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# MUSIC FOR THE WHALES

# jazz & blues report

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# EXOTIC WORLD OF INTERSPECIES MUSIC SPOTLIGHTED AS NJIT PROFESSOR IS HONORED

## Whale and Bird Song Experts Join Jazz Musicians for Unique Event



David Rothenberg, NJIT professor, plays clarinet at sea with whales at Spitsbergen (an island off the coast of Norway). Oct. 2009 taken by Andrea Galvani

NEWARK, NJ— The exotic world of interspecies music will be revealed on Oct. 6 when the New Jersey Institute of Technology Excellence in Research Prize and Medal is bestowed upon David Rothenberg, a member of NJIT's faculty, best-selling author and acclaimed jazz clarinetist, by the NJIT Board of Overseers.

"Harmonic Connections in Nature, Science and Music," held at 5 p.m. at the Jim Wise Theater in Kupfrian Hall, will include a presentation by Rothenberg, PhD, professor of philosophy and music, on how and why music enables him to communicate with birds and whales—the subject of his two best-selling books. A jazz performance with the multi-talented author on his clarinet accompanied by pianist Marilyn Crispell follows. The duo performed a similar offering this past June at Lincoln Center. A reception will take place after the ceremony.

The program will also include a talk by Ofer Tchernichovski, one of the world's foremost neuroscientists, who has figured out how birds learn to sing, and Scott McVay, founding president of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the man who discovered the complex structure of humpback whale songs. Donald H Sebastian, PhD, senior vice president for research and development at NJIT, will serve as program moderator. A reception concludes the evening's performance and academic insights beginning at 7 p.m.

The public is invited to this free event. Street parking will be available. For information about reservations, contact Colleen Vandervort, 973-596-8505.

The NJIT Excellence in Research Prize and Medal is awarded for contri-

butions that have enhanced the reputation of NJIT. The prize and medal winner delivers at the event a lecture based on his record of accomplishment, and the lecture will be available online at NJIT's iTunesU. The prize and medal winner must have been a member of the NJIT faculty for at least five years.

About David Rothenberg, PhD: Rothenberg's most recent book and CD, *Thousand Mile Song: Whale Music in a Sea of Sound*, chronicles his journey to make music live with whales from Hawaii to Russia. *Thousand Mile Song* (Basic Books) was named one of the ten best science and technology books for 2008 by Booklist, a publication of the American Library Association. *Why Birds Sing* (Basic Books, 2005) was the first trade book to examine bird song from the combined perspectives of science, music, and poetry and was the culmination of his interdisciplinary work since he began teaching at NJIT in 1992. *Why Birds Sing* has been published in the U.S., England, Australia, Italy, Germany, Spain, Korea, China, and Taiwan as both a book and compact disc.

Rothenberg's first CD on ECM Records, with pianist Marilyn Crispell, *One Dark Night I Left My Silent House* came out in May 2010. *Le Monde* called it "une petite miracle." The *Guardian* heard "the clarinet subtleties of Jimmy Giuffre and the tonal adventurousness of Joe Maneri." All About Jazz heard "sublime depth and intuition." BBC Music Magazine said "If these pieces were pre-composed they'd be categorized as chamber music of a high order. But, of course, it's only jazz."

Rothenberg received his PhD from Boston University and his BA from Harvard University.

NJIT, New Jersey's science and technology university, enrolls more than 8,800 students pursuing bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in 120 programs. The university consists of six colleges: Newark College of Engineering, College of Architecture and Design, College of Science and Liberal Arts, School of Management, College of Computing Sciences and Albert Dorman Honors College. U.S. News & World Report's 2009 Annual Guide to America's Best Colleges ranked NJIT in the top tier of national research universities. NJIT is internationally recognized for being at the edge in knowledge in architecture, applied mathematics, wireless communications and networking, solar physics, advanced engineered particulate materials, nanotechnology, neural engineering and e-learning. Many courses and certificate programs, as well as graduate degrees, are available online through the Office of Continuing Professional Education.



## 42ND VOLL-DAMM BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

### FEATURING SONNY ROLLINS' 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

BARCELONA, SPAIN – The 42nd Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival is set to commence Wednesday, November 3rd through Thursday, December 2nd. This month long celebration will feature Sonny Rollins' 80th Birthday Celebration along with performances by Chick Corea solo piano, Chucho Valdés & The Afro-Cuban Messengers, David Sanborn Trio, Kenny Garrett Quartet, Charles Lloyd Quartet, Kurt Rosenwinkel Standards Trio and Gonzalo Rubalcaba Quintet.

Opening the festival on November 3rd, Sonny Rollins continues his 80th Birthday Celebration after a historic New York performance that included special guests, Jim Hall, Roy Hargrove, Christian McBride, Roy Haynes, and Ornette Coleman. New York Times critic Nate Chinen stated, "The concert found him in high spirits, in strong form and, for a generous stretch, in rare distinguished company. It was an evening worthy of an American master, and primarily because he made it so."

Some of the best and brightest world music and jazz artists will be performing at this year's festival, including Jamie Cullum, Omar Sosa, Jaques Morelenbaum, Concha Buika, Richard Galliano, Peter Brötzmann Chicago Tentet, Paolo Angeli, Steve Wilson-Bruce Barth Duo, Lee Konitz-Dan Tepfer Duo, and JD Allen Trio.

### LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS

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click the Notable' button





The festival's lecture series continues this year with guest speakers: Wall Street Journal / Jazziz columnist Larry Blumenfeld, Blue Note Records President Bruce Lundvall, journalist and poet David Castillo, and author Ted Gioia, who will discuss the future of jazz.

The festival will present three highly anticipated programs at the world renowned Monvínic, which the Wall Street Journal proclaimed as "the best wine bar in the world." DownBeat magazine will present, for the first time, a Blindfold/Winefold Test featuring journalist Dan Ouellette and pianist Chucho Valdés. The event showcases critical listening and wine tasting, an extension of DownBeat's famous "Blindfold Test." In a separate event, the "Kurt Rosenwinkel Monvínic Experience," the American guitarist will improvise to the taste of classic Spanish wines presented by the vignerons himself and the highly-regarded sommelier Josep Roca, co-owner of the famous three-star restaurant El Celler de Can Roca. Blue Note Records President Bruce Lundvall will also present the "Story of Blue Note" along with pairing wines in a discussion with Joan A. Cararach, artistic director of the festival since 2003.

Last year, the Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival, in partnership with New York's Jazz Standard, officially closed the annual festivities with a performance by pianist Chano Domínguez & The Flamenco Quintet. The performance was recorded live and will be released in 2011.

In May 2010, the festival joined forces with the CareFusion Newport Jazz Festival® to enhance worldwide recognition for these two time honored events. "It is exciting for Barcelona to be associated with the most famous jazz festival in the world and to collaborate with George Wein, who is a good friend and an inspiration to me," said artistic director Joan A. Cararach. "Additionally, I look forward to the opportunity of exploring wider exposure for the many artists based in Barcelona, such as pianists Chano Domínguez and Omar Sosa, among others."

