louisiana Band on a blues that conjures up classic Clifton Chenier from three decades ago. This is simply great stuff and continues with the hot "Don't Listen," taken at a fiery tempo, yet the band is so tight and the performances don't become frenzied and uncontrolled. "Back in the

Woods," is a more traditionally oriented zydeco number akin to Clifton doing "Zydeco De Pas Sale" with just his brother and drummer.

These recordings certainly make this writer wish he would have the opportunity to see Dwayne Dopsie again. I will miss him at JazzFest this year (he plays the first weekend, then will be in Europe the next weekend). This is available from his website <http://www.dwaynedopsie.com>. He has some CDs available on cdbaby.com, but this one is not available. It should be available from the Louisiana Music Factory. Dwayne Dopsie has a regular French Quarter gig and you can check his performance schedule on his website.

Ron Weinstock



BIG DADDY STALLINGS

Blues Party

TAI JERIA RECORD COMPANY

"I'm Charles' Big Daddy' Stallings and I approve these blues," the gentleman from Baltimore proclaims on the introductory track of his third CD, "Blues Party" (Tai Jeria Record Company). Stallings, who became prominent in the Baltimore-Washington scene about five years ago, brings a down home blues style with a band that mixes traditionally oriented Chicago blues with classic sixties and seventies rhythm and blues. There is a variety of folk handling the backing here including Gail Parrish or Ronald Bland on bass; Russell Hayward II or Bill Pratt on drums; Joe "E Flat" Thomas on saxophone, Clarence Ward III on trumpet, and Steve Levine on harmonica. Mark Wenner of the Nighthawks adds the down home harp for the "Intro," and "Down on the Farm." There is plenty of music here, with 16 original songs book ended by his intro and thank you tracks

The title track is a nice good times cut, followed by the somewhat salacious "'Horny Bee," with a Jimmy Reed groove and some biting lead guitar from Leroy Flowers Jr with Stallings grittily delivering the vocal. Riffing horns embellish the simple groove of "Fine Lady" that displays Stallings' simple lyrics and rustic vocal with him taking a stinging solo. "Down on the Farm," a lazy, rustic piece of blues story-telling, is perhaps the most memorable track here, as he recalls growing up on the farm and the hard life down there with Mark Wenner contributing the harmonica here. "Swing 2010," is an instrumental (perfect for dancing) with Washington keyboard legend Jackie Hairston on organ, a hot trumpet solo from Ward and sax solo by Carlos Johnson, while "She's Gone" is a lament about Big Daddy's baby having gone and left him all alone

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because he did her wrong, while “Knocked Up” has him wondering about why there’s so much teenage pregnancy. “In Love With Yourself” is a nice soul ballad about one’s marriage ending and no fun to be in love by yourself. After a brief spoken introduction, organist Hairston and saxophonist Johnson are featured on the jazzy “The Lucky Number,” while Clarence Ward’s trumpet blasts off “James,” a funk tribute to the Godfather of Soul” with tough horns and a strong groove, followed by a couple of nods to disco-life, “I Wanna Dance,” followed by his salute to “Latin Girls,” another number with a dance groove and a percussion breakdown with Big Daddy closing as he asks us to put some “Blues in Your Funk,” with nice harmonica (I presume Steve Levine since it is not credited in the booklet) as well as brassy horns.

On “Old Folks,” a slow blues with nice guitar, Stallings sings, “Keep those bloomers on Granny, Grandpa ain’t giving up no love tonight.” While it has some catching lines like most of the record, the lyrics sometimes come off as simply strung together by some common theme. In sense, it’s perhaps best to enjoy the music and songs and not analyze the words too much. Big Daddy brings plenty of heart to his music and the band is tight behind him. There is plenty of music hear (nearly 80 minutes), if one just gets into the spirit, then one will have a “Blues Party.” This is available from Amazon, cdbaby or on itunes. Big Daddy Stallings website is <http://www.bigdaddystallings.com>.

