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Nicholas Payton

The 3rd Annual  
Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival

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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!

# The 3rd Annual Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival

By Ron Weinstock



Paul Carr

As I write, it is about 5 weekends from the 3rd Annual Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival. The Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival revives the legacy of the East Coast Jazz Festival that ran for 15 years starting in 1992. The ECJF originated in honor of Elmore "Fish" Middleton, a Washington, DC jazz radio programmer, whose commitment to promoting jazz music and supporting emerging jazz artists became the guiding principle behind the festival. The driving force of the ECJF was the late Ronnie Wells, a Washington DC jazz icon. After her passing, so did the ECJF.

Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival takes place at the Rockville, Maryland Hilton Hotel over the President's Day Weekend. Under the auspices of Washington DC area saxophonist and educator, Paul Carr, the Festival has a focus on not simply bringing some of the best local and national jazz performers to the area, but to help nurture and support Jazz Education. Besides such notable performers like Roy Haynes, Terrell Stafford, Carmen Bradford and Nicholas Payton, the festival spotlights local artists like vocalist Sandra Johnson, guitarist Mark Mosely, and bassist Michael Bowie. There are master classes for aspiring jazz musicians, a jazz for mall boppers class, jam sessions, band competition for high school bands and more. There are



Brian Lynch

also artist interviews, and much more.

The Festival opens on Friday night February 17 with highlights on the main stage being Winard Harper and the great vocalist Carmen Bradford backed by the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Orchestra conducted by Paul Carr. Saturday afternoon a highlight will be the Jazz Ain't Dead Jazz Troupe featuring Maurice Chestnut. Saturday evening features the acclaimed Baltimore vibraphonist (and much more) Warren Wolf and the legendary Roy Haynes and the Fountain of Youth band with the terrific Jaleel Shaw on saxophone. Sunday afternoon has a focus on gospel with a play, "The Mahalia Jackson Story" featuring vocalist Lavenia Nesmith. Sunday evening includes a Trumpet Summit featuring Brain Lynch, Nicholas Payton and Terrell Stafford and the evening concludes with Festival director Paul Carr's Quintet with Terrell Stafford, Joey Calderazzo, Michael Bowie and Lewis Nash.

As can be seen, this year's festival will present another full weekend of music. I had a blast at last year's festival and looking forward to this year's event as well and will perhaps see some of you there. The website for the festival with all the details is <http://www.midatlanticjazzfestival.org/>. All photos, including cover photo, by Ron Weinstock.

## LA Music Academy Open House Schedule Announced

### Live Auditions, Campus Tours; Opportunity to Meet Faculty

Pasadena, CA – Los Angeles Music Academy College of Music ([www.lamusicacademy.edu](http://www.lamusicacademy.edu)) opens its doors to prospective students with three open houses on February 4, April 28 and October 13, 2012; each at 2:00pm. LA Music Academy, accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), offers AA degrees in music performance (drums, bass, guitar and vocals) and music production. Celebrating its 15th year anniversary, LA Music Academy has graduated 1,500 domestic and international students since opening its doors.

"Our students are willing to do what it takes for a successful career as professional musicians, songwriters, performers, producers and engineers," says Tom Aylesbury, president of LA Music Academy. "We have assembled an internationally known faculty ready to teach students who are willing to meet the demands of our comprehensive curriculum. We encourage all interested music students to drop by for a tour and live audition."

A typical open house begins with school orientation and student performances. After an overview of LA Music Academy by Dean, Dave Pozzi, "students are escorted on a tour of the campus followed by orientation geared towards their music major of interest. The open house concludes with live auditions and an opportunity to discuss financial aid and scholarship opportunities with our staff," says Aylesbury. Students must schedule an appointment for a live audition. For more information, contact admissions at 626-568-8850 or email [admissions@lamusicacademy.edu](mailto:admissions@lamusicacademy.edu).

LA Music Academy ([www.lamusicacademy.edu](http://www.lamusicacademy.edu)) is located at 370 S. Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena, CA 91105. Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LAMusicAcademy](http://www.facebook.com/LAMusicAcademy). Follow the school on Twitter: @LAMusicAcademy. LA Music Academy is on YouTube: [www.YouTube.com/LAMusicAcademy](http://www.YouTube.com/LAMusicAcademy).

LA Music Academy College of Music in Pasadena, a suburb of Los Angeles, CA, is regarded as one of the premiere music schools in the world, for students who desire an intimate and friendly, yet serious and rigorous contemporary music education. Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, the school offers A.A. degrees and diplomas in music production and music performance (drums, bass, guitar or vocals). Founded in 1996, the Academy has provided a solid musical foundation for more than 1,500 international and domestic students. The Academy offers a significant number of real world playing situations with professional musicians, not just peers, setting the school apart from other prestigious music institutions. LA Music Academy gives its students the skills necessary to apply their learning in a wide variety of professional situations in the music industry.

**LIVE BLUES ON THE HIGH SEAS**

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## Legacy Recordings Commemorates Janis Joplin's Birthday with Upcoming 'The Pearl Sessions'

### Janis Joplin - The Pearl Sessions Available Everywhere Tuesday, April 17

On the occasion of Janis Joplin's birthday (January 19), Legacy Recordings is proud to announce the upcoming release of *The Pearl Sessions*, a newly-curated definitive two-disc edition of Joplin's final studio album premiering, for the first time, newly discovered studio outtakes, live performances and other sonic rarities recorded during her dynamic last chapter of accelerated tumult and creativity.

*Janis Joplin - The Pearl Sessions* will be available Tuesday, April 17.

Originally released on January 11, 1971 (three months after her passing on October 4, 1970), Pearl debuted Joplin's final finished studio recordings as well as intimations of what the influential American country-soul-blues-rock singer was capable of delivering.

The only album Joplin ever recorded with the Full Tilt Boogie Band, the touring ensemble that had backed her on the Festival Express (a mythic 1970 concert tour by railroad across Canada with the Grateful Dead, the Band and others), Pearl included canonical studio recordings of songs that had been introduced to audiences on tour.

Peaking at #1 on the Billboard 200, a position it held for nine weeks, Pearl included some of Janis's most familiar and best-loved performances including her cover of Kris Kristofferson's "Me and Bobby McGee" and her off-the-cuff a cappella "Mercedes Benz."

When putting together material for a 40th anniversary edition of Pearl, researchers discovered a treasure-trove of previously uncatalogued audio tapes from the album's sessions, produced by Paul Rothchild. An industry legend, perhaps best-known for producing the first five Doors albums, Rothchild further solidified his position in music history with his work on Pearl.

*The Pearl Sessions* brings together, for the first time in one package, the original mono versions of the album's 45s alongside the original LP tracks as well as the revelatory newly-discovered alternate versions,

outtakes and vocal takes of Pearl's classic tracks.

The *Pearl Sessions* includes newly discovered recordings of Janis in the studio, joking with producer Paul Rothchild and her Full Tilt Boogie bandmates as they work through what would become an essential part of Janis Joplin's core catalog.

Disc One of *The Pearl Sessions* includes the original album as well as the original mono singles from the album ("Cry Baby," "Get It While You Can," "Me and Bobby McGee").

Disc Two is a collection of behind-the-scenes recordings illuminating the Pearl sessions with highlights and insights revealed in candid studio dialogue, song demos and alternate takes including nine previously unissued tracks.

#### Janis Joplin - The Pearl Sessions

##### DISC ONE:

The Pearl Album - produced by Paul Rothchild

Move Over

Cry Baby

A Woman Left Lonely

Half Moon

Buried Alive In The Blues

My Baby

Me and Bobby McGee

Mercedes Benz

Trust Me

Get It While You Can

*Bonus Tracks - the Mono Single Masters - produced by Paul Rothchild*

Me and Bobby McGee

Half Moon

Cry Baby

Get It While You Can

Move Over

A Woman Left Lonely

##### DISC TWO:

The Pearl Sessions & more...

Overheard in the Studio...

Get It While You Can (take 3) - previously unissued

Overheard in the Studio...

Get It While You Can (take 5) - previously unissued

Overheard in the Studio...

Move Over (take 6) - previously unissued

Move Over (take 13) - previously unissued

Move Over (take 17) - previously unissued

Me and Bobby McGee (demo version)

Me and Bobby McGee (take 5 - alternate) - previously unissued

Cry Baby (alternate version)

A Woman Left Lonely (alternate vocal)

Overheard in the Studio...

My Baby (alternate take) - previously unissued

Overheard in the Studio...

Get It While You Can (take 3) - previously unissued

My Baby (alternate take)

Pearl (instrumental) - Full Tilt Boogie Band

Bonus Tracks

Tell Mama (Live) - June 28, 1970 - Toronto

The release of *The Pearl Sessions* marks a renewed focus on Janis Joplin and the continuing influence of her music. Columbia/Legacy Recordings recently announced the release of *Live at the Carousel Ballroom 1968*, a previously unavailable live concert recording of Big Brother and the Holding Company featuring Janis Joplin, recorded June 23, 1968 by legendary soundman Owsley Stanley, a/k/a "Bear," who supervised the mastering of this release before his fatal car accident on March 12, 2011, in his adopted homeland of Australia. Dedicated to Bear, the album will be released on March 13, 2012, marking the one-year anniversary of his passing.

## DC Jazz Festival Receives NEA Jazz Masters Live Grant

Washington – The DC Jazz Festival (DCJF) today announced that it has been awarded a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Jazz Masters Live grant for the fifth year. The DCJF was one of 12 non-profits selected to receive a total of \$135,000 in funding.

NEA Jazz Masters Live grants help bring legendary musicians, writers, producers and scholars to communities across the nation. The DCJF employs the grant to pay homage to NEA Jazz Masters with tribute concerts at its annual festival in Washington, D.C.

In 2011, the Festival honored two acclaimed artists: saxophonist/ composer/bandleader/educator Jimmy Heath, and Latin Jazz pianist/composer/bandleader Eddie Palmieri, at its *Jazz on the National Mall* concert.

Each year, the DCJF presents its Lifetime Achievement Award to Jazz Masters in recognition of their indelible lifetime contributions to jazz and humanity. Past awardees have included James Moody, Ellis Marsalis, George Wein, Clark Terry, Hank Jones, Dr. Billy Taylor, Buck Hill, and Dave Brubeck.