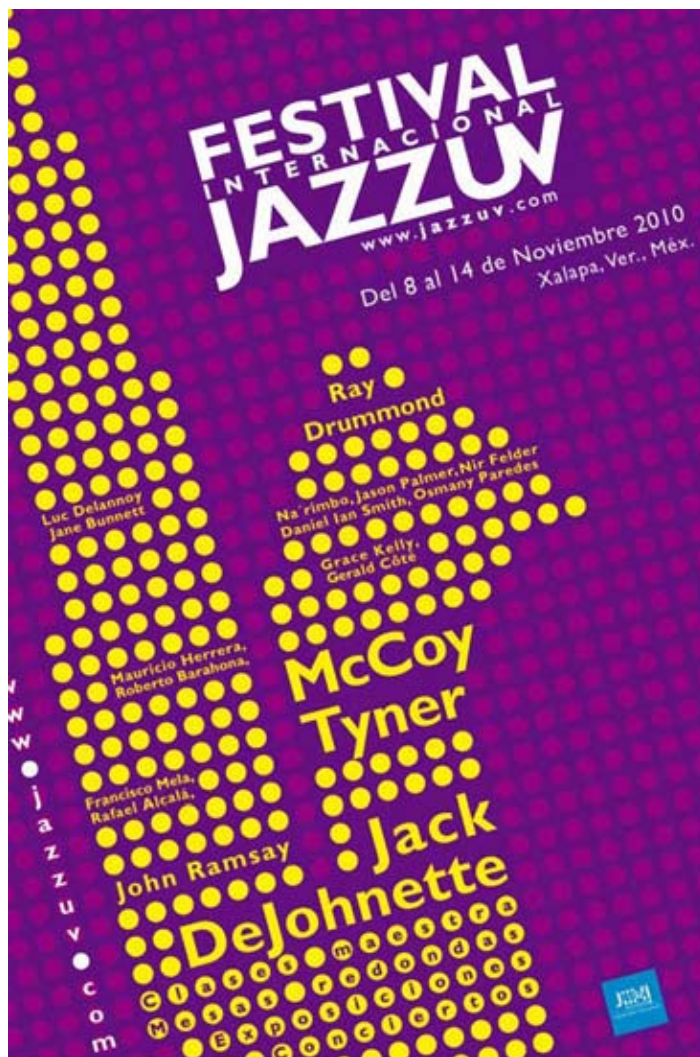
Spain saw its first professional jazz festival in 1966. It started with a concert at the amazing Palau de la Música in Barcelona, featuring pianist Dave Brubeck with his classical quartet. Despite surviving the hostile times of the Franco dictatorship, the festival ceased operations the years of 1977 and 1980, which were surprisingly the first years of democracy. Since the late '80s, the festival has been organized by The Project, whose efforts reach upwards of 300,000 people annually. The Project was founded in 1988 by producer Tito Ramoneda, still president of this organization leader in Barcelona and Spain. In 2010, the festival celebrates its 42nd anniversary with musicians and industry professionals from around the world making Barcelona Jazz Festival one of the largest and most ambitious jazz festivals in Europe.

For a complete schedule of events, please visit:

<http://www.barcelonajazzfestival.com/>

<http://barcelonajazzfestival.blogspot.com/>

## 2010 JAZZUV INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL BRINGS HEADLINERS MCCOY TYNER, JACK DEJOHNETTE, RAY DRUMMOND, JANE BUNNETT AND GRACE KELLY TO XALAPA



XALAPA, MEXICO – The 2010 Jazzuv International Festival comes to Xalapa (Veracruz, Mexico) November 8 through 14 mixing performances from some of the world's best jazz artists with educational opportunities. This year's headliners include McCoy Tyner, Jack DeJohnette, Ray Drummond, Jane Bunnett and Grace Kelly.

"Education has been the focus of our festival from the very beginning," says Artistic Director Francisco Mela. "We bring forums, master classes and performances to a university setting to create a festival that entertains while it educates you."

Performances at this year's festival include multi-talented headliners such as pianist McCoy Tyner who has often been credited as an influence on younger jazz musicians and is known for his work with the John Coltrane

Quartet. Jack DeJohnette's wide-ranging style of jazz has made him one of the most requested and renowned drummers of our time. Bassist Ray Drummond has worn many hats over his 30 year career including, composer, arranger, band leader, educator and producer. Canadian Jane Bunnett, saxophonist, flutist and pianist, has gained worldwide recognition for her talent in improvisation, execution and technical skills as a leader and composer. And, at just 17 years old, saxophonist, singer, composer and arranger, Grace Kelly has already recorded five albums as a leader and won numerous awards.

The educational mission of the Jazzuv International Festival is evident by it's schedule which offers an interactive opportunity for every participant. The festival holds public forums with discussions by musicians, writers and educators, free masters classes taught by guest artists, and performances where young artists share the stage with international artists. For more information, visit [www.jazzuv.com/festival](http://www.jazzuv.com/festival) - but we've not yet been able to find the info in English.

## BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

**New Release blues....** Ah, the smell of autumn and the sound of new blues! Here's something to keep that color tour hopping: **Kenny Wayne Shepard-** *Live in Chicago*; **Ronnie Earl-** *Spread the Love*; **Charlie Musselwhite-** *The Well*; **Eden Brent-** *Ain't Got No Troubles*; **Kenny Neal-** *Hooked on your Love*; **Duke Robillard-** *Passport to the Blues*; **Devon Allman's Honeytribe-** *Space Age Blues*; **Robin Rogers-** *Back in the Fire*; **Donell Jones-** *My Heart*; **Walter Horton-** *Blues Harmonica Giant*; **Joe Louis Walker-** *Blues Conspiracy: Live on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise*; **Chris Duarte Group-** *Infinite Energy*; **Buddy Guy-** *Living Proof* (vinyl and cd versions); **Eric Gales-** *Relentless*; **Albert Castiglia-** *Keepin On*; **Junior Wells-** *Live in 1966*; **James Cotton-** *Giant*; **Snowy White Blues Project-** *In our Time-Live!*; **Eddie Turner-** *Miracles & Demons*; **Bob Corritore-** *Harmonica Blues*; **Muddy Waters-** *King of Chicago Blues*; **Dr. Tequila-** *Dr. Tequila*; **Piano Red-** *Lost Atlanta Tapes*; **T-Bone Walker-** *Armadillo 2*; **Gary U.S. Bonds-** *Let Them Talk*; **Rick Holmstrom,** **John "Juke" Logan and Stephen Hodges-** *Twist-O-Lettz*; **Oli Brown-** *Heads I Win Tails You Lose*; **Bernard Allison-** *Otherside*; **Lucky Peterson-** *You Can Always Turn Around*; **JW Jones-** *Midnight Memphis Sun*; **Spider John Koerner-** *March 1963*; **Mel Melton & the Wicked Mojos-** *Papa Mojo's Roadhouse*; **Studebaker John's Maxwell Street Kings-** *That's The Way You Do*; **Rob Blaine's Big Otis Blues;** **Various Artists-** *Mississippi Sheiks Tribute Concert*; **Swississippi Chris Harper-** *Four Aces and a Harp*; **Claude Hay-** *Deep Fried Satisfied....* That's it for this month. See ya!

