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jazz & blues report

now in our 38th year

55 Annual Monterey Jazz Festival
Esperanza Spalding



jazz & blues report

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"Buffaloniou"

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



The 55th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival

September 21-23

Headliners Include Tony Bennett, Esperanza Spalding, Pat Metheny Unity Band, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Bill Frisell, Melody Gardot, Robert Randolph & the Family Band, Jack DeJohnette, Eddie Palmieri Salsa Orchestra, Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, Monterey Jazz Festival's 55th Anniversary Celebration with Dee Dee Bridgewater, Christian McBride, Ambrose Akinmusire, Chris Potter, Benny Green, Lewis Nash, and Many More

Monterey, CA; Tickets are on sale now for the 55th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival, September 21–23 at the Monterey Fairgrounds. Arena Package Tickets are on sale now at montereyjazzfestival.org or by calling 888.248.6499. The Festival features 500 artists, 90 performances on 8 stages and more, for 30 hours of live music over 2 days and 3 nights, accompanied by an array of international cuisine, shopping, arts exhibits, educational events, seminars and conversations with iconic and emerging jazz artists on the oak-studded 20-acres of the Monterey County Fairgrounds.

2012's Grammy Award-winning lineup includes Arena headliners Tony Bennett, Esperanza Spalding, Pat Metheny Unity Band, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Bill Frisell, Melody Gardot, Robert Randolph & the Family Band, Jack DeJohnette, Eddie Palmieri Salsa Orchestra, Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, Monterey Jazz Festival's 55th Anniversary Celebration with Dee Dee Bridgewater, Christian McBride, Ambrose Akinmusire, Chris Potter, Benny Green, and Lewis Nash.

2012 Monterey Jazz Festival Highlights Include:

- Return of jazz legends Tony Bennett, Jack DeJohnette, Pat Metheny
- 2012 Artist-In-Residence, Ambrose Akinmusire, makes four appearances over the weekend in the Arena and Grounds
- World Premiere of 2012 Commission, Bill Frisell's Beautiful Dreamers meets the 858 Quartet; Frisell appears three times over the weekend
- 2012 Showcase Artist, Jack DeJohnette, appears four times over the weekend in the Arena and on the Grounds
- Festival debuts of Eddie Palmieri, Melody Gardot, Robert Randolph & the Family Band
- Tribute to Cal Tjader, directed by Michael Wolff, features Warren Wolf, Pete Escovedo, John Santos, Robb Fisher, Vince Lateano
- Trombone Shorty and Esperanza Spalding make second appearances at the Festival
- NEA Jazz Masters include Tony Bennett and Jack DeJohnette
- 2012 Monterey Jazz Festival Artists have won 63 Grammys

- Coffee House Gallery Exhibit: Remembering 'The Real Ambassadors': Brubeck & Armstrong at Monterey

- Film Screenings of Jazz on a Summer's Day and The Girls in the Band

- Return of Sunday's Family Day with fun and music for all ages

The award-winning trumpeter, Ambrose Akinmusire, will serve as the Festival's Artist-In-Residence, and will perform with his own Quintet with the Monterey Jazz Festival's 55th Anniversary Celebration Band; and as a soloist with the Festival's all-star student band, the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra, of which he was a two-year member. The NEA Jazz Master and Grammy-winning legendary drummer, Jack DeJohnette, returns as the Festival's 2012 Showcase Artist, and will perform four times throughout the weekend on the Grounds with his own band, in the Arena with his Special Trio (with Pat Metheny and Christian McBride); and in duo with Bill Frisell, the Festival's 2012 Commission Artist. Bill Frisell will perform three times--with Mr. DeJohnette; with his group Beautiful Dreamers, and will debut his newly-commissioned piece with Beautiful Dreamers and his 858 Quartet.

2012 TICKET INFORMATION AND MORE

Full Weekend Arena Packages are available starting at \$225 and offer a reserved seat to each of 5 concerts on the Arena/Jimmy Lyons Stage (renewable annually), access to 7 Grounds Stages and all Festival activities. Full Weekend Grounds Tickets start at \$125 and Daily Grounds Tickets for as low as \$40, include access to 7 Grounds stages and activities, plus simulcasts of all Arena concerts in the Jazz Theater. Single Day Arena Tickets include a reserved seat (non-renewable) for the Arena shows on the day you select, and are \$66 for Friday, and \$132 for Saturday or Sunday. Single Day Arena Tickets go on sale June 28, 2012.

Also returning for 2012 is the Festival's 7th Annual Family Day, Front Box Auction, Premier Access Pass, Family Discount Package, Youth Tickets, Local's Package for Monterey County residents, and RV Parking on the Fairgrounds. Contact the Ticket Office at 888.248.6499 or e-mail ticketoffice@montereyjazzfestival.org to request additional information.

The 2012 Jazz Legends Gala will take place at the Hyatt Regency Monterey on Thursday, September 20. This exclusive event honors the contributions and lasting legacies of jazz pioneers, and this year, will honor 2012 NEA Jazz Master and legendary drummer, Jack DeJohnette. Proceeds from the Gala benefit Monterey Jazz Festival Jazz Education Programs. Contact 831.373.3366 or e-mail development@montereyjazzfestival.org for more information.

The 55th Monterey Jazz Festival partners include Amoeba Music, Carmel Road Winery, DownBeat, Gallien-Krueger, Inns of Monterey, The Jazz Cruise, JazzTimes, Jazziz, Jelly Belly, KGO 810, KUSP 88.9, North Coast Brewing Company, Remo, San Jose Mercury

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News, Yamaha Instruments, and Casa Vinicola Zonin.

Monterey Jazz Festival also receives support for its Jazz Education Programs from AT&T, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, William McCaskey Chapman & Adaline Dinsmore Chapman Foundation, Community Foundation of Monterey County, D'Addario Music Foundation, Joseph Drown Foundation, Dunspaugh-Dalton Foundation, Harden Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, David & Lucile Packard Foundation, Pebble Beach Company Foundation, Quest Foundation, Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation, Rotary International, Upjohn California Fund, Surdna Foundation and generous individual contributors.

For a complete event details including the full list of performers at the 2012 Monterey Jazz Festival please visit montereyjazzfestival.org. Artists and schedule subject to change.

Cover photo of Esperanza Spalding (c)Carlos Pericas - Courtesy of Montuno

JAZZRAEL

A Festival of Israeli Jazz & World Music
New York City May 6 – 16

"The Israeli jazz phenomenon is recognized worldwide as an incredible story of major creative artists coming from Israel with fresh new jazz perspective."