"The DC Jazz Festival is proud to once again partner with the NEA Jazz Masters Live program, which honors living legends for their enduring contributions to the advancement of jazz," said DCJF Executive Producer Charles Fishman. "We are delighted to continue offering performances and educational activities featuring the Masters and their music in our nation's capital city."

"There is no substitute for being in the presence of a great artist, and through the NEA Jazz Masters Live grants, the NEA is pleased to provide opportunities for Americans all across this country to have exactly that experience," said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. "Twelve exceptional organizations will be our partners this year, and we are pleased to once again work with Arts Midwest in administering these grants."

Keep up with the DCJF:

· Twitter: @dcjazzfest

· Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/dcjazzfest>

· Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dcjazzfest/>

· FourSquare: <https://foursquare.com/dcjazzfest>

With over 100 performances in nearly 50 venues, the DC Jazz Festival (DCJF) is the largest festival in Washington, D.C. A project of Festivals DC, Ltd., a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, the DCJF is one of the most popular, highly-anticipated cultural events in the nation's capital. The Festival has garnered widespread media acclaim, and has quickly become recognized within the global jazz community. The DCJF presents year-round programs with performances featuring local, nationally and internationally acclaimed artists that promote music integration in school curricula, and actively support community outreach to expand and diversify its audience of jazz enthusiasts. The 2012 DC Jazz Festival will take place June 1 - 10. For more information about the DC Jazz Festival and upcoming programs, visit [www.dcjazzfest.org](http://www.dcjazzfest.org).

The DC Jazz Festival® is sponsored in part with a grant from the Government of the District of Columbia, Vincent C. Gray, Mayor; and, in part, by awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

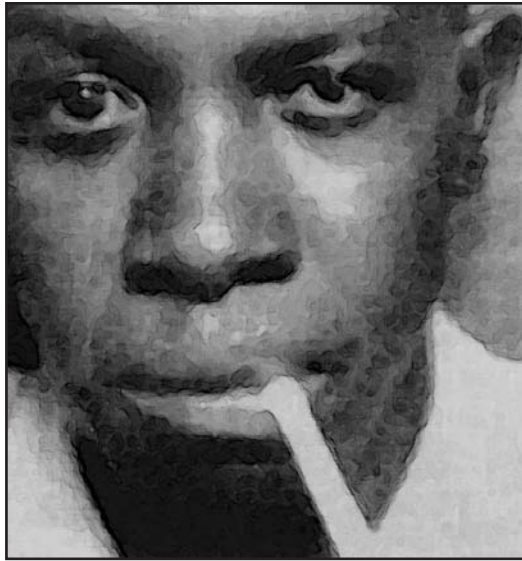
## Jack DeJohnette & Palle Mikkelborg to receive special honorary award during Vinterjazz 2012

Copenhagen – For every summer since 1979, Copenhagen Jazz Festival has presented a broad selection of the best of the Danish and international jazz scene. While there has always been plenty of room to include musical cousins such as world music and electronica, the festival has always been - and continues to be - grounded in modern jazz in all its colourful nuances. Put another way, without modern jazz, Copenhagen Jazz Festival would not exist – at least not in its present form. But how does one define modern jazz, actually? And how did it evolve? There are no doubt plenty of answers, but at least one of them will be presented during Vinterjazz 2012, on February 5th in Koncerthuset, when Copenhagen Jazz Festival concocts a special concert evening, titled the Copenhagen Jazz Festival Honorary Award. Koncerthuset, 5 February, 20:00 Copenhagen Jazz Festival Honorary Award: Palle Mikkelborg (DK) + Jack DeJohnette (US)

The Copenhagen Jazz Festival Honorary Award is an international, honorary prize that pays homage to two specially chosen musicians, each of whom - in his own, progressive way - has represented modern jazz for almost a generation. The recipients are Danish trumpet player/composer Palle Mikkelborg and American drummer/composer Jack DeJohnette. In addition to receiving this distinctive honour, both artists have been given free hands (and a free framework) to create their own, individual "dream" project for the evening's concert. This has been made possible with special economic help from the festival's principal

contributors, Nordea-fonden and Region Hovedstaden. We can reveal that the two, very exciting and different projects are already in the making and promise to comprise a fine celebration of modern jazz. "This special honorary award is meant to demonstrate the festival's deep ties with creative modern jazz, and with Palle Mikkelborg and Jack DeJohnette we have two of that genre's most prominent pioneers," says Signe Lopdrup, Copenhagen Jazz Festival chief. "Instead of offering them a large check, we have chosen to give them a broadened economic framework so each can create his special project and perform it at Koncerthuset." On February 5th Copenhagen Jazz Festival will also give a talent award to a younger Danish jazz musician. The recipient will be revealed on the evening of the concert.

Venue, date, time: Koncerthuset, 5 February 2012, 20:00 Copenhagen Jazz Festival Honorary Award: Palle Mikkelborg (DK) + Jack DeJohnette (US) Vinterjazz 2012 takes place during 3 - 19 February. Festival leader: Signe Lopdrup, signe@jazz.dk, +45 2514 0422 Music booker: Kenneth Hansen, kenneth@jazz.dk, +45 3115 9999 Communications coordinator: Simon Christensen, simon@jazz.dk, +45 6177 8335 Website: www.jazz.dk // Facebook: www.facebook.com/cph-jazzfestival



## All-star Robert Johnson Centennial Tribute Concert Benefitting Blues Hall of Fame set for March 6 at Apollo Theater

Producers have announced the first artists confirmed to play a special March 6 tribute concert at NY's historic Apollo Theater, celebrating the centennial of legendary bluesman Robert Johnson. The initial, star-studded lineup includes The Roots, Shemekia Copeland, Bettye LaVette, Taj Mahal, Keb' Mo', Sam Moore and Todd Rundgren, with more to be announced soon. Net proceeds from the concert, co-produced by Steve

Berkowitz, Michael Dorf, Joe Morton and Patricia Watt, will go to provide funding for the building for the Blues Hall of Fame in Memphis, TN.

"Robert Johnson's story is the fabric of myth," comments producer Joe Morton. "His music continues to weave its way, beyond the blues, into and through almost every other popular genre today. Our concert is a celebration of the man, the myth, and the omnipresent influence of his music."

The Blues Hall of Fame is a historical record of those who have made the Blues timeless through performance, documentation, and recording. Since its inception in 1980, The Blues Foundation has inducted new members annually into the Blues Hall of Fame for their historical contribution, impact and overall influence on the Blues. More info on the Hall here: <http://www.blues.org>

To order VIP ticket packages \$300 & \$1500, go to: <http://www.robertjohnson100.com>

Regular Tickets are \$45, \$60, \$75, \$90, \$125

In person at the Apollo Theater Box Office or <http://www.apollotheater.org/>

By phone call Ticketmaster 800.745.3000

Online at Ticketmaster.com: <http://www.ticketmaster.com/event/00004784C4A79135>

# jazz-blues.com

## 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)

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

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

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

powerfully on the piano, but it was the full orchestra that he considered his most compelling instrument. He introduced improvisation to his compositions — a process unheard of using a 15-piece orchestra. The result was a different approach to jazz that sparked a revolution and an evolution.



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

His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady," "In a



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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

really transform lives.

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



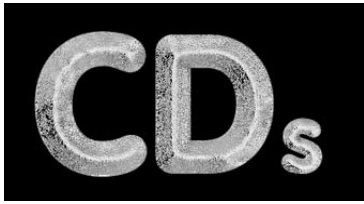
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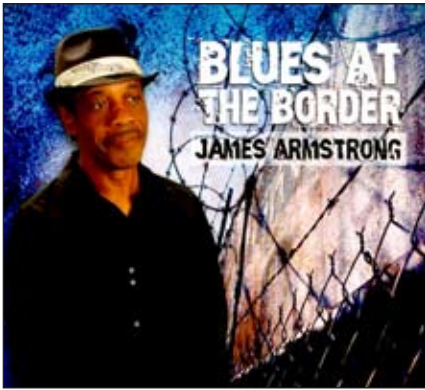


NAMM  
 Foundation

Image created by Cosbi-Battman. TM 2008 Estate of Mercer K. Ellington by CHC Worldwide



We only bring you  
the Cream of the Crop!



**JAMES ARMSTRONG**  
**Blues At The Border**  
CATFOOD RECORDS

A new album by singer-guitarist James Armstrong, "Blues at the Border" (Catfood Records) is a cause of celebration for blues lovers. This is only the fourth album by Armstrong who debuted over a decade ago on Hightone with "Sleeping With a Stranger." After a home invasion attack stabbing left him with permanent nerve damage in his left hand, he rebuilt his guitar style and resumed touring and his musical career as his brings a lean and deft, razor-like guitar style together with a soulful vocal attack. Comparisons will obviously be made to Robert Cray, which may both reflect artists who bring a strong soul base to their blues and who generally employ an unstated approach to their songs.

Recorded in New York City and Texas, the set was produced by Michael Ross, Bob Trenchard and Armstrong himself. Armstrong's bands bring lean, yet crisp backing to the mostly original material that displays Armstrong's ability at crafting songs dealing with everyday life with judicious use of wit and irony. Armstrong's wit is obvious on the opening "Everything Good To Ya (Ain't Always Good For Ya)," with his choral refrain noting his father's advice that candy tastes good but causes tooth decay and eating an apple a day may be good but too many apples gives one a tummy ache. "Somebody's Got To Pay" is a soulful number by Trenchard and Sandy Carroll about one giving too much and the other taking too much in their relationship as he pleads with his women to stop believing outsiders.

The title song, co-written with Madonna Hamel, is a humorous complaint about being an international traveler having to deal with getting back to the United

States in these post-911 days and how the world has changed with some slide guitar providing mood to his vocal before a concise slide guitar break. More of his controlled, clean slide playing is heard on "Devil's Candy," with an emphatic rhythm in the backing. The lyric is about a lady with an intoxicating effect that left him obsessed with her. He gave her his heart, but she wanted his soul. It's an impressive performance that exhibits that even though he shows considerable restraint, Armstrong generates smoldering intensity in his performances.

Dave Steen penned "High Maintenance Woman" on which Hamel adds a guest rap-vocal playing on the high maintenance woman in Armstrong's life who keeps him on the run. Still, despite her high costs to maintain, she keeps him warm. "Young man With the Blues" is a moving tribute to his father, a jazz musician who raised James as a single father. Its a song about James' mother walking out, making Armstrong's dad a young man with the blues. "Brand New Man" is a shuffle where he sings about how his love made him a brand new man and he doesn't want to lose her. The album closes with Trenchard's "Long Black Car" in which one won't get to heaven in unless one slows down and turns one's life around.