PAGE 10 Mark Smith

## LIKE JAZZ & BLUES PHOTOS?



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](http://www.flickr.com/photos/novaron)

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

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

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

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



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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

really transform lives.

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



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



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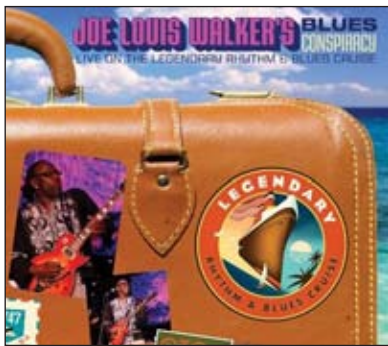


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We only bring you  
the Cream of the Crop!



**JOE LOUIS WALKER**  
**Blues Conspiracy: Live on the**  
**Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise**  
**STONY PLAIN MUSIC**

One would be hard pressed to find anyone in the past thirty years who has put together a body of recordings as deep and substantial as Joe Louis Walker. Especially on his initial recordings on Hightone and then on Verve-Gitanes, Walker has been able to be forward looking as well as rooted in the tradition.

Few approach his versatility as both a guitarist and as a vocalist. While his post Verve recordings may not have been on the same level as these earlier masterpieces (and one would be hard-pressed to name a half dozen other recordings the past two decades that approach these blues masterworks), Walker still remains a fervent and quite entertaining performer.

Now on Stony Plain Records, Walker has a new release, "Blues Conspiracy: Live on the Legendary Rhythm 7 Blues Cruise," that he views as a companion to his two volumes of "Live at Slims" and the "Great Guitars," which both date from the 1990s.

This is a live recording taken from January 2010 performances on the Cruise with most of these performances featuring Walker and his band joined by guest artists who were on the ship. Walker's Band included Linwood Taylor on guitar, Kevin Burton on keyboards, Henry Oden on bass and Jeff Minniweather on drums with guest appearances by the likes of Mike Finnigan on organ and vocals; Johnny Winter, Duke Robillard, Tommy Castro, Tab Benoit, and Kirk Fletcher on guitar; Mitch Woods on piano; Curtis Salgado on vocals; Jason Ricci, Kenny Neal and Watermelon Slim on harmonica; Keith Crossan and Deanna Bogart on saxophones; and Tom Poole on trumpet. These tracks all feature guests on the performances with the exception of one.

A good number of the performances here are of

songs Walker has previously recorded, but several selections seem not to have been previously waxed.

From a standpoint of a fan, the guests add a dimension of special occasion that does not always translate to an audio recording. Also, it can take away from the focus of the performances with some rough edges and perhaps a bit more emphasis on soloing.

Generally these pitfalls are avoided here, and the performances are quite fine even if they do not quite reach the level of the two volumes of "Live at Slims," arguably among the toughest live blues recordings of the past two decades.

Things start off on a solid note on "Slow Down GTO" with Mike Finnigan's organ joining Walker and his band (and it's great that bassist Oden, a Boss Talker from 2 decades ago, is back with Walker), and is followed by "Ain't That Cold," where Johnny Winter's slide embellishes Walker's fervent singing. Curtis Salgado and Mike Finnigan share the vocals on the OV Wright classic "You're Gonna Make Me Cry," which is enjoyable but slightly messy and frenzied in execution. Tommy Castro and the horn players join in on the rocking rendition of Travis Phillips' Louisiana rock'n'roller "Eyes Like a Cat."

Kirk Fletcher adds some nice guitar to the rendition of Lowell Fulson's "Ten More Shows to Play," but "Born in Chicago" suffers from too many musical cooks with Jason Ricci, Nick Moss and Paris Slim adding solos for a performance that seems longer than it should have been. In contrast, "Sugar Mama," with Watermelon Slim added on harmonica, is the longest track, but allows Walker to stretch out for some inspired playing along with Slim's nice harp on a performance that seems to take little time at all.

Kenny Neal joins in adding some Slim Harpo flavored harmonica on Junior Wells' "A Poor Man's Plea." "It's a Shame" is the track showcasing Walker's band and Linwood Taylor is featured on guitar here, followed by another jam as pianist Mitch Woods and guitarists Tab Benoit and Paul Nelson join Walker for "747."

Even if not as tight as Walker's earlier takes on this song, this track is a fun way to close this recording and certainly, warts and all, is a worthy addition to his considerable body of music that he has graced us with for such a lengthy period.

**Ron Weinstock**

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**RYUICHI SAKAMOTO**  
**playing the piano / out of noise**  
 DECCA

Jazz listeners, even those not acquainted with Sakamoto's formidable resume, should find much to savor while traversing the solo piano disc that leads off this double set. The well-traveled composer/keyboardist, who has left his distinctive mark on the pop, techno and, most often, the film score scenes, draws here from his diverse and dazzling repertoire. The masterful touch and harmonic sophistication heard on these tracks is like that found on the best of "pure" jazz solo readings. Standouts include themes from the films "Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence" and "The Last Emperor" and the Ravel tribute "Bolerish".

The multi-tracked piano piece that opens Disc Two begins a transit to realms of minimalism, ambient, space music and several cross-breedings of these. Sakamoto employs sources from electronics to medieval ensembles, consciously challenging the borders at which "music" becomes pure "sound". Uninitiated ears shouldn't be scared away as none of the twelve pieces are excessively long. And those that stay within range will encounter a varied and compelling sonic sequence. Regardless of genre, "playing the piano / out of noise" should rate as one of the year's most engaging releases.

*Duane Verh*

**DEKE DICKERSON**  
**Live at Duff's**  
 MAJOR LABEL/ HEP 400

I came across guitarist extraordinaire Deke Dickerson as he served to organize backing bands for headliners at the Ponderosa Stomp in New Orleans. Often Deke would be used to accompany some of the rockabilly or country oriented acts, but he could also be heard behind a bluesman like Lazy Lester as well as a Dale Hawkins. The core of his music might be old time country guitar mixed with some surf guitar. Plenty of country swing and twang with some jazz and blues accents added, like James Burton meets Duane Eddy with other genre hopping just like the backing band of the Modern Sounds whose approach may be rooted more in jazz and swing traditions, but provides a thoroughly compatible and sympathetic backing as they did for

blues and boogie woogie stylist Carl Sonny Leyland as I blogged last September, <http://inablue mood.blogspot.com/2009/09/totally-captivating-piano-blues.html>.