– Martin Mueller, Executive Director
The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music

NEW YORK – New York City is the world's center of Jazz, and now, for a week-long of live performances it will serve as a background for a Festival of Israeli jazz and world music:

May 6th, 8:00pm - JAZZRAEL, will kick off with "Works & Process". The Guggenheim Museum will be transformed into a Tel Aviv Jazz Club featuring Omri Mor - piano, Simon Starr - bass and Gregory Hutchinson - percussions. The sold out event will take place at the museum, which will be open to for the night. The works of Omri Mor, a Jerusalem-based jazz pianist, is being featured for one night only, integrating Andalusian music with jazz.

May 8th, 9:30pm - The Alon Yavnai Big Band with special guest artist saxophonist Dave Liebman will play at Joe's Pub. Alon Yavnai, a pianist and composer, moved to the United States at the age of 22 and has recorded with a vast array of artists in various genres. Yavnai has also performed in Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress as well as international festivals.

May 10th, 9:30pm - Music hot-spot Joe's Pub in the Village will introduce Avi Avital, a 33-year old mandolin player and Uri Sharlin on accordion.

May 12th, 8:00pm - Temple Israel on the Upper East Side will feature celebrated Israeli Jazz and world musicians

jazz
& blues

for an unforgettable evening of music with: Omri Mor, Uri Sharlin, Hadar Noiberg, Frank London and Roberto Rodriguez & his band.

May 14th, 8:00pm - The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, in the Union Square will incorporate students and alumni in this festival of Israeli jazz and world music.

May 16th, 9:30pm - Joe's Pub will also host the final night of the festival with Amir Gwirtzman, one of Israel's lead wind instrument artists, who will perform with Nurit Galron, a leading Israeli singer who has sold over a hundred thousand albums in Israel.

To keep up to date on Israeli musicians, events, and promotions be sure to check our web site: On Facebook at facebook.com/jazzraelifest

2nd Pennsylvania Blues Festival Keeps Tradition of Blues in the Poconos



Joe Louis Walker

Michael Cloeren, and the others involved with the Pocono Blues Festival found a new location to carry out the tradition of bringing the best blues to the Pocono Mountains with last year's "1st Pennsylvania Blues Festival" at the Blue Mountain Ski Area in Palmerton, Pennsylvania, not far from Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton, Pennsylvania. They have put together the "2nd Pennsylvania Blues Festival" at the Blue Mountain Ski Area that will take place the weekend of

Friday July 25 through Sunday July 27.

Once again they will be presenting a variety of top-draw blues acts to appeal to diverse blues tastes. Friday night they will host a blues jam featuring Mikey Junior & the Stone Cold Blues Band. Saturday, July 28 they present the first of two full days of blues on the main stage and tent stage. Acts scheduled for the main stage include Marquise Knox; Michael Burks; Big Sam's Funky Nation; Joe Louis Walker and Billy Branch & the Sons of the Blues with Lurrie Bell, Carlos Johnson & Demetria Taylor. In the Tent Stage will be the Canadian duo of Dawn Tyler Watson & Paul Deslauriers; Wallace Coleman along with an acoustic set from Billy Branch & Lurrie Bell and another set of New Orleans Funk by Big Sam's Funky Nation. Saturday Night will feature Steve Guyger and the Excellos.

The main stage on Sunday will open with Daptone Records artists Naomi Shelton & the Gospel Queens. Others up include Eugene 'Hideaway' Bridges; Teeny Tucker; Earl Thomas and the Brooks Family Blues Dynasty with Lonnie, Ronnie and Wayne Baker Brooks. Corey Harris will be featured in the tent along with an acoustic set from the Brooks Family, and sets by Hideaway Bridges and Teeny Tucker.

As can be seen by the list of performers, the Festival promises a full weekend of real deal blues. I have my hotel reservations already and I know folks from as far away as San Francisco and the Pacific Northwest that have their plans for this as well.

They are offering last years pricing for tickets until June 8th. For more information and on the festival, directions and the festival schedule, check out the Festival website, <http://www.skiblue.com/SkiBlue/activities/pa-blues-fest.aspx>. The Festival also has a facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pennsylvania-Blues-Festival/195740310453821>.

Ron Weinstock

Photos by Ron Weinstock



Teeny Tucker

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTREAL



Indoor program of the 33rd edition of the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal

Montreal - The Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, presented by TD in collaboration with Rio Tinto Alcan, is entering its 33rd edition. In other words, for 33 years, the Festival has spun out its annual celebration of musical pleasure, a jazz groove that also crosscuts with musical forebears and relatives, from blues to world music, showcasing all the timeless hits and classics as well as the rarities, "B-sides" and unknown gems that we delight in discovering. After over three decades of existence, the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal is itself a massive "compilation album" of the music of our era, with jazz at its very heart, an ever-shifting, evolving genre always open to new discoveries and invigorating and enriching musical cross-pollinations. Just drop the needle anywhere in our program to experience the infinite richness of Planet Jazz, ready to welcome any and all fans and engage their musical passions. As proof, witness the indoor program that awaits us for this edition, which runs from June 28 to July 7. Tickets for these concerts go on sale this Saturday, April 28, at noon... although Spectra Newsletter subscribers can buy them starting tomorrow upon reception of their latest issue of the newsletter, and until Friday at 6 p.m. Everyone can subscribe free of charge by visiting infolettrespectra.ca.

