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# jazz & blues report

now in our 38th year



## 2011 GIFT GUIDE INSIDE!

# jazz & blues report

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Check out our constantly updated website. Now you can search for CD Reviews by artists, titles, record labels, keyword or JBR Writers. 15 years of reviews are up and we'll be going all the way back to 1974.

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"Buffalicious"

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

## IT'S GIFT IDEAS TIME!

Every year at this time we compile some ideas for holiday gifts along the lines of box sets, DVDs, books and some single CDs that have come out during the past year. On page 21, after the regular CD Review section, you'll find our 2010 Holiday Gift Guide with some reviews of both brand new releases as well as reprints of reviews since December 2010. Here in the front section you'll find some record company press releases announcing releases of very well-known artists that we did not receive for review, some due to their very large size, which are surely worthy of your consideration. So, here we go.....



### THE DEFINITIVE MILES DAVIS AT MONTREUX DVD COLLECTION 1973-1991

New York, NY —Ten discs. Twenty Hours. All Miles. Eagle Rock Entertainment will release The Definitive Miles Davis At Montreux DVD Collection 1973-1991 on October 24. [MSRP \$149.98]

Recorded in DTS Surround and Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, this rare box will only be manufactured to the tune of 5,000 units. This historic release – an unparalleled archive of live Miles – comes complete with a 48 page booklet featuring a foreword by Montreux Jazz Festival founder Claude Nobs, about this most enigmatic, prolific, and important jazz figure of the 20th century.

It starts in 1973 when Miles debuts at the festival playing organ and trumpet. Complete with bonus interviews of Nobs, Carlos Santana, Herbie Hancock, Stanley Clarke, Jean Luc-Ponty, Al Di Meola and other world-class musicians, Disc #1 runs over two hours.

It would be 11 years before Miles would grace the Montreux stage again. In 1984, with a seven-piece band (featuring Bob Berg on sax and keyboards, Darryl Jones, now in the Rolling Stones, on bass, John Scofield on guitar and Al

Foster on drums), Miles performs 11 pieces stretching out over an hour and a half. The following year, the same lineup would perform the same set but you'd never know it by the way Miles changes up the changes in each song so it never comes out the same way twice.

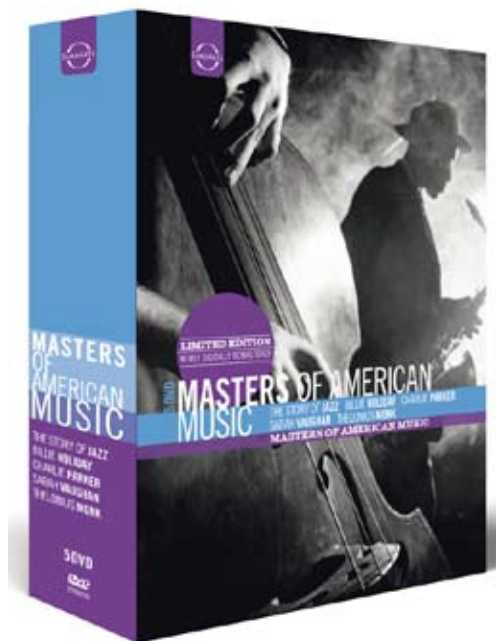
The two-hour 13-piece '85 set includes material from the A Tribute To Jack Johnson and Star People albums including Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time." In '86, Robben Ford replaces Scofield on guitar. Keyboardist George Duke ("Tutu" and "Splatch") and saxophonist David Sanborn ("Burn," "Portia," and "Jean-Pierre") are special guests.

In 1988, Miles returns for a very special night with saxophonist Kenny Garrett (who can also be heard on the 1990 set) to explore his "In A Silent Way" for the first time in years. The two-hour, 16-piece set is a spellbinder. In 1989, Chaka Khan adds vocals to "Human Nature" in a 13-piece 113-minute set that features Rick Margitza on sax, Kei Akagi and Adam Holzman on keyboards, Foley on lead bass, Benny Rietveld on bass, Ricky Wellman on drums and Munyungo Jackson on percussion.

The final appearance, July 8, 1991, a little under three months before his death, in a compact 60 minutes, features Quincy Jones conducting the Gil Evans Orchestra and George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band with Wallace Roney on trumpet and flugelhorn. On this night, Miles allows himself one small semblance of sentimentality: performing Gershwin's "Summertime," to the delighted crowd as well as the title track to the beloved Miles Ahead album.

Eagle Rock Entertainment is an international media production and distribution company operating across

audiovisual entertainment programming. Eagle Rock Entertainment works directly alongside talent to produce the highest quality programming output covering film, general entertainment and musical performance. Eagle Rock Entertainment has offices based in London, New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, Hamburg, & Paris.



#### **NAXOS USA & EUROARTS RELEASES MASTERS OF AMERICAN MUSIC 5-DVD BOX SET**

Masters of American Music is an award-winning television series - as entertaining as it is educational and memorable - that celebrates a pantheon of the greatest innovators in Jazz. Individual programs trace the lives and works of master musicians who defined the course of America's classical music. From its birth in New Orleans, to swing, the big bands, bebop, free Jazz and beyond - all of it is explored with sensitivity and in unique depth. Over 80 interviews were filmed in the making of the series. Featured artists come to life through these interviews, exciting rare performances, period footage and vintage photographs meticulously reproduced. Both the video and audio content has been restored and remastered in accordance with state-of-the-art specifications. After great response to the release of the single DVDs in 2009/2010, Naxos USA & EuroArts have made this limited edition "best of" box available at a special low suggested retail price of \$39.99.

- DVD1: Lady Day - The Many Faces of Billie Holiday: Aimed at the aficionado and novice alike, this documentary swings, both visually and aurally. What a Little Moonlight Can Do, You can't Take That Away From Me, Lover Man, On the Sunny Side of the Street, God Bless the Child, Strange Fruit, Fine and Mellow, and Swing, Brother, Swing (among many others) all come brilliantly to life on the screen.

- DVD2: Celebrating Bird - The Triumph of Charlie Parker is the first and only authorized documentary about one of the great legends in American music.

- DVD3: Sarah Vaughan - The Divine One: This production recounts the stellar singer's career of Sarah Vaughan,

from her beginnings at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey, to her debut at the Apollo Theater and her pre-eminence in nightclubs, concert halls and jazz festivals around the world.

- DVD4: Thelonious Monk - American Composer: Pianistic ringleader of the bebop revolution, Thelonious Monk is maybe Jazz' major composer after Duke Ellington.

- DVD5: The Story of Jazz: The Story of Jazz puts the crown on the brilliant, highly acclaimed Masters of American Music Series, which has profiles some of the music's pivotal figures: John Coltrane, Sarah Vaughan, Miles Davis, Count Basie, Thelonious Monk, Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker. The film places these important artists into historical context, allowing us to see them in the proper perspective.

Picture format DVD: NTSC 4:3 Sounds formats DVD: PCM Mono 2.0 Region code: 0

Booklet notes: English, German, French

Subtitles: German, English, French

Running time: DVD1 59 mins, DVD2 59 mins, DVD3 56 mins, DVD4 59 mins, DVD5 98 mins



#### **THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS - 43 CDs**

The consummate artistry of Miles Davis and the scope of his musical vision at Columbia Records is paid the ultimate tribute on THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS. For the first time, this new collection brings together the eight deluxe multi-CD box sets that were known as The Miles Davis Series. Each volume - seven of which have collectible "metal spines" - explored a major phase of the artist's development from 1955 (Miles Davis & John Coltrane: The Complete Columbia Recordings 1955-1961) through 1975 (The Complete On The Corner Sessions). Each volume presented the music from various LPs, plus a wealth of previously unissued session material. The eight box sets, totaling 43 CDs of music, were originally released on Columbia/Legacy between 1996 and 2007, and won a total of eight Grammy Awards. Priced at \$550, it is available only at [www.mypaydirect.com/genius-of-miles-davis/](http://www.mypaydirect.com/genius-of-miles-davis/)

Several of the original box sets have sold out over the



years, and have now been re-manufactured especially for this strictly limited-edition run of 2,000 copies of *THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS*. Presented in a replica of Miles' own trumpet case, a collectible *objet d'art* in and of itself, each package will include a number of extras: an exact replica of Miles' custom-made 'Gustat' Heim model 2 trumpet mouthpiece, a previously unseen and unavailable fine art lithograph by Miles, and a boutique quality t-shirt designed and manufactured exclusively by Trunk Ltd. for this package.

Weighing in at 21 pounds and individually numbered, *THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS* is destined to be a treasure in the hands of true Miles Davis aficionados. A D2C (Direct to Consumer) exclusive via GeniusOfMilesDavis.com, it was \$1199.00 in advance of its September 14 release through Columbia/Legacy, a division of Sony Music Entertainment. But I just checked and it is currently, as of this writing, \$749.

[Note: *THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS* includes the eight studio session box sets that encompass the bulk of his original studio albums from the '50s to the '70s. It does not include the various Columbia/Legacy live performance multi-CD box sets, for example *The Complete Live at the Plugged Nickel 1965*, released in 1995; or *The Cellar Door Sessions 1970*, released in 2005.]

The signing of Miles Davis to Columbia Records made musical history in 1955. He continued to make musical history for decades to come, changing the course of jazz (and in the process, popular and *avant garde* music) "four or five times," as he himself once quipped. There were important albums under his name in the late-1940s and '50s before his arrival at Columbia, and there were also notable albums after his years at Columbia, from 1986 until his death in 1991.

But Columbia Records became the repository of the overwhelming majority of the signature albums recorded by Miles in his lifetime, many of them with long-time producer and collaborator Teo Macero. These individual albums were gathered together in their entirety for the first time last year as *The Complete Miles Davis Columbia Album Collection*. A functional chest with removable lid housed the 52 single and double album titles (70 CDs of music in total), each packaged in a mini-LP CD cardboard replica of the original jacket, with original artwork and spine.

*THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS* is also the result of a unique collaborative partnership effort between the Miles Davis Estate and Sony Music, which includes the redesign of the MilesDavis.com website. It is now the first unified and regularly updated site high-lighting all aspects of his life. The dynamic web environment is not specific to Columbia/Legacy and Sony Music, in that it will cover product releases by other companies as well. The website, featuring news and vital information, video content, merchandise, and exclusive photography, will also offer special daily and weekly deals.

*THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS* draws together more than a decade of studio archival research by jazz scholars, annotators, and reissue producers. Each of the box sets in *The Miles Davis Series* was anxiously greeted with raves by

the critical establishment upon their release, and more than half of the box sets received at least one Grammy Award, some winning multiple Grammys. They are summarized as follows (in chronological order of the original music, not the Columbia/Legacy release dates):

- *Miles Davis & John Coltrane: The Complete Columbia Recordings 1955-1961*: This 6-CD box set (released in 2000) won two Grammy Awards, Best Boxed Recording Package and Best Album Notes. Focus is on the evolution of Miles' so-called "first great quintet," comprising John Coltrane (tenor saxophone), Red Garland (piano), Paul Chambers (bass), and Philly Joe Jones (drums), with important contributions by Cannonball Adderley (alto saxophone), Bill Evans (piano), Wynton Kelly (piano), and Jimmy Cobb (drums) – these sessions encompass the music for the LPs *'Round About Midnight*, *Milestones*, *Jazz Track*, *Kind Of Blue*, *Someday My Prince Will Come*, *Miles & Monk At Newport*, *Jazz At the Plaza*, and much more.

- *Miles Davis & Gil Evans: The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings*: The inaugural entry in *The Miles Davis Series*, this 6-CD box set (released in 1996) won three Grammy Awards, Best Historical Album, Best Album Notes, and Best Recording Package (Boxed), only the second time in Grammy history that was ever achieved. The partnership with Gil Evans spanned 1957 to 1968, and encompassed the music for the LPs *Miles Ahead*, *Porgy And Bess*, *Sketches Of Spain*, and *Quiet Nights*, but there is much more to be heard here.

- *Seven Steps: The Complete Columbia Recordings Of Miles Davis (1963-1964)*: This 7-CD box set (released in 2004) explores Miles' slow and careful development of his so-called "second great quintet," whose rhythm section comprised Herbie Hancock (piano), Ron Carter (bass), and Tony Williams (drums). Saxophonist George Coleman is heard on most of the music for the LPs *Seven Steps To Heaven*, *Quiet Nights*, *Miles Davis In Europe*, *My Funny Valentine*, and *Four & More*; and Sam Rivers joined for *Miles In Tokyo*. But it is not until the final CD's *Miles In Berlin* that Wayne Shorter enters the picture and the classic quintet's lineup was finalized.

- *Miles Davis Quintet 1965-'68: The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings*: Actually the second entry in *The Miles Davis Series*, this 6-CD box set (released in 1998) won the Grammy Award for Best Album Notes. The "second great quintet" of Shorter, Hancock, Carter, and Williams remains an all-time jazz standard, as heard on the music for the LPs *E.S.P.*, *Miles Smiles*, *Sorcerer*, *Nefertiti*, and *Miles in the Sky*, plus about half of *Filles De Kilimanjaro* and *Water Babies*.

- *The Complete In A Silent Way Sessions*: This 3-CD box set (released in 2001) covers less than six months from September 1968 to February 1969. But it is one of the most critical periods in Miles' career, as he transitions away from the "second great quintet" of Shorter, Hancock, Carter, and Williams. They are all here, to be sure, on the rest of the music from *Filles De Kilimanjaro* and *Water Babies* recorded in September and November. But by the time the *In A Silent Way* LP came into being, the picture had changed to include Chick Corea (electric piano), Joe Zawinul (organ and electric

piano), Dave Holland (bass), and most significantly, John McLaughlin (electric guitar).

- *The Complete Bitches Brew Sessions*: The third entry in *The Miles Davis Series*, this 4-CD box set (released in 1998) won the Grammy Award for Best Boxed Recording Package, as it reprised the memorable cover art of the late Mati Klarwein. Again covering less than six months time – from August 1969 (the week after Woodstock) through February 1970 – this is when the influence of Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone, James Brown, Santana, and Marvin Gaye, as well as the Beatles' post-production editing pyrotechnics all came together for Miles. To his new quintet lineup of Shorter, Corea, Holland and Jack DeJohnette (drums), Miles often augmented the sessions with a dozen other players, among them: McLaughlin, Zawinul, Bennie Maupin (bass clarinet), Harvey Brooks (electric bass), Lenny White (drums), Don Alias (congas), and so on. The result was one of the greatest albums of Miles' career, and one of the most influential records in post-modern jazz and rock.

- *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions*: This 5-CD box set (released in 2003) won the Grammy Award for Best Boxed Or Special Limited Edition Package. The *Bitches Brew* dates ended on February 6, 1970; these dates continue 12 days later and span less than four months through June. The difference is the greater role of McLaughlin (joined by 'free jazz' guitarist Sonny Sharrock), and the fiercer edginess of the music. The back-story was the contention for Muhammad Ali's heavyweight boxing title, and actor James Earl Jones' portrayal of turn-of-the-century black boxing champ Jack Jefferson in *The Great White Hope* (on Broadway and on film). All this was on Miles' mind in 1970, a year before *Shaft* ushered in a new breed of African-American hero.

- *The Complete On The Corner Sessions*: This 6-CD box set (released in 2007) is the final entry in *The Miles Davis Series* and is also the latest chronologically. It jumps ahead two years to 1972, by which time the quintet lineups were a thing of the past, and Miles had transitioned into the funk-rock-influenced large-group that would define his style for the next two decades. The sessions are chronicled through mid-1975, and encompass the music of the LPs *On The Corner* (1972), *Big Fun* (1974), and *Get Up With It* (1974), although more than half the music on the box set was previously unissued at the time of its release three years ago.

- Printed on the t-shirt included inside *THE GENIUS OF MILES DAVIS* is this quotation: "I can't play like anyone else, I can't fight like anyone else, I can't do ANYTHING like anyone else. I'm just myself." – MILES DAVIS. Over the course of these eight box sets and 43 remarkable CDs, his music is, indeed, like nothing else – but its haunting, turbulent, fearless, visionary, multi-faceted self.

So there you have it! We have reviewed every one of the box sets included in this mega-set over the years. When we launch our new site very soon, we'll be running a lot more news items, including important music release announcements such as this. And for the holiday gift givers, we've got another for Elvis coming up next. And in our Holiday Gift Guide section, we'll many more to cover.



## THE COMPLETE ELVIS PRESLEY MASTERS - 30 CD SET

THE COMPLETE ELVIS PRESLEY MASTERS was the crown jewel in RCA/Legacy's 2010 Elvis 75 campaign. This limited edition, individually-numbered deluxe set contains 30 CDs with all 711 master recordings released during Elvis' lifetime, sequenced in strict chronological order. Also included are 103 rarities: additional masters, alternate takes, session outtakes, demos, rehearsal jams, home recordings, live performances and radio recordings. This triumph of musicology is the definitive document – a magnificent audio chronicle of the inspiration, pain and genius that make Elvis the world's most enduring musical and cultural icon.

THE COMPLETE ELVIS PRESLEY MASTERS is available exclusively at CompleteElvis.com. Only 1,000 numbered sets were available for sale worldwide in this limited edition first run. That run has sold out, so Sony is offering a second run which will not be numbered for a cost of \$749.

Complementing the music is a beautifully designed 240-page hardbound reference book produced exclusively for this collection. A magnificent volume in its own right, this silk-screened, silver-gilded edition printed on archival paper is the ultimate reference work on the music of Elvis Presley. The discography was painstakingly researched by compilation producer Ernst Mikael Jørgensen, the respected director of RCA's Elvis catalog for over two decades and author of *Elvis Presley: A Life In Music* (St. Martin's Press, 1998), and co-written by him with award-winning author Peter Guralnick.

Jørgensen and Guralnick's extensive historical entries cover every song selection from the perspective of a scholar and a fan, with enlightening background stories and historical context, along with release dates, chart positions and other info. The discography includes recording dates and locations, full musician credits, technical notes and a song index. In addition, the book reproduces the artwork for every 45 rpm single, EP and LP release. The book is full of rare and classic photographs from throughout Elvis' life and recording career, beginning with the cover photo by legendary Williams 'Popsie' Randolph from Elvis' first official RCA photo session at RCA Studios in New York, on December 1, 1955.

Anchoring the book is a brand-new 6,000-word essay by Guralnick, noted biographer of Elvis Presley. Guralnick's two volumes – *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley* (Little, Brown, 1994) and *Careless Love: The Unmaking of*



Elvis Presley (Little, Brown, 1999) – are widely acknowledged as the definitive biographical studies of Elvis' life. In addition to writing the foreword to Jørgensen's *Elvis Presley: A Life In Music*, Guralnick also collaborated with him on another great reference work, *Elvis Day by Day: The Definitive Record of His Life and Music* (Random House, 1999).