There is a great picture of Deke with a 4 neck guitar in the inside cover of this new live recording with the Modern Sounds, and the material that ranges from honky tonk to rockabilly to country to jazz and blues includes such driving rockers as "Mexicali Baby," a terrific rendition of Lazy Lester's "I'm a Lover Not a Fighter" (with Patterson on harmonica here), the rockabilly vocal on "Snatch It and Grab it," a spirited rockabilly polka instrumental "Early American," and the jazzy "Lover Come Back To Me" (and no he doesn't evoke Dinah Washington). Listening him introduce "Ain't No Grave Deep Enough" as a country song that psychobilly fans seem to like reminds me of some of the material Commander Cody waxed three decades ago, while "Good Time Ga," features Patterson on steel guitar. Then there are covers of songs from Porter Wagoner, Conway Twitty, and Willie Nelson number (introduced as if Otis Redding would have done it if Otis Redding was .... (well I am not giving away all of his intros)). This is a live recording (as suggested by the title), and sound is really good which matches the music.

Anyway, listening to this makes me wish I was at Duff's that night. This ain't blues or jazz, but it is a helluva lot of fun to just put on. Hey I paid for this with my own money and give a big thumbs up. Oh for those interested, Deke has a website, [www.dekedickerson.com](http://www.dekedickerson.com) from which you can order this (as well as from better online retailers like [bluebeatmusic.com](http://bluebeatmusic.com)).

*Ron Weinstock*



**GEORGE BROOKS SUMMIT**  
**Spirit and Spice**  
 EARTH BROTHER

Saxophonist and composer, George Brooks has been called a "leading American voice in Indian jazz fusion." He has "performed with such notable and diverse musicians as Terry Riley, John McLaughlin, Zakir Hussain, Larry Coryell, Etta James, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Kronos Quartet and Anthony Braxton. His original compositions are said to "combine elegant melodies with the rich harmonies of modern jazz and the driving



rhythms of North India, forming a unique and wholly satisfying musical experience.” “Spirit and Spice” (Earth Brother) is the latest CD by the George Brooks Summit. The group is George Brooks on saxophone, Fareed Haque on guitar, Kai Eckhardt on bass, & Steve Smith on drums & konnakol (vocal percussion). This brilliant recording also includes guest appearances by Zakir Hussain, Swapan Chaudhuri, Frank Martin, Niladri Kumar, Ronu Majumdar, Kala Ramnath, Hamsika Iyer, Sridhar Parthasarathy, & Celso Alberti.

The music on “Spirit and Spice” is a varied stew starting with the funky blues with a churning rhythm, “Monsoon Blues,” with bassist Eckhardt laying down a funk bottom while guitarist Haque lays down some strong unison lines with Brooks before the leader takes a driving solo with plenty of blues flavor showing off a full-bodied sound, followed by solo by Haque which imaginatively mixes single note runs and chords. “Spice is the first number bringing together the traditions as a dreamy piano is followed by the Northern Indian musicians followed by Brooks’ sax.

The blending of sitar, tabla and violin with Brooks’ quartet is a natural sounding fusion of musical styles as the listener easily gets enthralled by the musical interplay, which at times gets very spirited. “Silent Prayer - Madhuvanti” is a more contemplative number with Brooks having a very meditative approach. “Spirit” opens with some robust, bluesy sax over a simple repeated riff before the tempo quickens with the guitar and Indian instruments weaving a fascinating musical base for Brooks to take off from, yet his earthy playing and the strong rhythms here make this performance highly accessible.

On “Lalita” Sridhar Parthasarathy adds a wordless vocal and the tabla of Swapan Chaudhuri enlivens the rhythms over which Brooks weaves his robust tenor sax with the bansuri flute of Ronu Majumdar before Brooks quotes “Black Magic Woman” at the performance’s end. “Sri Rollins” is a tribute to Sonny Rollins and is a calypso that celebrates a form that Rollins so often employs (and I do hear echoes of “St. Thomas” here).

Brooks and Haque both take solos on this solid performance. The fusion of Hard bop and North Indian music is again presented on “Peshkar For Hamza” before Brooks’ “Casting” features his lyrical soprano saxophone on a dreamy performance.

George Brooks has put together an album of fascinating performances that span from funky blues to rhythmically charged fusion of musical traditions. Brooks himself comes across also as a striking saxophonist, able to get down with a funky gutbucket blues riff as well as present a more spiritual side while engaging in the fascinating musical conversations that make “Spirit & Spice,” such an enlivening recording.

*Ron Weinstock*

**jazz-blues.com**



## JJ GREY & MOFRO

**Georgia Warhorse**  
**ALLIGATOR**

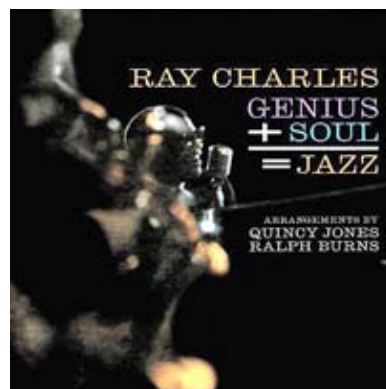
One part singer/songwriter, four parts soul shouter, JJ Grey here serves up another potent set of Deep Southern roots-bound song craft. And if the North Floridian vocalist/multi-instrumentalist has eased up on the redneck, blue-collar vitriol of previous offerings, he sure hasn’t abandoned the power.

While tracks such as the swamp-bound rocker “Diyo Dayo” and the slinky title tune set up a smoldering backdrop for *Warhorse*, it’s the ballads that provide the real punch. Placing a slow, almost dirge-tempo ballad second on the set would be risky business unless it’s as evocative and solidly delivered as Grey’s “King Hummingbird”. His lyrically enigmatic “Gotta Know” evolves into a low-key soul/gospel *tour de force*.

Grey’s rage isn’t all gone, this time around he recites a laundry list of evil-doers, consigning them to “The Hottest Spot In Hell”. His first-class journeyman backup on *Warhorse* ranges from earthy acoustic fronts to classic horns-and-rhythm.

With soul music currently in full-go “revival” mode, it’s an ideal time for J.J. Grey to get his due. *Georgia Warhorse* should greatly improve the odds.

*Duane Verh*



## RAY CHARLES

**Genius + Soul = Jazz**  
**CONCORD**

Concord continues its program of reissuing Ray Charles’ classic output with a two-CD package, “Genius + Soul = Jazz” that makes available not only that

release, but the three other jazz recordings Charles produced after leaving Atlantic Records, "My Kind of Jazz," "Jazz Number 2," and "My Kind of Jazz Part 3." It is an interesting chapter to Charles' musical legacy. Since he joined Atlantic, Charles' music more directly reflected a broad range of musical influences only hinted at his SwingTime recordings that were mostly in a Charles Brown vein but hinted at the mix of gospel, soul jazz and jump blues that he would meld into the Genius' unique style.