Armstrong's nuanced performances reward careful and repeated listening. "Blues at the Border" is a most notable new blues recording. **Ron Weinstock**



**3 COHENS**  
**Family**  
ANZIC RECORDS

Each of the 3 Cohens has established themselves in the contemporary jazz scene as vital, original players, composers and leaders.

Trumpeter Avishai has produced several memorable albums as has saxophonist Yuval, who has had serious health issues (discussed in the January 2012 DownBeat) that has led him to return to his native Israel. Anat is a DownBeat and Jazz Journalist Winner on clarinet and is also a formidable saxophonist who, like her brothers, is home playing modern hard bop, and Brazilian and other world jazz, although she is often featured in more traditional swing styles. There is a closeness between these siblings that is evident on the latest recording by the three together, "Family"

(Anzic).

A rhythm section of pianist Aaron Goldberg, bassist Matt Penman and drummer Gregory Hutchinson provides the foundation for the program of originals that have them joined on two of the ten selections by special guest vocalist Jon Hendricks.

With originals from Avishai and Yuval, along with their own renditions of songs of the traditional jazz canon, the 3 Cohens bring virtuosity and creativity along with the ebullient interplay between them and the rhythm section. The result is an hour of exhilarating performances.

"Shufra De Shufra" is a bouncy, bluesy original from Avishai, which opens with appealing ensemble horn playing before the composer takes the opening solo playing open before a muted wah wah chorus, followed by Yuval on soprano and some hefty tenor sax from Anat. Yuval's "Blues For Dandi's Orange Bull Chasing An Orange Sack" opens with Goldberg setting a mood before picking up the tempo as the Cohens enter with ensemble playing that conjures up some classic hard bop from the likes of Woody Shaw and Art Blakey. Anat's short tenor solo is enhanced by her brothers' embellishments and Hutchinson's drum breaks.

Avishai's "With the Soul Of the Greatest Of them All (Dedicated to Charles Mingus)" opens with Penman on bass before Hutchinson on cymbals and Goldberg start embellishing his introduction with a melodic theme that evokes some of the great bassist's work. Avishai also contributed the charming title track with the ensemble's restrained playing establishing the performance's soothing tone.

Duke Ellington's "The Mooch" lends itself to a small combo interpretation as found here, and there is some exquisite playing with Anat's woody clarinet contrasting with Yuval's serpentine soprano. Yuval arranged the traditional jazz standard "Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans," lending it a more contemporary, reflective spirit.

Anat's arrangement of Jelly Roll Morton's "Tiger Rag," gives it an air as if it had been written for a Brazilian troupe performing "Fiddler On The Roof" making for a fresh take that compares to Duke Ellington's similar modernistic reworking of it. The spirited playing, the enchanting horn voicings and arrangements make us listen to these numbers almost as if they were new compositions.

The collaborations with the great Jon Hendricks, "On the Sunny Side of the Street" and "Roll 'Em Pete" are solid performances, if not quite as magical as the originals or the updated classic jazz numbers. At 90, Hendricks' voice may not be supple as it was but still a joy. The arrangement of "Roll 'Em Pete" is more Joe Williams Chicago styled big band jazz than Joe Turner and Pete Johnson's Kansas City boogie woogie.

Each of the Cohen siblings has on their own made significant musical statements, but coming together they have provided us with this marvelous recording.

**Ron Weinstock**



## HARRY MANX & KEVIN BREIT

Strictly Whatever  
STONY PLAIN

With an arsenal of varied stringed axes at arm's reach and a serious bent towards eclecticism, this Canadian duo has cooked up one of most delightful sets of recent vintage. Original songs (save two), richly human in character and inventive in execution, are Manx's and Breit's stock in trade.

Root strains of all varieties blend in engaging cross-weaves. Eastern drones, blues, folk and jazz meet at interesting angles and make for natural neighbors, topped by the pair's congenial vocal personae.

Standout tracks include "Looking For A Brand New World", "Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep" and "There Was A Girl". This is one worth running down.

*Duane Verh*

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

Available at finer music retailers everywhere, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [iTunes](http://iTunes) 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)



**ARCHIE SHEPP**  
**For Losers/Kwanza**  
**IMPULSE**

One of the recent reissues celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Impulse Records is “For Losers/Kwanza” by Archie Shepp. Among those inspired by John Coltrane, Shepp brought together a fiery, passionate style, but rooted both in traditional as well as funk and soul music of the time while also bringing a strong focus on his culture and community. These two albums were recorded at the same sessions between 1969 and 1971.

For someone associated with ‘free jazz,’ the music has strong foundation the funk of James Brown and Junior Walker. This is clear on the opening track from “The Losers,” “Stick it Up” which has a Leon Thomas vocal with Doris Troy and Tasha Thomas adding backing vocals while Mel Brown adds guitar. Even better is “Abstract” with some nice trombone from Graham Moncur III. Chinalin Sharpe takes the vocal on Ellington’s “I’ve Got It Bad (And That Ain’t Good),” with Shepp’s tenor embellishing the vocal with a Ben Webster-styled vibrato and alto saxophonist Clarence Sharpe solos marvelously. Cecil Payne adds flute behind Shepp’s robust tenor on Cal Massey’s lovely ballad “What Would It Be Without You.” The centerpiece of “The Losers” was Shepp’s “Un Croque Monsieur (Poem: For Losers),” an extended composition opening on a tight, funky, rhythmic vamp leading to strong energetic and at times free ensemble playing followed by a segment with Shepp playing a sour sounding soprano sax, followed by Claritin Sharpe singing Shepp’s poem about everybody loves a winner, and who gives a damn for losers. Others on this very strong performance include trumpeter Woody Shaw, Payne on baritone sax, and Sharpe on alto sax.

While recorded at many of the same sessions, the music on “Kwanza” was inspired by celebration of Kwanza, which Shepp refers to as “our traditional African holy week.” In the reproduced liner notes of Emilan Sudan, it is noted that Shepp’s three contributions reflect the sounds of the African communities in the US. With selections such as “Back Back” we get more heavy James Brown inspired funk as Shepp solos over the funk groove of Dave Burrell on organ, Wally Richardson on bass and Bernard Pretty Purdie

on drums as he preaches the funk blues like a frenzied mix of post-bebop and Screaming R&B honker, while Graham Moncur III adds his tailgating trombone. Leon Thomas handles the vocal as well as scatting and yodeling on “Spoo Pee Doo,” on which Robin Kenyatta’s flute stands out. One of the centerpieces on this is Moncur’s “New Africa,” from a session Bob Thiele supervised and it is a freer performance with Burrell on piano, Walter Booker on bass and Beaver Harris on drums providing the foundation with Moncur’s blustery trombone and Shepp’s tenor (and yodels) joined by Jimmy Owens’ trumpet and Charles Davis’ baritone making for a highly animated and impassioned performance. Shepp’s “Slow Drag” includes Woody Shaw, Matthew Gee, Clarence Sharpe, Cecil Payne, Cedar Walton, Wilbur Ware and Joe Chambers for another passionate performance built upon a funky rhythmic figure with solos from Shaw and Shepp being especially galvanized. Cal Massey’s “Bakai” closed the original album as well as this reissue of the two albums and is another example of Cal’s marvelous compositions in his all to brief life. It mixes a highly rhythmic base with a strong melodic theme with Shepp very impassioned here.

There is plenty to get the listener invigorated on this forty-odd years old recordings that have held up well over the years and remind us that Archie Shepp has been always rooted in the past but always looking forward.

*Ron Weinstock*



**DUKE ROBILLARD**  
**Low Down And Tore Up**  
**STONY PLAIN MUSIC**

Venerable guitarist Robillard and his band slipped in one very nifty blues session toward the end of 2011 that should not go without mention here. Low Down And Tore Up is a nonstop procession of high-spirited covers of John Lee Hooker (“Want Ad Blues”), Jimmy McCracklin (It’s Alright), Elmore James (“Tool Bag Boogie”), among others. Tempos may vary but not the sound of enthusiasm.

While the leader is strong throughout, it’s the pianists, Bruce Bears or Matt McCabe that steal the show on most every tune. The old-school “live-to-tape” recording technique used here may have been the key to the verve of these tracks. Whatever the cause, this disc rates among the most solid from last year.

*Duane Verh*



## CURTIS FULLER

Soul Trombone

Cabin in the Sky

IMPULSE RECORDS

Fans of jazz trombone will salivate at the performances from Curtis Fuller and friends on this double album 2 on 1 disc.

On **Soul Trombone**, Fuller heads up an all-star group featuring Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Jimmy Heath (tenor sax), Cedar Walton (piano), Jymie Merritt (bass), Jimmy Cobb (drums on 5 tracks) and Granville T. Hogan (drums on 1 track). The 1961 studio-recorded, six-tune set serves up a mix of swingers, ballads and boppers enhanced by the fabulous front-line blended horns. Fuller contributes three originals: a brisk bopper (“The Clan”), a bluesy mid-tempo swinger (“Newdles”), and another melodious swinger (“Ladies Night”). The crew also delivers a mellow ballad rendition of “In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning,” a Latinate “The Breeze and I,” and a nice take on “Dear Old Stockholm” that starts out with a melancholy melody head and steps up to a swinger.

**Cabin in the Sky** features Fuller with trumpeter Hubbard, Hank Jones on piano, Art Davis or Milt Hinton on bass, Osie Johnson on drums, and Bob Brookmeyer (also) on trombone, backed by an orchestra conducted (and enjoyably arranged) by Manny Albam. The 10 standards include tunes mostly by Vernon Duke from the 1940 Broadway musical score which revived tunes such as “Taking A Chance On Love,” “Do What You Wanna Do,” and other gems sweetened with strings and splendid solos.

Fuller’s smooth, rich tones and all-around musicianship from his cohorts enhance listening pleasure of these two diverse recordings. The 12-page, four-color liner booklet contains historic images of the original album covers, musician photos and liner notes.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



## MIGHTY SAM MCCLAIN/ KNUT REIERSRUD

One Drop Is Plenty

VALLEY

Mighty Sam McClain has come some way from the days of the chitlin circuit and 45s on small independent labels. Often thought of as a blues and soul vocalist in the Bobby Bland tradition, listening to him singing from the opening moments of “Life,” the first track of his collaboration with Norwegian guitarist Knut Reiersrud, “One Drop Is Plenty” (Valley View) one hears echoes of the late Solomon Burke mixed with some of Bobby Bland’s choked leaps.

