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# jazz & blues report

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Nicholas Payton

The 3rd Annual  
Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival

# jazz & blues report

Editor & Founder  
Bill Wahl

Layout & Design Bill Wahl

Operations Jim Martin  
Pilar Martin

## Contributors

Michael Braxton, Mark Cole, Dewey Forward, Nancy Ann Lee, Peanuts, Wanda Simpson, Mark Smith, Dave Sunde, Joerg Unger, Duane Verh, Emily Wahl and Ron Weinstock.

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Comments...billwahl@jazz-blues.com

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"Buffalonious"

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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[jazz-blues.com](http://jazz-blues.com)





## 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

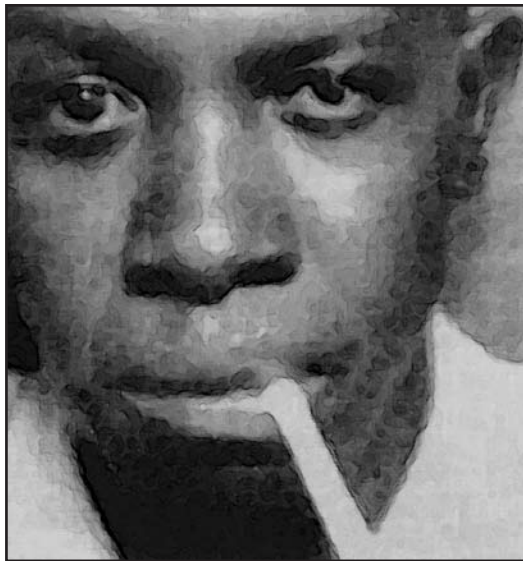
Copenhagen – For every summer since 1979, Copenhagen Jazz Festival has presented a broad selection of the best of the Danish and international jazz scene. While there has always been plenty of room to include musical cousins such as world music and electronica, the festival has always been - and continues 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

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This photo of Gary Bartz captured by Ron Weinstock at the 2008 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival is just one of hundreds of Ron's photos you can view online at [www.flickr.com/photos/novaron](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



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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can



Royal dukes are square-jawed.  
They have no rhythm  
And they wear crowns.

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

really transform lives.

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



**Art. Ask for More.**

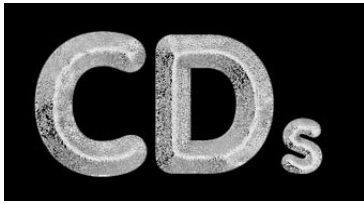
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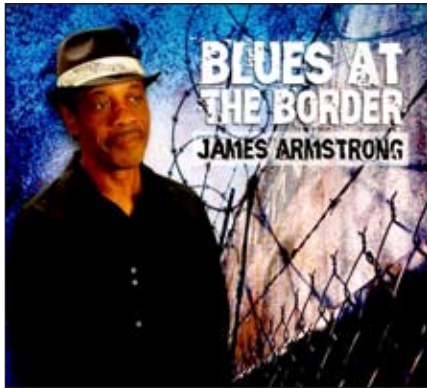
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We only bring you  
the Cream of the Crop!



**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**



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

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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 too 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 (“Toot 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 someway 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 Vue) 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

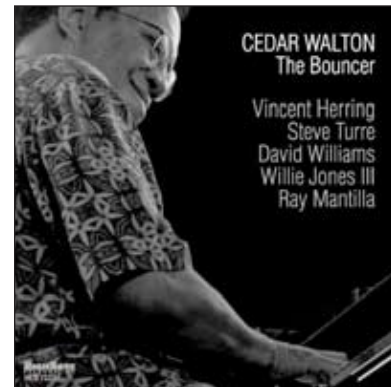
On the band's fifth disc, which comes on the heels of the Blues Foundation's 2010 award for Best Self Produced CD for its release, *Fire It Up!*, guitarist Laurie Morvan and crew make a strong case for more awards to fill their trophy case.

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**

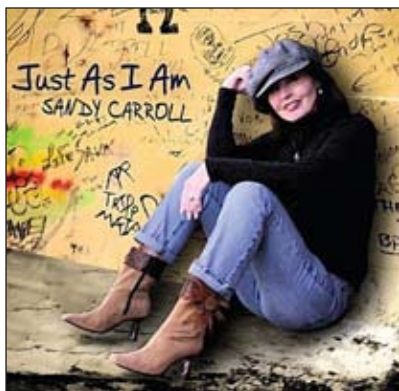
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For those whose picture of a present-day New Orleans traditional jazz scene is populated primarily with tourist-tailored outfits cranking out "When The Saints Go Marchin' In", this outfit should be a breath of fresh air. Gems from the books of Bessie 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. Theirs 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 advice to men that if they want to treat their woman right, "they need to learn 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

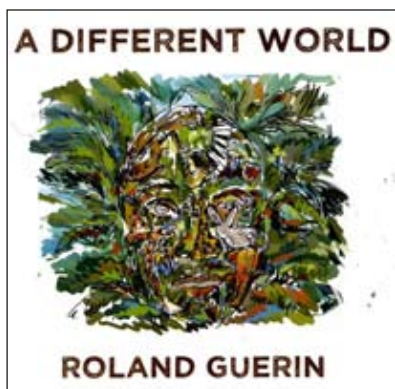
to get by as the bills pile up and savings won't go far, with Carl Weathersby taking then first scorch-the-earth solo with the two each taking solos after the final verses. "Open Letter (To Whom It May Concern)" has his vocal distorted as if singing through a harmonica mike as he sings about the backbiting, dog-eat-dog stuff that goes on some in the blues scene. Skoller adds nice harp embellishments on this before Cannon's 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 Khristian 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 Hankalker, 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**

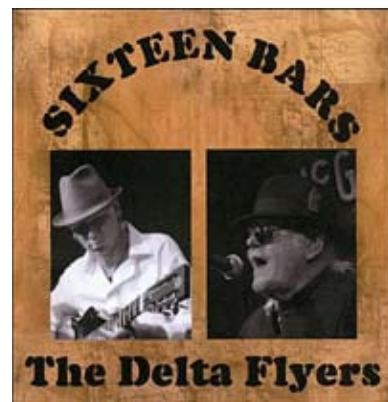
The Delta Flyers is an acoustic duo of vocalist Stevie DuPree and guitarist Travis Stephenson who are backed by a small combo for the self-produced CD "16 Bars." While the duo claim to play a variety of blues based on the styles of blues found on the gulf coast states, this album is as much influenced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