Years in the making, THE COMPLETE ELVIS PRESLEY MASTERS has been compiled from the original analog master tapes where available, using 24-bit technology for greater sonic resolution and dynamics. Each track has been carefully restored to achieve the best sound reproduction without compromising the audio quality of the original master. The only exceptions are found on the rarities discs, which "derive from a variety of sources," as Jørgensen writes. "First priority has been given to vividness of performance, historical significance and rarity of repertoire."



### Robert Johnson - The Complete Original Masters: Centennial Edition

This is the ultimate collector's vinyl piece for any Robert Johnson fan

Recreated in the historical look and feel of the twelve 10" 78rpm discs that originally carried Robert Johnson's music into the world in 1936 and 1937 (only playing at 45rpm), this Limited Edition collector's set will be individually numbered to 1000. Housed in an actual 78rpm album book – each "page" being a sleeve holding a single disc – each vinyl disc is outfitted with reproductions of the original record labels. Also included is a unique booklet with new essays telling the updated story of Robert Johnson, photos and more.

The Complete Original Masters tracklisting:

- Disc 1. - Kind Hearted Woman Blues / Terraplane Blues
- Disc 2. - 32-20 Blues / Last Fair Deal Gone Down
- Disc 3. - I Believe I'll Dust My Broom / Dead Shrimp Blues
- Disc 4. - Ramblin' On My Mind / Cross Road Blues
- Disc 5. - Come On In My Kitchen / They're Red Hot
- Disc 6. - Sweet Home Chicago / Walkin' Blues
- Disc 7. - From Four Until Late / Hellhound On My Trail
- Disc 8. - Stones in my Passway / I'm a Steady Rollin' Man
- Disc 9. - Malted Milk / Milkcow's Calf Blues
- Disc 10. - Stop Breakin' Down Blues / Honeymoon Blues
- Disc 11. - Little Queen of Spades / Me and the Devil Blues
- Disc 12. - Preachin' Blues / Love in Vain

As an added bonus, each order will include the following BONUS ITEMS:

*The Robert Johnson Centennial Collection* (2CD)  
*Rarities From The Vaults* 2-CD Set (includes Rare Vic-

*tor Blues* – recordings from the Sony/Victor vaults, as well as *Also Playing* – other performers who recorded on the same day)

*The Life And Music Of Robert Johnson: Can't You Hear The Wind Howl* DVD

This limited edition collector's item is available for \$349. only at <http://www.myplaydirect.com/robert-johnson/>

For lots more gift ideas, check out the Holiday Gift Guide beginning on page 21 of this issue.

## The Complete Digital Jimi Hendrix Experience Now on the iPhone and iPad

### The Free Jimi Hendrix App Brings a New Level of Interaction to Music Fans through a Digitally Immersive Artist Experience

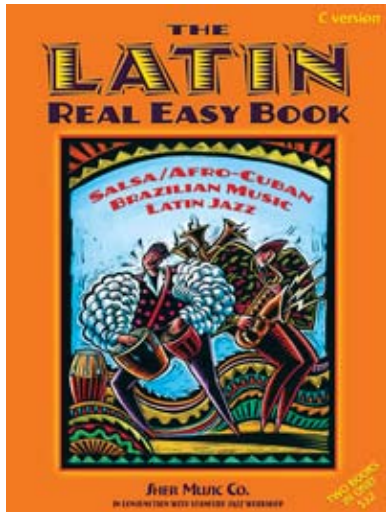
New York, NY and Denver, CO – Sony Music Entertainment and Experience Hendrix LLC today announced its Jimi Hendrix – The Complete Experience App for iPad, iPhone and iPod touch is now available on the App Store. The app, developed by Universal Mind, came out just in time to commemorate the iconic artist's birthday on November 27th. With Jimi Hendrix – The Complete Experience, music lovers are able to explore interactive chapters of Jimi's legacy through immersive text, images and video. Listeners can flip through the full collection of Hendrix's albums, read about docuementaries, live performances and other films about Hendrix with the option to download these assets directly from iTunes. For those who want to take the experience into the living room, users can stream video to their big screen using AirPlay and their Apple TV or even stream music to their AirPlay-enabled speakers.

Users are also able to learn about some of the most significant venues Hendrix played during his career; the app notifies users when they are near areas of importance to the Hendrix legacy, such as Electric Lady Studios or the Experience Music Project Museum. Using an interactive map, the user can dive into details about the iconic spots and get directions to the location for an even deeper, more dynamic discovery experience. Janie Hendrix, President and CEO of Experience Hendrix LLC noted, "We continue to celebrate Jimi Hendrix, his music, life and legacy. This app is nothing short of a revolutionary development in 'Jimi Land'." "Jimi Hendrix – The Complete Experience is a powerful new way for fans to immerse themselves in the world of Jimi Hendrix and discover great music and other special premium content," said Michael Paull, Executive Vice President of Global Digital Business for Sony Music Entertainment. "We are pleased to be working with Universal Mind to develop mobile interactive solutions that offer consumers new opportunities for experiencing our artists."

"Consumers already use their iPad, iPhone and iPod touch to access music and apps everywhere they go, so we built an experience that brings the two together," said Brett Cortese, President & CEO of Universal Mind. "The

result is an immersive musical experience, and interaction with an artist, that is unique and fresh.” The Jimi Hendrix – The Complete Experience App is available for free from the App Store on iPad, iPhone and iPod touch or at [bit.ly/hendrixapp](http://bit.ly/hendrixapp).

## New from Sher Music Co., THE LATIN REAL EASY BOOK!



Another great effort from the world leader in fake books, Sher Music Co., THE LATIN REAL EASY BOOK contains an in-depth selection of Afro-Cuban classics, Brazilian music and Latin jazz tunes. Designed for classroom or professional use, the book will be welcomed by music teachers, students and pros for being a unique source of great new material to play.

The tunes are presented in the “Real Easy” format—i.e., the tune on one page, educational material on each facing page. This will make it possible for band directors to expand their combos’ repertoire to include songs in these vibrant and life-affirming styles of music, or even start an ensemble dedicated solely to Latin music!

THE LATIN REAL EASY BOOK is structured into two books in one cover!

Part I - Easier Tunes, for High School or even good Middle School ensembles.

Part II - More Challenging Tunes, for College or Professional use.

The songlist includes:

- Latin jazz charts by Cal Tjader, Poncho Sanchez, Dizzy Gillespie, George Benson, Tito Puente, Ray Barretto, Horace Silver, etc.

- Afro-Cuban selections as played by Eddie Palmieri, Mario Bauza, Tito Rodriguez, Hector Lavoe, Descarga Boricua, and more.

- Brazilian composers represented include Tom Jobim, Ivan Lins, Djavan, João Donato, Nelson Faria, Baden Powell, etc.

- And playlists on The Latin Real Easy Book page at [www.shermusic.com](http://www.shermusic.com) allow people to hear the songs without charge—an invaluable aid!

As is true of Sher Music’s other “Real Easy Books,”

the educational material for each tune includes scales for soloing, piano voicings, guitar voicings and sample bass parts—all the things a band director would have to write out for their students anyway. When needed, there are separate rhythm section charts &/or horn harmony charts to help groups play authentic-sounding versions of the tunes.

Visit [www.shermusic.com](http://www.shermusic.com).

## THE INTERNATIONAL SONGWRITING COMPETITION (ISC) LAUNCHES NEW MUSIC COMPETITION FOR UNSIGNED ARTISTS

### Top Level Record Industry Executives To Mentor Grand Prize Winner

Nashville, TN, - The International Songwriting Competition (ISC), one of the world’s largest songwriting competitions, has launched Unsigned Only, a new, unique international music competition. Designed for solo artists, bands, and singers who are not signed to a major record label, Unsigned Only’s goal is to find an outstanding, talented performing artist: a band, singer, or solo artist...a newcomer or veteran...raw or polished - the “gem” that needs to be discovered. Unsigned Only is looking for the total package. Judging criteria includes vocals, performance, songwriting, and originality.

“A dynamic, take-no-prisoners blues and soul party that jumps out of your speakers” -BLUES REVUE



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ CELEBRATING 40 YEARS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Available at finer music retailers everywhere, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [itunes.com](http://itunes.com) and [alligator.com](http://alligator.com)  
Receive tour info and special online offers by subscribing to the Alligator Mailing List at [alligator.com](http://alligator.com)



Completely separate and distinct from ISC, Unsigned Only is a fresh and novel approach to other music competitions. Not only does it offer great prizes, recognition, exposure, and the chance to be heard by a group of judges consisting of high-profile recording artists and industry professionals, but it also takes it a step further and puts the Grand Prize winner in direct, personal contact with the influential record label executives who are the ultimate decision makers. For the first time ever, a music competition offers the Grand Prize winner the unprecedented opportunity to be mentored by a group of record company presidents, A&R reps, and more. This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for an artist to directly network with the top echelon of record company professionals and get guidance, advice, feedback, and networking opportunities.

The founders of Unsigned Only, Jim Morgan and Candace Avery, talk about the new venture: "We are pleased to introduce a new music competition of this caliber to artists throughout the world. Having worked with a wide variety of artists over many years, we know that what artists want most is access to record label professionals. However, it is virtually impossible for most up-and-coming artists to have direct access to this elite and elusive group of decision makers. So, Unsigned Only is offering the unprecedented opportunity for the Grand Prize winner to network with and be mentored by a prestigious group of record label executives. This has never been done before, and we are excited about the possibilities it affords the Unsigned Only winner."

The judging panel is comprised of an impressive group of recording artists, producers, and top-level music journalists. They include: 3 Doors Down; Manchester Orchestra; Cyndi Lauper; Robert Smith (The Cure); Jeremy Camp; Craig Morgan; Kelly Clarkson; Steve Lillywhite (Producer); Matt and Kim; St. Vincent; The Mountain Goats; Josh Jackson (Co-Founder and Editor-In-Chief, Paste Magazine); Scott Lapatine (Founder, Stereogum); and more to be announced.

The panel of mentors who have signed on to participate is equally impressive. Included are: Monte Lipman (President of Universal Republic); Pete Ganbarg (Executive Vice President/Head of A&R, Atlantic Records); David Wolter (Senior VP of A&R, RCA Records); Kim Stephens (President, Forward Entertainment and A&R/Capitol Music Group); Trevor Jerideau (VP of A&R, J Records); David Wilkes (VP of A&R, eOne Music); Pete Giberga (Head of A&R, Razor & Tie Records); Jason Geter (President, Grand Hustle Records); and more to be announced.

The Grand Prize Winner will be awarded \$5,000 in cash (plus additional prizes) and one-on-one mentoring by an elite group of record company executives. First Place and Second Place winners will also be selected in each category. Entries are being accepted now until March 5, 2012. Winners will be announced in July, 2012. Categories include: AAA (Adult Album Alternative), AC (Adult Contemporary), Christian Music, Country, Folk/Singer-Songwriter, R&B/Hip-Hop, Rock, Pop/Top 40, and Vocal Performance.

All entries must be original music except for the Vocal Performance category which accepts original or cover

songs. Judging criteria in the Vocal Performance category will be based solely on the quality of the vocals, thereby allowing singers who do not write their own songs the opportunity to enter.

For more information, please contact Candace Avery at 615.251.4441 or [cavery@unsignedonly.com](mailto:cavery@unsignedonly.com).

For entry and general information, please go to <http://www.unsignedonly.com>

## **SIMONE – DAUGHTER OF LEGEND- ARY MUSIC ICON NINA SIMONE – RE- LAUNCHES [WWW.NINASIMONE.COM](http://WWW.NINASIMONE.COM)**



NEW YORK, NY – Simone, the only child and daughter of legendary music artist Nina Simone and the only person qualified to carry on her mother's legacy, has re-launched [www.NinaSimone.com](http://www.NinaSimone.com) to share with the world - the mother and the artist - from a daughter's perspective through the redesigned web site.

Simone is honoring her Mother by capturing the milestones in Nina's career, as well as the peaks and valleys of her celebrated life. In addition to intimate details and personal stories, [www.NinaSimone.com](http://www.NinaSimone.com) will fully explore the many nuances and flavors that made up the more than 40 original albums in the Nina Simone library. The site will also feature "Nina Simone Radio," a 24 hour/7 day-a-week internet radio station providing hundreds of recordings spanning over four decades, interviews and special guest commentary. Other additions to the site will include unreleased Nina recordings, archived video performances and an expanded photo gallery with previously unpublished photos of Nina behind the scenes and on-stage.

An icon of American music and one of the most extraordinary artists of the twentieth century, Eunice Kathleen Waymon was born on February 21, 1933. She was a classically trained pianist, the consummate musical storyteller, a griot as she would come to learn, who used her remarkable talent to create a legacy of liberation, empowerment, passion, and love through a magnificent body of work. She



earned the moniker 'High Priestess of Soul' for she could weave a spell so seductive and hypnotic that the listener lost track of time and space as they became absorbed in the moment. She was who the world would come to know as Nina Simone.

When Nina Simone died on April 21, 2003, she left a timeless treasure trove of musical magic spanning over 40 years from her first hit, the 1959 Top 10 classic I Loves You Porgy, to A Single Woman, the title cut from her one and only 1993 Elektra album. While thirty-three years separate those recordings, the element of honest emotion is the glue that binds the two together - it is that approach to every piece of work that became Nina's uncompromising musical trademark.

"The vision I've always held, with regards to my mother's legacy, is finally gaining momentum," stated Simone. "NinaSimone.com will allow fans around the world to have access to her life, enjoy her music and revel in her message like never before. Mommy's legacy continues and this is just the beginning."

Among other popular recordings are Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood, I Put A Spell On You, Four Women (whereby Simone recorded a newer version of her mother's original classic for the movie soundtrack "For Colored Girls), Nina's own anthem of empowerment, the classic To Be Young, Gifted, & Black, and Feeling Good which was recently covered by pop diva Jennifer Hudson.

In addition to being the executor of the Nina Simone estate and her mother's biggest fan, Simone is her own woman, a singer, songwriter and performer whose ability to transcend genres echoes the tradition of her mother. Blessed with a rich vocal range, an innate skill for lyrical interpretation and a soul-deep understanding of music as a means of healing, empowerment and celebration, Simone is very much her mother's daughter. She is most assuredly a multi-talented artist in her own right.

Simone has many exciting projects in development for release over the next year including a double Nina Simone CD, which Simone will produce; Simone's own second CD release; and an "I Put a Spell on You" European tour.

For additional information, on Nina Simone, visit [www.NinaSimone.com](http://www.NinaSimone.com) and on Simone, visit <http://www.simonesworld.com/>.

## Alfred Music Publishing Offers Digital Sheet Music App for iPad

Los Angeles, CA — July 27, 2011 Alfred Music Publishing, the official print music publisher of thousands of popular artists, has released the Total Sheet Music App, a new app for the iPad® that instantly delivers hundreds of popular sheet music titles in digital form to tablet device users worldwide.

The Total Sheet Music App allows musicians to browse, purchase, and view sheet music on their mobile devices to play their favorite pop, rock, country or jazz standards from artists like Green Day, Led Zeppelin, Katy Perry, Van Halen, Garth Brooks, Carrie Underwood, Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, George and Ira Gershwin, and many more. Also available are favorite tunes from Broadway, movies, and TV hits, including The Wizard of Oz, My Fair Lady, The Flintstones, Star Wars, Harry Potter, and The Lord of the Rings.

Sheet music titles for the app are available in various arrangement types, including piano/vocal/chords, lead sheets, guitar tablature (Guitar Tab, Authentic Guitar Tab, Easy Guitar Tab), and more. Over a dozen free songs are available immediately upon downloading the app. The Total Sheet Music App is powered by the ACCESSTM Digital Publishing Ecosystem by ACCESS Systems Americas, Inc. It is a complete end-to-end system that also includes formatting of the sheet music titles for tablet devices, a digital storefront for browsing and purchasing them, and a virtual bookshelf for organizing and viewing the sheet music titles on tablets.

To view a video demo of the app, go to: <http://vimeo.com/22102809> "All too often, we're hearing people ask for a way to instantly get the sheet music to their favorite songs wherever they go," said Doug Fraser, Alfred's Director of Digital Sales. "The app gives any user of these mobile devices immediate access to an enormous library of songs—it's a powerful tool for learning and playing." "

Alfred is leading the music publishing industry into its next evolution with the launch of the Total Sheet Music application for the Apple iPad," said Ivan Dwyer, Head of Digital Publishing Market Development and Content Alliances, ACCESS. "Consumers are rapidly embracing digital media, and musicians of all skill levels will now be able to organize and interact with their sheet music on mobile and tablet devices, just as they would listen to music, watch videos or read books. The Total Sheet Music App was developed as an extension of [totalsheetmusic.com](http://totalsheetmusic.com), a service from Alfred Music Publishing that offers hassle-free, legal sheet music downloads that can be printed instantly. Alfred's print and digital catalog combined contains 85,000 titles from thousands of popular artists, Broadway shows, films, and TV shows.

The Total Sheet Music App is now available at the App Store: [itunes.com](http://itunes.com). The app will be available on Android™ tablets later in the year. For more information on Total Sheet Music, visit [totalsheetmusic.com](http://totalsheetmusic.com). To learn more about Alfred Music Publishing, please visit [alfred.com](http://alfred.com).

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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



*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



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

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

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).

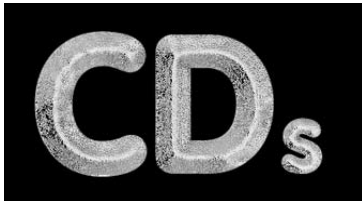


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**JERRY BERGONZI**  
**Convergence**  
**SAVANT**

A Professor at the New England Conservatory of Music, and alumnus of Two Generations of Brubeck and the Dave Brubeck Quartet, Jerry Bergonzi is an unheralded master of the saxophone. He has a new Savant CD, "Convergence" with bassist Dave Santoro and the Paris-based Italian drummer, Andrea Michelutti and on a couple numbers, pianist Bill Barth. About his last Savant album, "Simply Put," this writer wondered why Jerry Bergonzi is not a household name in the jazz world. He is a superior, passionate and thoughtful musician and composer, with a terrific band and he deserves to have a wider audience commensurate with the high level of the music he produces."

"Convergence" contains eight originals and one interpretation of a Gershwin song. With the exception of two tracks with pianist Barth, he is only supported by Santoro and Michelutti, although he has overdubbed on several tracks to play both tenor and soprano, with most of the solo focus with the tenor. The opening "Lend Me a Dream" has a boppish flavor with twin horns for the head. It sounds like piano chords sparsely played in the background as the leader sounds robust on tenor, as Santoro takes a terrific solo and then Bergonzi trades fours with Michelutti. The Gershwin's "I Got a Crush on You" has nice thematic improvisation over a simple repeated rhythmic figure.