McClain sounds deeper here than I remember him, but he sounds so comfortable while Reiersrud is a fine guitar player whether laying down single note modern blues guitar runs, or playing slide guitar in a manner suggestive of the of Derek Trucks and the sacred steel players. His slide playing here is supportive of the vocals and not in the jam band mode of Trucks. And the way McClain delivers his vocal accentuates the message of the lyric, as he asks the lady does she believe in love on “Can You Stand The Test Of Love.”

There is a nice Memphis feel to “You Don’t Know Nothing About Love,” with McClain singing about the nighttime, tears fall like rain, starting again in the morning and pray that she will never go away, and if you don’t know what he is talking about, one knows nothing about love, with nice guitar riffs and fills. “Learn How To Love You Again” is a country waltz with Reiersrud evoking a dobro at times. On “Long Time Running,” McClain sings about asking for forgiveness as he has turned things around and “would you still love me if I failed once more, would you deny me the chance to touch your soul ... .” The similarity to King Solomon is perhaps evident on “I Don’t Feel Noways Tired,” with its religious message, “Nobody told him the road would be easy, I don’t believe he brought me this far to leave me,” with some churchy organ from David Wallumrød on this striking performance.

Much can be said about the production and the splendid Norwegian musicians on this set. The musicianship is impeccable and the restraint in the spare accompaniments on these performances keep the listener’s focus on McClain, who is singing as well as

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he ever has. It perhaps was a fortuitous chance that McClain and Reiersrud met collaborating on the recording "Scent of Reunion," by Iranian artist Mahsa Vahdat. One consequence of this meeting is this exceptional recording that one would hope might help Mighty Sam reach a level of recognition and acclaim his talents deserve, and hopefully a chance to hear him and guitarist Reiersrud here in North America.

*Ron Weinstock*



## JEFF LORBER FUSION

### Galaxy HEADS UP

On *Galaxy*, Jeff Lorber shows he hasn't lost the knack for dosing his fusion play with plenty of solid swing. It's a key factor in the overall "up" character of the keyboardist's craft and on abundant display here; highlighted, interestingly, by his acoustic touches on a number of tracks.

His electric axe is, of course, the star, establishing tasty grooves on tracks including "Horace" and "The Samba". His supporting cast abounds with "names" from the fusion and "smooth" schools including bassist Jimmy Haslip, sax man Eric Marienthal and trumpeter Randy Brecker. Other standout tracks include "Montserrat"- very reminiscent of the Brecker Brothers' highly charged fusion-funk and a reprise of Lorber's 80's days, "Wizard Island".

*Duane Verh*

## LAURIE MORVAN BAND

### Breathe Deep SCREAMING LIZARD

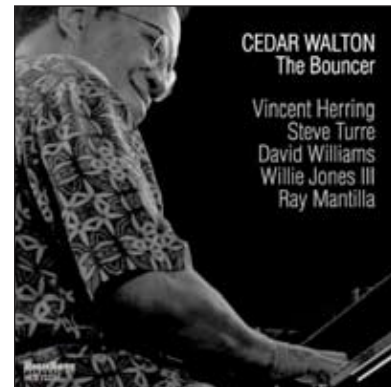
On the band's fifth disc, which comes on the heels of the Blues Foundation's 2010 award for Best Self Produced CD for its release, *Fire It Up!*, guitarist Laurie Morvan and crew make a strong case for more awards to fill their trophy case.

With Morvan's muscular, yet lyrical, guitar lines leading the charge the band proves to be adept at sexy funk, *Mojo Mama*, where Morvan wants to "pull you deep into my swamp", hard hitting commentary on the current state of the national dialog, *Back Up the Train*, with its poke at the T.V. blowhards "You know dogma is dead weight yeah, yeah/It leaves no room for debate/a shouting match ain't communication", Stevie Ray style slow blues, *It Only Hurts When I Breathe*, and even a

blues counterpoint to the clock watcher's anthem, *It's Five o'Clock Somewhere*, with a soon to be classic, *No Working During Drinking Hours*. Elsewhere, Morvan plays the diva who can't be pleased, *Bad Love Blues*, takes on a no good lover, *I've Had Enough*, looks at *Hurtin' and Healin'* as simply the opposite sides of the same coin, laments days that start out bad and only get worse, *Beat Up From the Feet Up* and makes it clear her expiration date has yet to pass, *Long Time 'til I'm Gone*.

With Morvan joined by Lisa Grubbs on backing vocals many of the tracks sound like they could come from vintage Heart discs until Tommy Salyers throws down some great keys and things take a sonic detour into Marcia Ball territory. With great guitar and compelling tunes there's plenty to like about this release.

*Mark Smith*



## CEDAR WALTON

### The Bouncer HIGH NOTE

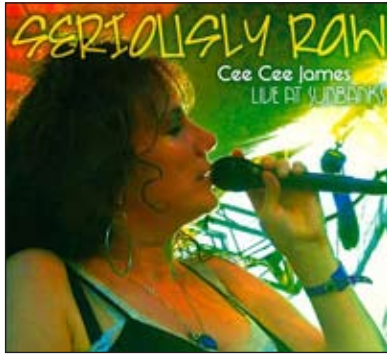
Cedar Walton has a new release, "The Bouncer" (High Note) that fans of hard bop and modern jazz piano will find of interest. Walton has had an impressive career starting with his days with J.J. Johnson and Art Blakey, and then the numerous sessions with bassist David Williams and the late drummer Billy Higgins. Whether leading his own sessions or backing the likes of the late Clifford Jordan or Dexter Gordon, he was predictable in the sense that one would expect rhythmically swinging, solid and fresh melodic playing and music. On this date he is joined by Williams and drummer Willie Jones III with Vincent Herring on saxophones and flute on five of the eight selections, Steve Turre on trombone for two and Ray Mantilla on percussion for one.

The opening title track is a melodic Walton original based on its bouncy tempo with Walton, Herring and Turre each taking solos that establish a lively feel. J.J. Johnson's "Lament" is the first time Walton has recorded this with only a trio, and his clean, relaxed touch helps establish the mood before we are engaged with his lengthy solo. With Herring featured on tenor, Walton provides another lively swinger, "Bell For Bags," followed by a lovely waltz, "Halo," that showcases Herring's woody tone on flute. "Underground Memoirs"

is a sextet performance with Turre, Mantilla and Herring on board for a bossa nova tinged rendition of this somber composition with Turre featured prominently here. Drummer Jones is featured on the trio swinger “Willie’s Groove,” with Williams also prominent. Williams composed “Got To Get To The Island,” a driving number with herring in a bluesy mood before the leader’s solo over bassist Williams firm bass lines and Jones’ rock solid groove.

Another trio number, “Martha’s Prize,” is another lively and youthful sounding performance that closes “The Bouncer” in a lively mode. He may be nearing eighty, but on this recording he plays with vigor with equally engaged players for a recording that is quite striking.

*Ron Weinstock*



**CEE CEE JAMES**

**Seriously Raw: Live At Sunbanks**  
BLUE SKUNK MUSIC

Vocalist Cee Cee James might be described as a Janis Joplin inspired vocalist from the Northwest. While her recent studio album, “Low Down Where the Snakes Crawl,” left this listener with a mixed reaction, he was more than pleasantly surprised to discover how much he enjoyed her new CD, “Seriously Raw: Live At Sunbanks.” James has been performing for several decades and had a solid backing band of Rob “Slide Boy” Andrews on rhythm guitar and slide, Chris Leighton on drums, Dan Mohler on bass and Jason Childs on drums at a semi-annual festival held at a Washington State resort.

With a few originals mixed in with a bunch of covers, James and her band deliver a spirited set with some blues-rock touches in some of the accompaniment, but performances that are delivered with a relaxed groove, never coming across as frenzied or hurried. Expecting the worst from an opening rendition of Robert Johnson’s “Crossroads Blues,” I was delighted by the nice, relaxed pace of the performance that owed little to Cream’s blues-rock version or Elmore James’ spirited slide version. And Cee Cee James’ raspy vocals might evoke Joplin, but she sounded relaxed in her delivery without straining. The contrast between the strong idiomatic slide of Andrews and the more blues-rock style of Childs added interest, but the rhythm duo were superb in helping deliver this performance. Her vocal on “I Ain’t Superstitious” moves from casual to fervent,

with which she mixes in some witty spoken interjections as she exhorts her band and the audience to get silly with it. This latter song has a solid solo where Childs builds off the groove.

Then there are originals like “Make It To The Other Side,” with a nice shuffle groove and her two Joplin covers, “Mercedes Benz” and “Me and Bobby McGee,” where she exhorts the spirit of Joplin, although the quality of her voice will make comparisons between her and the legendary singer inevitable. But James’ lively and infectious performances with the superb backing she gets, make for spirited listening that stands on its own as she places her own stamp on “I Just Want To Make Love To You,” “Nutbush City Limits,” and Luther Allison’s “Living in the House of the Blues.”

“Seriously Raw” is a seriously fun listening experience. Incidentally, some of her chat with the audience is on a track after the 13 performances, so one can easily dispense listening to this bonus.

*Ron Weinstock*



**SMOKING TIME JAZZ CLUB**

**Lina’s Blues**

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For those whose picture of a present-day New Orleans traditional jazz scene is populated primarily with tourist-tailored outfits cranking out “When The Saints Go Marchin’ In”, this outfit should be a breath of fresh air. Gems from the books of Bessie Smith and Jelly Roll Morton, among others, are delivered in highly energized editions, sporting very inspired-sounding solos and charts.

Vocalist Sarah Peterson sounds unforced and comfy working her way through “Gulf Coast Blues”, “Mr. Jelly Lord” and “Frosty Morning Blues” and there’s not a slouch in the horn section come solo time. There is a sound that should please long-standing “trad” fans and could easily turn newbies into converts.

*Duane Verh*

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## SANDY CARROLL

**Just As I Am**  
CATFOOD RECORDS

Memphis based pianist, singer and songwriter Sandy Carroll has a new Catfood Records CD, “Just As I Am,” that is an intelligently produced album that blends soul, rock and blues for a nice musical stew that ranges from ballads, blues/rock and gospel, to New Orleans styles and country. She says, “Just As I Am” is a project Jim and I have been working on for a few years. It came together when Bob Trenchard got involved and we decided to finish it and release it on Catfood Records.”

