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jazz
& **blues** **report**

now in our 36th year

jazz & blues
festivals
part 3

jazz & blues report

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jazz & blues festivals part 3

Compiled by Ron Weinstock & Bill Wahl

We continue with our selective survey of Jazz & Blues Festivals covering August, September and beyond.....

The 56th CareFusion Newport Jazz Festival takes place August 6 through 8 in Newport, Rhode Island. One of the iconic jazz festivals and produced by George Wein, will open on Friday August 6 as Jamie Cullum and Grace Kelly perform at the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Saturday and Sunday, Fort Adams Park has three stages of music with performances by such artists as Ahmad Jamal, Anat Cohen, Arturo O'Farrill, Bob Brookmeyer, Brian Blade, Chick Corea, Chris Botti, Conrad Herwig, Harry Allen, Herbie Hancock, Howard Alden, Jason Moran, Jon Faddis, Kurt Vandermark's Powerhouse, Kenny Garrett, Maria Schneider, Marshall Allen, Matthew Shipp, Randy Brecker, Roy Haynes, and Wynton Marsalis. For more information visit <http://www.newportjazzfest.net/index.php>.

The Riverfront Blues Festival takes place August 6-8 in Wilmington Delaware at Tubman-Garrett PRiverfront Park. Performers Friday night August 6 include Bernard Allison and The Delta Groove Harp Project with Al Blake, Randy Chortkoff, Mitch Kashmar, Jimi Bott, Willie Campbell, Frank Goldwasser & Kirk Fletcher. Performers on Saturday include Matt Guitar Murphy & The Nouveaux Honkies; Donna Angelle & The Zydeco Posse; Rod Piazza & the Mighty Flyers and The Perfect Age of Rock & Roll Blues Band with Pinetop Perkins, Bob Margolin, Hubert Sumlin, Willie "Big-Eyes Smith", Mojo Buford, Matt Guitar Murphy & Bob Stroger. Performers on Sunday include Mike Zito, John Lee Hooker Jr. and The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue featuring The Tommy Castro Band, Magic Dick, Deanna Bogart & Joe Louis Walker. For more information visit <http://www.riverfrontbluesfest.com/Home>.

15TH Annual Litchfield Jazz Festival at Kent School in Kent, Connecticut takes place August 6-8, and will celebrate Dave Brubeck's 90th year and more. Performers include All-Star Cannonball Adderley Tribute, Gabriel Alegria Afro-Peruvian Sextet, Wess Anderson, Dave Brubeck Quartet, Jane Bunnett & the Spirits of Havana, Gerald Clayton, Anat Cohen, Benny Green, Winard Harper, Bobby Militello, Aurturo O'Farrill Afro Latin jazz Orchestra, Valery Ponomarev, Dave Samuels and The Caribbean jazz Project, Avery Sharpe, Terell Stafford, Matt Wilson and more. The website is <http://www.litchfieldjazzfest.com>.

The Erie Art Museum's 18th Annual Blues & Jazz Festival coming August 7 & 8 at Frontier Park, Erie, PA. It is the largest jazz and blues event in the

region. The two-day Festival presents national, regional and local musicians in a beautiful outdoor, family-friendly setting. The two headline musicians are tops! Blues harpster Sugar Blue heads the lineup on Saturday, and jazz saxophonist Sonny Fortune closes the event on Sunday. The festival is free of charge, rain or shine. Some of the other performers are Pucho & His Latin Soul Brothers, Hal Walker, Familiar Spirit Band, One World Tribe, Ron Yarosz and the Vehicle, Red Hot Rug Cutters, Dave Callaghan and Hardbop, and Ahimsa Beat. For more information on the festival, and to buy tickets, visit www.erieartmuseum.org/performances/bj_fest/index.html

10th Heritage Blues Festival takes place August 13-15 in Heritage Port in Wheeling, West Virginia. Performers include Friday August 13 include Guy Davis, Tab Benoit, and The John Hammond Band. Saturday, August 14 performers include Grady Champion, Cedric & Malcolm, Shakura S'Aida, Janiva Magness and Pinetop Perkins, Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith & Hubert Sumlin. Sunday August 15 performers include Anders Osborne, Super Chikan, Duke Robillard, Bernard Allison and John Mayall. For more information visit <http://www.heritagemusicfest.com/>.

2nd Vermont Blues Festival takes place at Mount Snow, Vermont on August 27-29. It is produced by Michael Cloeren who produces the annual Pocono Blues Festival and is similarly devoted to real deal blues. Performers include Harrison Kennedy, James Armstrong, Andrew Jr. Boy Jones, Ryan Shaw, Ruthie Foster, Trombone Shorty, Johnny Winter, Big James Montgomery, Teeny Tucker, Joe Louis Walker, Marcia Ball and Kenny Neal. For more information contact <http://www.vermontbluesfest.com/>.

Detroit International Jazz Festival takes place September 3 through September 6. Subtitled "Flame Keepers: Carrying the Torch for Modern Jazz," the 31st annual Detroit Jazz Fest will pay homage to six trailblazers of modern jazz: Art Blakey, Ray Brown, Miles Davis, Horace Silver, Betty Carter, and Gil Evans. Performers include Take 6 with Mulgrew Miller Trio, Danilo Perez Quartet, Hot Club of Detroit, "Hot Pepper" with Barry Harris & Gary Smulyan, Kirk Whalum: Tribute to Donny Hathaway, Terence Blanchard Quintet, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Brownie Speaks: The Music of Clifford Brown featuring Dominick Farinacci and Jonathan Batiste, Kenny Barron & Mulgrew Miller, Tribute to Ray Brown with Christian McBride, Benny Green & Greg Hutchinson; Allen Toussaint, Branford Marsalis, Finger Poppin': A Tribute to Horace Silver with the Michael Weiss Quintet featuring Randy Brecker, Kurt Elling Quintet with special guest Ernie Watts, Manhattan Transfer/Detroit Jazz Festival Orchestra and special guest Gerald Wilson, Roy Haynes Fountain of Youth Band, Maria Schneider and more. Visit <http://www.detroitjazzfest.com/index.html>.

The first ever **Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival** will take place Friday, September 3-4, 2010 at the World Trade Center (WTC) on Piscadera Bay in Curaçao. Dutch Caribbean (or Antilles as some say.). Throughout the Festival,
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international artists with some of the biggest names in the jazz, funk, soul, Latin, Antillean and R&B worlds, will perform in and around the WTC. Headliners include John Legend, Lionel Richie, Sergio Medes, Luis Enrique, La India, George Benson, Simply Red, Raul Midón, Natalie Cole, Grupo Fantasma, Mulato, Randal Corsen, Roy Hargrove, and El Negro. There will be nine concerts each day, taking place at the same time on three different stages. All proceeds from the Festival will be donated to charity. For more information, visit www.curaconorthseajazz.com

The 2nd Annual LA Vida Music Festival will be held in Los Angeles at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood on Labor Day Weekend, the evening of Sunday, September 5th. The festival combines an exciting blend of music influenced by diverse Latin cultures, appealing to people of all demographics. Once again, LA Vida is headlined by the Louie Cruz Beltran Latin Jazz Ensemble. World renowned Grammy® Award winning percussionist Poncho Sanchez will be this year's very special guest star. Added to the lineup - "Real Tango." Dancers Sandor and Parissa will perform with an authentic Argentine lineup of musicians. Sandor was a principal dancer in the original Broadway/London hit "Forever Tango." Parissa has been Tango and Ballroom coach for Antonio Banderas. Together they have performed and choreographed for countless TV, film, and theatrical productions around the world. The Grammy® Award winning Mariachi Divas will open the

the devil is an angel too

Janiva Magness

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show, and returning by popular demand in a special tribute to Brazilian Independence Day are the Robert Kyle Brazilian Quartet and the high energy percussion group Chalo Eduardo and the Brazilian Beat. Comedian Mike Marino will be Master of Ceremonies. The show runs from 7:00 to 10:30. Tickets range from \$30 to \$50 and are available online at www.FordTheaters.org or by calling The Ford Box Office at 323.461.3673.