"Squid Ink," one of the two numbers with pianist Barth, starts off as a quintet with an engaging twisting line. Pianist Barth takes the first solo and Michelutti's imaginative playing adds to the interest with the leader sounding vigorous over the driving groove. "Stoffy" is a bouncy, free-sounding trio number followed by the moody "Silent Flying." "Osiris" opens with overdubbed

horns stating the theme before Bergonzi focuses on soprano sax (with a snake charmer's tone) here on this entrancing performance. Dedicated to the late drummer, Billy Higgins, "Mr. Higgins" has a spirited free-bop flavor with Santoro an anchor and Michelutti adding concise responsive fills and accents.

Pianist Barth returns for the loping, engaging title track. On the closing "Seventh Ray" overdubbing is used throughout the performance, not simply for the opening and coda, making for an intriguing dialogue by Bergonzi with himself. It concludes another album of cohesive, thoughtful performances by a significant, distinctive leader, composer and saxophonist.

*Ron Weinstock*



**RUTHIE FOSTER**  
**Live at Antone's**  
**BLUE CORN MUSIC**

Texas singer/songwriter Ruthie Foster, winner of the 2010 Blues Music Award for Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year for her *Truth According to Ruthie Foster* release, follows that milestone with this live disc recorded in front of a rightfully enthusiastic crowd at Austin's blues Mecca, Antone's. Backed by a versatile band that knows its way around a groove, Foster flexes her broad ranging musical chops.

While she's clearly comfortable with the blues as evidenced by her smoking vocal duet with guitarist Hadden Sayers on Back to the Blues, her own hard shuffle, *Runaway Soul*, the oft covered O.V. Wright show piece, *Nickel and a Nail*, and the traditional *Death Came A -Knockin'* (well worth the 11 minute listen!) she really shines when she flexes her gospel and soul roots. Her takes on Sister Rosetta Tharpe's *Up Above My Head (I Hear Music in the Air)*, the traditional *Woke Up This Mornin'* and the Ann Peebles R & B classic *(You Keep Me) Hangin' On* bristle with soulful energy. She can also get plenty funky as evidenced by *Heal Yourself* where she shares the spotlight with Papa Mali who does a guest turn on guitar. Slowing things down a bit, Foster also does an effective turn as a roots rocker on Lucinda William's *Fruits of My Labor* and Patti Griffin's *When It Don't Come Easy* which she delivers with nuanced power that recalls any number of Bonnie Raitt hits.

Of course even great vocalists can get let down if



their band misses the mark. That's not a problem here. While the entire crew does a great job of bringing these performances to life, keyboardist Scottie Miller adds deft keyboard touches that carry the instrumental load on many of the soul and gospel tunes, with guitarist Hadden Sayers really shining on the blues numbers, where his tough solos add as much heat as Foster's vocals. Solid from beginning to end, this disc makes me wish I was at the show.

*Mark Smith*



## ART BLAKEY

**Jazz Messengers !!!!!/A Jazz Message**  
IMPULSE RECORDS 2-ON-1

The two reissued albums seamlessly combined on this disc featuring the Jazz Messengers makes this a keepsale CD.

The eponymously-titled (except for the exclamation points) first reissued album on this disc features drummer Art Blakey with trumpeter Lee Morgan, trombonist Curtis Fuller, tenor saxist Wayne Shorter, pianist Bobby Timmons and bassist Jymie Merritt on studio dates in 1961. Throughout his career, Blakey nurtured many up-and-coming young artists who became stars in their own realm. On this set, Shorter was around 28-years-old, Morgan about age 23, and Fuller (then a recorded leader in his own right), about 27. The quintet skillfully performs a diverse mix of six tunes: "Alamode" (contributed by Fuller), "Invitation," "Circus," "You Don't Know What Love Is," "I Hear A Rhapsody," "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You." Front-line work is tight and harmonious; solos are imaginative and rich in tonalities.

A Jazz Message features Blakey with saxophonist Sonny Stitt (who plays alto and tenor on the six-tune set), pianist McCoy Tyner and bassist Art Davis. This quartet set, studio-recorded on July 16, 1963 (produced by Bob Thiele and engineered by Rudy Van Gelder) cooks from the start and showcases a more flamboyant Blakey than on the album above (where Blakey defers more to the soloists and frontline). Blakey maintains steady, motivating beats that punch up each tune from underneath. The band kicks off the set with a bopping 5:35-minute Blakey original, "Café." Davis leads off with a walking melody head on "Just Knock On My Door," another Blakey original. The four-some also plays an uptempo take on the Gershwin's

"Summertime," a bluesy McCoy Tyner tune, "Blues Back;" a romantic Jule Styne number, "Sunday;" and close with an uptempo, swinging version of Jerome Kern's "The Song Is You."

Both of these albums are enjoyably listener-friendly and should satisfy Blakey fans as well as jazz fan novices.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



## SHAWN PITTMAN

**Edge of the World**  
DELTA GROOVE

Shawn Pittman certainly has come a long way since growing up in a small Oklahoma town listening to Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry on the radio and hearing a grandmother, Juanita James, playing stride piano. He got hooked on the blues listening to records by the likes of Jimmy Reed, Elmore James and Albert King and in his relatively short life has become a significant part of the Texas blues scene. A CD he recorded with the Moeller Brothers was strongly praised by Living Blues.

Pittman's newest recording, "Edge of the World" (Delta Groove), is my first exposure to his recordings. Through overdubbing he plays all the instruments except for the saxophones added by Jonathan Doyle, and upon repeated listening this listener is impressed by the overall sound. He lays down a solid rhythm and plays some blistering guitar that continues in the vein Texas legends like Johnny 'Guitar' Watson, Albert Collins, Cal and Clarence Green, Albert Collins and Little Joe Washington with his twisting guitar lines and switch-blade guitar tone.

Along with a semi-retired criminal defense attorney, Pittman has crafted a number of solid blues tunes although he opens with Howlin' Wolf's "Sugar," transformed into a Houston 5th Ward shuffle. His vocal diction may be slightly muffled, but his lyrics are readily understood and his fervent delivery impresses. Slim Harpo perhaps inspired the delivery on "Leanin' Load," with a nice swamp blues rhythm and a terrific solo that would have made Johnny Copeland smile. A nice Texas Shuffle, "Scents of Yours Benjamins," has a cautionary lyric about gold digging ladies who are making withdrawals, as Doyle adds some horns in the backing.

"Almost Good" combines Texas blues guitar with a New Orleans rock and roll groove with riffing saxo-

phones. The title track (co-written with Braken Hale) mixes Pittman's Texas guitar with a Howlin' Wolf groove with his lead guitar coming across as Hubert Sumlin with unpredictable lines mixed with Ike Turner's tone as Pittman sings about his woman leaving him standing at the edge of the world. "That's the Thing" sounds like how Guitar Slim (or Earl King) might have reworked Elmore James' recording of "It Hurts Me Too." Its an apt example how Pittman has, in his evolution, taken a variety of influences in developing his own approach and crafting his original blues songs. "I've Had Enough" has some nasty, distorted slide guitar as he tells his woman, its time for things to change.

In his notes to this release, Pittman states that his favorite records are from the 50s and 60s, recorded with minimal technology and achieved a warm sound that he and others miss in recordings today. "There was more of a live sound and certain soul that reverberated through those records." Despite his overdubbing, this writer salutes him for capturing the sound and feel of those records here. "Edge of the World" has a soulfulness that captures the spirit of those classic recordings making for an exceptional blues recording.

**Ron Weinstock**



## THE TIERNEY SUTTON BAND

**American Road**  
**BFM JAZZ**

The bar for freshness in the vocal/piano/rhythm regions of jazz is set high by this fivesome. And the "band" tag is well deserved, as the group nature of this disc's success becomes apparent right away. Sutton, a first-rate vocalist inclined toward delicate readings and understatement, is, of course, the focus. In pianist Christian Jacob, however, Sutton's "call" consistently finds a most reflective and imaginative respondent on an equally imaginative set embracing American icons such as Gershwin, Bernstein and Harold Arlen.

The dual basses of Kevin Axt and Trey Henry provide subtle undercurrents, showcased on Arlen's "The Eagle and Me". Drummer / percussionist Ray Brinker provides his share of savvy punctuation as well, as arrangements match performances in their fresh-sounding character. Standout tracks include a *West Side Story* mini-medley "Something's Coming / Cool", the traditional "Wayfaring Stranger" and a vocal/piano duo take on the classic ballad "Tenderly".

**Duane Verh**



## THE KING BEES

**Carolina Bound**

**ORIGINAL HIGH JOHN RECORDS**

The Carolina Band, The King Bees, is celebrating 25 years of stinging' and swingin', as proclaimed on the cover to their latest recording "Carolina Bound."

The group is anchored around the bass, vocals and songs of Queen Bee Penny Zamagni and guitarist Hound Dog Baskerville. The band has worked with and learned with so many great blues artists, some of whom (Jerry McCain, Nappy Brown, Carey Bell and Chick Willis) are featured on some of the performances here.

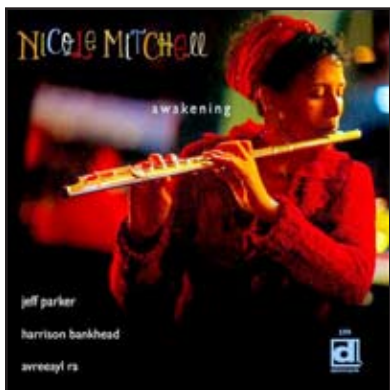
The King Bees play straight blues without any hard rock trappings. Their originals are idiomatic and display the same solid style that make them such a fine back-up band for the various blues legends they have supported over the years, such as the late Nappy Brown on his solid rendition of Howlin' Wolf's "Natchez Burning" and Carey Bell's "What Mama Told Me," which was a staple of his repertoire. Chick Willis does a solid "Yonder's Wall," a regular feature of his performances.

The title track has the line about going to the Carolinas, but also a travelogue of the states as Penny sings about loving that Carolina sound, and Tarheel Slim, Pink Anderson, Nappy Brown, Maurice Williams and Drink Small are still around as she encourages guest Roy Roberts to strut his stuff as the pianist pounds the ivories.

There is some nice slide guitar on this track as well. Roberts also adds guitar to the nice blues-ballad "You Were There," while McCain adds tough harmonica on the shuffle "Run Your Reputation Down." One of the group's originals "Its Tight" makes use of a melody that evokes "Rocket 88."

There is nothing revolutionary about The King Bees latest recording. "Carolina Bound" just has some solid straight-ahead blues played with feeling. It is available on amazon, cdbaby and itunes.

**Ron Weinstock**



## NICOLE MITCHELL

### The Awakening DELMARK

In the past few years Nicole Mitchell has emerged as a major voice in contemporary music. The poll-winning flautist (in 2010 she won Downbeat's Critics Poll as both Rising Star and top instrumentalist in the flute category) has performed in a number of contexts and has established herself as an educator, composer, instrumentalist and bandleader.

For her new Delmark album, "The Awakening," she notes that she decided to put her flute more in the forefront. She has worked previously with each of her collaborators here, bassist Harrison Bankhead, guitarist Jeff Parker, and drummer Avreeayl Ra. However this group played for the first time together a few days prior to entering the studio for this recording.

"Curly Top," the ebullient opening number, is written for her daughter and in addition to her flighty solo, Parker especially turns in some bright playing. The suite-like

"Journey On a Thread" has a bit more free and abstract tenor with Parker's opening, which is followed by Mitchell painting sounds with her flute. Bankhead's funky ostinato bass pattern provides the anchor for the mesmerizing "Center of the Earth" and the strong improvisations by Mitchell and Parker (who himself repeats a riff during Mitchell's solo with her overblowing and use of overtones).

"Snowflakes" is a lovely and brief, delicately played piece followed by "Momentum," which has an appealing peppy theme and is an engaging, vibrant performance. Parker's guitar helps instill an indigo mood for the evocative "More Than I Can Say."

Parker contributed one composition, "F.O.C." which features a stunning improvisation by Mitchell who displays such a pure tone, followed by the deliberate and thoughtful guitar of Parker. The title composition was inspired by Mitchell's association with Steve Coleman and closes this recording on a high level.

"The Awakening" impresses with the outstanding playing and strong ensemble playing on challenging compositions. This recording is consistently superb. This writer would love to see this band live.

*Ron Weinstock*



## McCRARY SISTERS

### Our Journey MCC RECORDS

Singing comes naturally to the McCrary Sisters, daughters of the late Rev. Samuel McCrary -- one of the original members of the legendary gospel quartet The Fairfield Four. The harmonies siblings Ann, Deborah, Regina and Alfreda produce reflect the singing they grew up with in the home and at their father's church, and they have produced a recording titled "Our Journey" (McC Records) which is a result of their years of singing music of praise on a program of songs that might draw some comparisons to the Staples (except the material is more straight gospel and less some of the message songs of that legendary group).

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While the sisters are the executive producers, they had assistance from Kevin McKendree, Gary Nicholson, Buddy Miller and others. McKendree is among the musicians on this album that also include Buddy Miller, the late saxophonist Dennis Taylor and guitarists Todd Sharp and Bob Britt. Guest vocals are added by Delbert McClinton, Mike Farris and Patty Griffin. Included are some covers as well as six originals penned by the sisters.

The opening interpretation of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' In The Wind" is simply stunning with its gospel-inflected arrangement and guitarist Ron McNelley's stinging fills. This is a performance that likely would have crossover appeal. There is a country-soul tinge to "Follow Me Up," an original by co-producer of this track, Tommy Sims, that would have been at home on a Staples recording with its message of reassurance and comfort. Kevin McKendree and Regina McCrary collaborated on "Bible Study," a hot jump blues melody with its gospel lyric about talking about Jesus and a groove that dancers may find irresistible as they sing mama get your daughter and daddy get your song, and get right with the bible.

Julie Miller's "Broken Pieces" is given a lovely performance that Alfreda takes the lead on as she sings about that one can have her heart if one doesn't mind the broken pieces. Ann McCrary's "Know My Name" is a powerful gospel performance with sparse, percussive backing and is followed by the fervent Memphis soul-gospel flavor of "Give Him My All," a song collaboration between Regina and Bob Dylan that evokes the Staples at their best.

"He Cares" has a softer R&B flavor as Alfreda leads the sisters in telling us he cares for us with what wounds her heart and soul, followed by the a cappella rendition of traditional "Dig a Little Deeper" in God's eternal love where Deborah takes lead.

On "Other Side of the Blues (Since I Met You)," Regina is joined by Delbert on a gospel-uptown blues as they sing about meeting their savior, they are on the other side of the blues.

The album closes with more down home gospel a cappella singing on the title track about through song, the sisters' journey keeps moving along. One of the sisters comments "That's the way daddy would have done it" and indeed he would be overjoyed by the performances as they sing "through our song our journey keeps moving on." And moving listeners and audiences is certainly what the performances do.

Highly recommended. **Ron Weinstock**

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## BOB JAMES & KEIKO MATSUI

### Altair & Vega

ENT. ONE MUSIC

"Altair & Vega" (Tappan Zee Records) is a new album representing the collaboration between pianists Bob James & Keiko Matsui. The seven duets transverse the jazz, new age and classical worlds to display the two conversing in their musical dialogue here usually playing four hands piano.

James mentions that they have been performing these duets for about 9 years. As is clearly evident on the live concert presented on the accompanying DVD, the two share the piano, with James playing the lower keys and Matsui the upper ones.

The music is lovely and more in the classical tradition, not that there aren't interludes that are more jazz-inflected, such as during the performances of "Divertimento (The Professor and the Student)" which opens with some stately motifs stated by James and echoed by Matsui, with Matsui taking an impressionistic run before a jazzy bop interlude segueing to more dreamy playing.

There is a lovely solo from Matsui on "Trees" that is part of the live DVD concert recording (from Pittsburgh's Manchester Craftsmen's Guild), followed by James' "Duo Oto Subito" where the two state the lively theme with each taking an extended passage before the two end this performance in an energetic fashion.

Also on the DVD is a marvelous rendition by James of the Ray Noble standard, "The Touch of Your Lips." The lengthiest performance on both the CD and DVD is "The Forever Variations," which the two collaborated with its varying changes in mood and tempo.

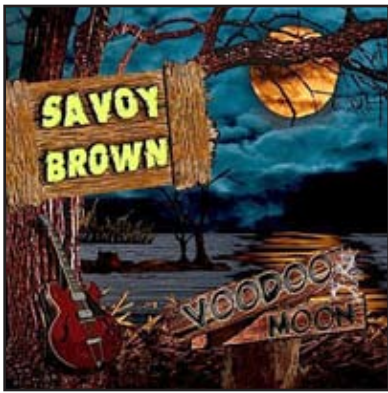
The CD concludes with James' arrangement for four hands of Bach's 'Chorale From Cantata BWV 147.'

The production quality of this is marvelous with fantastic sound to display the superb playing here.

The video on the DVD is beautifully filmed and employs a variety of camera angles adding to the enjoyment of watching and listening to the concert performances here.

In summary, "Altair & Vega" present marvelous music perhaps more oriented towards classical ears but certainly wonderful to simply relax, and listen, and watch.

**Ron Weinstock**



**SAVOY BROWN**  
**Voodoo Moon**  
 RUF

British blues rockers Savoy Brown have been on the radar so long in this country, some will think they came over on the Mayflower instead of the 1960's British blues invasion. Basically down to lead guitarist Kim Simmonds and players to be named later (at one point, they had Cleveland drummer Tommy Amato in the line-up), this 2011 version on VOODOO MOON has sax/lead singer Joe Whiting, bassist Pat DeSalvo and drummer Garnet Grimm along with the aforementioned Kim Simmonds.

If it's not broke, don't fix it, as the band mixes blues, rock and boogie woogie in familiar and, sometimes, spectacular ways. First up is a combination of rock and boogie via "Shockwaves" as guest piano man Andy Rudy adds to the texture. "Natural Man" is slow and steady while "Too Much Money" has a good hook in it, thanks to Simmonds' lead guitar. "She's Got The Heat" fires all guns at once as the instrumental "24/7" basically kicks ass and takes names.

If you've heard Savoy Brown in the past, VOODOO MOON doesn't reinvent their respective musical wheel. But, this one is one of the smoother ones they've brought off the assembly line in awhile and might be worth a listen if you haven't heard them before. *Peanuts*



**MOCEAN WORKER**  
**Candygram For Mowo!**  
 MOWO INC

What separates Mr. Worker from the techno pack, and makes his craft particularly attractive to jazz ears, goes beyond his savvy sampling of hot, sassy horn sec-

tions and flute blasts from Rahsaan Roland Kirk. What stands out most in the DJ/bassist/remixer's craft are the phenomenally natural feel to the grooves that is a constant here. Worker's knack for making 1's and 0's swing and rock borders on alchemy.