Ron Weinstock



JACKIE RYAN

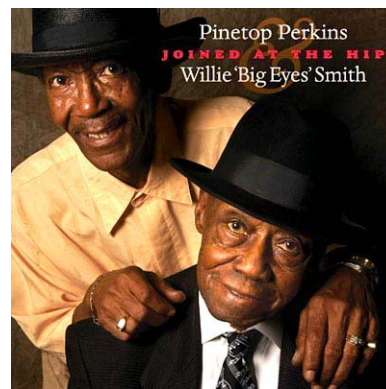
Best Of Love Songs OPENART PRODUCTIONS

Featuring vocalist Jackie Ryan, this disc compiles 15 romantic tracks from her recordings made from 2002-2006 with stellar sidemen such as Ernie Watts, Red Holloway, Jon Mayer, Larry Vuckovich, Jeff Hamilton and others.

Included are warhorse gems such as “When I Grow Too Old to Dream,” “You’d Be So Nice to Come Home To,” “While We’re Young,” “Besame Mucho,” “The Very Thought of You,” and others. From ballads, to bossas, to swingers, the musical fare provides about an hour’s worth of wooing. From duos to quintets, musicianship behind Ryan is flawless, and instrumental solos are sublime. Red Holloway’s saxophone solo on the up-tempo, bluesy remake of “Let There Be Love” ranks among the album highlights.

Ryan’s lovely mid-range voice, lush with the hint of vibrato, is perfect for these love songs. John Ballard, co-producer with Ryan and president of OpenArt Productions LLC, claims 100% of this CD’s 2010 profits will go to OXFAM for Haiti Relief Fund.

Nancy Ann Lee



PINETOP PERKINS & WILLIE “BIG EYES” SMITH

Joined at the Hip TELARC

If you are reading this on or after June 8, then you are eligible to buy a copy of the 13 song JOINED AT THE HIP collaboration between 97 year old pianist Pinetop Perkins and his 74 year old junior partner-in-crime/harpist Willie “Big Eyes” Smith. A former drummer for Muddy Waters, Smith actually years before started out on harp and teamed up with Perkins in 1980 to form the Legendary Blues Band, whose first version was basically Muddy Waters Band without the headliner.

Although a lot of the disc is Smith and Perkins trading shots on their respective instruments, there is an abundance of guitar here also, thanks to John Primer and Little Frank Krakowski, with “Lord, Lord, Lord” as one quick example.† Since Smith is doing the Mississippi saxophone here, the drum kit was handed over to Kenny Smith’s, Willie’s son, and it was a good move to say the least, be it the shuffle beat of “I Feel So Good” or the groove during “You’d Better Slow Down.”

Yet Perkins and the elder Smith are the spotlights, basically duking it out via their respective instruments on “Cut That Out,” “I Would Like To Have A Girl Like You” or “Grindin’ Man,” as three rounds of their fight for your attention.

While JOINED AT THE HIP is a soundtrack for the blues they play in Chicago, thanks to this team up, the music of the Windy City can come to you for a much cheaper price than a one-way ticket.

Peanuts

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Preservation: An Album To Benefit Preservation Hall & The Preservation Hall

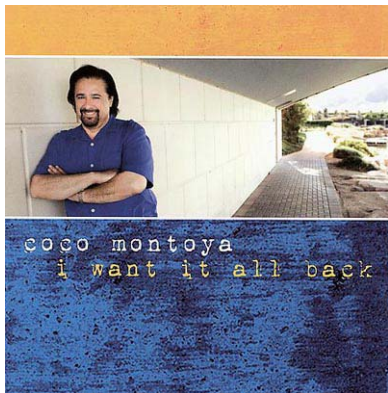
Music Outreach Program PRESERVATION HALL RECORDINGS

Since 1961, Preservation Hall in New Orleans has showcased traditional jazz to the delight of fans from around the world. While part of its charm has always been its stark, decrepit warehouse feel (six benches, no running water, no A/C), the post Katrina era found the venerable hall falling into further disrepair and out of the limelight as a “must see” stop in New Orleans. Worse yet, the musical tradition represented by the Hall faced extinction as displaced musicians followed the receding flood waters to other loca-

tions. This benefit disc is intended to reverse both trends by pairing the well oiled blend of upbeat, toe-tapping roots jazz featured night after night at Preservation Hall with vocals from a wide cast of characters from the pop, country, folk, rock, gospel and blues worlds. With a generous 19 tracks, featuring everyone from My Morning Jacket's Jim James (appearing as his alter ego Yim Yames) to Louis Armstrong and Angelique Kidjo, the disc is not only a pleasurable listen but at times a revelation. Who knew that Ani DiFranco had the playful side evidenced on *Freight Train* or that Tom Waits could sing around his gravelly vocals with such flourish and enthusiasm as on *Tootie Ma Was A Big Fine Thing?* Steve Earle even lightens up from his recent soapboxing for the classic *T'ain't Nobody's Business*. Other standout tracks includes Pete Seeger's buoyant take on *Blue Skies*, Angelique Kidjo's torchy jazz on *La Vie En Rose* and the Blind Boys of Alabama's gospel scorcher, *There Is a Light*.