The 53rd Monterey Jazz Festival is September 17-19 in Monterey, California with highlights including the return of jazz legends Chick Corea, Dianne Reeves, Roy Hargrove, Chris Potter, Christian McBride, Billy Childs, Kenny Garrett, and more; the MJF debut of Harry Connick, Jr., Ahmad Jamal, Angelique Kidjo; the world premiere of Commission Artist Billy Childs' "Music for Two Quartets" with the Kronos Quartet; and showcase Artist Roy Haynes performing throughout the weekend with Freedom Band, Fountain of Youth. The Saturday Blues show in the Arena will have among the performers Delbert McClinton, Naomi Shelton & the Gospel Queens, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue and among the tribute performances will be John Firmin & the Nocturne Band "Tribute to Hank Crawford, David 'Fathead' Newman and Leroy 'Hog' Cooper"; and Javon Jackson with Les McCann "Swiss Movement Revisited." For more information including the schedule visit <http://www.montereyjazzfestival.org/2010/index.php>.

2010 Angel City Jazz Festival will be held October 2nd through 9 in Los Angeles. L.A.'s only non-commercial jazz and new-music festival is a weeklong celebration at six venues, combining music, film, art, dance, poetry and food with two world premieres. Featured artists include The John Abercrombie Quartet, Nels Cline's DIRTY BABY, The Ravi Coltrane / Ralph Alessi Quintet, Henry Grimes and Friends, Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet with Vijay Iyer, Myra Melford's Trio, The Sons of Champignon (Tim Berne, Jim Black and Nels Cline) and many others. The festival is produced by Angel City Arts in association with the L.A. County Arts Commission, LACMA, CalArts, L.A. Filmforum, Cryptogramophone Records and the Jazz Bakery. For more information please visit angelcityjazz.com or call Rocco Somazzi at 323-573-2110.

The 25th Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival (formerly known as the King Biscuit Blues Festival) takes place October 7 through 9 in Helena Arkansas. One of the key blues festivals was founded in 1986, the first festival as a one-day event, with a small gathering of local residents and a flatbed truck as a stage. It has grown to a three-day event, with three stages and several activities, such as the Kenneth Freemyer 5K Run, the Blues in Schools program, and the Tour da' Delta bicycle tour. Notable performers at this year's festival on Thursday October 7 are Grady Champion, Willie Cobbs, Sterling Billingsley Band, James Harman and B.B. King. Performers on Friday October 8 include Big Jack Johnson, Johnny Billington, Mojo Buford Bobby Rush, Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King, Hubert Sumlin & Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, Michael Burks and Doctor John.

Saturday, October 9 performers include Preston Shannon, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, John Hammond, Lonnie Shields, Homemade Jamz Band, Larry McCray, Bobby Parker, Pinetop Perkins & Bob Margolin, Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Charlie Musselwhite and Taj Mahal. For more information visit <http://www.bluesandheritagefest.com/schedule/>.

Abstract Logix is proud to announce its first-ever festival event, **The New Universe Music Festival**, to take place at the Lincoln Theatre in Raleigh North Carolina on November 20 and 21. Abstract Logix has fostered a vital community of musicians and fans via its online portal, constantly taking advantage of the ever-expanding possibilities of the digital revolution. Yet they also understand that nothing can replace the exhilaration of master musicians performing in concert. The lineup for the New Universe Music Festival is a music lovers' dream, boasting a roster of artists who handily defy genre categorization in favor of unbridled expression - all of whom seamlessly mingle compositional ingenuity and improvisational grace and fervor. Confirmed performers include John McLaughlin and 4th Dimension, Jimmy Herring, The Lenny White Group (featuring Jimmy Herring), Human Element, Wayne Krantz, Alex Machacek and Ranjit Barot. For more information on the festival, and to buy tickets, visit www.abstractlogix.com/festival2010/

The Eighth Annual Riviera Maya Jazz Festival takes place in Playa del Carmen, Mexico on November 25-28. Drawing more than 50,000 visitors to the Riviera Maya last year, the Festival has showcased acclaimed jazz artists such as Herbie Hancock, Pat Martino, Fourplay, Marcus Miller and George Benson, among others, while also giving local jazz musicians the opportunity to display their talents. The Riviera Maya Jazz Festival is free and open to the public, allowing residents and visitors alike to easily partake in this unforgettable experience. I (BW) had the pleasure of attending in 2007 and had a fantastic time. This year could be the best lineup yet with John McLaughlin, The Manhattan Transfer, George Duke, Mike Stern with Dave Weckl, Al Di Meola, Ivan Lins and Incognito plus a number of top Mexican bands. During the four day festival, concerts will begin in the evening around 7 p.m., allowing attendees to explore Riviera Maya during the day. In addition to enjoying the sun at the stunning beaches, festival attendees can peruse local boutiques, restaurants, shops and clubs on Playa del Carmen's 5th Avenue, tour notable Mayan architectural sites such as Tulum and Coba, snorkel and dive at the world's second largest barrier reef, The Great Maya Barrier Reef, explore underground caverns and ponds, ride ATVs along the coast or zip line atop the canopy of the jungle. For more information, visit www.rivieramayajazzfestival.com. You can also read the review of the 2007 festival at www.jazz-blues.com and click the "Notable" button, then scroll down.

jazz-blues.com

New venture guides theme cruises from conception to execution

St. Louis, MO: A collective of veteran cruise planners with over fifty years of combined experience have formed Charter Cruise Consultants to develop and guide theme cruises for full ship and large group charters. The principals, who together have successfully produced twenty-five full ship music-themed cruises over the past decade, have been consulting outside parties for years and decided to formalize their collaborative efforts by forming a venture to help others realize their dream theme upon the seas.

It begins with a client's cruise theme idea. Charter Cruise Consultants will provide a theme analysis, aid in the selection and negotiation of a cruise line, offer financial services, sales and marketing guidance, handle administrative functions such as reservations, bookkeeping and fulfillment, facilitate cruise production and logistics for guests, entertainers and equipment, plan onboard programming, scheduling and directorship, process onboard marketing and sales for future cruises, and assess profit and loss of the cruise. Three packages of services are available: Gold, Silver and Bronze. Since each theme is unique, the range of services can be customized and tailored specifically to meet the needs of the individual client.

"For almost a decade, our team has produced arguably the most successful music theme cruises in the industry: The Jazz Cruise and The Smooth Jazz Cruise. Cruise lines working with new charterers or producers of large groups have touted our collective and recommended us as consultants for years. We thought that it was time to formalize our approach and see if we can assist others who want to do theme cruises by providing a complete range of services from consulting to full participation in the theme cruise event. Making this sector of the travel industry healthy, particularly in this economic climate, is in everyone's best interest," said Michael Lazaroff, executive director of Charter Cruise Consultants.