Growing up the son of storied producer Joel Dorn likely enhanced his jazz instincts and might explain the informing of several tracks on *Candygram* by soul jazz of the Eddie Harris / Les McCann variety, particularly "Swagger" and "Sistas And Bruthas". "It Still Don't Mean A Thing", featuring guest trumpeter Steven Bernstein, is an exercise in breezy, digital swing and "Do Like Ya Like" reads like some curious Mingus offspring. Club music, like a lot of jazz, is all about the groove. *Candygram* speaks well to both scenes. *Duane Verh*



**GEORGE BENSON**  
**Beyond the Blue Horizon**  
 Sony Masterworks

The first of George Benson's CTI recordings was "Beyond the Blue Horizon." It was recently remastered and reissued as part of the CTIMasterworks series that commemorates the 40th Anniversary of Creed Taylor's label. This release is a straight-ahead date with a band that included organist Clarence Palmer, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Jack DeJohnette with percussionists Michael Cameron and Albert Nicholson adding some musical accents.

A pretty hot rendition of "So What" kicks this set off with Benson displaying why he has been so highly regarded as a guitarist mixing chords and single note runs in his imaginative playing here. Palmer acquits himself quite well on the Hammond B-3 with Carter and DeJohnette swinging, as one would expect. It is followed by Luis Bonfá's "The Gentle Rain (From The Film "The Gentle Rain")", which opens with some spacey sounding organ before Benson states the theme displaying his precise and measured touch before launching his almost free form solo.

Benson's "All Clear" is built around some bright chords and its light, bouncy feeling anticipates the title track of what would be his crossover smash album, "Breezin'." His solo builds up quite some steam as Palmer adds interesting sonic effects in his comping. "Ode to a Kudu" is a lovely original ballad from Benson while "Somewhere in the East" opens with lively percussion that Benson plays some repeated riffs against

before the entire ensemble joins in with Benson taking off on an extended solo.

This release concludes with alternate takes of the last three numbers, the most interesting being the alternate of “Somewhere in the East,” which is about three minutes longer than the issued take. Like other CTI releases in this series, this was beautifully recorded and mastered. It is the recordings such as this that have led to Benson enjoying a reputation of one of the great jazz guitarists of the past several decades.

*Ron Weinstock*



## BERT DEIVERT

### Kid Man Blues

HARD DANGER

Born in Boston, Bert Deivert has taken his passion for the blues to Sweden, where he calls home, and has just issued his tenth album “Kid Man Blues” (Hard Danger).

This writer was not familiar with him but perusing the accompanying booklet I note that my friend Memphis Gold contributes two backing vocals among the twelve tracks, and that among the albums he has played on was Memphis Gold’s “Gator Gonna Bitchu!” Three of his earlier albums were collaborations with Eric Bibb and he also is among those who have adapted the mandolin in addition to guitar, acknowledging the influence of such early masters as Yank Rachell and Carl Martin.

Deivert’s skill with the mandolin is on display on most of this release, which is my first exposure to his music. It is a varied collection of songs ranging from adaptations of R.L. Burnside’s North Mississippi Hill Country Blues to fingerpicking classics from Blind Boy Fuller and Blind Blake, and the deep blues of Skip James and Son House. It was recorded in Sweden, Thailand, Mississippi and Germany with a variety of folks assisting Bert.

Augmented by backing vocals, R.L. Burnside’s “Goin’ Down South” has a string band feel with violin in addition to Deivert’s mandolin and he doubles on lap steel guitar. It’s followed by some rollicking piano by Willie Salomon for the barrelhouse flavored “State Street Pimp,” that comes from Carl Martin’s repertoire. Bill Abel adds guitar and the late Sam Carr played drums on “Rob and Steal,” a nice medium tempo blues recorded at Abel’s Mississippi studio with more hills country flavor. Sven Zetterberg’s nice harp on this was

added later in Sweden.

Walter Davis’ “Come Back Baby” was recorded in Bangkok and this brooding blues originally recorded by Davis has a definitely more modern, electric flavor with guitar from one Dulyasit “Pong” Srabua, with some overdubbed mandolin added in the latter part of this performance. The title track was from Carl Martin and is about a younger man being a married woman’s kid man, and features some nice mandolin as well as fiddle, and my buddy Memphis Gold is among those adding to the vocal here “...if you let me be your kid man I’ll always treat you right.” For some reason, Deivert attributes “Keep On Truckin’” to Blind Blake but I believe he meant Blind Boy Fuller, the great Piedmont blues artist of the thirties. A vocal duet with Tom Paley of the New Lost City Ramblers, it is a lively, raggy performance with lively picking from Paley and Deivert and one cannot ignore the resonator slide guitar of Frederick Karlsson here.

Deivert may not be as powerful a singer as Skip James or Son House but his renditions of James’ “Cypress Grove” and House’s “Death letter Blues” are quite moving. On “Cypress Grove” the harp of Mats Qwarfordt helps provide the ethereal quality that James’ vocals and guitar provided. “Death Letter Blues” is a credible solo cover with rhythmic slide guitar and a solid vocal. Blind Blake’s “Diddie Wah Diddie” is done as a lively duet with guitarist Lasse Johansson and sports some wonderful mandola playing.

It is often said that blues has become an international music. Certainly the fine music here is evidence of that. Deivert himself notes that this recording was not meant to simply be a solo vehicle, “but rather a showcase for this fine music that is being made all over the world, and great musicians who are not recognized by a larger audience.” Deivert’s “Kid Man Blues” is a delightful acoustic blues showcase that it was intended to be. This is being distributed through cdbaby.com and his website is [www.deivert.com/blues](http://www.deivert.com/blues).

*Ron Weinstock*



## AHMAD JAMAL

### Poinciana Revisited / Freeflight

IMPULSE RECORDS 2-ON-1

Combined on one disc are two illustrious reissued sessions by Ahmad Jamal and his trio featuring bassist Jamil Sulieman Nasser and drummer Frank Gant.



Recorded live in 1969 at Top of the Village Gate in New York City, Poinciana Revisited features the trio playing a mix of seven jazz and pop standards and one Jamal original. The upbeat "Poinciana," a Nat Simon original, gets a clever nine-plus minute Latinate workout that swings. Their racing version of Tony Hatch's "Call Me," demonstrates how facile and unique Jamal is at the keys. Other tunes include Jobim's "How Insensitive," the Rodgers/Hart gem "Have You Met Miss Jones," Andre Previn's "Theme From Valley of the Dolls," and more. The trio cooks on this enduring live performance.

Freeflight was recorded live at Switzerland's Montreux Jazz Festival in 1971 with the same trio and features four tunes: a punched-up take on McCoy Tyner's "Effendi" (with Jamal on piano and Fender Rhodes) a light and airy version of Herbie Hancock's "Dolphin Dance," the Jamal original "Manhattan Reflections" (featuring Jamal on Fender Rhodes), and another (piano) version of "Poinciana." Nasser's brisk bass work on "Effendi" is amazing.

Jamal's expressive talents sparkle throughout and this trio plays tight, tidy and imaginatively. These two performances are four- and five-star quality.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



**MONKEYJUNK**  
**To Behold**  
**STONY PLAIN MUSIC**

The Canadian trio MonkeyJunk has a brand new release titled "To Behold." Steve Marriner (vocals, harmonica, keyboards, guitar), Tony D (lead guitar) and Matt Sobbo (drums) all hail from Ottawa. They took their name from a comment by Son House made about talking about the blues and monkey junk. In relation to not having a bassist, they note the examples of Hound Dog Taylor as well as Little Walter. They had an acclaimed independently produced CD and were third place finishers at the 2009 International Blues Challenge. On their web site they describe their music as "Swamp R&B. Soul boogie. Deep blues. Oh, yes, and bedroom funk. Dark sometimes, rockin' at others. You can dance. Does that tell the story?"

The opening "Mother's Crying" starts off with a driving North Mississippi Hills groove, and the following cover of Hank Williams' "You're Gonna Change (Or

I'm Gonna Leave)" has a slightly heavy backbeat with Marriner adding harp on a performance that is a bit more country. While the opening of "Right Now" might suggest they could be viewed as grunge, garage blues, the starker and atmospheric tune, for which Marriner sits down at the organ, "Let Her Down," indicates they are much more versatile on a terrific slow blues performance. It is followed by a nice "With These Hands," which has a laid back soulful flavor, while the late night blue ballad "While You Are Mine" has some low key harp and organ in the backing.

By the time this disc closes with a feature of Marriner's driving harp showcase, "The Marrinator," one has been through a varied group of performances. The members of MonkeyJunk certainly display a tightness from playing together for several years and are strong players. Marriner's vocals are certainly first-rate as well on some solid material. "To Behold" is an impressive release that should hopefully lead to their expanding a growing fan base. Their website is <http://monkeyjunk-band.com>.

*Ron Weinstock*



**DENISE DONATELLI**  
**When Lights Are Low**  
**SAVANT**

Variety of songs and settings are indeed a spice added to the music on vocalist Denise Donatelli's latest Savant album, "When Lights Are Low." With pianist Geoffrey Keezer providing the musical direction, she is joined by Keezer on piano, guitarist Peter Sprague, bassist Hamilton Price and drummer Jan Wikan, who are on most of the selections along with appearances by Ingrid Jensen and Ron Blake amongst others, with a string section added to some selections and one track being with just Keezer.

A bright, brisk "I Wish I Were In Love Again" is a nice opening track displaying her clean and crisp articulation and her ability to embellish with some horn-like phrasing and scatting with a smart, swinging background. The mood changes with strings adding a cushion to her sensuous rendition of Billie Holiday's "Don't Explain," and her delivery seems somewhat deliberate here, but not forced and in addition to the strings providing the mood, Ingrid Jensen's flugelhorn helps the mood of the performance that Jim Wilke observes in the liner notes becomes less a song of a lost affair as a song of

forgiveness. Ron Blake's tenor is added to the quartet for a smart interpretation of "When The Lights Are Low," while backing vocals, cello and bass clarinet provide accents to the lively bossa nova rendition of Sting's "Big Lie, Small World," that again displays her ability to sound so natural in her phrasing and enunciation.

Backed by just Keezer, the ballad "Why Did I Choose You?" displays her ability to express her feelings in an almost effortless manner. The small string section returns along with Blake on soprano sax for "Kisses (Cantor da Noite)," while Julia Dollisson's "Forward, Like So" is the only song not arranged by Keezer, but by the composer (who sings as part of the backup vocals) with Keezer on piano and Fender Rhodes supporting the delivery of the lyrics along with her wordless solo. "The Telephone Song" has her breezily delivering the light lyric as guitarist Sprague and Wikan (on Pandeiro) provide lively Brazilian tinged accompaniment. The only prior rendition of "The Bed I Made" was apparently by Bonnie Raitt but one assumes the blues-rooted rocker lent it a different flavor than Donatelli's version on this reflective ballad.

Cedar Walton's "Enchantment (Firm Roots)" ends this recording on a livelier note with Sprague's guitar brisk solo serving to echo Donatelli's own horn like phrasing of the lyric here. It's a strong conclusion to "When Lights Are Low," which is simply a superbly sung and performed vocal jazz recording. **Ron Weinstock**

## KAY KAY & THE RAYS

### The Best Of Kay Kay And The Rays CATFOOD RECORDS

Catfood records has just issued "The Best of Kay Kay And the Rays," a compilation of the three albums the label issued from the big-voiced and big hearted Kay Kay Greenwade and The Rays. Health issues have shortened the career of this powerful vocalist while The Rays can be heard on recent Catfood Recordings by Johnny Rawls, with whom they sometimes do live performances from.

The band was formed in Odessa Texas and their material was a funky mix of soul and blues with their original songs marked by social commentary (as well as commentary on the relations between the sexes) with strong playing and Kay Kay belting out the vocals. "Long Star Justice" is an indictment of that state's judicial and penal system which, as Johnny Rawls notes in his spoken intro, has more folks in prison than anywhere in the world and where so many are executed, all being poor. As Kay Kay shouts out justice is the best money can buy and where they spend more money on prisons than on social purposes.

More topicality is heard in "Enron Field," where she tells us about going to see a game but not forgetting to talk about the country club justice afforded to white collar criminals like those involved with Enron. Then there's "Texas Justice - Billy's Story," of a young man who is convicted of murder even though he acted in self-defense, only afforded a legal aid attorney fresh

out of Law School.

Then there are her songs about relationships including her not wanting "No Mama's Boys" as well as "Hey Big Boy," whose tales and approaches she ain't buying. As she states, don't trust no man who has taken his wedding ring off. Of course she can view the relationships from the other view as she sings about the "Big, Bad Girl," who she warns men to stay away from. Kay Kay can change the mood with a lovely soul ballad, "Don't Have To Tell Me," as well as a terrific duet with Johnny Rawls on Rawls' original, "Hold On To What You Got."

The Rays match her intensity with solid support, although the arrangements sometimes sound a bit generic. The playing on the duet with Rawls is exceptional. Saxophonist Andy Roman is exceptional on several tracks and Johnny Rawls and Junior Jones add guitar for several selections. This writer remembers how impressed was when he purchased "Texas Justice" one of the three albums anthologized here and certainly this collection shows how formidable Kay Kay and the Rays were. Recommended. **Ron Weinstock**



## SHIRLEY SCOTT

### For Members Only / Great Scott!! IMPULSE 2-ON-1 SERIES

Organist Shirley Scott (b. 1934, d. 2002) is prominently featured on this two-album reissue on a single disc. Yet, an added treat is that the Oliver Nelson (b. 1932, d. 1975) arranged and conducts the orchestra on both albums, recorded in 1963 and 1964.

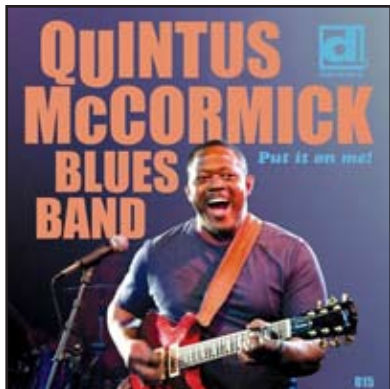
On the eight-tune session, *For Members Only*, Nelson contributes two originals, the bluesy opener, "Southern Comfort, and his benchmark tune, "Freedom Dance." Those numbers and two more, Duke Ellington's "Blue Piano" and George Dunning's "Toys In the Attic" include orchestra accompaniment. The second half of the album prominently features Scott with bassist Earl May and drummer Jimmy Cobb. Performed in the trio setting, Scott's originals include "Blues For Members," "Marchin' To Riverside," and "We're Goin' Home." They also turn the Lerner-Lowe tune, "I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face," into a swinging venture.

*Great Scott!!* again features the ambitious orchestrations of Oliver Nelson backing Scott's inventions on five tracks, including the swinging title tune by Bob Hammer,

Henry Mancini's "A Shot In the Dark" and (with vocalists) "The Shadows of Paris," Nelson's "Hoe Down," and "The Seventh Dawn" buy Riz Ortolani. Still, it's Scott in the trio setting on four tunes that finds her most in her element. She cooks with Kim Gannon's "Five O'Clock Whistle," vocalizes and improvises sentimental on her original "The Blues Ain't Nothin' But Some Pain," and serves up two more standards.

Enjoyable from start to finish, this compilation is part of the Impulse 2-on-1 series and contains a liner booklet with 12 pages featuring the original art and notes.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



## QUINTUS McCORMICK BLUES BAND

**Put It On Me!**

**DELMARK**

In reviewing Quintus McCormick's debut CD "Hey Jodie" (Delmark), this writer found it to be "a marvelous debut album by a blues voice I'd to hear more from." It is about two years later and Delmark has brought us its follow-up "Put It On Me!" It is a release that builds upon his strengths whether working in straight blues or in a deep soul vein. On this release, in addition to his fine quartet of John Chorney on keyboards, Vic Jackson is on bass and Jeremiah Thomas on drums, and there are appearances by Billy Branch on harmonica and the Chicago horns.

About his prior album, I observed that McCormick has "developed into a contemporary urban blues voice with a strong soul-blues tinge. He brings a vocal style that captures elements of Charles Wilson, Little Milton, and others with an intense guitar style..." There is more of this on the new release that shows him moving from a lazy Jimmy Reed styled shuffle "You Just Using Me," to the funk of "Talk Baby," with his high tenor vocal and then there is the soulful ballad "How Quick We Forget," with his deep singing evoking Brook Benton, with a fuzzy toned guitar solo. Its a pretty remarkable variety, and that's just the first three numbers.

There is a fine blues, "I Got It Babe," with a definite Malaco groove (think "Down Home Blues") where he sings "I got what you need, make you scream like you're sweet sixteen" with effective spare backing. John Chorney shines on keyboards here. Another good blues is "The Blues Has Been Good to Me," with a fine vocal and nice harp from Billy Branch. In contrast, "Loveland," with the Chicago horns, is a ballad with a nice groove but the

following blues shuffle, "Don't Know What to Do," with more fine Billy Branch harp and McCormick vocal also has a fuzzy blues-rock guitar solo that detracts from the performance. The title track is a nice blues performance whose melody hints at Muddy Waters' classic recording of "I'm Ready."

The country soul of "Sadie" has jazzier guitar playing as he asks the woman to leave him alone. Another fine slow blues vocal is on "Lady Blues" with more good guitar (suggestive of mid-60s B.B. King and Detroit bluesman Johnnie Bassett) while the closing "Hallelujah" is a R&B styled gospel that is wonderfully sung and played in a low-key manner. It closes an impressive second album by McCormick who certainly shows absolutely no sophomore slump on this excellent "Put It On Me!"

*Ron Weinstock*

## ALEXIS P SUTER BAND

**Two Sides**

**HIPBONE RECORDS**

Vocalist Alexis P Suter is one of those who command attention like a force of nature. Her deep and husky alto brings together gospel roots on a mix of blues, pop, soul and gospel-laced material on her newest recording "Two Sides" (Hipbone Records). Produced by Vicki Bell (one of her backing singers) and drummer Ray Grappone, the 14 performances here are mostly originals with the exception of new renditions of a couple of gospel classics and Bob Dylan's "Knocking On Heaven's Door."

The opening "Free" is typical of many of the songs here with a lyric about looking for a home the rest of her life, making hard choices set and taking a stand with some keen slide guitar in the backing. "All Over Again" has a rocking groove and melodic hook with Ms. Suter firmly telling this person she is over him and tired of taking crap. "Didn't It Rain" is the traditional telling of the Noah story from "Genesis," with understated backing and delivery of the vocal.

Part of the appeal of this recording is that the originals will evoke some classic recordings as manifested on "Part Time Feeling," as she sings about her man having a hard time dealing with his part time feeling. "Only I" has Ms. Suter singing about drowning in their relationship and never could make her man happy and be what he wants her to be, and "you'll never be my hero, only I can rescue me." "Rise" is a gospel styled original powerfully sung as she sings about seemingly walking alone, but standing her ground, as one is never truly walking alone.

The performance of Dylan's "Knocking On Heaven's Door" is among the highlights on this recording as it builds with intensity, while another spiritual "John the Revelator" benefits from a bit of honky tonk piano in the accompaniment. "Savior" comes across as a shorter version of "Only I," with its message of "only I can rescue me." "Drama," brings a bit of musical hall to the backing and Suter's vocal and closes this recording on an upbeat note. This is available from amazon and better sources. Her website is <http://www.alexispsuter.com/index1.htm>.