True to their reputation, Festival programmers have delivered a schedule packed with quality, of course, but also a most delightfully dazzling diversity, from the purest jazz to its youngest musical cousins. The marquees will light up with legendary names, including James Taylor in a pre-opening concert, Liza Minnelli, Tangerine Dream, Miles Davis Award winners Stanley Clarke (2011) and Ron Carter (2012), Al Stewart, Van der Graaf Generator, Wayne Shorter... And the list of great names only gets longer and more varied when

we consider concerts by Seal, Norah Jones, Melody Gardot, Sophie Milman, Esperanza Spalding, Gianmaria Testa, Victor Wooten... It's also a program with planetary scope, with musical ambassadors who effortlessly transcend borders and genres: Emir Kusturica, CéU, Jovanotti, Johnny Clegg, Strunz & Farah, Lila Downs, Tord Gustavsen and his Scandinavian guests, the Free Flamenco Trio with Dorantes, Garcia-Fons and Spassov, as well as hybrid concerts that transport us, from Harry Manx and his World Affairs and World Kora Trio Longsworth-Soumano-Di Fraya. Not to be outdone, the hottest sensations of the moment will be everywhere, with Get The Blessing, Adam Cohen, The Barr Brothers, Moriarty, Caravan Palace, Ziggy Marley, Timber Timbre, Janelle Monáe and Fishbone. Québec and Canada will once again be honorably represented, with concerts by Patrick Watson, Adrian Vedady, Misstress Barbara, Oliver Jones, Peter Appleyard (this year's recipient of the Oscar Peterson Award), Jorane and I Musici, Lorraine Desmarais, Vic Vogel, Rafael Zaldivar, Patricia Deslauriers, Rémi Bolduc, Raneé Lee... Finally, let's not forget concerts that put a different spin on the music, including Flamenco Hoy, by the super-celebrated Carlos Saura, The Rat Pack Is Back!, a painstaking-and hilarious-recreation of the famed foursome of '60s Bad Boys, the resurrection of a blues queen with The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith, and the eagerly anticipated return of GRUBB, the humanitarian musical adventure that so deeply moved the Festival and its fans during its North American premiere last year.

For all true fans, the Festival is a year-round experience, thanks to Bell. With montrealjazzfest.com, everyone can stay constantly connected to the passion of the music, whether before, during or after events. Video excerpts, information on the artists, access to archives from previous editions of the Festival, video channel (montrealjazzfest.TV, etc.-in short, it's the ideal online destination for every music fan. We remind you that the Festival is on Facebook (facebook.com/festival.jazz.montreal) and Twitter (twitter.com/FestivalJazzMtl) and that you can follow and experience every aspect of it using mobile applications for your iPhone and BlackBerry (montrealjazzfest.com/mobile).

Tickets are on sale now.

Tickets for all indoor concerts presented at the 33rd Festival International de Jazz de Montréal went on sale on April 28. Tickets can be purchased at venues, at the Métropolis box office (59 Ste. Catherine St. E.), or on the Admission or Ticketmaster networks (admission.com and ticketmaster.ca, 1 855 790-1245), excluding those concerts presented at Place des Arts and Maison symphonique de Montréal (175 Ste. Catherine W., laplacedesarts.com or 514 842-2112), and at Club Soda (514 286-1010, clubsoda.ca).

Get the jump on the crowd with the Infolettre Spectra and have the scoop on everything about the Festival emailed right to your inbox. All the latest news, exclusive pre-sales, discounts... and it's all free when you simply subscribe by visiting infolettrespectra.ca.

Info-Jazz: indispensable information tools...

Grouped together under the banner Info-Jazz, information tools for the Festival are easily accessed by anyone who wants to know everything that's happening at the biggest jazz festival in the world. The general public is cordially invited to pick up in SAQ branches in Greater Montréal the official Festival pamphlet, Info Jazz Indoor Concerts Schedule or call the Info-Jazz Line at:

Montreal Region: 514 871-1881

Long-distance calls made from within Canada or the United States (toll-free): 1 85JAZZFEST

Or visit montrealjazzfest.com Complete programming for free outdoor concerts and activities at the 33rd edition of the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal will be announced this coming June 4.

DC Jazz Festival Preview



Ron Carter

The 2012 DC Jazz Festival takes place in the Nation's Capital June 1 and runs through June 10. The Festival this year will have a variety of signature programs including "Jazz Meets the Classics" at the Kennedy Center; "Jazz in the 'Hoods" presented by Events DC; "Jazz 'n' Families Fun Days" at The Phillips Collection; "Jazz at the Hamilton" presented by The Washington Post; and Jazz at the Howard.

"Jazz Meets the Classics," co-presented by the Ken-

edy Center on June 4th, will feature an all-star lineup performing unique and exciting jazz interpretations of works by Bach, Chopin, Mozart, Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky. Headlining the concert is the Classical Jazz Quartet, with NEA Jazz Masters bassist Ron Carter and pianist Kenny Barron, vibraphonist Stefon Harris and drummer Lewis Nash. Also headlining is NEA Jazz Master and 10-time Grammy Award-winner Paquito D'Rivera, joined by Spain's Pepe Rivero Trio, Michael Phillip Mossman and Pernell Saturnino.

The "Jazz in the 'Hoods" program highlights the innovative CapitalBop D.C. Jazz Loft, Bohemian Caverns, and more than 80 performances at over 40 museums, clubs, restaurants, hotels, and galleries across the city with performers like Loide, Michael Thomas, Mark Prince, and Rodney Richardson with Lena Seikaly. The "D.C. Jazz Loft Series," presented by Capital Bop, returns to spotlight some cutting edge music and will span 3 days including an all day minifest on June 9. Performers include Marc Cary's Cosmic Indigenous; Tarbaby, featuring Orrin Evans, Nasheet Waits. Eric Revis; and the Todd Marcus Nonet.

The free annual "Jazz 'n' Families Fun Days" at The Phillips Collection on Saturday, June 2nd and Sunday, June 3rd will treat families to performances from some of the finest musicians from around the region, including



Jimmy Heath

Marianne Solivan, Victor Provost, the Herman Burney Trio, and the Elijah Balbed Quartet. Jazz at the Hamilton, the Festival's main venue, will feature 10 nights of performances with such noted artists as Randy Weston, Monty Alexander, Roy Hargrove, Jimmy Heath, David Sanchez, Les Nubians, Antonio Hart, Cyrus Chestnut, Jonathan Batiste, Ben Williams, Etienne Charles, John Scofield, Roberta Gambarini, and Marshall Keys. "Jazz at the Howard" celebrates the tradition of jazz in D.C. at the newly restored and reopened historic Howard Theatre. Headline artists include multiple Grammy Award-winning vocalist Dianne Reeves and famed Italian guitarist Pino Daniele. The Festival also hosts a performance by the dazzling clarinetist and saxophonist Anat Cohen at the Sixth & I Historic Synagogue, and six concerts co-presented by the Kennedy Center at the Millennium Stage featuring artists such as Malika Zara, the Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra, and Origem.

The DC Jazz Festival (DCJF) is the largest music 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 highly-anticipated cultural events in the nation's capital. The DC Jazz Festival is sponsored in part with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information about the DC Jazz Festival and upcoming programs, visit www.dcjazzfest.org.