While the guests add commercial appeal, they never get in the way of the classic charts laid down by the band. I dare you to sit still while this disc is spinning.

Mark Smith



COCO MONTOYA

I Want It All Back

RUF

A member of the infinite John Mayall alumni association, west coast guitarist Coco Montoya has returned with his latest effort "I Want It All Back."

Not known as a prolific songwriter (he only contributes "Don't Go Makin' Plans"), Montoya, though, has an ear for bringing back some gems from days gone by. By far the best is the old Smokey Robinson-penned Mary Wells '62 classic "The One Who Really Loves You," which has airplay written all over it with the help of Stephen Ferrone's percussion.

With keyboardist Jeff Paris opening and Montoya's guitar coming in right behind, Jackson Browne's "Somebody's Baby" gets a good revival (trivia: the song was Browne's biggest hit yet never appeared on any of his albums).

While Montoya picks his way through a jazzy, Tex-Mex version of the Penguins' "Hey Senorita," also of note is the Marvellettes '63 warhorse "Forever," plus Rod Piazza's harp helps classic gem "Fannie Mae" become a powerful blues tune. Bassist Reggie McBride puts a steady groove into "Cry Lonely," as Montoya drills some major picking into the end of the song.

Another seed that blossomed from the Albert Collins' tree, Montoya has put together a package that smartly leans

on some major songwriters from the past for one creative presentation.

The title "I Want It All Back" is misleading because it appears Coco Montoya never gave it away to begin with.

Peanuts



LAUREN KINHAN

Avalon

E1 MUSIC

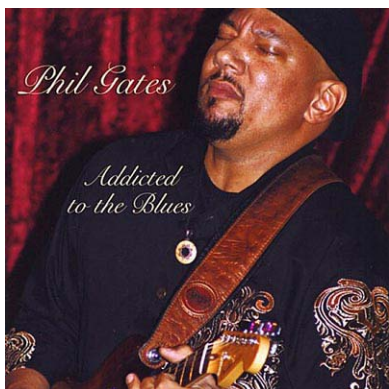
Vocalist Lauren Kinhan is best known as a member of the vocal group, The NY Voices, as well as two other vocal ensembles, Moss, and JaLaLa. With JaLaLa, she was part of the memorable tribute to Johnny Mercer, "That Old Mercer Magic." She has just issued her second solo recording, "Avalon," (E1 Music), which displays her talents as a songwriter, and not simply a singer.

She has done this with some of her closest friends who happen to be some of New York's finest musicians, including drummer and percussionist Ben Wittman, who co-produced this with Lauren, and bassist Peter Nowinski who is on most of this. Peter Eldridge, fellow New York Voices band mate, plays piano and co-pens some songs. Jonatha Brooke joins her on "Here After" while Romero Lubambo guests on "Until You're Mine" and "Here's My Avalon" and Donny McAslin and Joel Frahm add their signature horn handiwork. Andy Ezrin is also featured on piano and B3 organ.

There are plenty of Brazilian accents heard throughout this as on the opening "Until You're Mine," with its light rhythms, and the marvelous song "Here's My Avalon," with a bit more fervent rhythm and some terrific horns (Joel Frahm's alto sax is very impressive throughout as is Romero Lubambo's guitar) on a love song she wrote for her daughter while away from home, and her scatting dances along with the band as the song rides out. "Here After" is a dreamy pop number wonderfully sung with Jonatha Brook's duet vocal, while "Move Over Sunshine" has an uptown, bluesy flavor with brassy horns as she belts out the lyric in a most graceful manner. An entrancing rhythm drives "Hide the Moon and Stars," with lovely flute from Aaron Heick and a hint of flamenco in this romantic song. "Screaming Savoir Faire," co-written with Andy Ezrin who plays piano as she sings, somewhat disconsolately, about her lover leaving and not keeping the promises he made. On a song like this, one appreciates how she avoids coming off as maudlin, with her timing and phrasing of the lyric being enchanting. A bit of funk in the groove with some slide guitar accents on "Writing on the Wall," as she effortlessly glides from whisper-