Lazaroff is also executive director of Jazz Cruises, LLC, the company that owns, produces and markets The Smooth Jazz Cruise and The Jazz Cruise, the latter of which will mark its tenth anniversary sailing in January 2011 as the first and only full ship charter dedicated to straight ahead jazz. A hands on operator who works diligently behind the scenes yet thrives when rolling up his sleeves to meet the needs of guests, Lazaroff created and built the eight-year-old The Smooth Jazz Cruise franchise, which remarkably has sold-out two 2011 sailings and is nearly sixty-percent booked for both 2012 sailings. He has also developed other full ship charter themes and cruises.

Jazz Cruises, LLC works closely with Timeless Destinations, a cruise travel company based in North Miami Beach that functions as the travel managing partners for Jazz Cruises, LLC's offerings. Timeless Destination's Anton Boonzaier and Sylvain Van Embden are principals of Charter Cruise Consultants and are primarily responsible for the sales and marketing of Jazz Cruises, LLC's sailings to the travel industry, promoting and selling niche theme cruises.

They formulated the business and marketing plan, and play a part of onboard charter operations. Boonzaier will fill the role of travel director and Van Embden is the marketing director of Charter Cruise Consultants.

Entertainment industry veteran Dane Butcher is the program director of the new outfit while continuing his duties as the cruise director for Jazz Cruises, LLC. Butcher produces, directs and emcees The Jazz Cruise and The Smooth Jazz Cruise. He has handled those duties on a variety of theme cruises including the first-ever Elvis cruise, Dave Koz & Friends at Sea, The Smooth Jazz Cruise hosted by Wayman Tisdale, and the Playboy Jazz Cruise hosted by Marcus Miller. Butcher's vast experience has enabled him to become an authority on the unique aspects of producing entertainment aboard a cruise ship.

Rounding out the Charter Cruise Consultants principals is production director Joey Fairchild. With more than twenty years of experience as a production manager in the concert industry working with the likes of George Benson, Steve Miller Band, Aretha Franklin and Diana Ross, Fairchild, who also is part of the Jazz Cruises, LLC family, brings a wealth of knowledge to fulfilling the technical, equipment and staffing needs for clients aboard the ship. Trained in both the business and technical aspects of show production, Fairchild provides vital insights into the distinct demands of mounting cruise productions.

Additional information about Charter Cruise Consultants is available at www.chartercruiseconsultants.com.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release blues... Well since every blues act worth its salt is on the summer festival circuit, the release schedule is slowing way down. Here's a few to take you through the dog days of summer....**Derek Trucks Band-Roadsongs; Jimmie Vaughan- Plays Blues, Ballads and Favorites; Elvin Bishop- Red Dog Speaks; Smokin' Joe Kubek & B'nois King- Have Blues Will Travel; Walter Trout- Common Ground; Robert Cray- Cookin' in Mobile; Dr. John- Tribal; Various Artists (Southside Johnny, Jeff Beck, Peter Green and others)- This is the Blues, Vol. 3; Etta James- The Essential Etta James; Eddie Turner- Miracles and Demons; Johnny Winter- Highway 61 Revisited; Mitch Woods-Gumbo Blues; Johnny & Edgar Winters- The Winter Brothers; Bernard Allison- Otherside; Eric Gales-Relentless; Eric Bibb- Spirit & the Blues; Albert Castiglia- Keepin' On; Coco Robicheaux- Louisiana Medicine Man; Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters- Spread the Love; Revealing- James Blood Ulmer; Cathy Lemon and Johnny Ace- Lemonace; Edon Brent- Ain't Got No Trouble; Charlie Musselwhite- The Well....****Speaking of Festivals,** it's too nice and there are too many festivals to attend to spend any more time shackled to the computer. See ya next month....

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.*



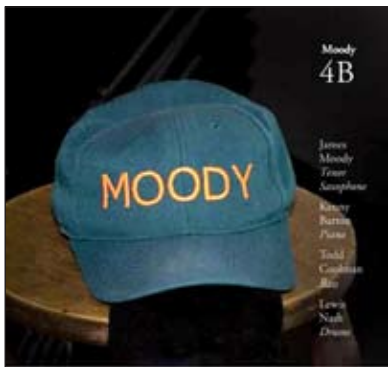
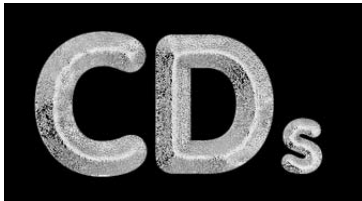
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JAMES MOODY

Moody 4B
IPO RECORDINGS

Tenor saxophonist James Moody teams up with pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Todd Coolman and drummer Lewis Nash for this nine-tune, straight-ahead set of standards, a follow-up recording to the team's 2009 "4A" release.

Swinging throughout, the stately foursome delivers solid versions of Billy Strayhorn's "Take the A Train," Tadd Dameron's "Hot House," Kurt Weill's "Speak Low," Benny Golson's "Along Came Betty," and other familiar gems. The crew slows things down for a ballad version of "Polka Dots & Moonbeams" and Latinizes "Cole Porter's "I Love You."

Moody's expressive improvisations, Barron's lyrical accompaniment and imaginative solos, and tidy timekeeping from Coolman and Nash all add to listener enjoyment. This is a superlative, melodious session with the collaborating veteran personnel at their creative best.

Nancy Ann Lee



JASON KING BAND
Blue Skies & Black Shoes
HIP-REX MUSIC

Jason King (Roxas), originally from the Philippines, hails from Northern Nevada where he holds forth with a

busy schedule of performances leading the Jason King Band, which today features a lineup of bassist Wilbert Banks, drummer Michael Moore and Weissenborn/lap steel guitarist Tommy Stiles.

On his new release, "Blue Skies & Black Shoes" (Hip-Rex Music), the band is augmented by Pat Dodson playing drums on several tracks, Jason Stanton on keyboards, Freddie Mills on harmonica and Rick Metz on saxophone. King contributed all the songs here, which range from straight blues to some numbers, including the title track, which are more rock flavored.

He is a personable vocalist and a stinging guitarist. One can detect some Stevie Ray Vaughan influence, although his vocals and guitar attack are a bit more restrained. Certainly listening to the opening "Steppin' Out," one can get a sense of his appeal with some nice harp in the mix. "Driftin'," with its churning rhythm, is a mixed track as his vocal comes off a bit muffled, but "Cryin' Shame" is a slow blues with exceptional, jazzy guitar as he tells his woman its a crying shame how she throws her love away and it's he who she betrays. It is a pretty straightforward performance, but he delivers it strongly.

"Learn to Take It Slow" is another solid blues performance with a nice groove. The mood changes on "Broken," which has a country - southern rock feel, with a reflective lyric. On "Mean & Nasty," a full band is present with Stanton's greasy Hammond B-3, and Metz's raspy saxophone backing another slow blues, with forceful solos from Metz and King (again really strong here).

The title track, another tune that's more southern rock than blues, evokes the Allman Brothers with a nice lyric and some guitar styled in a Dickie Betts vein. "Soulshaker," with a nice funky groove, also has some blues-infused rock flavoring. "My Little Baby" is a rocking blues shuffle, but does not stand out.

Listening to "Blue Skies & Black Shoes," one can appreciate that he is quite busy around Reno, Nevada. This is certainly a very listenable mix of blues and southern rock that includes several strong performances, along with some that are congenial if not standing out per se, and should particularly appeal to those who's listening tastes run from blues to country and southern rock.

His website is www.jasonkingband.com and this is available from the website, cdbaby and downloadable at i-Tunes.