Ron Weinstock

Photos by Ron Weinstock

International Songwriting Competition (ISC) Announces 2011 Jazz Winners

McCoy Tyner, Mose Allison, And Trombone Shorty Are Among Judges

Nashville - The International Songwriting Competition (ISC), the world's foremost global songwriting event, is pleased to announce its 2011 winners. Out of over 16,000 entries, Jazz artists Gregory Porter, Martina Flaherty, and Steve Talaga garnered the First, Second, and Third Place wins in the Jazz category. The Jazz category is one of the most competitive genres within ISC, and this year's list of judges included Jazz icons McCoy Tyner, Mose Allison, and Trombone Shorty.

Called "the songwriting competition to take note of" by the New York Times, ISC was established in 2002 and awards more than \$150,000 in cash and prizes to amateur and professional songwriters around the globe. This year was the most competitive of any year in terms of quantity and quality of entries, and winners were selected from over 16,000 songs submitted from 112 countries worldwide. Judges included iconic artists Tom Waits, Jeff Beck, Kelly Clarkson, Janelle Monae, Ozzy Osbourne, Lucinda Williams, Tori Amos, Wynonna, Keane, and many more.

In addition to the high-profile artists, the roster of judges also included five record label presidents as well as other industry leaders, offering songwriters the unprecedented opportunity to have their music heard by influential decision-makers. See below for the complete list of judges.

For a complete list of 2011 ISC winners and to hear the winning songs, go to <http://www.songwritingcompetition.com/winners>

Winning ISC's highest honor, the Grand Prize, is New Zealand's latest export, the quirky and wonderfully eclectic artist Kimbra. Kimbra has recently exploded onto the international music charts as the featured singer on Australian artist Gotye's current #1 hit song, "Somebody That I Used To Know." Her recent TV performances with Gotye on Jimmy Kimmel Live and Saturday Night Live were electrifying and introduced her to the US public, fortifying her meteoric rise to fame.

2011 Jazz Winners Include:

First Place

"1960 What?" - Gregory Porter - Bakersfield, CA, USA

First Place in the Jazz category goes to Grammy nominated Jazz artist Gregory Porter for the song, "1960 What?" Porter's debut album, *Water*, debuted in 2010 and was nominated for Best Jazz Vocal album at the 53rd Annual Grammy Awards; his second album *Be Good*, was released in February of 2012, peaked at #6 on the Billboard Jazz album chart, and has already received much critical acclaim. An artist who Wynton Marsalis has gone on record to call "a fantastic young singer," Porter's successes have only just begun.

Second Place

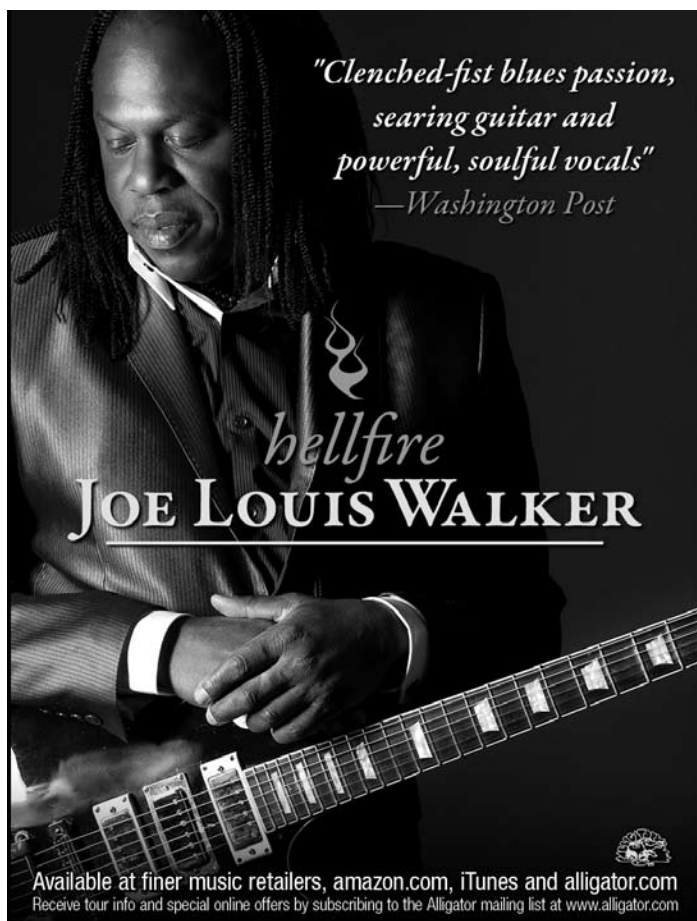
"Lover" - Martina Flaherty - Loughrea, Co Galway, Ireland

Second Place Winner in the Jazz category for the song "Lover" is Martina Flaherty, based in Loughrea, Co Galway, Ireland; in addition to her Second Place win, she has also received an Honorable Mention (also in the Jazz category), and her daughter, Rhianna, received an Honorable Mention in the Teen category. The family's talent is of no surprise to the country of Ireland--as the Flaherty's won TG4's 2011 Feis & Blood television show with the song "The Dream" and were crowned Ireland's most talented family. Martina is also a qualified speech level singing teacher and spends time teaching at St. Mary's College and Brereton Academy of Music in addition to gigging around Galway with various bands.

Third Place

"Deadman's Hill" - Steve Talaga - Grand Rapids, MI, USA

Pianist, composer, and arranger Steve Talaga takes Third Place in the Jazz category for his composition, "Deadman's Hill." West Michigan Jazz Society's 2008 Jazz Musician of the Year, he has independently released seven albums and performed professionally for over 30 years. Talaga is an adjunct professor of music at Hope and Aquinas Colleges in Michigan, teaching jazz, music theory, and composition courses. He has won outstanding soloist awards from the Elmhurst, Aquinas, Ohio State



*"Clenched-fist blues passion,
searing guitar and
powerful, soulful vocals"*
—*Washington Post*

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University, and Notre Dame Jazz Festivals; and awards for jazz composition from the Notre Dame and Montreux-Detroit Jazz Festivals.