ing to trumpeting the lyric with vocal chorus support and Ezrin soloing on Fender Rhodes. "Savor the Wine" is a rock styled number with Ben Butler setting the tone with his guitar against Eldridge's piano, while the rhythm on "Dory and a Single Oar" struts with Denny McCaslin adding some atmospheric tenor sax. The next two performances, "As If" and "There Alone Go I," have a bit more intimate backing and more lovely singing.

As she has shown over the past two decades, Lauren Kinham is a marvelous singer, able to handle pop and rock flavored material as effortlessly and heartfully as Brazilian sambas and Johnny Mercer standards. With the seamless backing and wonderful playing by the musicians behind her, she delights and enchants throughout with her songs and vocals on "Avalon." **Ron Weinstock**



PHIL GATES
Addicted to the Blues
 SETAG MUSIC

Guitarist-vocalist Phil Gates is currently based in Southern California, but was born and raised in Chicago. After time in the Air Force, he moved to Los Angeles and over the years has developed a very tasty style with a slightly lazy, grainy vocal style and a deft guitar style that constantly swings and shows considerable imagination in his solos. His most recent recording (and first to these ears) is "Addicted to the Blues," which, with his low-key delivery, is a refreshing change of pace from the many 'house-rocking' releases that are issued. A reference point might be Doug MacLeod's earlier recordings when he was playing with a band. Gates actually plays most of the instruments here through the recording process.

"The opening "Get Around To Me" is a lively number with tasteful, crisp jazzy-styled guitar and laconic vocal as well as some accordion that is overdubbed here. "Sexy Little Cool," where he notes his girl has a way to move him and put a spell on him, sports effectively whining slide guitar as the tempo stays nice and relaxed. On "Evening Train," about a lonely town where no one knows Phil's name, has an insistent train-like rhythm and a nice twangy solo with imaginative single note runs, while "My Babe" isn't the Willie Dixon song, but rather a song with a similar sentiment set with a driving funk groove, as he celebrates how she treats him right. Another easy funk groove underlies "Everyday," a song with a message as we've got to everyday keep making it better and not let things slow us down. "I'm Addicted" is the track referenced by the CD's title as he sings about Jonesin' to play

a tune. He takes the tempo down for "You Should've Listened," about a woman too busy yapping and not enough listening. "I Never Knew" is another light shuffle as he sings about things being better after his woman has gone. "Road Shufflin'" is an instrumental taken at a relaxed tempo, if a little leadenly played. "The closing "The Wisdom," has a spiritual tinge as he remembers those dear to him and the words they said as he still has them in his heart, with his drumming being a bit livelier here.

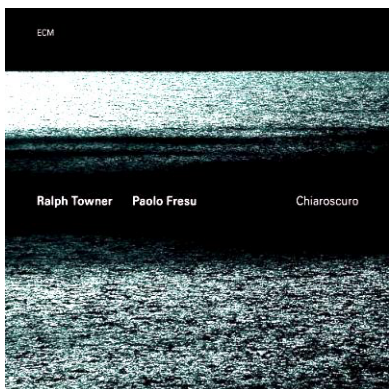
There are few surprises in the nature of material, and the performances have a charm, but the overdubbing (including bass and drums) lends some of the material to possess a sameness that takes away from some of the appeal here. This is a shame because he is a thoughtful player and vocalist with plenty to intrigue a listener. One senses that with proper production, Phil Gates can produce a superb, not simply a good, recording. This should be available from cdbaby. **Ron Weinstock**

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RALPH TOWNER, PAOLO FRESU

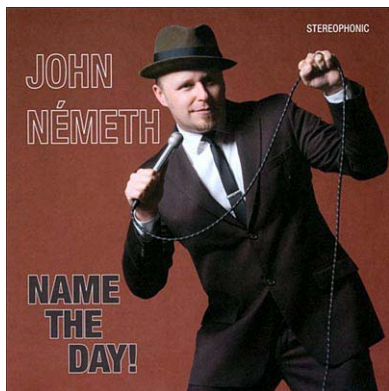
Chiaroscuro ECM

The term that's used for this disc's title speaks to contrasts; of literally working artistically with both darkness and light. But rather than each player assuming a polar position, acoustic guitarist Towner and trumpeter Fresu mutually explore brighter and duskier terrain and offer up a both unique and bountiful duet performance.