Ron Weinstock

**LIVE BLUES ON
THE HIGH SEAS**



Read The Review
jazz-blues.com
click the Notable' button



RANDY KLEIN
Sunday Morning
JAZZHEADS

The intimate potential of duet improvisation is nicely celebrated on pianist Klein's new offering. In tandem with either trombonist Chris Washburne or saxophonist Oleg Kireyev on alternating tracks, Klein stakes out engaging turf on this all-original set, whether swinging quirkily, as on the leadoff "Hiding Out," or smartly addressing a ballad- "House On The Hill."

Both partners are adequately simpatico for consistent success here; each capable of the proper degree of extroversion or introspection to accommodate the tune. The attraction of Sunday Morning grows with repeated listening- a cut-above release.

Duane



LITTLE SMOKEY SMOTHERS
& ELVIN BISHOP
CHICAGO BLUES BUDDIES
BROWN DERBY

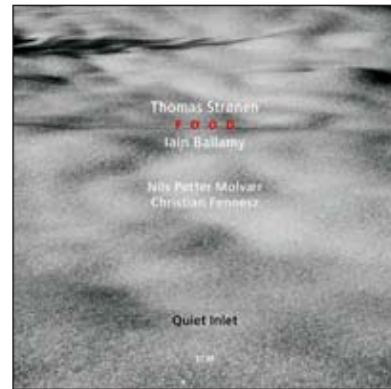
It was in 1960 that Elvin Bishop, then a newcomer to Chicago, met and was mentored by Smokey Smothers (oft referred as Little Smokey to distinguish him from his older brother Big Smokey). Smokey at the time was at the Blue Flame and also working with Howlin' Wolf at the time. Later Smokey would also encourage Paul Butterfield and helped inspire that band. Elvin and Smokey have remained close friends through the years, even while Elvin's career took off with Butterfield and later as a blues-rooted rock act with several smash hits. With his career in rebound at the time, Elvin instigated and participated in the 1993 award-winning album, Bossman!, and later recorded a live album with his old friend for Alligator. Later at the 2006 Chicago Blues Festival

they reprised their collaborations.

More recently, Smokey's health has been in decline and as Dick Shurman has noted, Elvin seized the moment to compile a new CD, Little Smokey Smothers & Elvin Bishop "Chicago Blues Buddies" (Brown Derby), with the proceeds going to Smokey. The CD is a nice retrospective that opens with a couple tracks from "Bossman!" including "Remembering," where the two trade licks and recall their younger days. Next up are five performances from the 1993 Chicago Blues Festival which are the musical core of this disc and strong performances including "Smokey's Shuffle," "Crack Head Woman," and "Mother-in-Law Blues," marked with strong vocals from Smokey and playing from both. It is followed by an interview of the two by Chris Heim and Steve Cushing. The next two selections are from the live Alligator recording from San Francisco's Biscuits & Blues, "That's My Partner," and then the last two selections are from a 2006 Ground Zero appearance shortly after their Chicago Blues Festival appearance.

This serves as a solid retrospective of a wonderful partnership with the release of the first-rate 1993 Chicago Blues Festival performances particularly welcome, as are the tracks that Alligator and Black Magic graciously lent to this project, which can be obtained from BlueBeat Music (www.bluebeatmusic.com) from whom I purchased this. I am not sure if this set is available from other sources, but it is well worth seeking out not simply for the music but for the good cause that it was compiled for.

Ron Weinstock



FOOD
Quiet Inlet
ECM

Ethereal horns glide and dance over layers of electronic vapor and continuously morphing percussion in one of the more purely "atmospheric" offerings in recent months.

The duet Food is comprised of Thomas Strönen (drums, electronics) and Iain Bellamy (tenor and soprano saxes). Here, joined by trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer and guitarist Christian Fennesz, both whom also add "live" electronics, they create a consistently compelling sonic environment where spatial and textural values stand on equal ground with theme and melody- highly recommended for those not averse to trance-like listening experiences.

Duane Verh



ROB STONE
Back Around Him
EARWIG MUSIC

Chicago harmonica player Rob Stone was new to these ears until I heard him on several tracks on a new Earwig disc by Chris James and Patrick Rynn, "Gonna Boogie Anyway." Stone is a long-time associate of James and Rynn and they worked together as the C-Notes, which included touring with drummer Sam Lay. Stone had an album on Earwig 7 years ago, *Just My Luck*, and the label has just released his new album, "Back Around Him," which reunites Stone with the pair along with pianists David Maxwell and Aaron Moore, drummers Willie Hayes, Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith and Sam Lay, and a sax section led by Rodney Brown. The result is a set of classic Chicago blues that rocks and swings.

As a harmonica player, Stone has a fat tone that shows the influence of Little Walter, Big Walter, the two Sonny Boys and Junior Wells, while vocally his influences include Sam Cooke and Ray Charles as well as Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. Eight of the twelve songs were co-penned by Stone, James and Rynn and are solid idiomatic tunes. As a vocalist, I like Stone's unforced, unaffected singing, which is mixed with some exceptional ensemble playing. The title track is a marvelous rocker with great piano from Maxwell and a cutting solo from James as the saxophones add an uptown flavor. Aaron Moore's piano is the anchor behind the slower tempo and Sonny Boy II styled harp on Sonny Boy I's "Love You For Myself," with Moore taking a terrific solo. Magic Sam's "Give Me Time" is in a more R&B tinged vein with James supplying guitar evoking the blues legend who left this world way too young 40 years ago. It's followed by a terrific shuffle about spending too much, "I Need to Plant a Money Tree," with some very effective Big Walter Horton inspired harp and Jeff Stone adding guitar to that of James to help sustain the driving groove.

"Chicago All Night" has a rumba groove with Maxwell setting the tone with his two-fisted playing as the saxes riff away. "Sloppy Drunk Blues" has been recorded numerous times, but Stone's interpretation goes back to the Leroy Carr rendition as James lays off here as Maxwell and Rynn provide support. "Can't Turn Back The Clock," is a rocking boogie with Maxwell, Rynn and

Sam Lay, with a terrific piano boogie-woogie solo from Maxwell. "It's Hard But It's Fair," is a bluesy reworking of The 5 Royales classic vocal group rocker. "Dragon Killers," is a hot instrumental that suggests Little Walter's "Roller Coaster." His playing on this shows plenty of drive as well as a clean, full-bodied tone.

Stone is a regular at the Chicago House of Blues' "Back Porch Stage," and given the powerful, Windy City sounding blues heard here, one can understand why. He plays strong blues that plays tribute to the music that is his inspiration, but as evidenced by the music on "Back Around Here," treats the idiom not as mere history, but as a living tradition to be celebrated. *Ron Weinstock*



PAUL CARR
Straight Ahead Soul
PAUL CARR JAZZ

Saxophonist Paul Carr has assembled a fine team for his fourth CD as leader. Returning from his 2008 release, *Musically Yours: Remembering Joe Henderson*, are bassist Michael Bowie and drummer Lewis Nash. Pianist Allyn Johnson and percussionist Sam "Seguito" Turner (both residents of Washington, DC with Carr) join this project and Chicago-based guitarist Bobby Broom rounds out the main crew. Carr's niece, Chelsey Green, plays viola on the closer, a solemn medley of church songs dedicated to Carr's late sister.

The nine-tune set consists of Carr originals and tunes by Johnson and Bowie as well as two of my favorite tracks: the Brazilian gem by Ivan Lins, "Love Wants to Dance," and the bluesy Eddie Lockjaw Davis tune "Light and Lovely."

Growing up in Houston, Texas, Carr (b. 1959) was influenced by recordings in his mother's large collection and began playing alto sax at age 11, switching to tenor as a high school senior. After three years at Texas Southern University, Carr moved to DC to attend Howard University from where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in music performance. He's remained in the DC area since.