In addition to these winners, 12 other deserving Jazz songs garnered an Honorable Mention in the category:

"A Picture Of Dorian Mode" - Michael Longo - New York, NY, USA

"Above Ground" - Greg Ward (Greg Ward's Phonic Juggernaut) - New York, NY, USA

"Conversation With Nellie" - Zoe Rahman - London, England

"Grizzly's" - Regina Litvinova - Ludwigshafen, Germany

"Hadairo (Beige)" - Andy Akiho - Columbia, SC, USA

"Memphis Mix-Up" - Elizabeth Dotson-Westphalen (elizabeth!) - Los Angeles, CA, USA

"Pukl-N-Pappo" - Michael Janisch - London, England

"Save Me" - Stephen Coates, Joe Coles (The Real Tuesday Weld) - London, England

"Shumshi" - Michael Janisch - London, England

"The King Is Dead (Long Live The King)" - Marzio Scholten - Alphen a/d Rijn, The Netherlands

"To Work Marvels" - Vincenzo Amazio (Enzo Amazio) - Pozzuoli, Italy

"You Are Here" - Matt Savage - Francestown, NH, USA

ISC is now accepting entries for 2012. Go to www.songwritingcompetition.com for more information and an entry form.

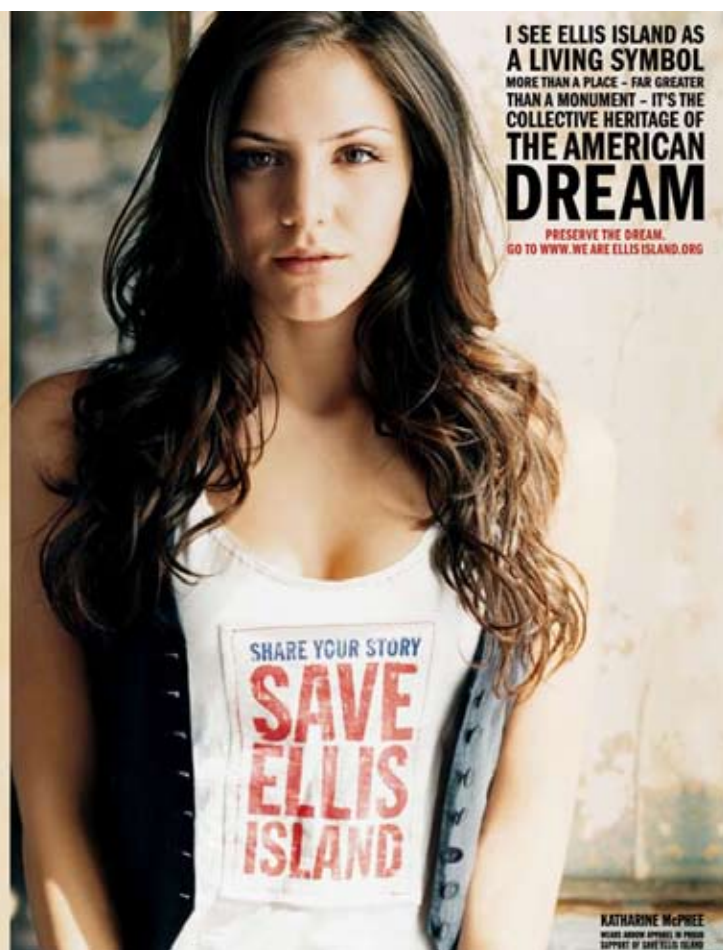


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Why Some People Think Duke Ellington Is a Member of the Royal Family.

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

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



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

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



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.



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SCISSORMEN

Big Shoes: Walking and Talking the Blues VIZZTONE

The duo/band Scissormen is comprised of the vocals and guitars of Ted Drozdowski and the drums of R. L. Hulsman and have been laying down their North Mississippi Hill Country inspired blues for several years, including having made several recordings. Now under the imprint of the VizzTone Label Group, Scissormen have a combined CD/DVD release, "Big Shoes: Walking and Talking the Blues." The CD is a live concert recorded at the Key Palace Theatre in Redkey, Indiana, while the DVD is a Robert Mugge produced film that intersperses the concert performances with a slide guitar workshop at Indianapolis' Slippery Noodle Inn and an appearance at Cleveland, Ohio's Beachland Ballroom.

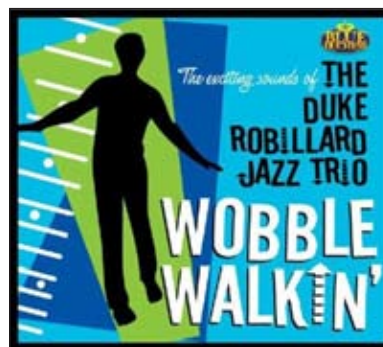
Drozdowski is a music journalist as well as a musician with a defining moment when he became acquainted with some of the musicians of the Hill Country such as R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough and Jessie Mae Hemphill (becoming acquainted with the latter after her stroke curtailed her music making career). The musicians and their songs shaped Drozdowski and his approach, although his playing perhaps rocks a bit wilder than those of his influences. But from them he learned to tell a story through the songs and his playing and he also realizes that he isn't an academic recreating past musical glories, but uses his personalized adaptation of the style of RL Burnside especially to forge his own musical vision, aided by Hulsman's very adept support, at time just pounding the groove and at other times adding a parade type rhythmic counterpoint.

The songs are mostly originals by Drozdowski (and a few with Hulsman) with one direct cover with several benefiting from spoken introductions that help set the mood. If not as compelling a singer as his musical idols, Drozdowski is more than an able one who performs with

style, dynamism and a subtlety that may not always be obvious. The recording opens with the title track where Drozdowski tells about when asked about... his right to play the blues, it's a free country, but he is going to do it his own way to fit his own big shoes. Without going into a track by track listing, I should mention some highpoints which include the brooding slow blues "The Devil Is Laughing," inspired by R.L. Burnside; the rollicking cover of Burnside's "Jumper On The Live"; "Tupelo" which sounds inspired from a brooding John Lee Hooker blues on the flooding of Tupelo, Mississippi that mixes contemplative moments with others marked by hard driving slide as he chants 'didn't it rain, oh lord'; "Jessie Mae" his loving remembrance of Jessie Mae Hemphill; and "Whiskey and Maryjane," which he needs to cure his pain, that is a hard rocking number.

I had the pleasure of seeing Scissormen and the CD captures the energy and passion of their live performances quite adeptly. The DVD is a fascinating mix of concert films that give a sense of their showmanship in addition to musical skill as well as the folks operating the venues they are seen performing at. So we have Drozdowski chatting with the owner of the Key Theater and including a discussion of the replica plantation cabins constructed to house traveling musicians; learning about the Slippery Noodle's history as well as see him walking out to the audience, playing slide with a beer can while laying on a chair and more. There are nuggets that can be drawn out of the interview segments, but the videos of performances are the real treasure of the DVD of Robert Mugge's latest film. Certainly the combination of CD and DVD makes this quite an attractive package of the music of a duo that is doing its best to provide their own interpretation of this aspect of the blues tradition. Scissormen certainly fit their own "Big Shoes" on this dynamic recording and video.