On a set of eight Towner originals, one collaboration, and the Miles Davis/Bill Evans co-penned "Blue In Green", this duo shares an exquisite acoustical space; each seems particularly mindful of the other's path as he articulates his own evocative course.

The intimacy of the format is well served by these two masterful players.

Duane Verh



JOHN NEMETH

Name the Day! BLIND PIG

When observing great athletes, talent is invariably synced up with "intangibles", those qualities impossible to measure but detectable in their result. On this new disc John Nemeth takes the classic soul/r&b genre on with the sort of verve and authority that speaks to more than chops alone. The Boise-bred vocalist/harmonica player and his band here deliver top-shelf goods that can hold their own alongside the finest journeyman work of the mid-Sixties soul era they embrace. Nemeth's vocals on the leadoff track, "Breakin' Free" channels the fire of James Brown disciples such as Rodger Collins. If time travel were possible, the infectious "Tuff Girl" would rotate heavily on urban radio about four and a half decades ago.

Highlighted by guitarist Bobby Welsh's Memphis minimalism, the backup is spot-on track after track. To deem their craft mere "retro" is to short- sell it; Nemeth & crew are bona fide throwbacks in the most flattering sense of the term. And the cat up front might be the best white r&b singer on the planet.

Duane Verh

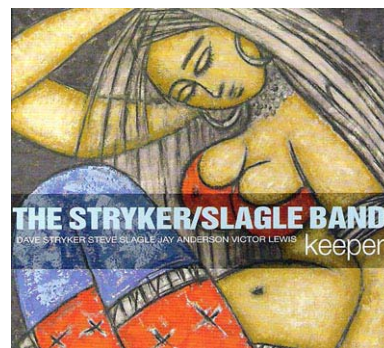
JOHN NEMETH

"NAME THE DAY"/"WHY NOT ME" BLIND PIG 45RPM VINYL

Back in the '60's the r&b world was populated by independent labels such as Chess, King and Stax, and smaller imprints like Double Shot, Phil-LA of Soul and Calla. This golden era enjoys a rebirth in the sounds of Sharon Jones, Eli Reed and John Nemeth. The feisty houses that "grew" that sound are celebrated themselves with Blind Pig's vinyl 45 release of Nemeth's "Name The Day" from his CD of the same name (see elsewhere in this issue).

Other than the obvious collectable factor, the platter features killer "jukebox" mixes of analog recordings of "Day" and the B-side ballad, "Why Not Me". Available on a direct basis, the label states that retail stores will have the single this month.

Duane Verh



THE STRYKER/SLAGLE BAND

Keeper

PANORAMA RECORDS

Co-leaders Dave Stryker (guitar) and Steve Slagle (alto sax) enlist bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Victor Lewis for their fifth recording, a 10-tune set of mostly originals.

The band opens the set with Stryker's title composition that maintains their spacious sound and customary blend of strings and reeds. Stryker contributes four additional tunes and Slagle serves up four originals.

The lone standard is their mellow ballad built on Thelonious Monk's "Ruby My Dear," featuring Slagle's smooth alto sax melody head. Stryker's drawling "Blue State" ranks among the catchiest tunes and gives him a chance for some bluesy guitar improvisations. Slagle switches to soprano sax on "Convergence," a lively original by Stryker.

With 20 years experience together, the two leaders have developed an empathetic approach so that their musical outpourings seem effortless.

Their combined talents, both composing and performing, make this another engaging straight-ahead delight for their fans.