Alternating between tenor and soprano saxes, Carr's at his best when he's in his element: "...bathed in the blues and gospel, which is the soul of the South." When not waxing in a down-home mode, Carr's improvisations have a modern edge that pushes the envelope a bit and the best of those tunes nicely feature Broom.

Nancy Ann Lee

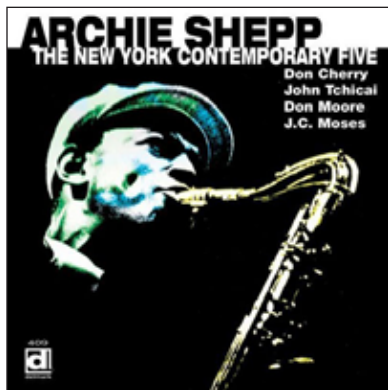


EDDIE TURNER
Miracles & Demons
 NORTHERN BLUES

Cuban-born, Chicago-bred singer/guitarist Turner is one of the handful of artists that succeeds at taking blues into this century with its roots alive and intact. And his is a blues most atmospheric in nature. Spell-weaving supersedes storytelling on Planet Turner and the moods of Miracle & Demons tend to surround rather than take the listener head on.

While connections from Turner's playing to Hendrix have been noted previously, it's his vocal ties to Jimi that show on this set, and lyric sets more "psych" than blues ("Ride a Painted Pony", "Miracles & Demons"), also bit Jimi-esque, that contribute much to the dusky, misty setting here. Blues hoodoo is alive and well in the modern world.

Duane Verh



ARCHIE SHEPP
The New York Contemporary Five
 DELMARK

The reissue on CD by Delmark of "The New York Contemporary Five" under Archie Shepp's name is welcome for fans of early examples of "free jazz." The group was actually a cooperative, with cornet from Don Cherry, alto sax from the Danish born John Tchicai, Shepp on tenor, Don Moore on bass and J.C. Moses on drums. Recorded in November 1963 at the legendary Denmark club, Jazzhus Montmartre, the six performances here present a document of the exploratory direction of the time. The trumpeter and composer Bill Dixon, who recently passed away, arranged three of the performances and introduced the ensemble.

There are originals from Cherry, Shepp and Tchicai

along with two Ornette Coleman compositions and a straight rendition of Thelonious Monk's "Crepuscle With Nellie."

Cherry's "Cisum," opens with his cornet evoking "Fanfare for the Common Man," before stating the theme leading to his solo backed by the rhythm with his interesting mix of bursts of notes and more melodic lines as he rides Moses' rhythm, which is followed by Tchicai who builds on repeated phases while employing the higher register of his alto with Cherry punctuating his solo with some runs. Shepp enters into like a buzz saw with a machine gun like attack with Cherry's more legato phrases providing an interesting contrast. Ornette Coleman's "O.C." is built upon a swinging jump riff and groove with Shepp first up with a raspy solo that is followed by Cherry who is the most consistently interesting solo here, while Tchicai follows with some blues-rooted playing although it is interesting to hear him try to make some trumpet like phrasing. It is followed by the similar Coleman composition "When Will the Blues Leave," with one of Coleman's most memorable themes which Cherry explores with some of his most melodic playing. Cherry's doleful tone opens Shepp's dirge, "The Funeral," with the saxophones contributing to the mood and a relatively quiet passage where Moore and Moses are to the fore before the organized chaos of the close. Tchicai's "Mik" opens with a riff that evokes Tadd Dameron's opening with a bluesy solo followed by some

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bright playing from Cherry over the seemingly meter-less rhythm.

There is some fascinating playing here with Cherry and Tchicai especially being exceptional. Moore and Moses however do not strike this listener quite as organic a rhythm combo compared to say Charlie Haden and Eddie Blackwell with Ornette, or Henry Grimes or Gary Peacock and Sunny Murray with Albert Ayler. Moses spent time with Roland Kirk, recorded with Eric Dolphy and was a house drummer at Jazzhus Montmartre playing with such greats as Dexter Gordon and Ben Webster in a vein that shows his strengths better. In any event, it is most certainly welcome to have this document available again. *Ron Weinstock*



KAREN CARROLL
Talk To The Hand
DELMARK

Chicago blues singer Karen Carroll was 39 when Delmark issued her second album for the label in 1997, "Talk to the Hand," which has been just re-released by the label. She is the daughter of vocalist Jeanne Carroll and goddaughter of guitarist George Freeman.

She was associated with the late Professor Eddie Lusk and Donny Hathaway was a major influence on her. She was backed on this session by a band including the keyboards of Russell Purifoy and Walter Scott's guitar on a program of originals and some covers ranging from less obvious choices like Left Dizz's "Ain't It Nice," to the overly familiar, "Sweet Home Chicago."

She is more of a moaner than a shouter as on the opening "West Side Blues" by Lefty Dizz, although Walter Scott's buzz saw guitar here grates. Her original, "I'm Glad," with nice punchy horns, is much better as she delivers the vocal with an appropriate bittersweet delivery and Scott's guitar is much more palatable here with fleet, jazzy phrasing. Another Carroll original, "Don't Make Me Wait," is a soulful ballad in the vein of such seventies artists as Hathaway with nice piano from Purifoy.

"Tired of Being Mistreated" is a rocking gospel-based rave with backing vocal as she sings about her man mistreating her. I am not sure who J. Williams, the composer of "Can't Fight the Blues" is, but Carroll conveys the desolation the lyrics (set to a melody similar to Ray Charles "I Believe") convey.

Hathaway sounds like an inspiration on "I Need a Friend," while the title track (melodically evoking

"Someday Baby") tells the man he can talk to the hand but the face does not understand, with short effective solos from Scott and Purifoy. Carroll is able to capture the sassy, sultriness of Nina Simone's "Do I Move You," while able to handle the wistful melancholy of Dorothy Moore's smash, "Misty Blue."

She added little to the overly recorded "Sweet Home Chicago," but her reworking of "How Blue Can You Get" does show her interpretative powers. Still the most interesting selection is her original, "Naked J Blues." This long talking blues showcases her storytelling ability as she talks about herself and some of the things she did to help spark things at the home front, including buying a negligee (Naked J) and getting the bed ready for when her man gets home. The closing "Please Come Back Home," closes this disc with an unexpected country twist.

There is a definite low-key feel to much of this and while there are a few missteps, this is an enjoyable disc worthy of re-release. *Ron Weinstock*



HILARIO DURAN TRIO
Motion
ALMA RECORDS

Performing in a trio setting with bassist Robert Occhipinti and drummer Mark Kelso, as well as guests, pianist Hilario Duran delivers a scintillating eight-tune set of mostly originals that draw on his Cuban roots and his extraordinary keyboard skills.

One of my favorites is his "Conversation With A Lunatic," an intense 4:12-minute tune that races along with pulsating edginess. Augmented by the Pandamonium Strings, "Havana City" (the longest track at 10:04-minutes) captures gentle Cuban rhythms and exudes a languid, longing mood.

Duran's piano skills are exemplary. He uses the full range of the keyboard in romantic and flowery expressions, improvising in fresh and facile ways. As much as his prowess with the keys, his compositional skills are so extraordinary that you'll want to play his melodious and innovative originals over and over.

There isn't a dull tune in the bunch. The trio's up-tempo tunes bristle with energy that will increase your heart rate and his ballads shimmer with splendor. This disc is a keeper! *Nancy Ann Lee*



THIS IS THE BLUES

Volume Three
EAGLE RECORDS

Finishing out this series of high-quality, if scantily documented, studio sessions featuring British blues veterans in a number of interesting lineups are two more volumes that offer much enthusiasm and some strong highlights.