Ron Weinstock



THE DUKE ROBILLARD JAZZ TRIO

Wobble Walkin' BLUE DUCHESS RECORDS

Blues guitar master Robillard's latest foray into jazz exudes the comfy, congenial vibes of a classic after-hours jam session.

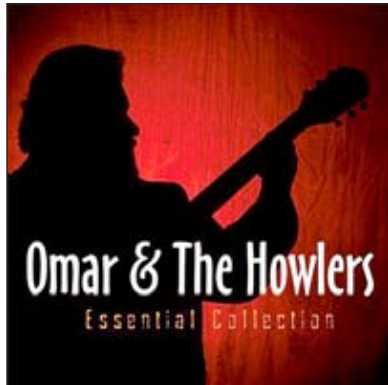
Dropping a few originals in amongst a set list of old school standards, Robillard and his regular band rhythm partners- bassist Brad Hallen and drummer Mark Texiera- maintain a steady simmer, each of the leader's solos a

display of inventive underplay.

The hardest swinging shows up midway on "All Of Me", followed by an all-too-short guitar chorus on "Things Ain't What They Used To Be".

Vocalist Mickey Freeman guests nicely on "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You" and Robillard is unsurprisingly at home on "High Heel Sneakers". Tasty stuff.

Duane Verh



OMAR AND THE HOWLERS

Essential Collection

RUF

Ruf Records has just issued a double CD set by Omar and the Howlers, "Essential Disc." This is a career and label spanning compilation that covers the two or so decades of the recording career of Omar Dykes. Ruf compiled the first of the two discs while Omar himself selected the second disc, producing over two hours of some choice music. He also proves some commentary on the songs he selected.

It has been easy to take Omar and the Howlers for granted, but as is evident from the opening moments of "Magic Man, with its Bo Diddley groove, and dedicated to Omar's fellow McComb, Mississippi native, through the acoustic rendering of "Built For Comfort" with Magic Slim that closes the second disc, one is impressed by Omar's presence as a vocalist as well as his gritty blues guitar playing. His hoarse, husky vocals might be likened to that of Howlin' Wolf, although he is not one to try to imitate Wolf, while his mix of string bending, single note runs and hard chords consistently stand out. It's also nice how he and the band can lay down a hot, rocking groove but not try to overwhelm us. Omar recognizes and makes use of the space between the notes played, letting the silence speak at times.

Certainly there is a rock flavor on much of this, such as the kick-ass shuffles like "Border Girl," but his rocking songs have his feet still planted in the blues. "Hard Times in the Land of Plenty" is a driving rocker with his message about some doing real well while others are in the welfare line. The consistency over the thirty performances stand out, as these recordings include some from his outstanding collaboration with Jimmy Vaughan, "Jimmy Reed Highway," or his relaxed, expressive delivery of Oscar Brown's lyric's to Nat Adderley's "Work Song" with David 'Fathead'

Newman on saxophone. The latter number not only had him with one of his musical heroes but displayed his musical range as the tenor of his vocal is much different than Omar's outrageous reworking of the Leiber-Stoller "Alligator Wine," which is a fine cover from the Screaming Jay Hawkins school book with some nice guitar as well along with some controlled frenzy. Then there is another rocker with the driving Bo Diddley beat, "Do It For Daddy."

I have not listened to the entire body of recordings by Omar and the Howlers, and there may be some lesser songs he has recorded over the years. However, nothing on "Essential Collection" is less than first-rate making for an exceptional career retrospective and harbinger hopefully of much more of the same in the future.

Ron Weinstock



ODEAN POPE

Universal Sounds

PORTER RECORDS

Saxophonist Odean Pope may be best known for his tenure with the late Max Roach, but was also part of the legendary cooperative group Catalyst and also the Saxophone Choir. The Philadelphia based tenor saxophonist is joined on his newest recording "Universal Sounds" (Porter Records) with Marshall Allen, one of the principal saxophonists with the late Sun Ra, on alto sax and electronic wind instruments, bassist Lee Smith and three drummers, Warren Smith, Craig McIver and Jim Hamilton creating an unusual setting for the performances here.

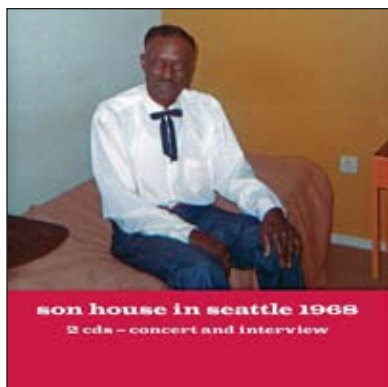
Listening to this CD, a number of reference points strike me. "Custody of American Spirit" opens with Pope's strong tenor contrasted with Allen's electronic wind instrument followed by the Warren Smith's use of percussion and what sounds like Indian chants and whoops backed by Lee Smith's arco playing followed by Warren Smith's timpani and the other drummers creating a wall of percussion as Pope and Allen, both on saxophones state the theme. Pope and Allen state the theme of "Mwalimu" with its African flavor followed by Lee Smith's dueting with one (or more) of the drummers. "The Binder" conjures up some of the more intense free jazz of the sixties and seventies, which evokes some of the recordings by Pharoah Sanders, Coltrane (particularly the latter recordings with Rashied Ali, including those which included Sanders and/or

Donald Garrett). Allen follows with a furious solo with a fair amount of overblowing, screeches and honks set against the furious cacophony of the percussionists.

"She Smiled Again" is a more pensive composition with Pope's ballad playing employing a slightly harsh vibrato with Lee Smith anchoring the performance while the drummers add their own accents here. Bassist Smith contributed the lively "Go Figure," which is a lengthy bass feature with the drummers adding their comments. "The Track" by Allen has him on the electronic wind instrument contributing various electronic effects and sounds and engaging in a musical colloquy with Warren Smith on marimba and timpani. Allen's playing was interesting and indicated possibility of electronics in the mix of usual wind instrument musical ideas with sounds one might associate more with, say, keyboard synthesizers. "Blues" opens with some driving percussion before the saxophones state the simple blues riff at the performance's heart leading to fresh and robust blues playing by Pope (once again Lee Smith's bass playing merits kudos) with some intense, fresh passages. A longer rendition of "Custody of the American (Bullshit Version)" concludes with Warren Smith's wordless chanting supplemented by soft shouts of 'Bullshit,' with more furious percussion by the trio of drummers.