Nancy Ann Lee

TAD ROBINSON

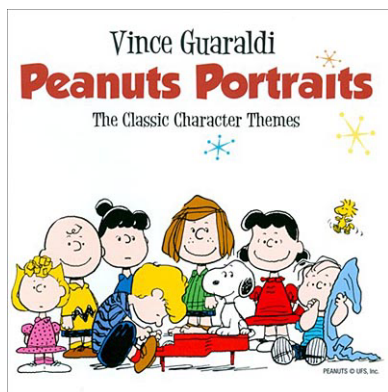
Back on Style SEVERN

I have long been a fan of Tad Robinson, and in fact I wrote the liner notes for one of his earlier albums. More recently, he has recorded for Severn Records who has just issued his latest release, "Back on Style." As usual, Severn has brought together a full studio band to evoke the classic Memphis soul sound (perhaps more Hi Records than Stax). In addition to the usual rhythm of drummer Robb Stupka and bassist Steve Gomes, he has Kevin Anker and Benjie Porecki on keyboards with Dan Hovey and Alex Schultz handling most of the guitar with Wayne Jackson of the Memphis Horns leading the brass on several tracks.

"Rained All Night" is a nice dish of Memphis Soul Stew, and the smoldering rhythm groove is present on a terrific slow blues, "Full Attention Blues," with Robinson sporting some Junior Parker-styled harp, and a terrific guitar solo from Baltimore's Harold Flood, one the Baltimore-Washington area's most unheralded guitarists. Vocally Robinson continues to impress with a delivery that suggest Al Green crossed with Junior Parker. He may not be on their level, but is an extremely fine singer. While Robinson contributed most of the material here, he certainly tears into Clarence Shields' "You Name It I've Had It," with some stinging guitar fills from Schultz. "On and On" is another smoldering ballad in the Hi Records style, while he ably handles the southern soul of Sam Dees' "Just Out Of My Reach."

The rest of this recording is on a similar level and it is another first-rate collection of southern soul and blues on Severn.

Ron Weinstock



VINCE GUARALDI

Peanuts Portraits: The Classic Character Themes CONCORD

California-born pianist-composer Vince Guaraldi has been long gone (died February 6, 1976), yet his music continues to sell on compact discs such as this compilation that defines the *Peanuts* comic strip characters from animated TV specials in the 1960s.

In addition to nine tracks performed by Guaraldi, the disc features two tracks by pianist George Winston who recorded some of Guaraldi's *Peanuts* compositions in the 1990s. Probably the most familiar tune is the "Linus and

Lucy" theme, first heard on *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965). The set opens with Guaraldi playing the gem and ends with Winston reprising it as the finale.

"Blue Charlie Brown" was written by Guaraldi for the half-hour documentary *A Boy Named Charlie Brown*, produced in 1963 and never televised until it was heard on a *Peanuts* TV special *He's Your Dog, Charlie Brown* in 1968. Other tunes include "Sally's Blues," "Peppermint Patty," "Joe Cool," "Schroeder," "Charlie's Blues," "Frieda (With the Naturally Curly Hair)" and (one of my favorites for the Snoopy character) "The Masked Marvel."

Although Guaraldi may not be considered a major pianist, his part in the West Coast cool jazz movement in the 1950s and his penchant for joyful swing, add to his popularity gained from the jazz-influenced scores for the *Charlie Brown* TV specials. His command of the keyboard and knowledge of classical music as well as jazz are evident on this disc.

This enjoyable compilation was produced by Bill Belmont and mastered by Joe Tarantino. A 16-page, four-color liner booklet accompanies, with extensive notes by Derrick Bang who co-hosts the Charles Schulz/*Peanuts* repository website FiveCentsPlease.org. Each character is given a liner page that details the tune as well as the character's origins. A must-have disc for Guaraldi (and *Peanuts*) fans!

Nancy Ann Lee

PETER PARCEK

The Mathematics of Love VizzTone

Peter Parcek's website describes his guitar style as weaving "rock, gypsy-jazz, country, folk, and blues—especially blues—into a tapestry of melody, harmony and daredevil solos that push those styles to their limits without sacrificing the warmth of his own personality." He has a release to showcase this musical blend and his virtuosity, "The Mathematics of Love" (VizzTone). As for this album he states the influence of Django Reinhardt, "Django's performances are breathtakingly beautifully and technically demanding. I've really been taken with the purity of his acoustic guitar sound, and he played electric with such abandon. His music is very much alive and creative, so I also tried to bring those qualities to 'The Mathematic of Love.'" He is backed here by drummer Steve Scully and bassist Marc Hickox with appearances by Mandolin virtuoso Jimmy Ryan, violinist Dan Kellar and upright bass Marty Ballou.