*Ron Weinstock*



# 2011 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



## HOWLIN' WOLF Smokestack Lightning: Complete Chess Masters 1951-1960 HIP-O-SELECT BOX SET

Chester Arthur Burnett, known as Howlin' Wolf, was one of the seminal blues artists of all time. Sam Phillips who recorded Wolf's earliest sides said of Wolf "This is where the soul of man never dies." Having produced similar compilations of Little Walter, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley amongst others, Hip-O-Select takes us to what is likely two sets of the Chess recordings of the Wolf over four discs and in an attractive hard back book with sleeves to have ready access to the four CDs that include 97 tracks and a little under 5 hours of music.

The book package contains an overview of Wolf's music from Peter Guralnick and an overview of the included recordings by Dick Shurman, along with a variety of photos and newspaper clippings with full discographical information. The music ranges from Sam Phillips' earliest recordings of Wolf in Memphis that were sent to Chess in Chicago through the 1960 session that produced "Back Dog Man," "Wang Dang Doodle" and "Spoonful." Roughly a third of the recordings on this set were recorded by Phillips in Memphis, with the remainder done in Chicago after the Chess brothers convinced him to move north.

Many of Wolf's signature recordings are included, ranging from the initial release of "Moanin' At Midnight" and "How Many More Years" from his first session in Memphis along with other deep south sounds as "Bluebird (Blues)," "Streamline Woman," "Mr. Highway Man" and "Saddle My Pony." Then there are his Chicago recordings including "No Place To Go," "Forty Four," "Smokestack Lightning," "The Natchez Burning," "Sittin' On Top Of The World," "Mr. Airplane Man," and "Back Door Man."

As the selected song titles suggest, there are many impressive sides included that if an artist had simply recorded a couple of songs would be regarded as the basis of a legendary career. In Wolf's case, his body

of work merits this consideration as well as the iconic songs. And the recordings start with the Memphis sides with Willie Johnson on guitar, Willie Steele on drums, Ike Turner, L.C. Hubert or Bill 'Struction' Johnson on piano, and on one session James Cotton, who plays on "Saddle My Pony." After relocating to Chicago, Wolf's sessions included Otis Spann and Hosea Lee Kennard on piano, Willie Dixon on bass, Willie Johnson, Jody Williams, Otis "Smokey" Smothers and Hubert Sumlin on guitar, Abb Locke on saxophone and Earl Phillips and Fred Below on drums.

While Williams and Johnson are very prominent on the earlier Chicago sessions, these recordings also allow us to appreciate the emergence of Hubert Sumlin as an important and original guitar voice, whose guitar lines, snaking against the rhythm, offer a bite in addition to Wolf's powerful vocals. This provided an immediately recognizable sound as the recordings evolved with the rollicking boogies of the Memphis days to storming shuffles and emphatically performed slow blues that hit like the Chicago winter winds.

All of the issued recordings are included along with alternate takes and several compilations of alternate takes and studio banter. From a listening standpoint, one wishes some of these alternates were not included in the generally chronological presentation of material, but rather at the end of the package. While there is a value of illustrating how the sessions shaped what was ultimately released, one wonders if so much of these multi-take tracks was included to fill out four CDs so they could split Wolf's Chess recordings into two volumes. This is the only fault one might suggest about this reissue. The sound is quite good on this reissue of some of the greatest blues recordings of the past six or so decades. With the holidays around the corner, Howlin' Wolf's "The Complete Chess Masters 1951-1960" will make a terrific gift.

*Ron Weinstock*



## FRANK SINATRA Best of The Best CAPITOL RECORDS

"Best of the Best" is a new CD compilation that for the first time collects Frank Sinatra recordings from both Capitol Records and Reprise Records. The 23 tracks (13 from Capitol and 10 from Reprise) collect his most memorable and iconic recordings. One is hard-pressed to say anything new about this music, which should be familiar to many.

From "I've Got The World On A String" to "Theme

PAGE TWENTY ONE

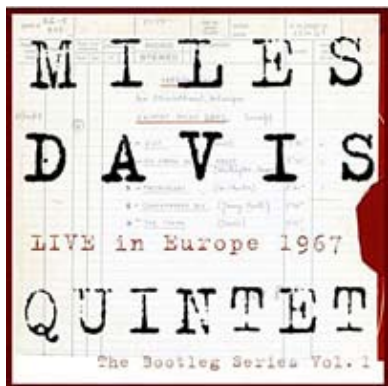
From ‘New York New York’” listeners are treated to classic interpretations of songs from the great tunesmiths like Cole Porter, Rogers and Hart, Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen. These are presented in arrangements from such masters as Nelson Riddle, Don Costa, Billy May, Quincy Jones, and Ernie Freeman. From spectacular big bands to lush orchestra stylings, the voice, the songs and the performances are timeless and marvelously mastered.

Despite the familiarity of the material, some tunes are going to come off as almost new to the listener, such as “In the Wee Small Hours Of The Morning” “Angel Eyes” and “Summer Wind.” Then there is “Fly me To The Moon” from a session with Count Basie that Quincy Jones arranged. At the same time, one appreciates nuances in the songs and the arrangements that might have been missed hearing Sinatra over a Car radio.

Frank Sinatra Jr. provides commentary on each performance, providing insights on how the material was selected and the imprint his father’s recording left. For example, I was unaware that a Kingston trio recording was the basis of Sinatra’s classic, “It Was a Very Good Year.” As his son notes, Frank Sinatra was unequalled in recognizing great lyrics. Sinatra’s music has been anthologized, a subject of box sets, and prior “Best Of” collections. Let others quarrel about specific songs that are not included. I will simply continue to enjoy the “Best of the Best.”

Incidentally, this is available as simply a CD, or in a deluxe package that also includes a DVD of a long out-of-print Seattle concert. I did not receive a copy of the DVD so cannot comment on it.

**Ron Weinstock**



## MILES DAVIS QUINTET

### Live In Europe 1967: The Bootleg Series Vol. 1 COLUMBIA/LEGACY

This three-CD-plus-DVD showcase of Miles’ 1965-68 quintet fascinates not only for the masterful play of both the group and each individual member on constant display here. *Live In Europe 1967* also documents a pivotal time in the creative direction of the bandleader and, due much to his influence, jazz itself.

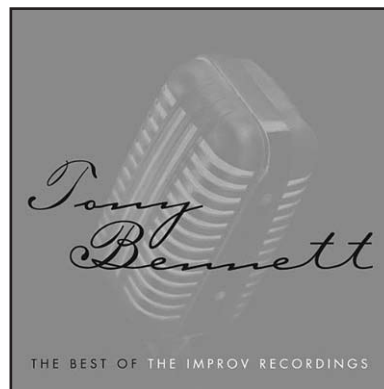
Chronological context magnifies the bounty of these “live” dates, taken from the group’s “Newport In Europe” performances in five cities. This assemblage- tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, pianist Herbie Hancock, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Tony Williams, was Miles’ last conventional jazz lineup. Indeed, his future “electrification”

would partially begin its development with these players (think *Miles In The Sky*). Jazz itself was contending with the “free” movement, with interested parties everywhere taking highly passionate positions in the debate. These tremors might well have energized the brilliant, frequently urgent-sounding work each man delivers on these sets; each player contending with these changes in his own way.

Shorter and Williams seem the most possessed by the “free” scene, their statements consistently reaching for ways out of the structure. Miles consistently walks the tightrope, taking on the perils of all that latitude while never abandoning his exquisitely creative craftsmanship. Hancock most completely resembles the leader in approach and might be the ultimate “star” of these dates. For as much as an anchor is needed, the masterful Carter provides it. The set lists will be familiar to those who know Miles, and include multiple takes of “Round Midnight”, “On Green Dolphin Street”, and “Masqualero”.

Given the amplified paths taken soon after by Miles, Shorter, Hancock and Williams, directions that would birth the fusion era, the music documented on these sides are among their final “pure” jazz statements. In any case, *Live In Europe 1967* is a jazz experience of the highest magnitude, an experience most deserving of this deluxe package.

**Duane Verh**



## TONY BENNETT

### The Best of the Improv Recordings CONCORD MUSIC GROUP

Gleaned from singer Tony Bennett’s brief stint on his own Improv label that last a couple of years in the mid-1970s, the compiled 16 tracks include studio and a couple of live performances of American Songbook titles. All of the tracks on this album are also included in Concord’s 4-CD boxed set, Tony Bennett: The Complete Improv Recordings.

Bennett is featured on this single disc with the Ruby Braff/George Barnes Quartet, Charlie Byrd, Vic Dickenson, Bill Evans, John Guiffreda, Chuck Higgins, Jimmy McPartland, Marian McPartland, Wayne Wright, Torrie Zito (Bennett’s musical director at the time) and others. Tunes include “This Can’t Be Love,” “Blue Moon,” “Isn’t It Romance?,” “You Don’t Know What Love Is,” “My Romance,” “You Must Believe In Spring,” and other romantic gems. The only departure is the up-tempo

Rodgers/Hart chestnut, "The Lady Is A Tramp."

Although at the time of these recordings Bennett had complete artistic freedom, the Improv label was not a commercial success and shut down after releasing about ten albums.

Bennett is in prime form, accompaniment is respectful and this is a pleasing listen from start to finish. A 16-page liner booklet, with photos and lengthy notes (from the 4-CD boxed set) by Will Friedwald, accompanies this CD compilation produced by Nick Phillips.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



## THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

Winterland  
EXPERIENCE HENDRIX/  
LEGACY  
4-CD BOX SET

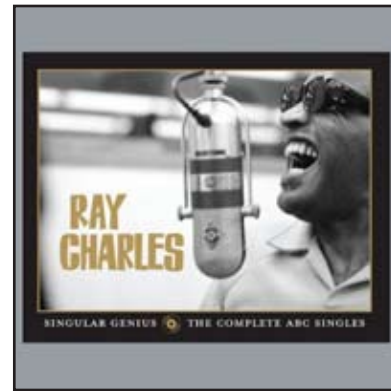
At one point on Disc Number Two, Jimi tells the audience, "We're sorry everything's so slow tonight." Truth is, Mr. Hendrix and crew had nothing to apologize for. It's the different character of each of the shows chronicled on this four-disc set that will keep fans returning to these October 1968 performances at the storied San Francisco venue (synchronous with the release of the trio's classic *Electric Ladyland*). From jam session casualness to highly focused ferocity and points in between, *Winterland* abounds in energy, spontaneity and an almost "bootleg" charm. It's precisely how each evening's mood impacts the versions of "Hey Joe", "Red House", "Are You Experienced" and others played on that particular night, and how they (often dramatically) contrast with last night's version, that make this such a compelling collection.

The deluxe edition includes a 36-page book featuring unpublished photos and a rare interview. An eight-LP version and single CD compilation are also available. A must for the hardcore Hendrix fan.

*Duane Verh*

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## RAY CHARLES

Singular Genius: The Complete ABC Singles  
CONCORD

"Singular Genius: The Complete ABC Singles" is the aptly titled box set issued by Concord of all of the singles issued by Ray Charles after he left Atlantic Records and signed with ABC Paramount. This complements the reissue of Charles' Atlantic singles, "The Birth of Soul" that was issued a number of years ago and takes us through 1970 and through some very familiar and iconic recordings. The 106 tracks are spread over 5 physical CDs and contain a booklet with an overview of the music from Billy Vera and session information about the selections included.

Vera observes, fans of Charles often are divided between those with a preference for the early R&B singles with the legendary eight piece band and those who enjoy his latter recordings often with a big band or full orchestra that cover a wider variety of material. It should be noted that even Charles Atlantic singles and recordings transcended the blues, rhythm and blues to include jazz. And while with Atlantic, he recorded the brilliant album "The Genius of Ray Charles" which indicated his future direction with big band and orchestral charts from Quincy Jones and Ralph Burns.

One reason perhaps some prefer the Atlantic period is the more homogenous material and musical framework of those recordings. ABC gave Charles greater leeway in the material he recorded and Sid Feller oversaw Charles recordings, as opposed to pro due them. So there was considerable variety in the material including pop and country songs as well as blues and jazz classics. He would, in some cases, be backed by a big band, on others with an orchestra with strings, and there also were some small combo recordings. Furthermore on some recordings there would be a vocal chorale as opposed to gospel-based R&B.

While his earliest recordings were on ABC Paramount, Charles was able to have his own label, Tangerine where he could record musical idols like Louis Jordan and the sophisticated blues of the songwriter Percy Mayfield who contributed the signature Charles recording "Hit the Road Jack" along with "The Danger Zone," "At the Club" and "Hide Nor Hair." Then there are the duets with Betty Carter including "Baby Its Cold Outside," which was a bit more sophisticated than



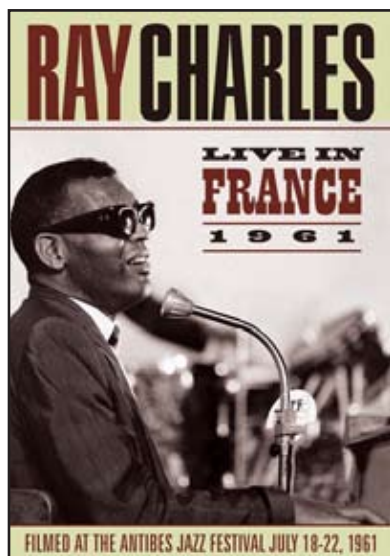
either the Louis Jordan and Ella Fitzgerald recording or Hot Lips Page and Pearl Bailey.

While with ABC Charles would record his path finding albums of country music and many of those classic recordings are also included as are his singular interpretations of The Beatles' "Yesterday" and "Eleanor Rigby." Standards such as "Without Love" and "Without a Song" (in two parts, one a vocal, the other instrumental) are mixed with the Harlan Howard classic that Charles invigorated "Busted," and he never forgot his roots in the blues with "Worried Life Blues" (the flip side of "Sticks and Stones"), Sam Cooke's "Laughin' and Clownin'", and the Chuck Willis classics "Feel So Bad" and "What Am I Living For." The latter number has a country flavor in the backing with the choral backing and the steel guitar in the orchestral backing along with a nice bluesy guitar solo. Not that long after he would record his classic rendition of "America The Beautiful."

On his last ABC singles, Charles covered Silas Hogan's "Every Saturday Night" with a smoldering big band rendition and Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire." One might argue that the performances as a whole are not as consistent as the Atlantic recordings. Perhaps it's the wide range of material he covers and not everything comes across with the emotional gravity of his best work. With a few rare exceptions, Charles was able to invest so much of himself in his music and placed his own stamp on his recordings and performances. On occasion he would not be able to transcend the sentimentality of a few songs, but that is the exception as can be heard here.

Oddly, my only complaint is that extracting the CDs from the box they come in can be tricky at times. "Singular Genius" is an apt title, and one can readily doubt whether we will ever see another performer with so much soul and so much musical depth. That genius and depth is evident here.

**Ron Weinstock**



## RAY CHARLES LIVE IN FRANCE 1961

EAGLE ROCK ENT DVD

Eagle Vision has issued an amazing and important DVD by Ray Charles "Live in France 1961." This was filmed over four nights during Charles' first tour of Europe when he played a Jazz Festival outside of Antibes on the Cote d'Azur and marked a departure in that he brought his

big little band as opposed to the larger big band he was touring with in the United States. There is also

an excellent video of Charles in Brazil from a couple years later that shows The Genius in his prime with the full big band.

With Charles and his piano, we hear the legendary saxophone trio of Hank Crawford, David 'Fathead' Newman, and Leroy 'Hog' Cooper along with trumpeters Philip Guilbeau and John Hunt, bassist Edgar Willis and drummer Bruno Carr. And also present were the Raelettes of Gwen Berry, Margie Hendrix, Pat Lyles and Darlene McCrea. This was essentially Ray's Band during his years at Atlantic Records and the chance to see this band (which was the band on Ray's live Atlantic Recordings) makes this particular DVD special.

The performances are taken from French television programs of highlights from the Festival and as the folks from Reelin' In The Years Productions observe, this was filmed, not taped, which helps explain the excellent video quality.

However, film not used after cutting and splicing of source material, was discarded so this 105 minutes which includes multiple performances of several songs is all there is. Radio recordings of the entire shows existed that allowed rearranging the clips from the festival highlights into the performance order and provide superior sound.

The performances include the jazzy instrumentals including renditions James Moody's "The Story," Horace Silver's "Doodlin'" and his instrumental take of "One Mint Julep." Then there are stellar renditions of "Let the Good Times Roll," "Georgia On My Mind" with Fathead Newman on flute, "Sticks and Stones" and "What'd I Say." Does anybody need to have me say what a great band this was and that the members get showcased throughout?

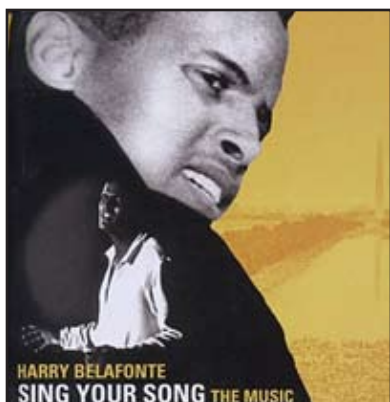
The filming did have the great Charles' vocals and piano front and center while focusing on the horns during their solos. Listening and watching how effortlessly he moves from a ballad like Cecil Gant's classic, "I Wonder" to the vocal interchange with Margie Hendrix who admonishes him to "Tell The Truth," one is awestruck even 50 years later. Similarly, one is amazed watching Charles jazz up "My Bonnie," and while getting down for the nitty gritty for "I Believe."

Few performers were so at home and so expressive at performing such a wide range of music. This DVD presents Charles at his greatest, and in addition to the terrific production, there is a booklet with Rob Bowman providing us the context for these performances.

This is a stellar DVD that should be of interest to many.

**Ron Weinstock**

**jazz-blues.com**



## **HARRY BELAFONTE**

### **Sing Your Song: The Music** **SONY MASTERWORKS**

Harry Belafonte's "Sing Your Song: The Music" (Sony Masterworks) has been issued to accompany the acclaimed documentary "Sing My Music" as well as his published autobiography "My Song: A Memoir By Harry Belafonte" (Knopf). The 17 performances here include some of his more famous ones as he developed from a folk troubadour to legendary singer, actor, social activist and an icon. It is a remarkable life he has lived and the music here is part of proof of that statement.

Opening with "Mark Twain" and Leadbelly's loving ballad "Sylvie" backed by just a guitar (and in the case of the latter number a vocal chorus) the warmth of Belafonte's singing is evident. I was not familiar with his rendition of Lord Melody's "Mama Look a Boo Boo," but it was one of his earliest recordings of Calypso which he helped popularize and others (written with his collaborator Lord Burgess) include the brassy "Cocoanut Woman," and "Banana Boat Song (Day-0)." The latter number helped make his album "Calypso 1956" the first album to exceed 1 million copies sold. Mixed in with lovely ballads such as "Scarlet Ribbons (For Her Hair)," it helps explain his great popularity (and of course his looks did not hurt at all).