There is powerful music here and when one considers that Pope is 72, Warren Smith is 76 and Marshall Allen is 86, one has to be astonished by the energy they impart into these performances. Obviously if one is not a fan of free jazz, this will not appeal to that individual. However, there is more on "Universal Sounds" than what might strike some as the frenzied cacophony during "The Binder." Most of the performances are more structured and providing for some fascinating, and thoughtful musical conversations. While again, this won't be for everyone's tastes, this is a most potent session.

Ron Weinstock



SON HOUSE
Son House in Seattle 1968
ARCOLA RECORDS

The word 'great' is overused, but few would disagree that it is properly applied to the Delta Blues of Eddie "Son" House. House was one of the most riveting blues performers that ever recorded and performed. Dick

Waterman, who used to book and manage House after he was discovered in Rochester NY has stated, "Son House was the core of greatness of blues artists. There were many who had great talent but Son House was the standard by which they would be measured." Those words can be found in the booklet to a new release, "Son House in Seattle 1968" (Arcola Records).

This is a double CD that is subtitled "2 cds - concert and interview." The first CD is Son in concert in March, 1968 when he appeared under the auspices of the Seattle Folklore Society, while the second disc is taken from a radio interview that Bob West conducted with him interspersed with original recordings by Son along with associates like Louise Johnson, Charlie Patton, Willie Brown, Rube Lacy and Robert Johnson.

In the accompanying booklet Bob Groom observes, about the concert performance, that it was unusual in the amount of speaking and story telling House engages in between the performances of "Death Letter Blues," "Government Fleet Blues," "Empire State," "I Want to Live So God Can Use Me," "Preachin' Blues," and "Louise McGee." No blues performer was more compelling than Son and he was in top form this day. From his forceful guitar to his vocals that bore open his soul, there are some extraordinary performances including "Death Letter" and the a capella "I Want to Live So God Can Use Me." The lengthy spoken interludes are invaluable in giving a fuller sense of him than the driving musical performances alone. This concert predates Son suffering frostbite in the winter of 1969 that affected his use of fingers in his fretting hand.

The second disc is valuable for his lengthy recollections of his blues contemporaries. Included is a wonderful booklet with Dick Waterman's cogent recollections of Son and Bob Groom's lengthy overview of Son's life and music.

While "Father of Folk Blues" on Columbia (now Sony) remains the essential 1960s Son House release, fans of the deepest Delta blues will obviously want this. Son's musical fires were burning brightly in Seattle during this 1968 visit and we should be grateful that Arcola has issued this wonderful package. Arcola's website is www.arcolarecords.com, and www.bluebeatmusic.com and other retailers should have this as well.

Ron Weinstock

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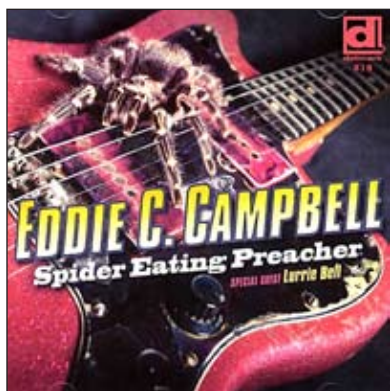
AMANDA RUZZA
This Is What Happened
 WWW.AMANDARUZZA.COM

Amanda Ruzza is possessed of all the pop, slap and chops to pass muster as a fusion bassist. And also evident on her debut disc is the NYC-based prodigy's knack for crafty "heads" and for breezy grooves true to her South American roots. The result is a set both cerebral and swinging.

These dual goals are well served, solo-wise, by Ruzza's side players, particularly pianists Mamiko Watanabe and Cliff Korman (Rhodes and acoustic, respectively) and saxophonists David Binney and Lucas Pino. Korman delivers a chorus of particularly smart swing on Ruzza's "Pimenta no Choro", Watanabe dazzles at every opportunity.

The leader's own solo work tends to emphasize fluidity over funk, favoring her mid-to-uppermost registers. *This Is What Happened* is one formidable first effort.

Duane Verh



EDDIE C. CAMPBELL
Spider Eating Preacher
 DELMARK

Eddie C. Campbell is among the last of the West Side Chicago bluesmen still standing. A disciple and colleague of Magic Sam, he still lays down similar reverb soaked guitar runs and riffs while singing his soulfully delivered laments. Not as direct or extroverted a player as Magic Sam, Otis Rush and others, his laconic style with a restrained attack has its own charms.

Delmark has just issued his latest recording "Spider Eating Preacher" that displays his distinctive blues style. He is joined by Daryl Coutts on keyboards; Vuy-

ani Wakaba and his wife Barbara Mayson share bass duties; and Robert Pasenko on drums. Lurrie Bell is on three selections and a full horn section is on four. The release is mostly comprised of Campbell's quirky originals although there are three covers, which thankfully are not overly familiar blues warhorses.

Things get off to a good start with "I Do," which displays one consistent strength of his wonderfully paced style with an understated vocal, and horns that go beyond simple riffing that helps frame Campbell's reverb-laced guitar standout. He never comes across as hurried and this is further illustrated on the title track as he sings about the devil awaiting under his rocking chair, but when one is in the darkness, one will see the light. Lurrie Bell makes one of his guest appearances on guitar on "Call My Mama" on which Campbell plays harmonica while the band grooves on the "Smokestack Lightning" melody, with Coutts being particularly outstanding on piano here.

An understated reworking of Ricky Allen's "Cut You A-Loose" is followed by "Soup Bone (Reheated)" which revives and rearranges one of his early 45s as he sings about having a soup bone but is hungry and will be putting the soup bone down and try some collard greens. The lazy shuffle lament, "I Don't Understand This Woman," is followed by the jaunty "Boomerang" with the hook line, "Sling me like a boomerang, I'll come right back to you," with some nice greasy organ from Coutts followed first a searing guitar solo by Alexander Mejia before Campbell himself takes a measured solo.