The recording opens with a rendition of Peter Green's "Showbiz Blues," with the mood incorporating Elmore James licks, a driving hill country groove with blistering slide. While not a great singer, Parcek convincingly asks, "Do you give a damn about me." The title track follows with a hesitant slow tempo, as he hauntingly sings "don't lie to me, don't erase me, you know the Mathematics of Love are plain and simple as A B C," with nice acoustic slide contrasted with his use of electronic effects. "Rollin' With Zah," is a dazzling instrumental tour de force as Parcek snaps, crackles, chicken scratches and lays down some heavy runs. A surprising, but striking cover is from the pen of the late Jessie Mae Hemphill's "Lord Help the Poor

and Needy,” which he sings and plays at a dirge tempo with vibrato and echo prevalent and a synthesized drone, before he takes an impressive, carefully developed solo against this thudding rhythm. “Get Right With God” is a rocking instrumental take of a Lucinda Williams song with more guitar pyrotechnics. He takes a softer approach on “Tears Like Diamonds,” with his vocal being a bit more effective here. “Kokomo Me Baby” takes a number associated with Mississippi Fred McDowell, and takes it into warp drive with an able vocal and dazzling guitar. The cleanliness of his picking as well as his use of sonic textures again stands out. “New Year’s Eve” again takes a more country blues feel with some tasty harp by Mike Fritz and Ronnie Earl adds his guitar to the performance. This is followed by an instrumental interpretation of “Busted” with Al Kooper guesting on organ. Parcek employs a heavy, nasty tone at the beginning as his guitar sings the lyrics before taking off on his sonic explorations.

“The Mathematics of Love,” is a first-rate recording of blues roots and guitar explorations that mixes tradition with a heavy dose of the contemporary. While his vocals may vary in convincingness, (he shines when he is in an acoustic-oriented vein), he always is listenable. However, his guitar playing will unquestionably be the recording’s strongest appeal; and fans of the legendary Danny Gatton and Roy Buchanan should enjoy Parcek’s impressive fretwork.

Ron Weinstock



ROBIN MCKELLE
Mess Around
 E1

Robin McKelle’s new recording “Mess Around” (E1 Music) represents a change from the 2 Big Band CDs she previously recorded. Spanning soul, blues and jazz she says she was inspired by the 60s albums by Ray Charles and Nina Simone (she also references Etta James) which enables to her investigate somewhat different musical textures than in the larger settings of her earlier discs as many of these sides use what might be called a little big band setting, rhythm section and 3 to 5 horns with a strong group of material including 4 McKelle penned originals and seven imaginative covers of material from such notable sources as Bee Gees, Leonard Cohen, Doc Pomus and Willie Dixon. Fred Wesley contributed a pair of arrangements and Houston Person adds tenor sax solos to a couple of tracks. Interestingly, only a couple selections have guitar. The core of the band here is bassist Tim Lefevbre and drummer Mark McLean, with Adam Klipple,

Xavier Davis and Alain Maillet sharing the keyboards.

She certainly belts out her vocals throughout right from the title track, a striking original where she tells her lover she ain’t messing around with his hurt, cause she wants to hold him in her arms and squeeze him tight. Fred Wesley contributed the striking, original and funky arrangement for her heartfelt rendition of The Bee Gees’ “I Can’t See Nobody,” followed by a rocking, shuffle rendition of the Hooper-Jennings “Never Make a Move Too Soon,” (a hit for B.B. King) which sports wonderful tenor saxophone by the great Houston Person and a terrific arrangement by Alain Maillet. Leonard Cohen’s “Everybody Knows,” was not a familiar to these ears but McKelle certainly delivers the lyrics in a convincing fashion as Alex Harding blasts away on baritone sax on a strong bluesy performance. “Angel,” another McKelle original, takes the tempo and volume down, and shows a bit more reflective side here on this gloomy performance with a lovely horn arrangement. Marvin Sewell, Cassandra Wilson’s guitarist, is added to the hornless “Until the Day I Die,” and crafts a nice solo. Klipple’s organ and Fender Rhodes add to the atmosphere behind the yearning mood she expresses here.