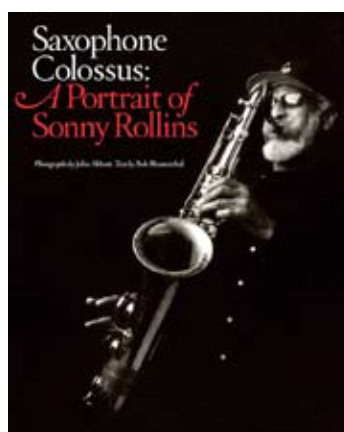
He starred in the movie "Island In The Sun" and with Lord Burgess contributed the marvelous title song with a fine orchestra. There is also a lively rendition of the folk round, "Jump Down Spin Around," while his rendition of King Radio's calypso "Man Smart (Woman Smarter)" became covered by the Grateful Dead and The Carpenters among others. "Jamaica Farewell" is another familiar Belafonte classic as he sings about leaving his little girl in Kingston Town. Belafonte's regular accompanist at the time, Millard Thomas, has lovely acoustic guitar breaks on this, and it is followed by "Mathilda" another of his celebrated recordings.

His musical horizons would expand to incorporate African sounds as on a lovely vocal duet with Miriam Makeba, "My Angel (Malaika)," initially set against a soft guitar and percussion backing. "Jump In the Line" is a brassy song for the Trinidad Carnival that will be familiar from those who have seen the movie

"Beetlejuice" (several other of these songs were also in that movie's soundtrack). A duet with Odetta "A Hole in the Bucket," from a 1959 television special still is highly amusing over fifty years later. "Turn the World Around" with its afro-beat rhythm was recorded in the US but never issued in the US, although Belafonte did perform this with The Muppets and some will know it from that. "Can't Cross Over (River Come Down)" comes from that same 1977 session.

Obviously this compilation only scratches the surface of Belafonte's remarkable recording career. There are two subsequent studio albums and several concert recordings that post-date the music on this. However "Sing Your Song: The Music" stands up as a terrific selection of Harry Belafonte's music, and the insert includes notes on all the songs. This is highly recommended.

*Ron Weinstock*



## **SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS: A PORTRAIT OF SONNY ROLLINS**

**Photographs by**  
**John Abbott,**  
**Text by**

**Bob Blumenthal**  
**2010 NEW YORK: ABRAMS**

Sonny Rollins has turned 80 and part of the celebration is a superb

new coffee table book, *Saxophone Colossus: A Portrait of Sonny Rollins* (Abrams 2010) with Photographs by John Abbott and text by Bob Blumenthal.

Photographer Abbott has been photographing Rollins for twenty odd years and was *JazzTimes* cover photographer for a number of years. The images in here come from a variety of sources including festival and concert performances as well as at his home, both his former apartment near the World Trade Center and upstate from New York City. There are a number of formal portraits mixed with Sonny in a silhouette with a festival audience in front of him. There are shots of members of Sonny's Bands in some of the performance shots as well as some of individuals who had associations with Sonny over the years including a 2002 portrait of Max Roach.

There are also pictures of Sonny with Roy Haynes and Christian McBride taken around the time of Sonny's concert to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of his Carnegie Hall Concert, and backstage as he examines album covers of his older vinyl albums that have been brought for signature. Black & White and Sepia toned images mix with color images and all are marvelously reproduced.

Simply put, as a book of photographs of Sonny Rollins, one would have little trouble recommending this volume. Additionally it has the musings of Blumenthal

on Sonny Rollins and his music. The book is divided into 5 chapters, each named for one of the tunes that Rollins recorded on the album *Saxophone Colossus*, which enables Blumenthal to provide some musical commentary on Rollins' music and life. He not only discusses the specific performance but also a variety of other recordings and performances, and includes some discussion of the views towards Sonny's music.

This is obviously not a full biography of Sonny Rollins or a full detailed discussion of Sonny's music, but Blumenthal's discussion and the listing of performances in the Appendix provides a concise guide to the central core of Sonny Rollins' considerable musical legacy.

*Ron Weinstock*



## MILES DAVIS

Live at Montreux

### Highlights

1973-1991

EAGLE ROCK ENT DVD

This Miles at Montreux DVD was released this past summer as a kind of prelude and a teaser to the mammoth 10-CD set of Miles Montreux concerts Eagle released in October, which is featured on our cover and lead story in this issue. It features over 2 hours of music begin-

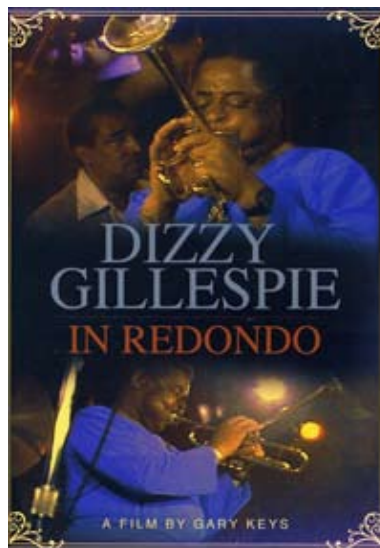
ning with "Ife" in 1973 and ending with "Solea" in 1991. The eight songs in between come from his shows at the prestigious Swiss festival in the years 1984 (Speak: That's What Happened), 1985 (Code MD" and "Pacific Express"), 1986, (Jean Pierre"), 1988 "Heavy Metal Prelude"), 1989 ("Jo Jo"), 1990 ("Hannibal") and 1991 ("The Pan Piper" and "Solea").

Naturally, in true Miles fashion, the band changes with each appearance over the various years featuring such players as David Liebman, John Scofield, Kenny Garrett, Bob Berg, Al Foster, Robben Ford and others, with a red hot guest appearance from David Sanborn on "Jean Pierre." Another highlight is the work of percussionist Marilyn Mazur on "Heavy Metal Prelude."

In 1973 Miles really didn't play much, playing some notes and bursts here and there and piddling around on the organ, while sporting mighty big hair with sunglasses that filled half his face. Nonetheless, the music is first rate with his rock edge of the period. He then took several years off from performing (for health reasons) and when he returned to Montreux in 1984 he was in great form, and pretty much was for the remaining shows. You can see him aging over the years, and the last two songs are acoustic recreations from his "Sketches of Spain" album, "The Pan Piper"

and "Solea," along with an orchestra conducted by Quincy Jones (since Gil Evans had passed on). Over the years his sunglasses became tamer, and now he was wearing old-fashioned reading glasses. This would be Miles' last Montreux performance, as he passed away just three months later.

There is no question that this would make a fantastic gift for any fan of Miles' later work. Of course, an even better gift would be the 10-DVD set for those who can afford it. I certainly wish I could! *Bill Wahl*



## DIZZY GILLESPIE

Dizzie Gillespie

In Redondo

MVD VISUAL DVD

This 60-minute film by producer/director Gary Keys captures the playful trumpeter and his team in a live-recorded 1981 intimate set before a full house at the Concerts By The Sea jazz club in Redondo Beach, California.

Joining Dizzy on the crowded stage are saxophonist Pacquito D'Rivera, trombonist Tom MacIntosh, guitarist Ed Cherry (whose surname is misspelled in the captions), pianist Valerie Capers, drummer Tom Campbell, bassist Ray Brown, and electric bassist Michael Howell. Each musician gets plenty of moments in the spotlight as the band stretches out on the four main tunes.

The casually-dressed crew (except for Brown who's wearing a suit jacket) launches with a cookin' take on "Be Bop" with fine solos all-around. Dizzy takes melody head on a 17-minute version of his original, "Kush." They serve up a 10-minute rendering of "Birk's Works" and an 18-minute impromptu slow blues number called, "I'm Hard of Hearing Mama," which features vocals from then 63-year-old Dizzy. As the credits roll, the band plays about three minutes of a funk-laced "Jazz In America."

A few brief, interspersed off-stage interview clips with Gillespie present him snappily dressed but his comments add little of musical or biographical value. One can forgive some of the technical distractions because of the first-rate musicianship and the onstage banter. There are no notes.

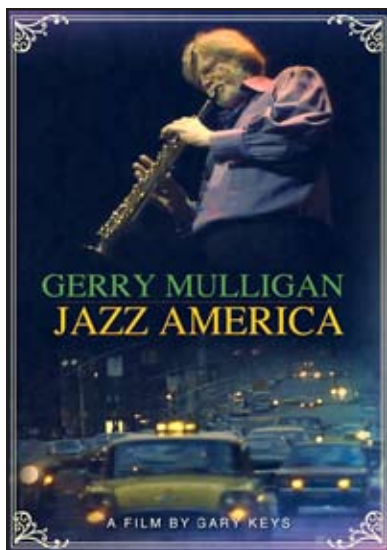
Relaxed and friendly, the appealing performance whizzes by all too soon.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

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**GERRY  
MULLIGAN**  
Jazz America  
MVD VISUAL DVD

This 60-minute DVD captures baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan's quartet performing at Eric's in New York City. Filmed by Gary Keys, the set was likely originally produced for California's KCET television. Before starting the 1981 set, the film

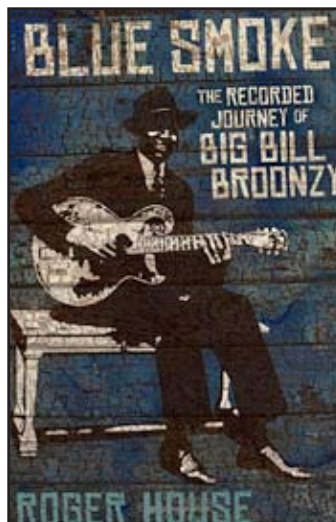
opens with a few minutes of interview snippets interspersed with Mulligan's riffs.

Mulligan is charming and friendly throughout the entire live performance, announcing the seven tunes and providing details behind some of his originals performed with pianist Harold Danko, bassist Frank Luther and drummer Billy Hart. Tunes include "17 Mile Drive," "Around About Sundown," "For An Unfinished Woman," "Walk on the Water" (featuring Mulligan on soprano sax), "North Atlantic Run," and (my two favorites) "Song For Strayhorn" and "K-4 Pacific." The tune dedicated to Ellington band composer Billy Strayhorn contains one of the prettiest melodies of the set and the dramatic, traveling, time-shifting 'K-4' tune, Mulligan explains, is inspired by a steam locomotive that traveled from Philadelphia to Chicago. Gary Keys' cinematography provides tight close-ups from four cameras without any special effects and sound quality is excellent.

A multi-talented arranger, composer, saxophonist and conductor, Mulligan (b. 1927, d. 1996) is probably best known for his compositions and arrangements that led to the landmark recording, *Birth of the Cool*, which marked a new direction in jazz, departing from the bebop style.

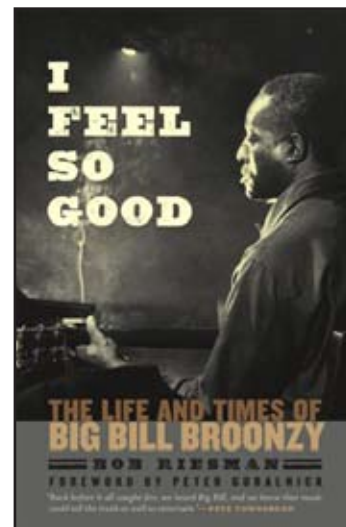
This intimate live performance by one of the world's most widely respected and revered jazz musicians documents him at the peak of his career, the same year he won a Grammy Award for "Best Jazz Instrumental Performance by a Big Band" for his DRG album *Walk on the Water*.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



**BLUES SMOKE: THE RECORDED  
JOURNEY OF BIG BILL BROONZY**

Roger House  
2010: LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS



**I FEEL SO GOOD: THE LIFE AND TIMES  
OF BIG BILL BROONZY**

Bob Riesman  
2011: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

It is rather intriguing that two books on the life and music of legendary Chicago bluesman Big Bill Broonzy have been published within a year. I had purchased and read, "Blue Smoke" by Roger House when I became aware of Bob Riesman's "I Feel So Good: The Life and Times of Big Bill Broonzy." The latter book provides a very different book than House's and, as discussed below, is the preferred biography of Broonzy, although House's book, while consolidating information that was known when he wrote it, is valuable as a cultural history of Broonzy and his songs, but accepts perhaps too much of Broonzy's sometimes fanciful autobiography "Big Bill's Blues: William Broonzy's Story As Told To Yannick Bruynoghe."

For those who are not familiar with him, Broonzy was a very popular blues singer, guitarist and songwriter who had moved from the deep South after World War I and was mentored by Papa Charlie Jackson and Blind Blake before commencing a recording career in 1927 when Paramount issued his "House Rent Stomp." By the mid-1930s he had become established as a popular recording artist who recorded regularly for what was known then as Race Records series and, after World II, "Rhythm and Blues." Such songs as "Key to the Highway," "It Was a Dream," "When I Get to Drinking," "I Feel So Good," "Southbound Train" and others established Broonzy as a major star in the Chicago blues world and became part of the blues repertoire. He also played a significant role in the live club scene and was ready to take someone under his wing to mentor.

Broonzy also was one of the first bluesmen to cross over to a more general audience, starting with his appearance at the fabled "From Spirituals To Swing" concerts that John Hammond presented at Carnegie Hall in the late

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1930s. Broonzy was a replacement for Robert Johnson who Hammond originally sought, but had died before he had been contacted. It was the beginning of a relationship with the white audience that included performing at the famed Cafe Society, concerts organized by Alan Lomax at Carnegie Hall and other venues in the late forties, and he later participated in early folk revival concerts in the United States, and he was amongst the earliest 'folk' bluesmen to tour Europe where he had lengthy engagements as well as developed some close personal relationships. His repertoire included 'folk songs' including those associated with other artists like Leroy Carr or Leadbelly, reworked renditions of his commercial recordings and protest songs like "Black, Brown and White."

House's "Blue Smoke" is a less detailed attempt at a biography. It is reliant on "Big Bill's Blues" for facts on Broonzy's early life as well as until he moved up north. He takes the basic parameters presented in the books, such as the claim of his parents being together during slave time, being born in Mississippi, serving in Europe in World War 1 and leaving the South after experiencing the white supremacist backlash against blacks after he returned from the War. The problem is that Broonzy's account of his early days is a fantasy that reflects the image that Broonzy wishes to project about his origins, but is not consistent with some of the facts of Broonzy's early life. That said, it isn't the only source of information on Broonzy's early life as Broonzy wrote a short account for Art Hodes magazine "The Jazz Record" and was also interviewed by Alan Lomax.

House's strength is focusing on Broonzy and his recording in the socio-cultural context they took place in. Broonzy was one of many blacks that migrated from the racist deep South to the urban North and places his music in the context of the house and rent parties, taverns and theaters and shared experiences the migrants had in the northern urban ghettos. He traces Broonzy's recording career from Papa Charlie Jackson's introduction of him to Paramount Records through his establishing himself as one of the most recorded blues artists in the thirties and forties. Broonzy's recordings evolved from guitar duets where Broonzy displayed the influence of the great Blind Blake, to spectacular piano-guitar duets with Black Bob, and Joshua Altheimer, and then the small group blues with horns with Memphis Slim and Blind John Davis.

In considering Broonzy's crossing over to white audiences starting with the Spiritual to Swing, House does not note that Broonzy was a replacement for the dead Robert Johnson, and notes how Broonzy was presented as an authentic primitive in contrast to his status as a significant urban blues artist of the time. But while he recites facts about Broonzy's life, he also does not go into depth about, for example, the relationship Broonzy had with Lil Green, which went beyond simply playing guitar on many of her sessions, but also writing songs for her and accompanying her on early tours before she was connected with Tiny Bradshaw's Big Band.

After the roughly 160 pages on Broonzy, "Blue Smoke" also contains an extensive and invaluable 60-odd-page

discography of all known recordings that Broonzy made as well as those by other artists on which he played. While flawed as a biography, there are insights and issues raised as well as some astute consideration of Broonzy's music that makes it worth considering. I do not regret purchasing this book despite its flaws.

Bob Riesman's "I Feel So Good" stands as the biography on Broonzy. Going beyond the mostly library sources of House's book, Riesman described the challenges he faced:

"Over the course of researching and writing the book, I've learned that Bill was exemplary in many respects, flawed in others, and capable of exquisitely contradictory behavior. He left invaluable material for future historians by writing dozens of letters to correspondents in Europe, Great Britain, and the United States, who preserved many of them. During the same period, he provided substantial amounts of misleading or just plain wrong information about himself, his family, and his colleagues to interviewers, readers, and audiences on three continents that would take decades to untangle.

Because of Bill's success at what magicians call misdirection—directing the audience's attention away from where the crucial action is being performed—the challenges facing a would-be biographer have not been simple or straightforward. He specified incorrect marriage dates to wives whose names he changed in the telling, heaped praise on a favorite uncle who is absent from all family records and memories, relocated his own birth to a different state and set it in a different decade, and gave himself different first and last names. It turned out that it was necessary to retrace his steps in Europe to find out who he was and where he came from."

Key to uncovering this was when he interviewed "Pim van Isveldt, the Dutch woman with whom he had fathered a son, Michael, in 1956. "Near the end of our conversation, Pim handed me a shoebox in which she had kept the many letters Bill had written her. He had written one of them while visiting his sister, Lannie Bradley Wesley, in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Her home address, which Bill had given as the return address, was a vital clue."

He would later meet and interview Broonzy's grandniece and grand-nephew, who helped establish some of the facts that Broonzy obscured. "Bill's imaginative powers enabled him to obscure his origins and many portions of his journeys, while illuminating the worlds he grew up in and passed through. In my view, Bill's life and work can best be understood and appreciated by considering both the facts and the truth—as Studs Terkel put it, "Bill is speaking the truth—his truth." Here is my version of Big Bill Broonzy's story."

In the course of compiling this story he interviewed countless people including blues man Billy Boy Arnold (who was mentored by Big Bill and is scheduled to have an album of Broonzy's music released), members of Broonzy's family, Bill Randle who produced the last interviews of Broonzy, Studs Terkel, David 'Honeyboy' Edwards, B.B. King, Eric Clapton, Pete Seeger, Rambling

Jack Elliott, Jody Williams, Jimmie Lee Robinson and Ron Sweetman. He also explored the archives of Yannick Bruynoghe, and Jim O'Neal provided tapes of an interview with Blind John Davis and a transcript of one with Memphis Slim. This is just to give a sense of the depth of research and material used for this biography.

And through his research (collaborated by other blues researchers), we know that Big Bill Broonzy's real name is Lee Bradley and he was born in Jefferson County, Arkansas on June 26, 1903, the fourth and last boy of Frank and Mittie Bradley, and the Bradley Family lived in Jefferson County outside Pine Bluff from the 1880s through the 1920s.