The title album was one of the first albums issued on Impulse records and had Ray on Hammond organ backed by the Count Basie band without its leader, and another session with other great jazz veterans of that era. With arrangements by Quincy Jones and Ralph Burns, Charles and the band turn out brassy renditions of originals like "From the Heart," a couple of vocals including a strong "'I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town," a big band rendition of Bobby Timmons "Moanin'" and the instrumental rendition of the Clovers' hit "One Mint Julep," that was a #1 R&B hit and a top ten pop chart smash. Incidentally, Charles seemed to have a soft spot for Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers because there are several other Jazz Messenger tunes adapted in these Jazz recordings in addition to the Bobby Timmons classic.

"My Kind of Jazz," the second album reissued in this set, was recorded in Los Angeles and Charles had such musicians as trumpeters Bobby Bryant and Blue Mitchell, and saxophonists Clifford Scott and Leroy Cooper, while Charles is on piano. The Blakey songbook is mined for Bobby Timmons' "This Here," while there are also renditions of Benny Golson's "I Remember Clifford," Lee Morgan's "Sidewinder" and Horace Silver's "Senor Blues." As Will Friedwald's annotation observes, Charles was among the instigators of the jazz waltz, including Toots Thielemann's "Bluesette." Charles contributed the original "Booty-Butt," to this and also the disc opens with a rendition of "Golden Boy," from the musical of the same name.

"Jazz Number 2" was recorded with the Ray Charles Orchestra that included Johnny Coles, Blue Mitchell, James Clay, David 'Fathead' Newman, Don Wilkerson and Leroy Cooper and opens with the four part "Our Suite," with some strong tenor sax, trumpet and baritone sax along with Luiz Bonfá's "Morning of Carnival (Manha de Carnaval)," and Teddy Edwards' marvelous "Brazilian Skies," both displaying a definite tropical flavor.

This flavor is also evident on Alf Calusen's "Samba De Elencia," on the final of the four albums compiled here, "My Kind of Jazz Part III," with a different Charles Band that still has James Clay and Leroy Cooper but now has Clifford Solomon (some may be familiar from his work with Charles Brown). Horace Silver's "Sister Sadie," is among the other performances while Benny Golson contributed an original, "Ray Minor Ray."

The fun of the performances here are they are solid swinging big band jazz with strong blues roots but definitely modern touches. A bonus track of "Misty" is

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included from a session led by trombonist Steve Turre, recorded nearly a quarter century after the latest of the big band sessions, with Charles spare piano complementing Turre's growling tailgate playing. This is a convenient package of Charles post-Atlantic recordings which should appeal to the Genius' fans as well as lovers of swinging big band jazz.

**Ron Weinstock**



**DUKE ROBILLARD**  
**Passport To The Blues**  
**STONY PLAIN**

Best known as a founder of Roomful Of Blues in 1967, guitarist Duke Robillard has cut a wide path in the music business on his own or as a sideman for the likes of Bob Dylan and Tom Waits. His latest is a return to his blues roots after experimenting with numerous other styles of late.

Having just been audited by the IRS, "Workin' Hard For My Uncle" gives a tongue in cheek crotch chop to Uncle Sam with the help of Bruce Bears on keyboard and the sax of Doug James, while "Hong Kong Suit," the second half of the death and taxes openers, includes a little bossa nova touch from Robillard's guitar.

Having toured with Tom Waits, Robillard gives a nod via the cover of Waits' "Make It Rain," vocally channeling the author as Robillard's six strings sear through the tune.

"Duke's Spoken Blues" is just that, smokey in nature, assisted by bassist Brad Hallen, though the boogie woogie of "Text Me" offsets the extended guitar showcase of "Grey Sky Blues." Finally, since the NFL season is in progress, fans of the St. Louis Rams might want to adopt the bonus instrumental "Bradford's Boogie." I don't think it is about their rookie quarterback Sam Bradford, but the song might be useful as a theme to use after the next win.

If either a newbie to the blues or a veteran of getting around its highways and back roads, "Passport To The Blues" might be just the ticket for a little audio indigo road trip.

**Peanuts**

**jazz-blues.com**





**SOULLIVE**  
**Rubber Soullive**  
**ROYAL FAMILY**

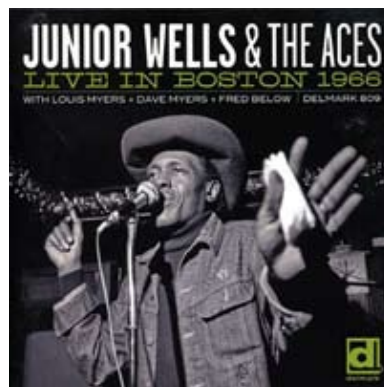
In the '60's-early '70's golden era of "organ jazz" cover versions of popular tunes were a mainstay. Think Jimmy McGriff's classic remake of Ray Charles' "I've Got A Woman" for one. This approach made the genre one of the most successful of jazz styles in "crossing over" to the pop charts.

The trio Soullive- Neal Evans (Hammond organ), Eric Krasno (guitar) and Alan Evans (drums)- evokes those days with a solid and sometimes surprising set of Beatles compositions. Some, ("Drive My Car", "Taxman") come off as naturals for this treatment. Others are unexpected: drummer Evans' rhythmic shifts underscore a fiery take on "Eleanor Rigby", and an up-tempo "Help" makes a notably "legit" jazz transition.

The playing is strong across the board and Krasno,

in particular, stands out solo-wise.

There are a goodly number of additional moments on Rubber Soullive where the merger of classic material and classic format will grab the ear. *Duane Verh*



**JUNIOR WELLS & THE ACES**  
**Live in Boston 1966**  
**DELMARK**

What a pleasant surprise it was to learn that Delmark was planning to issue a 1966 Boston appearance by Junior Wells. It was recorded shortly after the classic "Hoodoo Man Blues" was issued, but as Scott Dirks notes, instead of the band Junior was using in the clubs (that included Buddy Guy), he traveled with the Aces (Louis and Dave Myers, guitar and bass guitar respectively; and Fred Below on drums).

The result is Junior Wells & the Aces "Live in Boston 1966," and is a release that will certainly raise the blood

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Photo © Robyn Churchill

pressure of the many fans the late legend had. The hour long performance issued here includes twelve songs interspersed with Wells' comments and introductions. For those who remember the live tracks on Wells' Vanguard album "It's My Life Baby," there will be some similarity, although Louis Myers' guitar style is very different from the more flamboyant fretwork of Guy.