The Jim that Carroll refers to is celebrated producer Jim Gaines, who is her husband. Gaines produced, engineered and mixed this disc. The studio band is pretty strong with guitarist Evan Leake and keyboardist Rick Steff being the only persons playing on all or almost all the selections. Sandy Carroll had a hand in all of the songs here which go to celebrating one’s fellow persons on the opening, uplifting, “Blessed Be,” asking for blessings for the children who hold the light, the warriors that let us sleep at night, the healers, the lame, and “blessed be the glory blessed by thy name,” to her amusing lyrics about trying to improve on her natural self in “Helping Mother Nature,” where she looks in the mirror and gets the botox blues as she sings “nip, tuck fill it in.”

She sings about love, yearning and whether the man she loves is her “Heart Fixin’ Man,” as well as the tragic young love in “Romeo & Juliet,” whose lyrics Bob Trenchard (who plays bass on the track) brought to her. There is more of a spiritual message on “Runnin’ Out of Grace,” while she gives advise to men that if they want to treat their woman right, “they need to lean how to give “Slow Kisses,” set to a boogie piano based accompaniment. The album closes with the title track that she co-wrote with James Sjoberg and the late Luther Allison, and which Allison recorded on Allison’s “Reckless” album for Alligator. It has been years since I last listened to Allison doing this, but I can’t imagine him crafting a blue ballad performance in his own style as she does with her vocal asking, “Will you love me just as I am.”

The songs resonate with both the crisp production

and lyrics matched by Carroll’s wonderful vocals that bring a strong country-soul flavor, with nice elements such as Steff’s use of accordion on “Romeo & Juliet” to lend it a Tex-Mex flavor and Leake’s guitar (except on the title track) providing atmosphere without overshadowing her natural, understated singing. While some of the publicity for this characterizes this as a blues recording, there is little actual blues on this (the somber “Waiting For the Storm” with a strong guitar solo).

Regardless of how one classifies this recording, it is a recording that should appeal to a wide range of listeners with Carroll’s natural, heartfelt singing and the strong backing provided her. **Ron Weinstock**



## ALAN LEATHERMAN

**Detour Ahead**  
AJL MUSIC

Vocalist Alan Leatherman delivers 11 tunes by Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Cole Porter, and other composers, with backing from Rick Germanson (piano), Gerald Cannon (bass) and Steve Williams (drums).

Houston native Leatherman shows smooth elegance in his vocals that could cause one to label him a “crooner” in the style of Sinatra, Bennett, Harry Connick, Jr. and similar singers. The best tracks come near the end of the studio set with Leatherman and crew delivering bluesy expressive renditions of the Charlie Parker/King Pleasure standard “Parker’s Mood” and Ellington’s “I Ain’t Got Nothin’ But the Blues.”

His sidemen contribute greatly to the album’s success: Cannon has worked with McCoy Tyner; Williams was Shirley Horn’s long-time drummer and the ultra-talented Germanson is a mainstay on the New York City scene.

Inspired as a youngster by recorded music of The Spinners, Stevie Wonder and Nancy Wilson and, later, Hip Hop and Neo Soul, the Leatherman began performing in local venues as a high school student and continued throughout college during which he was awarded by the National Foundation for Advancement in Arts. Ignoring his natural talent, Leatherman studied Economics and Political Science at Syracuse University, after which he briefly entered the corporate

world before returning to music and studying at Juilliard's evening division and New York University as a Masters candidate in Vocal Performance. Leatherman met Germanson soon after and established an ongoing working collaboration.

Leatherman has a pleasant voice and remains true to the lyrics. Yet, he seems to lack the swinging verve and dramatic feeling of famous jazz crooners until he injects the blues. I'm hoping he'll discover what really excites him. I'm not sure that it is just purely jazz.

*Nancy Ann Lee*



**TORONZO CANNON**  
**Leaving Mood**  
**DELMARK**

A Chicago native, singer-guitarist Toronzo Cannon has been playing professionally since 1997 after playing with vocalist Tommy McCracken at the Taste of Chicago. Since that time, he has evolved musically and developed a driving, searing style that strikes me as suggestive of Son Seals. His influences range from Muddy and Elmore to Tyrone Davis and Johnnie Taylor, with his ears open to Bob Marley, John Mellencamp and Jimi Hendrix.

Delmark has just issued a new CD "Leaving Mood" that follows up a 2007 self-produced CD. He is backed by rhythm guitarist Lawrence Gladney, keyboardist Roosevelt Purifoy, bassist Larry Williams and drummer Marty Binder, with guest appearances by guitarist Carl Weathersby and harmonica player Matthew Skoller. It's a tight band with a rocking style. Nearly all of the songs are originals from Cannon and/or Gladney, and there is a varied bunch.

"She Loved Me" has echoes of Hound Dog Taylor's "She's Gone" with Gladney's slashing rhythm guitar as Cannon sings about his woman who committed murder in first degree before Cannon takes a searing solo. With Skoller adding harp, Cannon's shuffle "Chico's Gone (For Chico Banks)" is an affectionate tribute to the late Chicago bluesman where he issues his regrets of not saying goodbye to his friend. Cannon sings about not being to get over an old lover on Gladney's soulful "Come On," while the two collaborated on the funky "I Believe" where his woman knows about what is going on while playing games that mess with Toronzo's head.

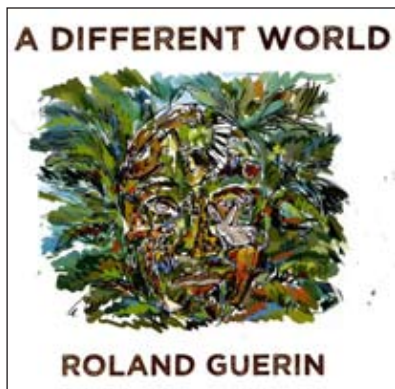
"Hard Luck" is an original slow, topical blues about losing his job and it being hard on a man when one tries

to get by as the bills pile up and savings won't go far, with Carl Weathersby taking then first scorch-the-earth solo with the two each taking solos after the final verses. "Open Letter (To Whom It May Concern)" has his vocal distorted as if singing through a harmonica mike as he sings about the backbiting, dog-eat-dog stuff that goes on some in the blues scene. Skoller adds nice harp embellishments on this before Cannon' solo, which makes use of the lower strings and guitar effects as Gladney and rhythm lay down an insistent groove in an understated manner. One of the few songs not written by Cannon is his sensual rendition of Nina Simone's smoky "Do I Move You," which provides a nice change in feel."

Whether talking about the woman who will drink away Toronzo's gig money on "I Can't Take Her Nowhere," or waiting for his woman who can make him feel so small so that he is in a "Leaving Mood," Cannon and Gladney have provided us with some fresh songs and a distinctive approach that has led Alligator's Bruce Iglauer to provide his endorsement for this "contemporary blues statement" on the back cover, noting it has "a slew of striking, original songs with performances full of swaggering power and confidence."

The music at times is perhaps a bit too upfront for my 'taste,' but that is a matter of preference. Cannon is a strong singer and the band here is terrific, and the result is this album that certainly will have those listening to the blues taking notice.

*Ron Weinstock*



## ROLAND GUERIN

*A Different World*

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Fusion listeners expect lightning-speed facility from their bassists, and the New Orleans-based Mr. Guerin will by no means disappoint them. The payoff of *A Different World* is multiplied by the earthy, vibrant atmosphere of this set and the warmly melodic nature of the compositions. Guerin's uniquely-designed, six-string acoustic bass guitar, lends much to couple his technical prowess with creative improvisational options. At times exploiting the "guitar" aspect of the instrument, Guerin expands and enriches the language of "lead bass" pioneered by Stanley Clarke and others.

He does so in a sonic backdrop where the cold, hyper-technical nature of much fusion fare is blissfully absent. Layers of woody percussion, courtesy of one-time Herbie Hancock sideman Bill Summers, and simpatico contributions from saxophonist Khris Royal and pianist Mike Esneault flesh out a warm-blooded delight of a session.

*Duane Verh*



## DAVE ALVIN

*Eleven Eleven*

YEP ROC

Dave Alvin's incendiary guitar work has ignited the work of the Blasters, X and the Knitters as well as his own releases with the Guilty Men and, more recently, the Guilty Women. His fearless use of dynamics, taking songs from a whisper to a roar, and his deep knowledge of blues, country, soul, folk and rock places him in the top ranks or roots music guitarists of all time. And

that's just the start of why he's so good. Even more compelling than his guitar work is his uncanny ability to craft tales of broken souls, lustful lovers, lost warriors, wistful dreamers, hard working common men and assorted dangerous characters that connect in a way that makes the songs linger long after the last notes fade away. While he sings with a big bold voice that matches his ringing guitar, he can also be quietly affectionate and tender when necessary in service of the tale. On his best songs you are there with him checking the perimeter for danger, examining why she left or reliving the sweet memory of a perfect night.

This disc continues Alvin's nearly flawless run of releases since leaving the Blasters. *Harlan County Line* finds Alvin wondering what happened to an old lover while the duet with Christy McWilson, *Manzanita* features the two of them tugged back into the spring of their long expired relationship and the hope the wild canyons once fostered for the two of them. *Dirty Nightgown* leaves sentiment aside with its scorching guitar and promise of a lust filled night. *Johnny Ace* is the real life tale of the R & B star that accidentally killed himself fooling around with a gun during a break while on tour with Big Mama Thornton.

While Ace's death was tragic, far sadder is the lost soul on the tender *Black Rose of Texas* where the pills, booze and good times ultimately couldn't keep the demons at bay. *Murrietta's Head* is the tale of a good family man turned bounty hunter to support his family after losing a son for the lack of money to pay for a Doctor. The hilarious *What's Up with Your Brother?* is the first recorded vocal duet by Alvin and his brother Phil, lead singer of the Blasters, who have great fun with their off again/on again relationship and the public's constant inquiry about their status.