While from the 1930s on Broonzy claimed he was born in Scott, Mississippi, ten years earlier than his actual birth date, Riesman observes, "the documentary evidence is clear that the facts are otherwise. Lannie Bradley Wesley's granddaughter Rosie Tolbert keeps the family records. She and her older sister Jo Ann Jackson remember their uncle Bill and his sister (their grandmother Lannie), their great-grandmother Mittie, their great-uncle Frank Bradley Jr., and their great-aunts Gustavia and Mary. The censuses of 1900, 1910, and 1920 all show Frank and Mittie Bradley and their children living at home in Jefferson County. Tax records, marriage licenses, Social Security applications, and death certificates all confirm and reinforce the fact that Big Bill Broonzy was Lee Bradley of the Bradley clan." Yet while he might misdirect on specifics as to his family and his early dates, Big Bill provided "an indelible sense of what it was like to be in a particular place at a particular time. This was both his gift and his artistry." The truths he spoke were more general truths than the life he may actually have lived.

Riesman helps us understand and follow his life in considerable detail. The book opens with a chapter with an account of Broonzy's funeral and notes that the arrangements were taken care of by Win Stracke, who had toured the Midwest with Big Bill in a folk song review, as well as also appearing on Studs Terkel's radio program, and he helped launched Big Bill's European concerts tours. Bill trusted Win enough to name him executor of the estate. While House summarizes Broonzy's funeral, Riesman goes into depth about the participants and their roles and the deliberate choice of four black and four white pallbearers.

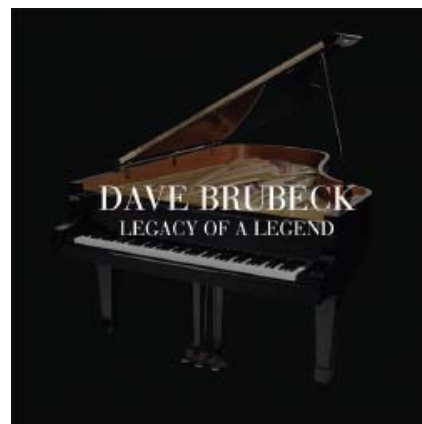
Riesman continues in tracing his musical career as a country fiddler, often playing for white folk, to the brilliant guitarist who became the preeminent blues artist in Chicago. More context is placed in discussing his appearance at "From Spirituals To Swing," including the fact that Blind Boy Fuller was in jail, led to Broonzy, not Fuller, being the 'primitive' blues artist in lieu of the deceased Robert Johnson. He covers more fully Bill's performances in taverns as well as touring with Lil Green. The time he spent in Iowa is also fully detailed as is the European travels, with much new information presented that gives a sense of him as a person and how he was regarded by so many from such different backgrounds.

I read a proof of Riesman's text, which included foot-

notes, a selected discography (actually recommended reissues) and Big Bill on film. It did not include photographs that likely will be in the published version nor an index.

"I Feel So Good" was a compelling read and a biography worthy of the subject, whose blues are timeless. Highly recommended.

**Ron Weinstock**



## DAVE BRUBECK

**Legacy of a Legend  
SONY / LEGACY 2CD SET**

As a kick-off to a year-long 90th birthday campaign at Legacy Records, the label has just released this 2-CD set for which Brubeck hand picked the 21 tracks as he looked back the quartet's 17 years with Columbia Records.

The program opens with a track from their first studio album in 1955, "Jeepers Creepers," and closes with two tracks featuring Gerry Mulligan from 1970, "Out of Nowhere" and "St. Louis Blues." In between, Dave has picked songs culled from 19 different albums spanning the years from 1955 through 1957.

Most are the famous quartet with alto saxophone master Paul Desmond, bassist Eugene Wright and drummer Joe Morello, but there is also a track from the 1960 album Brubeck did with Jimmy Rushing, a song called "Evenin'," and two tracks from the album "The Real Ambassadors," released in 1961 showcasing several singers. Included here are "My One Bad Habit," featuring Carmen McRae, and "Summer Song," featuring Louis Armstrong.

Two songs from the album "Time Out," the first jazz album to sell a million copies, are here with the quartet's most famous song, Desmond's "Take 5," along with "Blue Rondo a la Turk." Another song from that album, "Three To Get Ready," is featured, but in a previously unreleased live version from 1967. The enclosed booklet contains liner notes and annotations written by Brubeck's son Darius. This is without a doubt a sweet treat for any Brubeck fan out there – or someone you'd like to become one.

**Bill Wahl**

**jazz-blues.com**





## WES MONTGOMERY

### **Movin': The Complete Verve Recordings HIP-O-SELECT 5-CD BOX SET**

The great Wes Montgomery is celebrated in a new box set, "Movin': The Complete Verve Recordings," from Verve through the Hip-O-Select, which like Verve is part of the Universal Music Group. Like other recent Hip-O-Select box sets, this comes in the form of a hard cover book which contains substantial annotations from Wall Street music journalist Marc Myers (who also does the excellent [jazzwax.com](http://jazzwax.com) blog) along with five CDs that contain all the substantial musical legacy that Montgomery produced for Verve, after his important, innovative and influential Riverside recordings. My only quibble with the packaging is that the pages used to contain the CDs (which contain session information) hold the CDs in a manner that makes it slightly difficult to extract and return the CDs to the sleeves without getting one's fingerprints on the shiny side of the disc.

Myers essay is entitled "Birth of the Mod," and gives an overview of Montgomery's career with a focus on the Verve recordings. While comfortable in his hometown Indianapolis, Wes nevertheless became a major jazz performer through his association with the Riverside label. The death of Riverside's Bill Grauer was eventually followed by bankruptcy. Without a record label, Montgomery signed with Verve and Creed Taylor who was one of its primary jazz producers and had been working with Jimmy Smith, Stan Getz and others. Myers details the recording of the eight albums by Montgomery on Verve, which marked some of Taylor's earliest jazz-pop experimentations and which turned the guitarist into a jazz-pop avatar, to quote Myers.

With Verve, Taylor mixed recordings of jazz standards, popular numbers and show numbers often with big bands that still had Montgomery's guitar in front. From the first moments of his initial "Movin' Wes" to the collaborations with Jimmy Smith, Montgomery's brilliant fretwork was on display. While some of his recordings like the rendition of "People" on the Johnny Pate arranged first album employed fadeouts, like pop 45s, others like his rendition of the Duke Ellington classic "Caravan" were front and center burners. And it wasn't simply Johnny Pate, as Taylor also employed Don Sebesky, Claus Ogerman and Oliver Nelson for

other big band sessions.

Not to be forgotten among these big band sessions are the sessions with the Wynton Kelly Trio that included some live recordings. Jimmy Cobb, the trio's drummer, recalls that Montgomery was somewhat uncomfortable with the commercial material, and that it was beneath what he was capable of. Myers explains how Montgomery, despite initially resisting such material, became more comfortable with it employing the example of "Going out of My Head." After first resisting the simplicity of the material, Montgomery would make a Grammy winning recording, working out stuff with Grady Tate before the recording.

Yet as the recordings with Wynton Kelly and later the collaborations with Jimmy Smith make most evident, Montgomery had matured but remained the brilliant improviser, mixing single notes chords and octaves, and the best of the orchestrations simply add punch to this brilliance. But even when simply embellishing a melody as on "Going Out Of My Head," his tone and note placement produced magic. When Montgomery and Smith collaborate on "Down By the Riverside" or "Milestones," with terrific Oliver Nelson charts the, sparks fire. Then there are the small group sides by Smith and Montgomery with just Grady Tate and Ray Barretto on "King of the Road" and "Baby Its Cold Outside" that makes one wish they had recorded more.

It is almost impossible to find any recording here that doesn't possess at least some musical magic, even the tracks with some imperfections that remained unissued at the time of recording. Of course some of the alternates and other tracks have been subsequently reissued. Unless one has an extensive collection of the source CDs, this is a must for fans of Wes Montgomery and/or jazz guitar.

*Ron Weinstock*



## VARIOUS

### **Blues And The Alligator: The First Twenty Years Of Alligator Records GAZELL RECORDS DVD**

While Alligator is celebrating its 40th Anniversary, MVD Visual has issued "Blues and the Alligator: The First Twenty Years of Alligator Records," making available Jim Downing's film from 1990 that has been issued by Gazell Film.

The documentary is a mix of performance clips and interviews that serve to provide an overview of what led Bruce Iglauer to start his label and how it grew to become one of the most important (if not the most) labels producing new blues music.

The film opens with Lonnie Brooks in the studio recording with his band and Bruce in the control room

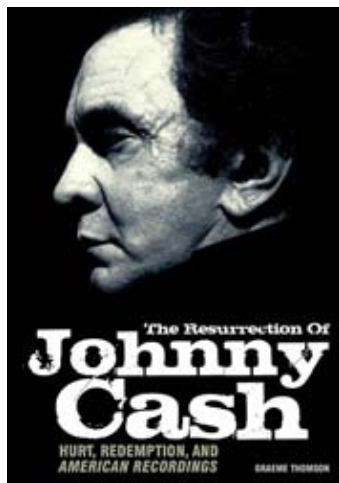
discussing levels and such with the engineer before we start getting into Bruce talking about his background and how Alligator got started. We see him at the studio as well as in his office having a business meeting with staff. The performance clips include a number of gems including a small excerpt of a band on Maxwell Street playing "You Don't Love Me," a fuzzy black & white film of Hound Dog Taylor, followed by a live club shot of Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials.

Kenny Neal & Billy Branch's duo album was contemporaneous with this film and a back porch performance by the two of "Devil Child" is followed by the two talking. We then are taken to a public school where Billy Branch is conducting a "Blues in the School" program with the kids singing and playing "Stormy Monday," and then starting Jimmy Reed's "Baby What you Want Me To Do" before we are taken to a clip of Kenny Neal and Lucky Peterson handling this.

No question that through Alligator and her recordings for them, Koko Taylor became internationally known as the "Queen of the Blues" and was able to enjoy a recording career as opposed to housework. Recognition of her stature is reflected by showing her sing the "Star Spangled Banner" at Comiskey Park before Bruce and then Koko discuss how life has indeed changed. Koko with Lonnie Brooks doing a strong "It's a Dirty Job" follows this.

Bruce talks about how the blues has changed and ironically how Alligator has taken its artists from its roots playing in the community as they seek bigger paychecks and a bigger audience. As a result, the blues as they perform it has changed. Magic Sam's recording of "Sweet Home Chicago" segues into a hot live rendition by Brooks that takes this film to its close. It is a nice end to what certainly is an intriguing look back at Alligator. BTW, it is about time Robert Mugge's film on Alligator "Pride and Joy" made it to DVD.

*Ron Weinstock*



## THE RESURRECTION OF JOHNNY CASH: HURT, REDEMPTION AND AMERICAN RECORDINGS

by Graeme Thomson  
2011 - LONDON: JAWBONE PRESS (254 PAGES)

While not a full biography, Graeme Thomson's "The Redemption of Johnny Cash" is a remarkably thorough examination of

the revival of Johnny Cash's musical and career fortunes in the last years of his life. Cash of course emerged with Sun Records in the mid-fifties and then had a lengthy career on Columbia Records which in-

cluded some major recordings, both thematic albums and "Live at Folsom Prison." The Man in Black also had a weekly television show where he had an intriguing mix of performers from Louis Armstrong to Bob Dylan.

But as the 1980s came, and with shifting personnel at Columbia as well as shifting musical trends and tastes, Cash found himself without a record contract as sales on his recordings dropped to the tens of thousands, well below what was required by the bean counters that were running the major labels. And as a concert act, he was increasingly a country oldies act, playing to older crowds that might flock to the Cash Theater in Branson, Missouri, or county and state fairs. And let's not talk about country radio, to which a new Cash release was no longer a must play. At the same time, Cash was having other personal battles including health issues and ongoing battles with addiction and a career that seemed directionless.

Thomson traces how the what superficially would seem to be the odd linkage between Cash and Rick Rubin, the head of Def Jam and Def American Records and known as the producer of hip hop and metal records. But it was a partnership that enabled Cash to return to prominence with nothing simpler than having him sing some songs accompanied solely by his own guitar. This simple idea recognized that Cash's strength was his personality as a performer, undiluted by lavish accompaniments and production. This was evident with his Sun Records sides and the best of his Columbia recordings. His music had an integrity that resonated with listeners that transcended fans of country music that had been diluted. Many high moments, and who can ever forget having seen the video for "Hurt."

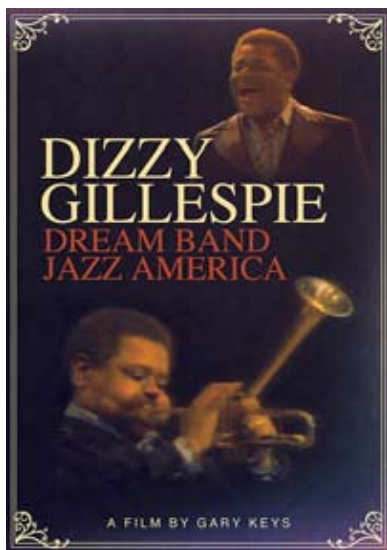
Interviews with countless people including Rosanne Cash, Nick Lowe, Rodney Crowell, Will Oldham, 'Cowboy' Jack Clement, Adam Clayton of U2, Bruce Lundvall and others helps Thomson put together the story, taking us from the depths, to a show at the Viper Room in Hollywood, shortly after completing the "American Recordings," and to an unforgettable set in Glastonbury in 1994. The recordings, with what seemed as the time unusual choices of material, are detailed as well as his health struggles that he fought through the final recordings with Rubin, which includes a discussion of the production of Cash's posthumous recordings and how they were compiled.

Thomson is to be thanked for this terrific chronicle of Johnny Cash's last years. It is an excellent biography that is thoroughly researched, well written, handsomely published and will certainly appeal to fans of Cash as well as contemporary popular music.

*Ron Weinstock*

**jazz-blues.com**





## DIZZY GILLESPIE Dream Band Jazz America MVD VISUAL DVD

This 89-minute DVD, a film by Gary Keys, documents an historic 1982 all-star Dream Band Jazz America concert in New York City at Lincoln Center, featuring Gerry Mulligan, Max Roach, Milt Jackson, Pacquito D' Rivera, Candido, Frank Wess, Pepper Adams, Frank Foster, Jimmy Heath, Melba Liston, Jon Hendricks, Grady Tate, and Dizzy protégé Jon Faddis (about age 30), as well as other top echelon players.

"These are the 'boss' musicians of the world," announces Dizzy, after launching the concert with an 18:43-minute version of one of his Latinate benchmarks, "Manteca." What follows are Gillespie classics such as "A Night In Tunisia," "Groovin' High," "Tin Tin Deo," "Salt Peanuts," and more, including some 1952 Charlie Parker/Dizzy Gillespie film footage playing "Hot House" before a combo (featuring Dizzy, Roach, Jackson, Mulligan, Paul West on bass and John Lewis on piano) launches into that tune. Grady Tate is drummer for the first three numbers. Then Max Roach steps in with a 5:37-minute high-hat cymbals solo on "Mr. Hi Hat," a dedication to master drummer Papa Joe Jones who makes a cameo appearance onstage. The lone ballad, "Lover Man," features Jackson on vibes. As would be expected from these musicians, solos are impressive and cameras capture Dizzy's reactions to their creativity.

Many of these musicians are gone now, which makes this concert performance all that more treasurable. This is one film I'll want to watch over and over. It brings back memories of when I caught some of these musicians in other live performances, but this is a supreme gathering.

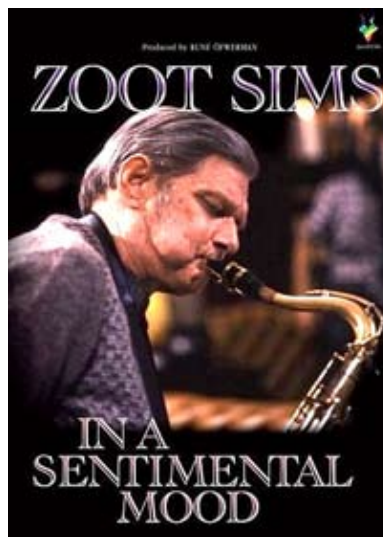
Backstage interview clips and Dizzy's humorous onstage antics boost the appeal of this outstanding concert DVD. Close-ups of the soloists and other smart camera work add to viewer enjoyment.

Nancy Ann Lee

## ZOOT SIMS

In a Sentimental Mood  
GAZELL RECORDS DVD

MVD Visual has released in the US the Gazell Records video of Zoot Sims, "In a Sentimental Mood." This video was filmed in November, 1984, just months before the tenor saxophonist passed away. It was filmed at the library of Sonet Records in Lidings, Sweden with Sims backed by Bassist Red Mitchell and guitar-



ist Rune Gustafsson. The library setting and the drummer-less trio make for an intimate performance. An interview by Mitchell of Sims (actually more of a conversation) is interspersed between the performances.

The performances focus on ballads starting with the Ellington classic that gives this DVD its title and ending with "Autumn Leaves." The swinging Sims was a master at ballad playing which, like his basic approach to the saxophone, reflected the influence of Lester Young, perhaps with a slight vibrato that might have been picked up from Ben Webster. Mitchell provides a foundation as Gustafsson lends some chords with each taking solo breaks. "Gone With the Wind" opens with somewhat more of a breathier sound, perhaps reflecting more Webster here (and Webster did record this on a session with Art Tatum).

The interview portions includes recollections of his early days, including a story of his time with Benny Goodman when he had a big apple on the stand and Benny had him solo and took the apple and kept gesturing for Sims to keep soloing as Goodman ate the apple. He recalls it was the longest solo he ever played with Benny. After Sims had talked about his early days on 42nd Street, Mitchell himself recalls playing with a trio opening for Charlie Parker at the Onyx Club, and Bird after the set comes by and speaks in a very proper Wasp-ish accent and asks Mitchell to play the next set with him. Mitchell thinks this isn't serious until Bird announces it from the bandstand.

The light banter complements the performances, with the filming centering mostly on the players faces and expressions. So we see Sims and his embouchure but little fingering, but there is plenty of character revealed in their faces as well as in the music. "In a Sentimental Mood" is a delightful video that fans of Sims' ballad mastery will certainly enjoy. **Ron Weinstock**

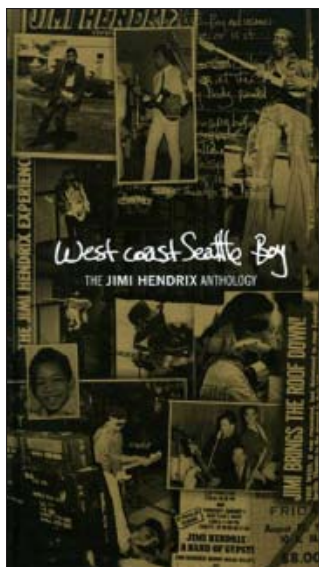
## WEST COAST SEATTLE BOY

The Jimi Hendrix Anthology  
EXPERIENCE HENDRIX/LEGACY 4-CD & 1-DVD SET

There are a handful of musicians whose influence is such that listeners crave any and every note that can be turned up. Jimi Hendrix is one of these and this four disc-plus-DVD set goes a long way towards satisfying that urge for discovery. 40-plus previously unreleased tracks trace the legendary guitarist's path from R&B journeyman to rock superstar.