The songs include "Feelin' Good," a staple of his repertoire, followed by "Man Downstairs," where he quotes "Mellow Down Easy" in his solo.

He has fun playing with the audience at times and it is clear they are having a good time as he launches into "Worried Life Blues," with Below helping kick it off with his identifiable drum roll.

"Junior's Whoo," suggests his fusion of funk and traditional blues as the groove again evokes "Mellow Down Easy," as he urges his woman to come on and scats a bit followed by a tough harp break. Over forty years later, renditions of "That's All Right" and "Look On Yonder's Wall" would hardly be exciting, but Wells sings strongly on what likely would have staples of his club performances.

No such complaint can be made about Wells' "Messing With the Kid," which is very similar to his "Chicago The Blues Today" recording, with Myers playing some of the same riffs as Guy behind the vocal. "Hideaway" is a feature for Louis Myers' guitar and taken straight before Wells comes in on harp over

half way through.

Dirks suggests that both "If You Gonna Leave Me" and "I Don't Know" (note the Willie Mabon recording), sound like Junior put them together from fragments of songs and illustrates his ability to make these sound like finished songs and display his personality.

Myers takes a nice solo on the former number, while Wells opens the latter number on a harp with a nice shuffle groove that evokes his mentor, Sonny Boy 'Rice Miller' Williamson's "Don't Start Me Talkin,'" and even sings a couple lines in a Rice Miller vein. Myers handles one vocal here, "Got My Mojo Workin'."

The sound is a slight bit muffled, but that is due to the source material and the restoration does a really good job in presenting the music. It is also handsomely packaged in a digipak. Scott Dirks writes that the power of Junior's personality comes across here and this writer certainly will not disagree with that assessment. The one omission is lack of information of where this was recorded other than in Boston.

This is a wonderful addition to the Junior Wells discography and certainly should appeal to his fans and fans of solid Chicago blues. **Ron Weinstock**

*the devil is an angel too*

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## RONNIE EARL

### Spread The Love

#### STONY PLAIN

I first saw Ronnie Earl (Horvath) in 1978 when he was the guitarist with Sugar Ray & the Bluetones when they were backing J.B. Hutto at a New York club. At that time I bought an EP, which included his renditions of some Earl Hooker numbers, and his wonderful way with a guitar was evident then.

In the years since he had a stint with Roomful of Blues before starting his own group, Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters, initially with vocalists, but increasingly oriented towards a straight instrumental focus.

At the same time he collaborated on numerous recordings with a variety of blues greats and had such artists as Robert Lockwood guest on his own recordings. He is a dazzling guitarist who plays with a voice-like tone and can evoke mentors like Lockwood, Albert Collins and Guitar Slim while also displaying his awareness of the lessons of Grant green, Kenny Burrell and Wes Montgomery. I would be hard-pressed to think of another guitarist than can play straight blues, straight jazz and them a mix of the two that is so completely unforced,



natural sounding.

His latest recording with the Broadcasters, "Spread the Love" (Stony Plain), was recorded in March 2010 with Dave Limina on keyboards, Jim Mouradian on bass and Lorne Entress on drums with Paul Kochanski playing bass on a couple of selections, and Tim O'Connor and Jason James playing on "Blues For Slim."

From the opening moments of his take on Albert Collins' "Backstroke," to the last lingering country blues styled licks on "Blues For Bill," one can be dazzled by Earl's virtuosity yet soothed by his taste and soulfulness. "Blues For Donna" seems inspired by Lightnin' Hopkins and one can almost hear Hopkins or Lowell Fulson singing "Lord have mercy, forgive me for my sins," against his playing as he well spin of a cluster of notes and then a chord and a few riffs. His playing exhibits awareness of the lesson of Albert King that the silence and space between the notes say as much as what one plays.

Kenny Burrell's "Chitlins' Con Carne" is given a lively reading with Limina sounding quite nice on organ and then followed by a moving version of Duke Pearson's "Christo Redentor," that was first on a Donald Byrd album. Blues fans will know of this from Charlie Musselwhite, but Earl is really wonderful here with his guitar sounding vocalized against Lumina's deep organ backing. This is a rendition that will certainly join the others as a classic performance.

The trio of instrumentals, "Happy," "patience," and "Miracle," are marvelous tone poems, followed by Lumina's rollicking "Spann's Groove," for which he sets the tone on piano playing some boogie-laced piano before Earl enters with responsive, rocking riffs and complimentary chords and then takes off with some explosive playing.

My favorite blues instrumental here is "Blues For Slim," which Earl builds upon the foundation that Eddie 'Guitar Slim' Jones, provide for "Things I Used To Do," and while he evokes Slim's playing, it is as inspiration as opposed to simply copying. Earl also gives Jones co-composing credits here.

Ronnie Earl can take us from the alley up into the heavens with his playing. He can play with grit yet touch us in our hearts and soothe our minds. As Earl's friend, Rev. Deborah J. Blanchard, states when Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters play, they "spread the love when their soulful notes brush the hearts of all of us who gather to listen and receive."

The level of Ronnie Earl's recordings is generally of a consistently high level and the superb "Spread the Love," is simply the latest demonstration of this.

*Ron Weinstock*

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## ROBIN ROGERS

### Back in the Fire

BLIND PIG

The release of Robin Rogers' new Blind Pig CD, "Back in the Fire" should have been a cause of celebration and a further step in her career's evolution and growth. However, serious health issues have arisen (discussed below) that may soon still this powerful and soulful voice.

The comments of her many admirers and friends suggest that this will be a considerable loss, both in musical and personal terms. I have not had the pleasure of meeting her or seeing her perform, but statements from fellow blues-woman Debbie Davies, and XM-Sirius blues programmer Bill Wax make it clear that she is a

James Cotton **GIANT**

"Among the greats of all time. He blazes on harp with brilliant virtuosity." —*Rolling Stone*

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very special person, not simply a special talent.

And what a voice she has. She sings with complete authority and total conviction which is evident on the opening track, "Baby Bye-Bye," that starts with hard hitting guitar from her husband Tony before Robin emphatically tells her ex that the only one he loves is himself and he ain't gonna steal Robin's pride. Tony Rogers builds a nice solo here with the rest of the band solidly keeping the groove (and in the case of Mark Stallings on organ add to the atmosphere). It's a strong performance of a striking lyric.

Robin adds nice harp to "Second Time Around," with Kerry Brooks on bass, producer-drummer Jim Brock and Stallings on piano maintaining an easy shuffle groove with Robin taking a nice harp solo on a lively performance. "You Don't Know" takes down the heat down as Robin sings in a low-key manner about how she has rested in the shadows and let love pass her by as she has been hurt too many times. Again, the Rogers have such a way with words and Robin sings with as much soul here and Tony adds a sweet guitar solo.