The homage to his best friend and former Guilty Man, Chris Gaffney, *Run Conejo Run* is a John Lee Hooker style boogie that allows Alvin to finally give voice to his feelings of loss at the death of his friend who he knows is still by his side. Gaffney returns the favor with a duet recorded shortly before his death and helps Alvin close out this disc on a high note with a look at their good fortune in making a living as ramblers and musicians, *Two Lucky Bums*. Tough, tender and absolutely rocking, this is a great disc. *Mark Smith*

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## CATHERINE RUSSELL

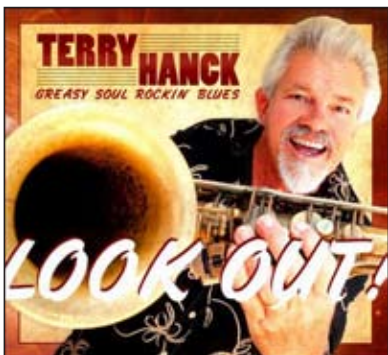
### Strictly Romancin'

WORLD VILLAGE/HARMONIA MUNDI

It's a good bet that the acclaimed Ms. Russell will charm the socks off of old-school jazz fans with this set. The NYC-bred vocalist celebrates the legacies of Ella Fitzgerald, Abbey Lincoln, and her late father Luis's longtime associate, Louis Armstrong with inspired sounding adaptations of their works.

Russell's approach is "retro" in the most flattering sense of the term, her stylish, dusky delivery is an ideal match for a take on the Fitzgerald/Chick Webb arrangement of "Under The Spell Of The Blues" or the Armstrong version of Hoagy Carmichael's "Ev'ntide." Blues and classic r&b fans should join in the admiration with her torchy run-throughs on Lil Green's "Romance In The Dark" and Ivory Joe Hunter's "Don't Leave Me." Worth the money.

*Duane Verh*



## TERRY HANCK

### Look Out

DELTA GROOVE

Saxophonist and vocalist Terry Hanck has been part of the San Francisco Bay area blues scene for several decades, including a lengthy association with Elvin Bishop. He, in fact, is part of Bishop's Raisin' Hell Revue that had a CD on Delta Groove. Now Delta Groove has issued his new CD "Look Out."

This is co-produced by Hanck and Norwegian born guitarist Chris 'Kid' Anderson, who was part of Hanck's band before joining Charlie Musselwhite and then replacing Charlie Baty with Rick Estrin & the Nightcats. Andersen also lends his guitar to a number of tracks along with guitarist Johnny 'Cat' Soubrand

from Hanck's current band, bassist Tim Wager, drummer Butch Cousins and the keyboards of Bob Welsh.

The album cover describes this as "Greasy Soul Rockin' Blues," a not so inaccurate description for Hanck's mix of jump blues and soul. Listening to him, obvious influences are honkers like Junior Werry Hanckalker, Big Jay McNeely and Joe Houston. He plays tough R&B sax and is a pretty strong-voiced vocalist who brings plenty of passion to his delivery. The band is terrific behind him with a relaxed, steady backing that doesn't rush the tempo, even on hot shuffles, and in addition to the leader's sax, both guitarists get plenty of solo space.

An example of the Junior Walker influence might be on the reworking of Guitar Slim's recording, "You Give Me Nothing But the Blues," usually done as a shuffle and transformed with a "Shotgun groove." There is plenty of raspy sax along with some strong guitar from Johnny Cat, making much use of the lower register here. The other material is pretty solid and not overdone to death from covers of Chuck Willis' "Keep a Drivin'" as well as Louis Jordan's "Just Like a Woman."

Hanck's own originals are pretty solid efforts as well ranging the reggae flavored "Girl, Girl, Girl," to the nice ballad "Keep On Holding On," that provides a contrast to the jumping remake of Tiny Bradshaw's "Train kept a Rollin'" with the focus on the leader's sax, although the most famous cover is the Yardbirds' guitar rave. Another nice jump tune is the Fats Domino classic "Hello Josephine," with the closing tune being an Ike Turner rocker, "Just One More Time." On this latter tune, Kid Andersen emulates Turner's use of the whammy bar on the original. It's a solid close to a strong recording that showcases Hanck as a singer as well as a saxophonist with an excellent band.

*Ron Weinstock*



## MIKE LEDONNE

### Keep The Faith

SAVANT

I was not familiar with organist Mike LeDonne prior to listening to his new Savant CD "Keep The Faith." LeDonne grew up on hard soul and funk before falling under the spell of Miles Davis and Wes Montgomery and the swing feeling. He spent eleven years in the

legendary vibist Milt Jackson's quartet before establishing "The Groover Quartet" with saxophonist Eric Alexander, guitarist Peter Bernstein and drummer Joe Farnsworth. LeDonne's band is well named as they hit the groove and run hard with it.

This disc opens with a dynamic rendition of the O'Jay's hit "The Backstabbers," which establishes the mood with Alexander as well as the leader both being especially striking as drummer Farnsworth provides the hard swinging rhythm. The late Charles Earland was a major influence on LeDonne, and the Earland penned title track hurdles out the gate like a runaway midnight special. Alexander takes things up a notch followed by fiery single note playing by Bernstein who certainly has become one of the most in demand guitarists (Sonny Rollins for one) and is so much at home in the context of an organ band. The leader himself provides plenty of chicken fried grease here as well followed by the three trading fours with drummer Farnsworth. It's typical of the fire to be heard here.

LeDonne's original blues, "Big John," is a tribute to another jazz organ master, John Patton. The relaxed walking tempo provides a change of pace from the burners that opened this album. It is followed by the relaxed groove in an interpretation of Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel." The four invest quite a bit of feeling into Donny Hathaway's classic "Someday We'll All Be Free." Another LeDonne original, "Scratchin," is fleet groover as Bernstein takes a driving solo followed by some strong tenor sax while "Burner's Idea" is a hot bluesy number that shows inspiration in Earland's similarly styled compositions (Earland's nickname was "The Mighty Burner"). The leader takes us to the church of organ blues here.

This writer is an unabashed fan of organ jazz. Listening to this was like being an eleven-year-old boy alone in a candy store. However, the musical treats of Mike LeDonne and The Groover Quartet, on "Keep The Faith," have no calories, don't promote tooth decay and is musically enriching. LeDonne has produced a superior organ jazz recording that will be listened to repeatedly by this writer.

*Ron Weinstock*

## THE DELTA FLYERS

16 Bars  
SELF-PRODUCED

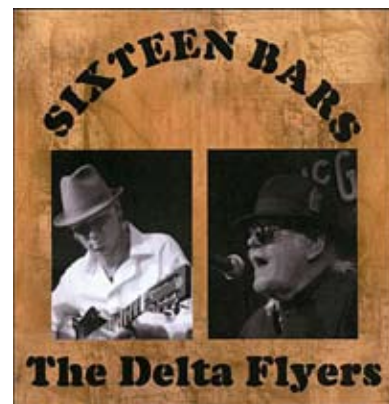
The Delta Flyers is an acoustic duo of vocalist Stevie DuPree and guitarist Travis Stephenson who are backed by a small combo for the self-produced CD "16 Bars." While the duo claim to play a variety of blues based on the styles of blues found on the gulf coast states, this album is as much influenced by southern rock, bluegrass and country rock and might properly be described as Americana.

The set opens with rollicking slide guitar from Stephenson on the resonator for "61 Highway Blues." There is plenty of roughhouse harmonica to mix with the slide. The title track is an acoustic number whose

titles refers to the bars on the singer's jail cell door with perhaps a bit of Allman Brothers inspiration. Frenzied slide is heard on "Mentone, Alabama," which one can easily imagine being done as a bluegrass number with the spirited tempo.

"Baby's So Fine" is a shuffle with nicely played slide and harmonica, but could do without the backing vocal refrains. "Sunflower River Rag" shows their country roots (sort of like the group Alabama), while "Poison Took My Baby" is a relaxed rocker about how whiskey took the singer's baby away. "Dockery Farm" has a subject that should be the basis for a blues song, but again is in a roots music vein. "Fishin' Little Mama" is a rocker with more of a blues core, followed by the brisk "Baby Jane" as they sing about having to run and working so hard and now its time for fun. The closing "I Got To Testify" has a skiffle band-jug band flavor that is nicely played and an appealing gravelly vocal.

A fun recording that is likely to have the most appeal to fans of Americana and roots. *Ron Weinstock*



## JASON STEIN QUARTET

The Story This Time  
DELMARK

After starting on rock and blues guitar, Jason Stein has focused his musical career on the bass clarinet. In this respect he differs from a variety of multi-instrumentalists such as Bernie Maupin, Eric Dolphy, James Carter and David Murray who have made major statements on the instrument, but do not play it exclusively. His Chicago quartet is heard on his Delmark release, "The Story This Time," and includes Keefe Jackson who plays mainly tenor saxophone but also doubles on contrabass clarinet here, bassist Joshua Abrams and drummer Frank Rosaly. Jackson's use of the contrabass clarinet also serves to provide a deep bottom on the selections he employs it on.

The eleven performances here include five originals

along with three compositions from the Lennie Tristano school and three from Thelonious Monk. The choice of compositions from Tristano along with Warne Marsh and Lee Konitz are reflected in his interaction with Jackson throughout. Their playing is akin to the interplay of Konitz and Marsh on Tristano's classic oeuvre and provides a feeling of the suspension of time, although the two generally eschew the tonal purity of the Konitz-Marsh front lines.

Marsh's "Background Music" opens this with some heat and bebop flavor as Stein quickly displays a strong attack followed by Jackson's hot tenor as the two weave in and out of each other's lines while the rhythm keeps the tempo heated. It is followed by Stein's, "Laced Case," which suggests free jazz in the vein of Ornette Coleman. The two play in a bluesy vein as the rhythm embellish Stein's growls and then provide a base for the swinging groove of by the leader and Jackson. There is a lively opening to Stein's "Little Big Horse," which makes use of the contrast in pitches and tonalities between tenor sax and bass clarinet. The three interpretations of Monk's music also provide an interesting rhythmic approach. Unlike Steve Lacy's explorations of Monk's music which were quite close to Monk's conceptions of his songs, Stein and his band provide a rhythmic feel that I suggest is akin to the Tristano school with its rhythmic static-ness as on "Skippy."

This overview of several of the performances hopefully will give a sense of the music presented here. Some might describe this as free jazz, but that may refer to the looser musical structures as they build their improvisations, and with few exceptions do not relate to frenzied or frenetic playing (although the two reeds sound a bit abrasive at the beginning of Konitz's "Palo Alto"), and certainly will not sound too out for those who have listened to a broad spectrum of contemporary jazz. Stein has put together a fine band for the musical explorations heard on this very absorbing recording.