The standouts on the third volume include Foghat/Savoy Brown guitarist/vocalist “Lonesome” Dave Peverett on Peter Green’s “If You Be My Baby”, Rory Gallagher’s version of Green’s “Showbiz Blues” and axe master Gary Moore’s workout on John Lee Hooker’s “Serves Me Right To Suffer”.

Savoy Brown’s venerable leader, guitarist Kim Simmonds, delivers a fiery lead-in chorus on their run-through of “Little Red Rooster” as well. *Duane Verh*

THIS IS THE BLUES

Volume Four
EAGLE RECORDS

Strong tracks on this volume include an energetic shuffle “Judgment Day” from 60’s ravers The Pretty Things, Thin Lizzy alum guitarist Snowy White’s feature on Peter Green’s “Looking For Somebody” and Arthur Brown’s signature edgy take on Green’s “The Green Manalishi”.

As suggested in last month’s reviews of the series’ first two volumes, the abundance of Green covers strongly suggests the original destination of these sessions was a tribute to the talented but troubled Brit bluesman.

Whatever the case, the play is consistently solid & a goodly number of tracks sound highly inspired. Connoisseurs of Brit blues should find much to like here.

Duane Verh

jazz-blues.com



DR. LONNIE SMITH
SPIRAL
PALMETTO RECORDS

Joined by Jonathan Kreisberg on guitar and Jamire Williams on drums, B3 maestro Dr. Lonnie Smith lays down eight tracks that explore the rich variety of sounds that can be pulled from his chosen instrument.

There’s everything here from quiet, introspective numbers where Smith adds color to Kreisberg’s jazzy guitar, *Frame for the Blues*, to ecstatic sound blasts, *I’ve Never Been In Love Before*, to percussive funk work outs, *I Didn’t Know What Time It Was*, to the icy grooves of *Sweet & Lovely* and the silky smooth title cut. Smith’s cover of Harold Mabern’s *Beehive* will have you looking for the sting ointment with its hard hitting attack and frantic pace while his cover of the 1963 classic *Sukiyaki* plays the other end of the spectrum with its easy pace and mellow vibe.

While Smith is clearly the focus of the disc, Kreisberg and Williams acquit themselves well throughout with Kreisberg’s guitar work often evoking comparisons to Pat Metheny with his rich, fluid lines and William’s drumming keeping the proceedings in solid order.

Mark Smith



GALACTIC
YA-KA-MAY
ANTI

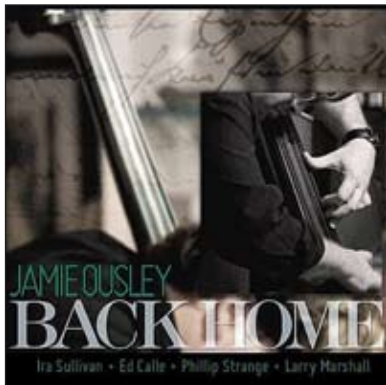
Galactic has become synonymous with modern New Orleans funk. Escaping the penchant of too many New Orleans bands to recycle the rich catalog that makes up the City’s musical heritage (really, do we need another *Hey Pocky Way* or *Mardi Gras Mambo*?) this disc features the band taking on an aggressive program of all new original material. With body slamming grooves that would

make even your bed-ridden aunt Matilda shake her booty, the band joins forces with multiple vocalists to create a disc that veers wildly over the musical landscape. Irma Thomas and John Boutte work their soul magic around the bottom heavy groove of *Heart of Steel* and *Dark Water* respectively.

Allen Toussaint takes a break from his normal jazz piano duties to add synthesized vocals to the spacey *Bacchus*. Big Chief Bo Dollis powers his way through the rubbery *Wild Man* while Big Freedia checks in with a variation on hip hop known as bounce (The other bounce tracks, 7, 10 and 15 are all NO PLAYS) and Walter “Wolfman” Washington gets sinister to the ambient, moody, *Speaks His Mind*.

Elsewhere, Josh Cohen and Ryan Scully of The Morning 40 Federation lay down wise guy vocals over the Godzilla stomp of *Liquor Pang*. While the guest vocalists get plenty of time to shine, the band doesn’t simply provide a backup groove: it jumps in hard on the instrumental tracks, *Boe Money*, featuring Rebirth Brass Band, and *Cineramascope*, featuring Trombone Shorty and Corey Henry both of which will warm the hearts of those that have been fortunate enough to see and feel the power of a brass band in action.

Always striving to push the envelope, Galactic succeeds here with a disc that will find favor with those with a taste for edgy funk. *Mark Smith*



JAMIE OUSLEY

Back Home
TIE RECORDS

On his second release, bassist-composer Jamie Ousley delivers a diverse mix of 11 tunes recorded in Osaka, Japan and Miami, Florida with pianist Phillip Strange, drummer Larry Marshall. Guest artists include multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan (6 tracks), Ed Calle (soprano sax on one tune), percussionist Carlomagno Araya, and Jhonny Mendoza (violin, mandolin, cuatro and maracas).

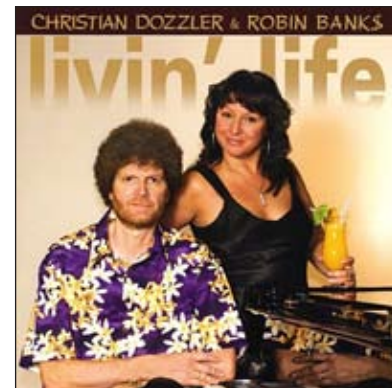
Ousley’s melodious album features eight new compositions, a Flamenco-tinged arrangement of “My Favorite Things,” and a Cuban danzon version of Chopin’s Nocturne in E-Flat. Ousley’s rhythm team is superb and Sullivan generously adds warm, lyrical touches to the album. Rising star Japanese vocalist Nanami Morikawa sings sweetly on the children’s bedtime tune, “Prayer.”

On Ousley’s ode to a deceased uncle, “So Long,” Miami baritone LeNard Rutledge’s expressive vocals intricately interweave with Sullivan’s smooth soprano sax comping. Mendoza enhances the lively “Pasaje Tennessee” with his mandolin and violin playing. The title tune was co-written and performed with Ousley’s trio by smoky-voiced SAMM (Sharon Ann-Marie Mapp) and is reprised as an instrumental for the closing number.

A Tennessee native, Ousley began music studies at an early age, playing violin until he switched to double bass at age 12. He moved to Miami in 1988 to attend graduate school in the Jazz Program and the University of Miami. After earning his Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Bass Performance, Ousley remained in South Florida where he performs regularly. He’s collaborated with an array of musicians including Sullivan, Arturo Sandoval, James Moody, Benny Golson and others. He continues to perform at international festivals and teaches both locally and overseas.

Influenced by Ousley’s world-wide travels, this is a relaxed, warm-hearted listen from start to finish.

Nancy Ann Lee



CHRISTIAN DOZZLER & ROBIN BANKS

Livin’ Life
BLUESWAVE

Canadian singer Robin Banks has been singing the blues throughout her homeland, as well as Dallas, Texas (and she can regale with stories about the late Sammy Myers) and Jamaica, mixing in some Caribbean and jazz seasonings to her sound. Pianist-vocalist Christian Dozzler came to the US after establishing himself as a boogie woogie pianist (Harmonica and accordion player as well) in his native Austria.