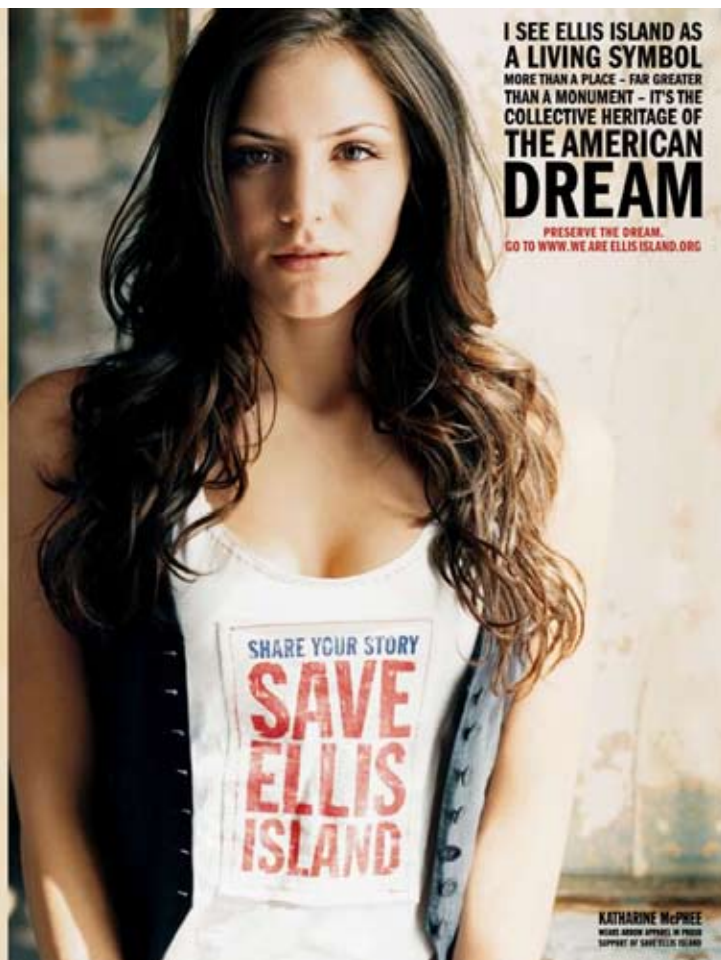
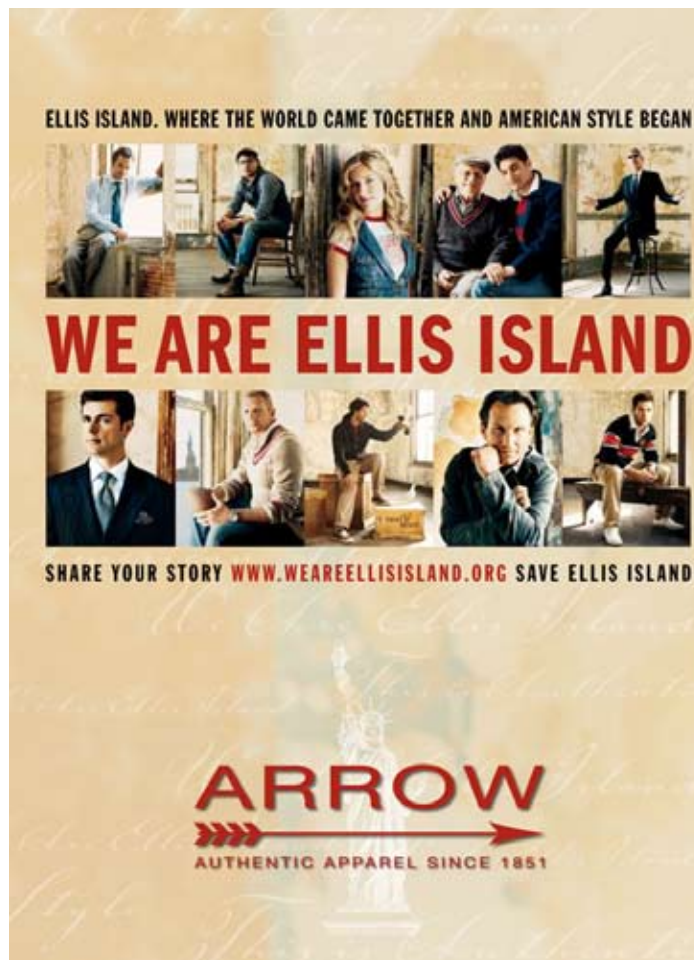
Among other selections, Robin marvelously interprets the Little Willie John classic "Need Your Love So Bad," with horns part of the backing and Bob Margolin guests and plays a strong guitar solo. "I Know I Done Wrong" is a lively number with a New Orleans flavored groove as Robin admits she has been a bit wild. In this

disc of wonderful performances, the most powerful may be "Don't Walk Away Run," Chuck Glass' song of spouse abuse, as Robin entreats her friend to get away from the abuser who drinks too much and loves to fight with no one his own size. The simple backing helps make Robin's urging that her friend "leave him tonight before the morning sun, don't walk away (pause) run," stand out even more. Robin's harp also adds to the mood on this compelling performance.

This terrific recording is counter-balanced by the fact that less than a month prior to its release, Robin Rogers, who had been hospitalized for a severe liver problem, was diagnosed with liver cancer.

A scan prior to surgery revealed an untreatable cancerous tumor on her liver. She is not a candidate for a liver transplant so she was sent home for hospice care. A trust fund has been set up to help with medical expenses and also aid for Tony who will be out of work. Like most musicians, they do not have health insurance and depend on touring income for their livelihood. Expenses for hospice care, medicine, and everyday living will be extremely high.

Much of this is from the Blind Pig Records website, <http://www.blindpigrecords.com/index.cfm?section=news&newsid=83>, which also has information on how one can help Robin and Tony and provides information on benefits as well (there is a Facebook page, Robin Rogers Benefit Central), and





to a Paypal page to make direct donations. There is also a direct link to Robin Rogers's webpage, [www.robinrogers.com](http://www.robinrogers.com), from which one can directly purchase Robin's CDs including the excellent "Back in the Fire." I have purchased this recording and made a donation to Robin. I hope that other blues and music fans will take my lead and buy some of her wonderful music from her website.

*Ron Weinstock*



## **JAMES COTTON**

**Giant**  
**ALLIGATOR**

James Cotton's career as a musician extends some 66 years and while he no longer handles the vocals, he still wails on the harmonica. His latest CD is "Giant" on Alligator and features his band of the past several years: Slam Allen on guitar and vocals; Tom Holland on guitar; Noel Neal on bass and Kenny Neal, Jr., on drums in addition to Mr. Superharp himself.

It's refreshing that for this latest Cotton recording they featured Cotton with his band and eschewed the superstar guests. Slam Allen certainly has developed into a solid singer with plenty of personality, and Tom Holland has become one of the most highly regarded traditionally-oriented guitarists around today, and little need be added about Noel Neal and Kenny Neal, Jr. This is a great band as the many who have seen them will readily testify.