**Ron Weinstock**

## SHAUN MURPHY

### Live at Callahan's Music Hall

#### VISION WALL

While she's small in stature, singer Shaun Murphy is a large presence whenever she picks up a microphone. With a big voice that easily adapts to differing material she has sung, toured and recorded with Bob Seger, Eric Clapton, Little Feat, Joe Walsh, J. J. Cale and a host of others.

Even though often cast in a background role, her 16 year stint with Little Feat found her as the lead vocalist more often than not. Since leaving Feat in 2009, Murphy has not only toured again with Seger but has crafted a solid career as a blues belter.

This live disc finds her working her way through a pair of Koko Taylor classics, *I Can Love You Like a Woman* and *Gonna Buy Me A Mule*, southern R & B, *Someone Else Is Steppin' In* and *Come To Mama*, the early 70's Little Milton hit, *That's What Love Will Make You Do*, some gospel, *Amazing Grace* and Sister Rosetta Tharpe's *Can't No Grave Hold My Body Down* and greasy funk, *Love of Mine*. Murphy also gives a nod to her long career in rock

with a terrific version of Dylan's *Down in the Flood*. On *I Know Why the Sun don't Shine* and *John Hiatt's It Feels Like Rain* she trades the high wattage of most of this set for slow, steamy ballads that reveal the richness of her wondrous voice.

With a 4-piece band, a couple of background singers and the Motor City Horns adding the musical backdrop, this is a top notch release that should expand Murphy's fan base beyond the Little Feat nation and the liner note readers who had to know who possessed the great voice heard in the background on so many rock hits.

**Mark Smith**



## SONNY ROLLINS

### On Impulse/ There Will Never Be Another You IMPULSE RECORDS

Among the two LPs on one CD reissues that mark 50 years of Impulse is Sonny Rollins' "On Impulse/ There Will Always Be Another You." The two albums were both recorded in 1965, with "On Impulse" being a studio recording that was his first release for the label, while "There Will Never Be Another You" was a live recording from a performance at New York City's Museum of Modern Art that was not released until 1978. Drummer Mickey Roker is on both recordings. "On Impulse" also had Ray Bryant on piano and Walter Booker on bass, while pianist Tommy Flanagan, bassist Bob Cranshaw and drummer Billy Higgins (along with Roker) were on the live Museum of Modern Art recording which took place a few weeks prior to the studio session.

Also common to both recordings were renditions of "On Green Dolphin Street," and "Three Little Words. The live rendition of the former number being preferred to these ears as Rollins' tenor sounds a bit sour opening "On Impulse." This isn't to dismiss the performance, as it grows stronger during the improvisation. Highpoints on this studio date include the moody "Everything Happens To Me," which is ideal material for his thematic explorations; and a Rogers and Hart standard "Blue Room."

Rollins playing is superlative throughout, although he sounds off-mic at times and the drums may be a tad too prominent and sound boxy. This may account for why this was not issued until over a decade later. Despite the sound, Rollins and Flanagan are especially terrific throughout this. There is so much classic Sonny Rollins available to which this can be added.

**Ron Weinstock**



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# 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

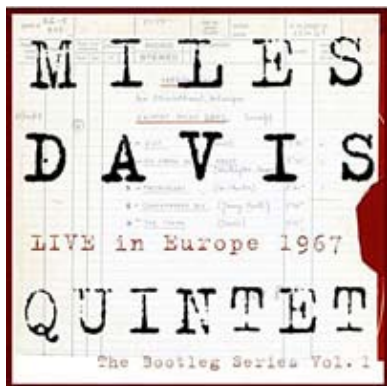
From ‘New York New York’” listeners are treated to classic interpretations of songs from the great tunesmiths like Cole Porter, Rogers and Hart, Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen. These are presented in arrangements from such masters as Nelson Riddle, Don Costa, Billy May, Quincy Jones, and Ernie Freeman.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

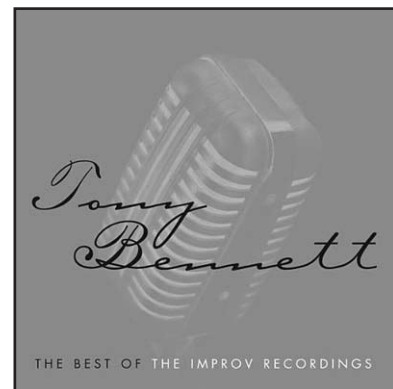
Chronological context magnifies the bounty of these “live” dates, taken from the group’s “Newport In Europe” performances in five cities. This assemblage- tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, pianist Herbie Hancock, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Tony Williams, was Miles’ last conventional jazz lineup. Indeed,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

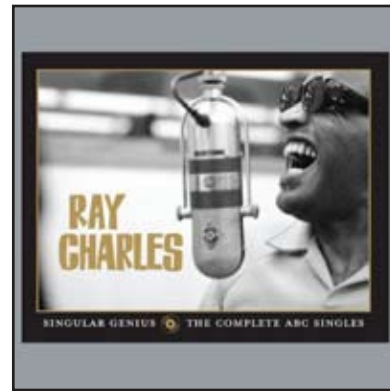
At one point on Disc Number Two, Jimi tells the audience, "We're sorry everything's so slow tonight." Truth is, Mr. Hendrix and crew had nothing to apologize for. It's the different character of each of the shows chronicled on this four-disc set that will keep fans returning to these October 1968 performances 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 producing 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

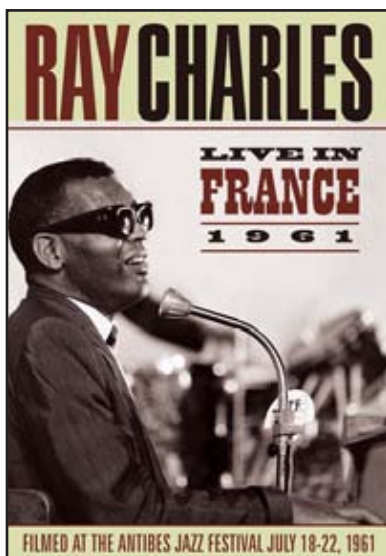
either the Louis Jordan and Ella Fitzgerald recording or Hot Lips Page and Pearl Bailey.

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?

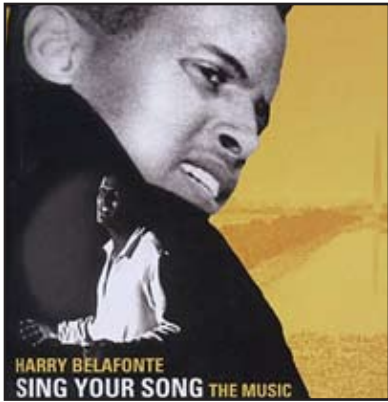
The filming did have the great Charles' vocals and piano front and center while focusing on the horns during their solos. Listening and watching how effortlessly he moves from a ballad like Cecil Gant's classic, "I Wonder" to the vocal interchange with Margie Hendrix who admonishes him to "Tell The Truth," 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.

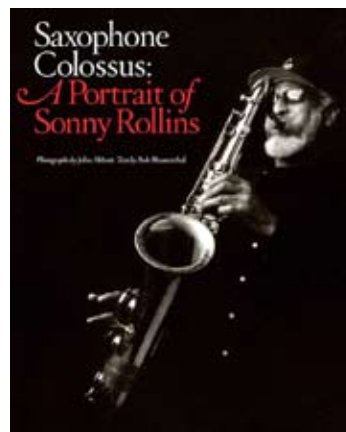
Opening with "Mark Twain" and Leadbelly's loving ballad "Sylvie" backed by just a guitar (and in the case of the latter number a vocal chorus) the warmth of Belafonte's singing is evident. I was not familiar with his rendition of Lord Melody's "Mama Look a Boo Boo," but it was one of his earliest recordings 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").

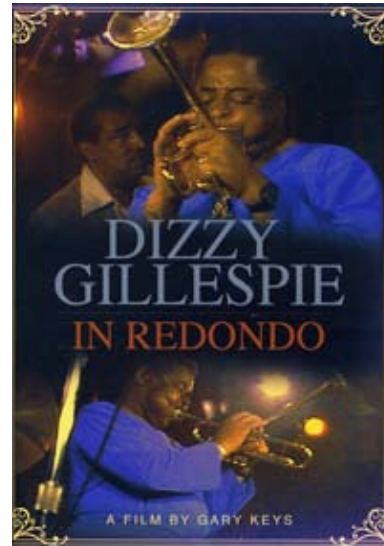
Naturally, in true Miles fashion, the band changes with each appearance over the various years featuring such players as David Liebman, John Scofield, Kenny Garrett, Bob Berg, Al Foster, Robben Ford and others, with a red hot guest appearance from David Sanborn on "Jean Pierre." Another highlight is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

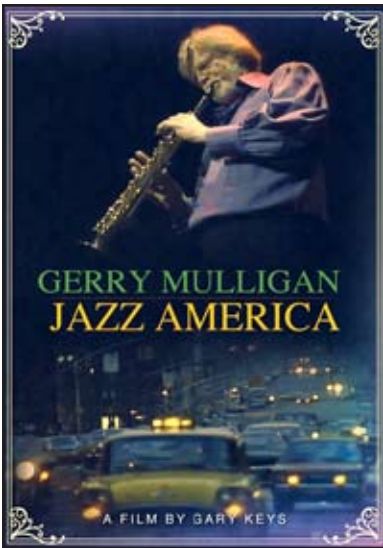
Relaxed and friendly, the appealing performance whizzes by all too soon.