Moving to the States, he toured with Larry Garner before settling in around Dallas and becoming a part of that city’s vibrant blues scene. Dozzler was part of the band Banks used on two albums made while living in the Lone Star State. Last year, Banks traveled back to Dallas to record an album with Dozzler, and the pair have just issued “Livin’ Life,” (Blueswave). The disc is comprised of original material with each writing 7 of the 14 tracks here. Banks sings on all of her compositions (one a duet with Dozzler), while Dozzler sings on 5 of his originals while the other two are instrumentals.

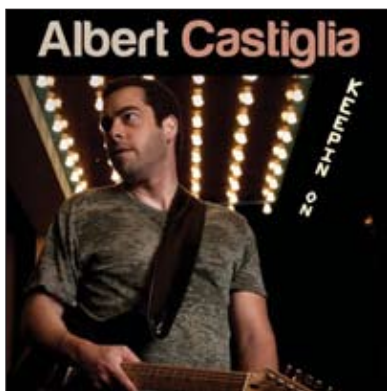
Banks’ whimsical “Cocktail or Beer” sports a rollick-

ing accompaniment as she asks her lover whether he is a cocktail or beer, a real thing or a dud, double manhattan or a six pack or beer, “just don’t disappoint me or I’m out of here.” Listening to her pitch and her phrasing, this performance suggests that Banks would be capable of recording a strong jazz album. Dozzler’s “Walkin’” is a solid medium tempo-ed blues which a solid vocal and tough piano, while “Roxanne,” has a lyric about nothing he does being enough for this woman, set against a New Orleans funky piano groove.

Banks’ “Sister” has a somewhat dramatic accompaniment as he sings to her sibling that Robin has her eyes on her as she gives through some rough times. The pair join up for “No More,” a tango on which Dozzler overdubs accordion as they sing about how much they adore one but can’t wait no more. “Out of the Blue,” the first of two piano solos is a strong blues stomp suggestive of Otis Spann. There is a touch of country boogie in Dozzler’s piano behind Banks’ “The Last Time I Saw Texas,” which celebrates Texas as she asks to be taken back to Dallas.

“If You Wanna Be My Gal,” is a fine original where Dozzler tells his woman to love him with all his heart but also leave him some space with a melody that hints at Jimmy Rogers’ “Walking By Myself.” “Everybody Let’s Dance,” is a rocking number but also is one number that would have benefited from a having a full band. “For Pete’s Sake” is a fabulous boogie woogie instrumental dedicated to the great Pete Johnson. This track most obviously displays how good a pianist Christian Dozzler is, but his playing is strong throughout, subtly embellishing his or Ms. Banks vocals and Robin Banks is quite enticing as a singer.

This delightful release is available on cdbaby.com among other sources and one can check their websites, www.myspace.com/MissRobinBanks and www.dozzler.com.
Ron Weinstock



ALBERT CASTIGLIA

**Keepin On
 BLUE LEAF**

Former lead guitarist for the late Junior Wells presents his latest project, KEEPIN ON, with a mix of originals and some interesting covers that have been ignored by too many folks in the reading audience for way too long.

In the latter subdivision, the boogie of John Lee

Hooker’s “Goin’ Upstairs” is fueled by Castiglia’s slide work while Mack Rice’s “Cadillac Assembly Line” burns throughout. Add a funky take on Bob Dylan’s “Til I Fell In Love With You” and a resurrection of T-Bone Walker’s “My Baby Is Now On My Mind” to the list of orphaned songs finding a new home. Pick of the category, though, has to be Peter Green’s “Could Not Ask For More,” where both harpist Sandy Mack and piano man Bill “Mighty” Quinn duel for the spotlight, much to the delight of the listener.

On the original side of the ledger, the title cut channels Creedence Clearwater Revival with Castiglia cranking it out at the end, while the guitarist duels with bassist A.J. Kelly during the instrumental “Mojo 305.” Although KEEPIN’ ON has pretty high standard throughout, that can’t be said for “Do You Love Me?,” a funky, and I mean that in every sense of the word, dance number that I’m still trying to figure out how to razor blade off the disc.

With Toby Walker adding dobro to the shadings of “Sweet Southern Angel” and “Murderin” Blues,” KEEPIN’ ON has a lot of fine string work throughout that can be appreciated even if you don’t live in the Windy City.

Peanuts



DR JOHN AND THE LOWER 911

**TRIBAL
 429 RECORDS**

Dr. John has always exemplified the rich musical stew that finds its origin in New Orleans with an eclectic combination of blues, jazz, funk, country, voodoo mysticism and rock. Coming on the heels of his Grammy© award winning *City that Care Forgot*, a mostly political rant about the injustices foisted upon his beloved Crescent City, the good Dr. seems to have exorcised some demons and checks in here with one of his most exuberant discs in years.

Joined by the Lower 911 and a host of guest horn players and background vocalists he sounds like he’s having a whale of a time even though he continues to keep his keen eye on social issues. His enthusiasm is contagious with *Feel Good Music* setting the right tone by virtue of its nimble piano work and lyrics about how his music can heal your problems.

The title cut incorporates Indian chanting into his muse about how like minded people need to band together and make their own progress. *Big Gap* looks at the distance between the rich and poor with the horns adding life to a cut that would be a dry civics lesson

in lesser hands while *Lissen At Our Prayer* calls on the spirits to save us from those that profit by negativity and panic. *Change of Heart* and *Only In America* are surprisingly buoyant given their dead relationship and screwed up state of the state subject matter while *Music Came* celebrates the importance of music with a hot jazz chart and Philly Soul background vocals.

Jinky Jinx and *Them* are funky work outs with *Them* exploring that mindset that attributes all of our problems to “them” rather than ourselves. *What’s Wit Dat* continues a line of questioning from his 1998 release *Anutha Zone’s Why Come* regarding why we do things such as eating white bread, chips and greasy fries and then wondering why the scales are screaming at us. *When I’m Right (I’m Wrong)* reprises the sentiment of his classic hit, *Right Place, Wrong Time* and is simply a fun listen.

After a number of world weary discs where the twinkle in his eye seemed diminished, it’s great to hear the Dr. having a good time without losing his political edge.

Mark Smith



MARIAN PETRESCU QUARTET WITH ANDREAS OBERG

**Thrivin’: Live at the Jazz Standard
RESONANCE RECORDS**

On his label debut, Romanian keyboard master Marian Petrescu displays a dazzling command of the keyboard with a seven-tune, live-recorded set featuring guitarist Andreas Oberg, bassist David Finck and drummer Mark McLean.

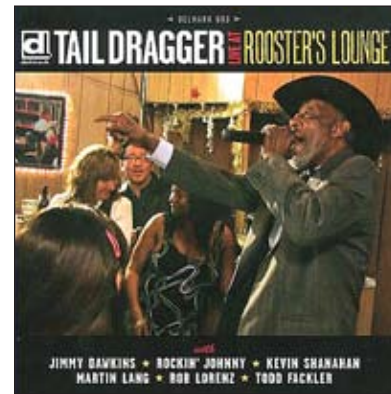
Launching briskly with Oscar Peterson’s “Cake-walk,” Petrescu sets the keys afire with his playing and yields ample spotlight time to each of his talented team members. Shifting tempo for track two, the Rodgers-Hart ballad “My Romance,” Petrescu plays a flowery lead before his crew joins in, shifting to a lightly swinging tempo.

A melodious reading of the Bill Evans-Miles Davis tune “Blue In Green” follows, with Oberg taking the lead with warm improvisations. The bluesy, toe-tappin’ take on Oscar Peterson’s “Blues Etude” is one of the catchier tunes showcasing Petrescu’s chops. A sprightly take on Grofe’s Classical piece “On the Trail,” a boppin’ read of “Yours Is My Heart Alone,” and a solo piano finale on “Indiana” round out the set.