While the music is the main attraction, the pack-





age also includes a 60-page booklet with rare photos and annotations on each track by John McDermott.

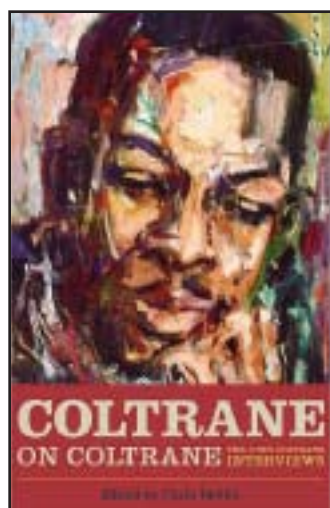
Beyond their sheer amusement value, the selections on the first disc, on which Hendrix works behind the Isley Brothers, Don Covay or Little Richard, reveal stylistic flashes that speak to his future work. It's hard not to hear his flourishes on early ballads and sense the roots of leads on "Little Wing" or "The Wind Cries Mary."

Alternate versions of several songs from *Are You*

*Experienced* and *Axis: Bold As Love* bring interesting perspective to those pieces and mark Hendrix's "birth" as a producer. Supercharged "live" Fillmore East performances of "Fire," "Foxey Lady" and "Stone Free" speak for themselves. The most intriguing fare in this package might be the abundant demos, impromptu takes and works-in-transition performed by the Experience and Band Of Gypsies line-ups or mixes of the two.

While several would see the light of day, completed or edited, often posthumously, the collective creative energy displayed on these versions of "Room Full Of Mirrors," "Hey Baby (New Rising Sun)" and others suggest the Seattle Boy was far from finished when he left us.

*Duane Verh*



## COLTRANE ON COLTRANE: THE JOHN COLTRANE INTERVIEWS

Edited by Chris DeVito  
2010: A CAPELLA BOOKS -  
CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS

The lead author of this John Coltrane reference, Chris DeVito, has provided an invaluable new volume that includes practically all of the published interviews about

John Coltrane, although also with articles, album liner notes (including Coltrane's notes and poem for "A Love Supreme") and similar pieces which have material where Coltrane is talking about himself and his music. Also included are lengthy interviews with a childhood friend from Coltrane's native High Point, NC, and a music teacher in Philadelphia. While some of the material may be familiar to some, there are a number of pieces that most will not

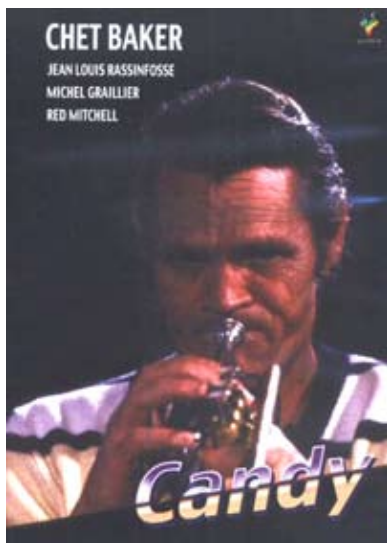
be aware of. That said, it should be noted that the overwhelming majority of the interviews and articles will be new to the reader. Also it does not include the full text of Ralph Gleason's interview with Coltrane (only an excerpt is provided), as the entire interview will be published in a book of Gleason's interviews that is coming out. Also, where the source tape is available, DeVito makes corrections and changes based on the tape such as on Frank Kofsky's interview, the lengthiest of the interviews with Coltrane published here.

The earliest piece here is a 1952 Baltimore Afro-American account of a 1952 performance by Coltrane and Specs Wright followed by a previously unpublished interview by August Blume in 1958 when Coltrane was in Baltimore with the then new Miles Davis Quintet. The informality of the discussion, which was recorded without Coltrane's knowledge at the end, is fascinating as he discusses music, philosophy, religion and other performers. Coltrane's straight-forwardness comes across here and throughout the latter interviews. His humility and the fact he was constantly striving to improve himself as a musician and searching in his music is something repeated in various latter interviews and so many of the interviews note the contrast between the apparently 'angry' music and his calm and thoughtful responses, whether discussing how he tries to relate to audiences, reactions to he and Eric Dolphy being called anti-jazz (an infamous DownBeat article), how playing the soprano saxophone was affecting his playing of the tenor saxophone, and thoughts on members of his band and musicians he admired.

Interestingly, many of the interviews from the sixties after the famous DownBeat article where Coltrane and Dolphy respond to their critics, come from European publications and we get a sense of audience reactions to a live performance of "A Love Supreme" from some of the introductions and questions. Then there are concerns (and restraints) about playing in clubs and the quality of PA systems as opposed to concerts. While the issues of politics as well as racial discrimination do come up, the interview with Kofsky is perhaps the one in which he discusses points at length. Also included is an invaluable remembrance of Coltrane with Babatunde Olantunji with whom Coltrane was a friend and eventually a collaborator, and Coltrane helped open the Olantunji Center of African Culture, which was the site of one of Coltrane's last performances and notes that Coltrane was withdrawing from certain performance venues because of a desire to have more self-determination over his music. Also included is a remembrance of Hod O'Brien that remembers Coltrane as an extremely generous man, who allowed O'Brien to take a break when he had not had a break for several hours and needed to use the facilities.

Chris DeVito has provided an invaluable service in bringing all this material together, despite some repetition of themes between some of the interviews. They do help provide a sense of this gentleman who was not simply one of the most significant musicians of the 20th Century, but a man to be admired on so many other levels.

*Ron Weinstock*



## CHET BAKER

**Candy**  
GAZELL RECORDS DVD

A companion of sorts to the Zoot Sims DVD "In a Sentimental Mood," MVD Visual has released in the US the Gazell Records DVD of Chet Baker, "Candy." Like the Sims video it is an intimate trio recording that finds the trumpeter in the library of Sonet Records in Lidingo, Sweden with Sims backed by pianist

Michel Graillier and bassist Jean Louis Raissinfosse with one duet with bassist Red Mitchell, resident in Stockholm at the time, who also conducts a brief interview with him.

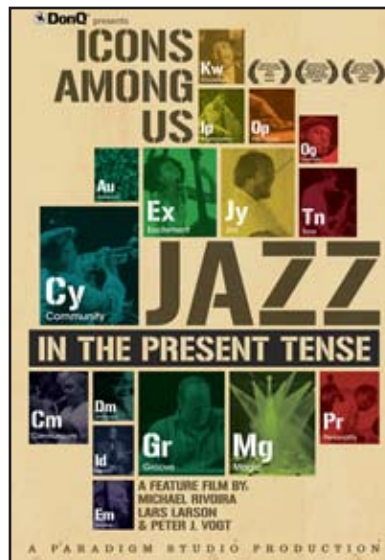
Performances are introduced by the song-titles and the CD opens with Baker taking the vocal on "Candy," before his trumpet solo. While by the time this was recorded, Baker's James Dean-like looks had a weathery look; certainly the visual appeal of him is still apparent, as is the genial melodicism of his approach. Bassist Raissinfosse sets the tone on his 5-string electric upright bass providing a bass line to anchor the performance of "Love For Sale," with more lyrical playing from Baker and some nice piano by Graillier. It's followed by a lively version of Bud Powell's *Tempus Fugue-It*, and the bluesy late-night feel of "Sad Walk."

The trio portion concludes with a nice "Red's Blues" some nice playing by all, Miles Davis's "Nardis" with a slight exotic flavor and the standard "Bye Bye Blackbird," which of course many know of from Miles' classic recording. Baker's playing is suggestive of Miles and like Miles he focused on painting a mood rather than exhibit fleet technical facility, and his vocals similarly inhabited a narrow range but had such an expressive quality to them. One can't overlook pianist Graillier who turns in a nice blues solo on "Red's Blues, or Raissinfosse's firm playing throughout.

Mitchell and Baker are seen at a piano when Mitchell mentions that he was able to work out on piano some chords in playing "My Romance," and Baker stating it was among the first songs he recorded before the two of them play a duet of it with Mitchell playing piano. It is a fine way to end this engaging DVD. **Ron Weinstock**

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## ICONS AMONG US: JAZZ IN THE PRESENT TENSE

PARADIGM STUDIO  
(DVD 4-DISC SET)

People have been trying to define what jazz is for decades. Musicians themselves usually chafe at labels, in part because jazz has the capacity to absorb many other musical styles, blurring

the boundaries that shift with each new generation of players and each new performance.

This outstanding educational feature-length film was produced by John W. Comerford and directed by Michael Rivoira, Lars Larson and Peter J. Vogt. A theatrical version of the film was presented worldwide at jazz festivals, various institutions, and film festivals, and aired in 2009 on the Documentary Channel. Now available to the public on four-discs, with extensive bonus features and a separate comprehensive 62-page study/discussion guide in pdf format on CD, the film compiles seven years of interviews with over 80 living jazz artists and many hours of live performances in venues from around the U.S. and Europe. Despite numerous interview slices and performance shots, the film is efficiently assembled without seeming choppy or disorganized--a credit to editing by Kristian R. Hill.

How people perceive jazz and the commercial value of the art form covers a lot of the film. Veterans and younger musicians intelligently comment on what they believe jazz is today. Included are interviews with Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Terence Blanchard, Ravi Coltrane, Jason Moran, Bill Frisell, Gretchen Parlato, Matthew Shipp, Charlie Hunter, Donald Harrison and numerous others. Commenting on the commercial value of jazz and minimal jazz record sales, executive director of Earshot Jazz John Gilbreath claims, "We're sitting on a powder keg of incredible creative potential that may make a bang that very few people will hear."

Jazz is perhaps best described by keyboardist Marco Benevento who states, "Everybody's playing a different version of 12 notes, all at the same time. So call it what you want. It's 12 notes, man. It sounds easy but there's a million combinations."

Focusing not on the legends of the past but on modern players into the future, the film has educational value for widespread viewing and extended discussion in the classroom and among jazz fans. First-rate video and audio quality and the attentive way the 90-minute film is presented make this, to date, the best documentary on jazz that's ever been produced. **Nancy Ann Lee**

**jazz  
& blues**





## TONY BENNETT

### Duets II

COLUMBIA

There are seventeen great reasons why Tony Bennett's *Duets II* debuted at number 1 on the Billboard 200: the seventeen songs on this three-time Grammy nominated album. Packed full of surprising, powerful and just plain beautiful vocals, arrangements and musicality, it is both a pleasure and a thrill to listen to. From songs that my mother would once have described as "dreamy" to edgy, bluesy and guttural, it proves that Mr. Bennett still has it in him and so much more.

Tony has extended a vocal hand to a vast array of talent throughout his musical career. He continues to whet youthful appetite in the jazz direction by inviting contemporary chart toppers to share the mike with him. Never ceasing to amaze and astound and just plain induce the listener to smile and to dream, Tony Bennett is the quintessential Renaissance man.

Pairing Tony with artists from the worlds of country, opera, pop, soul and everything in between and around, the result is a true treat for the ears. Prompting a whole lot of gasps of delighted surprise, Tony Bennett generously showcases the gifts of his singing partners throughout the album on the second of this Duet series.

The chemistry, yes chemistry between Lady Gaga and the incomparable Mr. Bennett makes for a version of "The Lady is a Tramp" that results in a perpetual grin. Alejandro Sanz on "Yesterday I Heard the Rain" and Norah Jones on "Speak Low" transports the audience as they share the Mike with Tony while stand out performances by Aretha Franklin, Willie Nelson, and Carrie Underwood command the listener's full attention.

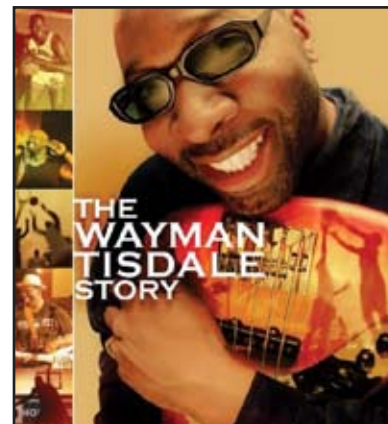
Tony Bennett and Amy Winehouse perform a raw and edgy version of "Body and Soul." Amy's performance is reminiscent of Billie Holiday that is particularly haunting due to her untimely death. "Body and Soul" has garnered an individual Grammy nomination for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance.

K.D. Lang and Michael Buble make their returns, having worked on the first *Duets* album in 2006. John Mayer, Queen Latifah, Sheryl Crow and Andrea Bocelli all take a turn on this vocal dance floor that truly holds something for everyone as do Mariah Carey, Natalie

Cole, Josh Groban and Faith Hill.

Phil Ramone and Dae Bennett brought their superior production skills to the table and top flight musicians make drop dead gorgeous contributions. *Duets II* is an insidiously excellent way to introduce youth to jazz and true musicality.

*Wanda Simpson*



## WAYMON TISDALE

**The Wayman Tisdale Story**  
RENDEZVOUS RECORDS CD/DVD

I admit it. I'm a music snob who changes the station at the first hint of elevator music. So when my editor asked me to review this album and DVD, I agreed to do it but not without a significant roll of the eyes first. Wayman Tisdale...sure, I'd heard of him. Ex-NBA player turned musician, passed a few years ago...

So I went out to Amazon, to minimize the amount of time I would spend in the elevator waiting to get my teeth drilled and decide how I might write the most positive review possible in the shortest amount of time. This review is to appear in our gift guide issue... 'tis the season!

To my surprise, I found that this elevator moves to a funky beat and lovely melodies. This music makes you happy and I admit it. So, OK – I thought that I would watch the DVD to find a quotable quote and got another surprise. Now here I have another admission, frankly, I didn't know if a DVD chronicling the last couple of years of a man's life would be appropriate fare to include in the gift guide...as cold as that sounds, I considered putting it off to another issue.

But it was in the DVD player so I hit play. Am I ever glad that I did! If I had not, I would have cheated myself out of knowing much more about this man who had a palpable joy for life. No anger at the random nature of illness, as the man said, "...it's just something he had to deal with." And he did so with grace and love and gratitude for the gifts that he had been given in life- particularly the gift of music.

Yes, he was blessed with athletic ability but even more blessed by the people around him and his family and his faith and Wayman Tisdale expressed all those things through his music, through his life and through his example. This man made me like things that I never thought I would...Oklahoma, basketball, smooth jazz

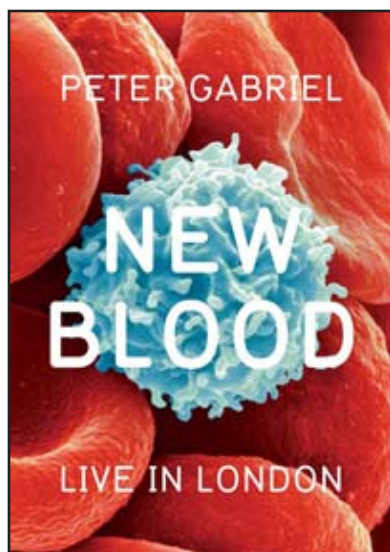


and, dare I say it (anyone who knows me please avert your eyes)...Toby Keith! The last cut, Cryin for Me (Wayman's Song) is a beautiful, heartfelt tribute.

For those of you who are already Wayman Tisdale fans, this set is a must have especially if you were a fan of his music without having known any more than I did about the man. As musicians in the documentary say, "he's for real!" A gifted man with a trillion dollar smile always at the ready, his wisdom, moral strength and love for humanity are rarely seen in anyone, let alone someone who spent only 44 years on this planet.

Tisdale is interviewed repeatedly throughout the film and always with a smile. This album and companion DVD are a joy to watch and to listen to. Spend the money and gift someone (or yourself) to that lesson in love and living right, Wayman Tisdale.

*Wanda Simpson*



## **PETER GABRIEL**

### **New Blood**

#### **Live in London**

#### **EAGLE VISION DVD**

Peter Gabriel, timeless and contemporary, progressive and creative, never seems to disappoint. Unlike many of the bands, performers and young adult musical prodigies of the time, Gabriel has managed to avoid the trap of being pigeon-holed and eternally lashed to their past successes.

Gabriel's work has continued to grow over the years. His new work fits comfortably into the present while old familiars are always welcome.

Mood and music and performance art, all three are present and admirably accounted for in this concert DVD shot at the Hammersmith Apollo in March, 2011. The 46 piece New Blood orchestra shares the stage and marvelous arrangements for this performance. No bass, no guitar, no drum kit – Gabriel's idea for this performance was to rearrange all selections for this orchestra and the result is magical.

This DVD (also available in 3D) invites the audience to be right there in London as this full-blown piece of art is presented. Sound quality, camera angles and Steadicam shots paint a multi-dimensional artistic picture. LED art that enhances rather than distracts, and Gabriel's trademark vocals produce moods and reactions that sometimes give the audience the distinct impression that they themselves are a part of the arrangement. This video captures and holds on for the entire 162 minutes.

Never ceasing to amaze, Gabriel succeeds once again in transporting those in attendance (or on a living room sofa) to another place and time. Some songs have a distinctly gothic flavor to them while in some instances,

the presentation feels other worldly.

John Metcalfe, the musical director has come through in making Gabriel's vision a reality for one and all. The arrangements are thoughtful and complex while still flowing and floating over the listener. Backup vocals from Melanie Gabriel and Ane Brun round out the sound. Gabriel generously features Melanie (his daughter) and/or Ane on several songs. Melanie's solo on "Washing of the Water" (not on the 3D edition) clearly shows that talent runs in the family and Ane Brun on "Don't Give Up" are among the many stand out numbers included on this DVD.

Gabriel makes it extremely difficult to single out any song over any other. From the way he pays tribute to the past with renditions of "Red Rain" and "Solsbury Hill" to unconventional and beautiful treatments of songs like Paul Simon's "The Boy in the Bubble" and Lou Reed's proposal to Laurie Anderson "The Power of the Heart," Gabriel delivers every selection on this DVD like a present to the audience.

This DVD is essential for any Peter Gabriel fan as well as to those who are on the fence about their devotion. It is truly a feast for the eyes and for the ears. Highly recommended, presenting this DVD to someone who likes Gabriel this holiday season is more than a safe bet, it is a gift in every sense of the word.

*Wanda Simpson*

Editor's Note - This is the only "Jumping Genres" entry for this year. While we featured several in many previous years, the current state of the economy has resulted in less year-end releases in every genre. Have a great holiday! BW

## **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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