On the standard “Cry Me a River,” McKelle sounds like a grittier Julie London, nicely sung with more marvelous support from the horns, while Fred Wesley contributes the new arrangement of the old Ray Charles hit, Doc Pomus’ “Lonely Avenue,” which McKelle really pours her heart into. McKelle herself contributed the latin-funk arrangement for “Eleanor Rigby,” which comes off as if she was singing for Willie Bobo or the like. Mark Tucker enlivens the fresh interpretation with some fine tenor sax. Houston Person returns to solo on a sultry, swinging take by McKee on Willie Dixon’s “I Just Want to Make Love to You,” before she closes the disc with the hornless group again on her original “Since I Looked In Your Eyes,” with Marvin Sewell adding some bluesy slide guitar.

An impressive album that is beautifully played and McKelle certainly places her stamp on the performances. She perhaps has a tad bit more vibrato than my own taste would prefer, but that is my own preference. She certainly has produced an outstanding album that should appeal across genre boundaries, and to fans of blues and traditional R&B as well her fans from her prior releases.

Ron Weinstock

OTIS REDDING
Live on the Sunset Strip
 STAX

It’s been over forty years since Otis Redding perished in a tragic plane crash. One of the stars of the R&B circuit, he was starting to become a major cross-over artist at the time of his death. He had toured Europe and been a major sensation at the Monterey Pop Festival. The future was looking bright when tragedy struck. After his death, besides the release of his biggest recording, “Sitting on the Dock of the Bay,” Atlantic issued “In Person At the Whiskey Au Go Go,” which presented ten performances from a 1966 stint at the famed Hollywood Club (Taj Mahal and the Rising Sons opened). Another dish of Otis from this engagement appeared on LP and then CD. Now Concord has issued a double CD of

the last three sets from Otis' Whiskey appearance, "Live on the Sunset Strip" (Stax). Liner notes by Ashley Kahn provide the context for Otis and his band (that included Katie Webster on keyboards).

With respect to Otis Redding, the music is terrific. What can I say? There are any number of staples of his repertoire including "These Arms of Mine," "I've Been Loving you Too Long," the Stones' "Satisfaction," "I Can't Turn You Loose," "Respect," and "Mr. Pitiful." Some of these songs are heard in several renditions like "Satisfaction," and "Chained & Bound," but with his strong band behind him, he tears things up. I presume that much of this was issued on the prior two live recordings, but there are some previously unissued tracks, and this first-class reissue presents this fine music in the order in was heard by the audience. Over four decades, Otis Redding's music remains as compelling as when he performed it on the Whiskey's stage. Obviously those having the earlier reissues may not need this, but others who love "Sweet Soul Music," will want this.

Ron Weinstock

PROJECT TRIO

Project Trio

HARMONYVILLE RECORDS

On their third studio recording, Project Trio releases a self-titled album that showcases their unique musical explorations. This disc follows their first two CDs, *Winter in June* and *Brooklyn*.

The classically-trained, Brooklyn, New York-based trio featuring Greg Pattillo (flute), Eric Stephenson (cello) and

Peter Seymour (bass) delivers 10 appealing tunes, all originals except for Dave Brubeck's "Blue Rondo a la Turk" and Guns n' Roses "Sweet Child O' Mine." Their style melds Hip-hop, Rock, Bluegrass, Jazz, Americana and Classical music to create a distinctive sound



that sort of fits into the niche occupied by similar-sounding classical-crossover groups such as Turtle Island String Quartet, Bela Fleck, and Kronos Quartet. Catchiest among their originals are "Dr. Nick" and "Dup Dup." The lengthiest tune is the eight-minute Classical piece, "Arco/Pizz," with its pretty Japanese-flavored melody that segues into a livelier tempo about halfway through.

The three musicians met at the Cleveland Institute of Music 13 years ago. Subsequently, they worked with famed orchestras. Their big break came in 2006 through Pattillo's beatbox flute videos on YouTube, which acquired more than 40 million views and yielded their YouTube channel, "Freedomworksfilms," which has more than 50,000 subscribers.

Enjoyable from start to finish, Project Trio should satisfy a wide base of fans with their virtuosic and energetic musical creations.

Nancy Ann Lee

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