*Nancy Ann Lee*

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**GERRY MULLIGAN**  
**Jazz America**  
**MVD VISUAL DVD**

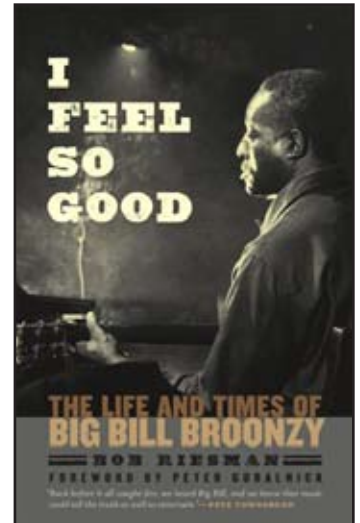
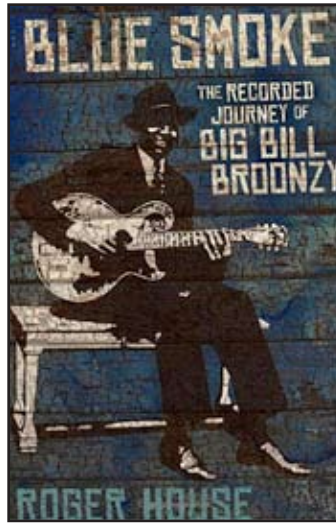
This 60-minute DVD captures baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan's quartet performing at Eric's in New York City. Filmed by Gary Keys, the set was likely originally produced for California's KCET television. Before starting the 1981 set, the film opens with a few minutes of interview snippets interspersed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

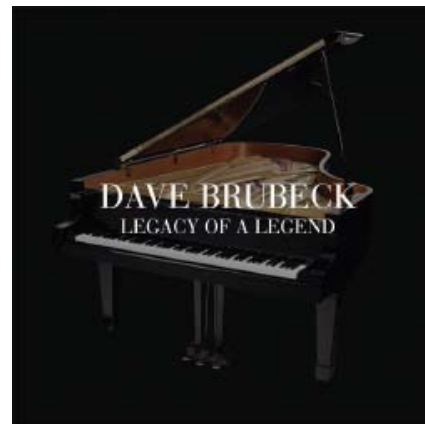
Riesman continues in tracing his musical career as a country fiddler, often playing for white folk, to the brilliant guitarist who became the preeminent blues artist in Chicago. More context is placed in discussing his appearance at "From Spirituals To Swing," including the fact that Blind Boy Fuller 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 re-issues) 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

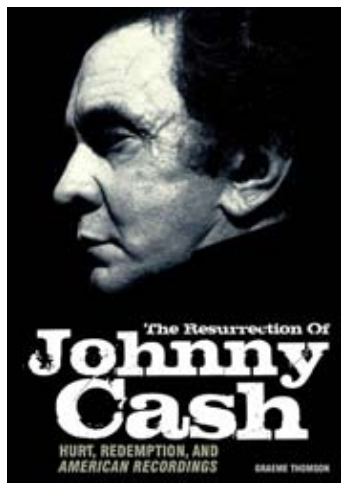
discussing levels and such with the engineer before we start getting into Bruce talking about his background and how Alligator got started. We see him at the studio as well as in his office having a business meeting with staff. The performance clips include a number of gems including a small excerpt 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.

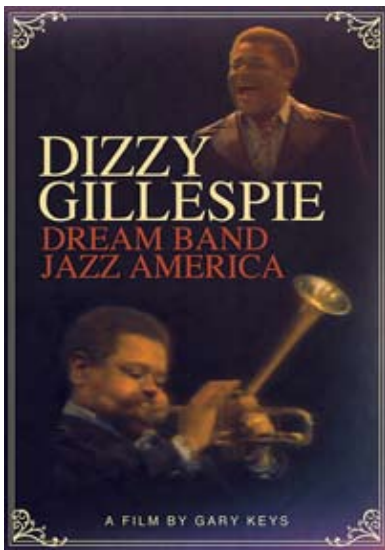
Thomson traces how the what superficially would seem to be the odd linkage between Cash and Rick Rubin, the head of Def Jam and Def American Records and known as the producer of hip hop and metal records. But it was a partnership that enabled Cash to return to prominence with nothing simpler than having 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 Latin 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.

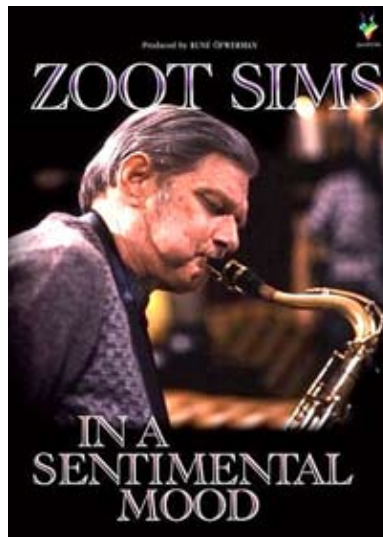
Backstage interview clips and Dizzy's humorous onstage antics boost the appeal of this outstanding concert DVD. Close-ups of the soloists and other smart camera work add to viewer enjoyment.

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.

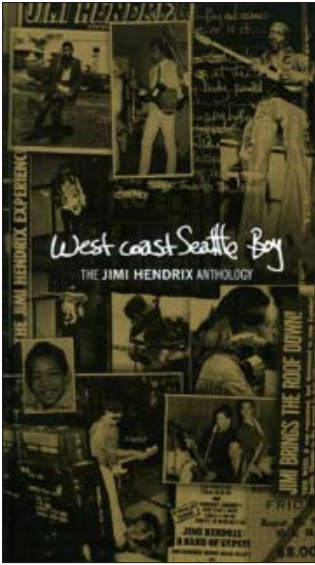
The light banter complements the performances, with the filming centering mostly on the players faces and expressions. So we see Sims and his embouchure but little fingering, but there is plenty of character revealed in their faces as well as in the music. "In a Sentimental Mood" is a delightful video 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-



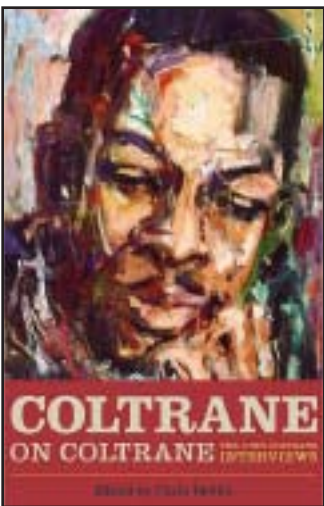
age also includes a 60-page booklet with rare photos and annotations on each track by John McDermott.

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," "Foxy 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

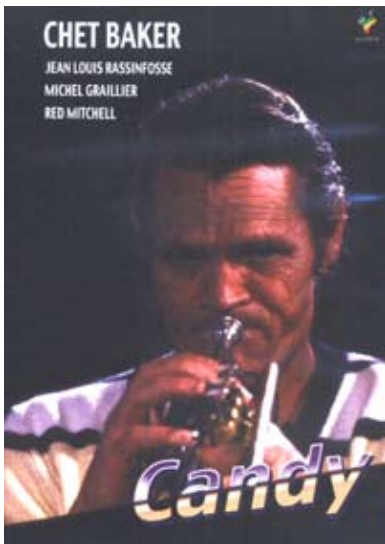
be aware of. That said, it should be noted that the overwhelming majority of the interviews and articles will be new to the reader. Also it does not include the full text of Ralph Gleason's interview with Coltrane (only an excerpt is provided), as the entire interview will be published in a book of Gleason's 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

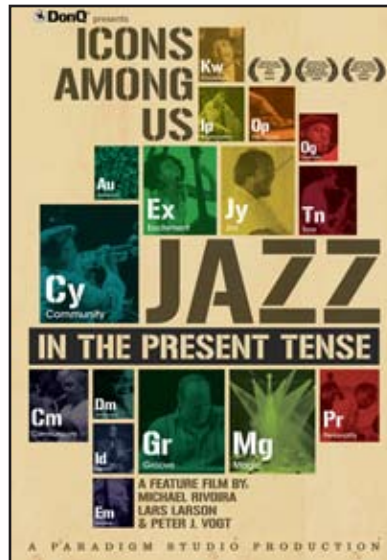
A companion of sorts to the Zoot Sims DVD "In a Sentimental Mood," MVD Visual has released in the US the Gazell Records DVD of Chet Baker, "Candy." Like the Sims video it is an intimate trio recording that finds the trumpeter in the library of Sonet Records in Lidingo, Sweden with Sims backed by pianist

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 Raissenfosse 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*



## 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.

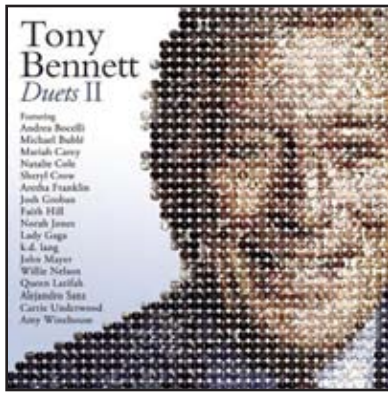
How people perceive jazz and the commercial value of the art form covers a lot of the film. Veterans and younger musicians intelligently comment on what they believe jazz is today. Included are interviews with Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Terence Blanchard, Ravi Coltrane, Jason Moran, Bill Frisell, 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*

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**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.

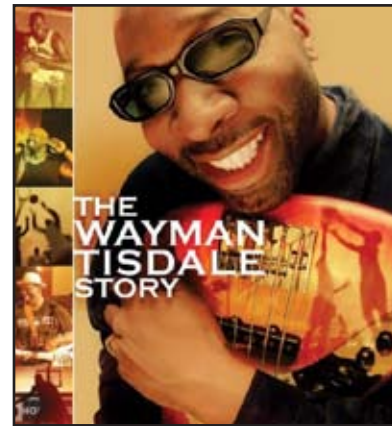
Tony Bennett and Amy Winehouse perform a raw and edgy version of "Body and Soul." Amy's performance is reminiscent of Billie Holiday that is particularly haunting due to her untimely death. "Body and Soul" has garnered an individual Grammy nomination for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance.

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.

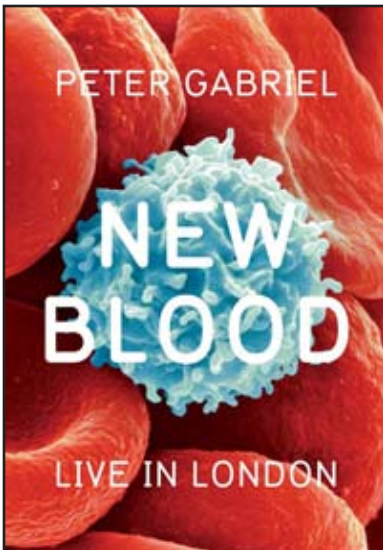
Yes, he was blessed with athletic ability but even more blessed by the people around him and his family and his faith and Wayman Tisdale expressed all those things through his music, through his life and through his example. This man made me like things that I never thought I would...Oklahoma, basketball,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

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