There are a few originals here in addition to interpretations of classic blues of which "How Blue Can You Get?," "Since I Met You Baby" and "That's All Right" are the best known to most. I know the opening "Buried Alive in the Blues" by Nick Gravenites has been recorded a lot, but it is relatively new to these ears and it receives rollicking shuffle treatment here with plenty of Cotton's harp.

"Heard You're Getting Married" is a slow blues penned by Allen and Cotton with more crying harp. A pair of Muddy Waters tunes follows, with the slow rendition of "Sad Sad Day" standing out with terrific slide guitar from Tom Holland who evokes Waters' classic style. Another Allen-Cotton original, "Change," follows with a churning rhythm and a rocking solo from Allen.

Allen does a pretty solid job singing "How Blue You Can Get." The song is handled pretty straight and

Noel Neal takes a bass solo with Cotton's harp adding commentary to the bass solo. A hot instrumental, "In the Quickness," has a short guitar break from Allen and is followed by the Ivory Joe Hunter ballad "Since I Met You Baby," which again serves to showcase Cotton's harp with a serviceable vocal from Allen. Holland plays some lovely guitar behind the vocal on this in addition to Cotton's strong playing responding to Allen's vocal.

The band rocks on Muddy Waters' "Going Down Main Street," which includes some strong guitar before Cotton quotes his classic instrumental "The Creeper," as he takes the song to its end.

Allen follows with a first-rate vocal on "That's All Right," that also sports first-rate harp. "Blues For Koko," a moody instrumental by Cotton, is dedicated to the late Koko Taylor, and it concludes this disc on a high note. Mention should be accorded to Tom Holland's accompaniment of Cotton's dazzling, virtuosic harp on this.

Bruce Iglauer notes that Cotton has cut nearly 30 albums in his career. That does not include the many recordings he played on as a sideman. "Giant" simply is a strong addition to Cotton's rich musical legacy and is also valuable to document the terrific music that he has been playing with his working band.

*Ron Weinstock*



## **PEACHES STATEN**

**Live At Legends**  
**SWISSISSIPPI**

One would have to reach back to Koko Taylor in her prime to sample from-the-gut delivery this potent. Ms. Staten's own variety of Chicago fire is cast here in a nicely- paced, highly charged set of soul burners and ballads.

Her own tunes, notably the leadoff "Long Distance Phone Call" and the follow up, "Don't Rush Me" stand up well to covers including the Etta James hit "I'd Rather Go Blind".

A fair piece of this set's success comes courtesy of Ms. Staten's guitar/keys/and rhythm backup crew, the Groovesmakers. Their rock-solid support is further enhanced with subtle, show-band smarts; the fellas even lending tasteful vocal backing when called for.

*Live At Legends* should rate with best of club dates on disc this year.

*Duane Verh*



## BLUES IN BLACK & WHITE

The Landmark Ann Arbor Blues Festivals as  
photographed by Stanley Livingston

2010: ANN ARBOR, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS

In 1969 – two weeks prior to the Woodstock – the first Ann Arbor Blues Festival was held on the University of Michigan Campus. I neither attended Woodstock or the Ann Arbor Blues Festival. The Ann Arbor Blues Festival was the one of the two I wish I could have attended. It was a gathering of blues legends that one would never see the likes of again. In 1970 a second Blues Festival was held and then after a short hiatus, the festival returned as the Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival for a few more years, with a somewhat broader palette of music that now ranged from Son House to Sun Ra, the Art Ensemble of Chicago to Otis Rush. The University of Michigan Press has published “Blues in Black & White” a celebration of those path-making festivals centered around the marvelous photography of Stanley Livingston, one of several photographers who documented this event.

Livingston passed away in mid-September, 2010, but lived to see publication of this book that he worked on with his former photographic assistant, Tom Erlewine, who is the book’s editor and designer. The previously unpublished photos here were from thousands he took at the festivals. Livingston had never heard blues until he attended the first Ann Arbor Festival. He recalled, “When I arrived, Howlin’ Wolf was playing. I was struck by the intensity in his eyes. He had a scowling, expression, but then he’d smile just like a little baby. He was the greatest.”

Seeing Wolf and the others he knew he had to photograph them and that is what he did; and he did it so marvelously. The book presents candid backstage and performance shots that capture a young Luther Allison (Ann Arbor was a breakthrough performance for him); Howlin’ Wolf; Mississippi Fred McDowell (in performance and with a little child hugging him); Doctor Ross; Johnny Winter and pianist David Alexander

(n/k/a Omar Sharif) hanging out; Lucille Spann and Sippie Wallace, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells (together and separately); B.B. King; Otis Rush; Papa Lightfoot; Victoria Spivey, Johnny Shines and a laughing Robert Lockwood; Charlie Musselwhite with Freddie Roulette playing lap steel guitar; Roosevelt Sykes backstage with Big mama Thornton and Big Joe Williams; Johnny Winter and Luther Allison playing guitar together; Magic Sam (a nice sequence of shots, one of which includes (an unidentified Eddie Shaw on saxophone) as Sam smiles and Bruce Barlow looks on); Lightnin’ Hopkins; Mance Lipscomb; Son House (one where he and his wife sing a gospel number a cappella and the other shows Son intensely playing guitar); Albert King (including one picture where Robert Lockwood is hugging him on stage); Muddy Waters; Otis Rush; Mighty Joe Young; Bonnie Raitt accompanying Sippie Wallace; Jimmy ‘Fast Fingers’ Dawkins; Freddie King; Hound Dog Taylor; J.B. Hutto; John Lee Hooker, Juke Boy Bonner; Bobby Bland; Pee Wee Crayton; John Jackson (with his characteristic warm smile); Koko Taylor; and Robert Pete Williams.

I am sure I may have omitted a few names but as you can see, this was a veritable Blues Hall of Fame and very few of the performers shown here are still alive. But this book is more than photos of blues legends. These are classic images of the performers and performances as Livingston gives us a sense of the intensity and joy on stage and back stage. As Peter ‘Mudcat’ Ruth is quoted on the back cover, “These photos are works of art.”

The book includes an introduction by Jim O’Neal who discusses how the Festival impacted him and led to the beginning of the magazine, Living Blues. Michael Erlewine, who founded the All Music Guide, provides a History of the Ann Arbor Blues Festival as well as an interview with Howlin’ Wolf. Blues in Black & White also includes brief biographies and suggested recordings of the artists pictured (and this also serves as an index for the photographs). The book also strikes me as beautifully printed with the images wonderfully reproduced. It is a no-brainer and anyone who considers himself or herself a blues lover needs this book. This reviewer also suggests that it is among the finest recently published books of music photography.

**Ron Weinstock**

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