Petrescu was born into a large musical family in Bucharest, Romania in 1970. He studied at classical and jazz conservatories in Romania, Sweden and Finland, where he now heads his own music school.

Petrescu and his musicians perform with extraordinary flair, finding deep grooves and tender expressions. This is one of those superlative live-recorded performances that will make you wish you’d been there.

Nancy Ann Lee



TAIL DRAGGER Live at Rooster’s Lounge DELMARK

It’s been a few years since Delmark issued a live performance by Tail Dragger on CD and DVD. The prior release, “My Head Is Bald, Live At Vern’s Friendly Lounge, Chicago,” was well received and reportedly one of Delmark’s better selling releases.

Three years later they follow with “Live at Rooster’s Lounge,” with the Howlin’ Wolf inspired James Y. Jones performing straight Chicago blues in the vein of his mentor and friend as he redoes some of Wolf tunes along with some similarly structured originals and a few tunes associated with Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter and John Lee Hooker, although played in a Wolf-style.

This is a well-played performance with a solid band that includes Rockin’ Johnny Burgin and Kevin Shanahan on guitars, Martin Lang on harp, Todd Fackler on bass and Rob Lorenz on drums with Jimmy Dawkins added to one track.

These are the first recordings and appearance from Rockin’ Johnny in over a decade. Jones is an expressive singer who suggests Wolf, but whose slurred diction does detract a bit from the forcefulness of the performances and the band plays idiomatically. Shanahan and Dawkins are the only ones returning from the earlier CD/DVD, which benefited greatly from Lurrie Bell’s mercurial guitar. There is certainly nothing wrong with Jones’ covers of “Louise,” “Baby Please Don’t Go” or “I’m in the Mood”, his own “Stop Lyin’,” and “Bought Me a New Home,” but also nothing amazing about them either. The DVD has additional performances and Delmark’s usual straightforward video qualities.

On its own, an enjoyable if unexceptional recording. If you have the prior live recording, I find little here to call

this a must purchase. This one may be easier to find and one might be fan of this viewing Tail Dragger as a Wolf tribute artist, but he is not such a compelling performer that the general blues fan would need everything he has recorded.

Ron Weinstock

books

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS: HIS LIFE AND BLUES

Alan Govenar
CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS
2010: 368 PAGES

One of the blues most iconic artists, Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, is the subject of a welcome new biography from writer and photographer Alan Govenar. Govenar has written a number of books including "Texas Blues: The Rise of a Contemporary Sound," as well as a musical "Blind Lemon Blues," that has been performed Off-Broadway. Hopkins was celebrated during his life for his ability to spin songs seemingly out of the blue, for his sometimes acerbic commentary on people, the relationships between men and women and current events, while performing for two very different audiences, the urban working class folk that bought his commercial recordings and frequented the bars in Houston's black community and the white

audience that was first introduced to his music during the folk revival and later when he became one of the most respected performers on the blues circuit from the sixties through his death in 1982.

Hopkins was born in rural Centreville, Texas. At the time Texas was pretty racist, with lynchings happening far too frequently. In this world, life was rough and hard and often violent. Hopkins' dad was shot to death over a card game when he was three. Shortly thereafter his oldest brother, John Henry left because he would have killed the man who shot their dad. He grew up in a world of country suppers and square dances, and had to share in the farm work. He learned to play guitar as well as dance as a youngest and this enabled him to give up the hard life of farm work. Relying on interviews of those who knew the young Hopkins, as well as Hopkins' own recollections (some were issued on one of the many recordings he made), Govenar shows the develop of the young artist who would spend time with Blind Lemon Jefferson and Texas Alexander. Alexander was a particularly important person for Hopkins and their travels together would be reflected in some of his repertoire.

Hopkins would settle into Houston whose Black Community had a varied night life ranging from the upscale El Dorado Ballroom Club to neighborhood bars for the working and country folks. It was the later venues that Lightnin' would play at. To middle and upper-level residents of the Third Ward, he was likely invisible. Then he was discovered by Lola Cullum, who had discovered Amos Milburn and had taken the pianist out to California where he recorded for Aladdin Records in 1946. As a follow-up to Milburn's success she brought Hopkins and pianist Wilson "Thunder" Smith to record. While Hopkins played on Smith's "Rocky Mountain Blues," Hopkins on acoustic guitar, SMith on piano and a drummer, he recorded "Katie Mae Blues," and "Mean Old Twister." It was at the session that Cullum nicknamed Hopkins Lightnin'. These recordings would start one of the most prolific recording careers in blues history and were unusual in the use of acoustic guitar, since Hopkins played electric on nearly every recording he made until he recorded during the folk revival when some producers insisted (based on some false notion of authenticity), that he play acoustic. Not all did so, as Chris Strachwitz who started Arhoolie Records in part because of Hopkins. Strachwitz had been a fan of Hopkins juke box recordings and would record Hopkins using electric guitar for the recordings that would be issued on Arhoolie as well as some he made for other labels such as Poppy (later reissued on Tomato).

Govenar tracks Hopkins' recordings after his initial Aladdin sides, through he recordings at Bill Quinn's studio for Gold Star and other labels, Bobby Shad, the Herald label and then Mack McCormick who was first to record Hopkins for the folk music market, followed by Samuel Charters, Strachwitz and others. Hopkins, like his contemporary John Lee Hooker, was one who would record for any label willing to pay him, and he insisted in being paid in cash which may relate to Hopkins having minimal education and essentially being illiterate as well



as a general mistrust of whites. So he would insist on cash payments, and eschew royalties. Then he would complain he was underpaid by the record company, while asserting he received substantial cash payments.

Govenar traces Hopkins' career as a recording artist and performing artist, noting the changing nature of those who booked and managed him. Mixed in are accounts of his performances including recollections of those who saw his performances and his differing persona for his two different audiences, who related to his music in fundamentally different fashions. The interaction between Lightnin' and those watching him at the Third War neighborhood bars was far different from the restrained, but attentive white audiences that proved to much more financially lucrative. While Hopkins had a guarded personality, he does flesh out some of his personality as well as provides a cogent discussion of Lightnin's songs and music, ranging from his ability to spin songs out of current events to his development of "Mr. Charlie," which with his spoken introduction, became a staple of his performance.

"Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life and Blues" is a celebration of Hopkins' life and music. There are a couple of minor factual errors. There is a reference to a performance at Toronto's New Yorker Theatre which John Hammond opened as being in 1978, but unless this was a repeat booking, I am certain this show was in 1977 because I was living in Buffalo and went with my friend Paul to catch this show, one of the two chances I had to see him perform.

In 1978 I was living in the New York area, and did not return to Toronto until 1984. Also Terry Dunn, the owner of Tramps, was remembered as a Texan but in fact was an Irish immigrant whose origins would be hard to miss. Still these are minor errors and do not detract from the invaluable biography Govenar has provided us.

In addition to extensive endnotes and a selected bibliography, Andrew Brown and Alan Balfour have contributed a fifty page discography of Hopkins extensive recording career which includes much new information including correcting the identity of the steel guitarist who recorded with Hopkins in 1949 for Gold Star. It was Hop Wilson, not Frankie Lee Sims as long suggested, who can be heard on "Jail House Blues," and "T' Model Blues." In addition to Govenar's narrative, this discography ensures that this will be the standard reference on Hopkins for years to come. In summary, this is an invaluable addition to the blues literature.

Ron Weinstock

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