There is a solid remake of the Ohio Players' funky "Skintight" as well as the superb, down-in-the-alley slow blues "All My Life" originally done by the late Jimmy Lee Robinson. Set to a Bo Diddley groove, "My Friend (For Jim O'Neal)" is a tribute to former Living Blues editor Jim O'Neal who helped step up and gave Eddie breaks and publicity decades ago. "Brownout" is an instrumental set to a funk groove with surprising twists in how Campbell constructs his solo.

The recording closes with Eddie on acoustic guitar and Lurrie on harmonica as having some fun, "Playing Around These Blues." It's a relaxed, enjoyable conclusion to Eddie C. Campbell's latest album.

One would be hard-pressed to name a poor recording by him and while it may not be his best ("King of the Jungle" that Jim O'Neal reissued on Rooster Blues is worth looking for), it will be welcomed by his existing fans and hopefully we get many more new ones.

Ron Weinstock

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ROY HAYNES

**Roy-Alty
DREYFUS**

Six decades plus of music making has not slowed down the ever youthful and hip Roy Haynes. This writer has the pleasure of seeing him with his Fountain of Youth Band recently at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and he displayed vigor and enthusiasm that folks 60 years younger would have difficulty matching. It was a terrific evening of jazz by a true Jazz Master and is also evident on his latest Dreyfus Jazz release "Roy-Alty," which includes several numbers they performed that night.



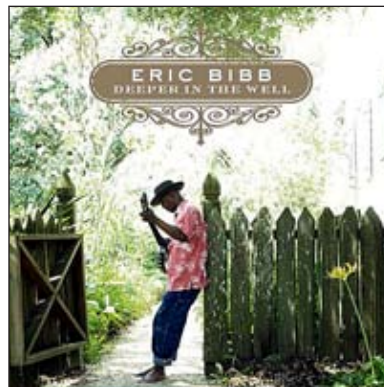
The core of this recording features Roy with the Fountain of Youth Band that includes Jaleel Shaw on alto saxophone, Martin Bejerano on piano and David Wong on bass. Roy Hargrove is added on six of the ten selections while two selections are duets with Chick Corea. On "Tin Tin Deo" Roberto Quintero is added on congas while on the last track, "Passion Dance," pianist Robert Rodriguez replaces Bejarano while Craig Haynes is added on congas and Marcus Strickland is on tenor saxophone.

From the opening moments of Sonny Rollins' "Grand Street," with a superbly constructed Hargrove solo followed by marvelous playing from Shaw, to the rousing rendition of McCoy Tyner's "Passion Dance," Haynes drives the music, adding embellishments with his snap crackle cymbal work and snare rolls, all the while swinging. On this very marvelous recording, a few tracks still manage to stand out including Hargrove's marvelous ballad playing on "These Foolish Things," the sensational Corea-Haynes duet on Thelonious Monk's "Off Minor," the classic bop flavor of Miles Davis' "Milestones" and the Latin jazz classic from Chano

Pozo and Gil Fuller, "Tin Tin Deo" which opens with Roy speaking the praises of the great percussionist.

The Fountain of Youth Band is strong throughout (I really enjoyed Shaw's alto and downloaded on iTunes his recordings after seeing him with Roy) and with a nice mix of material, the terrific recording certainly showcases the eternal youthfulness and hipness of Roy Haynes.

Ron Weinstock



ERIC BIBB

**Deeper In The Well
STONY PLAIN**

Eric Bibb, like Taj Mahal, consistently finds the sweet spot at the intersection of folk, blues and traditional string music.

Whether he's playing solo, or in a group format with the likes of Rory Block and Maria Muldaur as he did in 2004 on *Sisters and Brothers*, Bibb brings a storyteller's ear to the lyrics and a museum keeper's sense of preservation to the music. On this set he travelled into rural Pont Breau, Louisiana, far from the horns, funk and second line groove of New Orleans and added a number of local musicians including Cedric Watson on fiddles and Christine Balfa on Cajun triangle to the mix.

The result is a terrific release that uses the textures of banjos, fiddles, mandolins, accordions and harmonica to add a dimension to the tunes that separate them from the typical acoustic blues set. As an instrumental disc this release would be a fun listen but adding Bibb's lyrics and vocals to the mix makes sure the hooks stick. *Bayou Belle* has a tough, insistent riff that reinforces the all night carnal pleasure that Bibb reveals in the final verse.

On *Could Be You, Could Be Me* he appeals for assistance to the homeless and on the more traditional blues of *Money In Your Pocket* he points out the need to be thankful for your own blessings. The title track has a jug band feel that reinforces the call for perseverance, something the dreaded *Boll Weevil* had in abundance which comes through in the insistent harmonica of that track. On the dark, sinewy *Sinner Man* the narrator isn't running from a hellhound but instead is looking for cover from the wrath of the almighty, a far more worthy adversary. On *Movin' Up* he makes the case for a big, inclusive economic tent where everyone helps

each other rather than just protecting what they have. Elsewhere, Bibb explores living both the high life and the bottom of the social and economic ladder, *In My Time*, cautions against the downward spiral of addiction, *No Further*, and not unsurprisingly rails against those who insist on music hewing to specific labels and styles, *Music*. Add a couple of covers by Taj Mahal, *Every Wind In the River*, and Bob Dylan, *The Times They Are a Changin'* and you've got a disc that is a pleasure from beginning to end. **Mark Smith**



FREDDIE HUBBARD

First Light
SONY MASTERWORKS

As part of its celebration of the 40th Anniversary of CTI Records, Sony has through the CTI Masterworks imprint reissued Freddie Hubbard's *First Light*. *First Light* was a Grammy Award winning recording, and had Hubbard with a band that included drummer Jack DeJohnette, bassist Ron Carter, guitarist George Benson, pianist (acoustic and electric) Ricard Wyands, percussionist Airtio Moreira along with a large orchestral horn and string section that included flautist Hubert Laws.

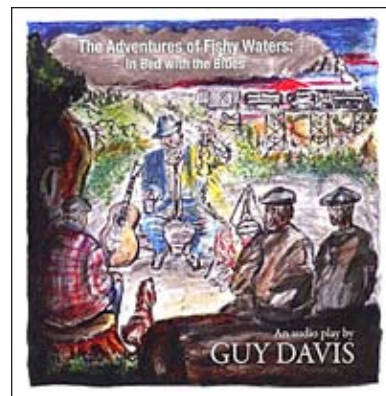
The title track certain is one of the high points here as it has some sparkling trumpet by the leader as well as some sizzling fretwork from Benson and flute from Laws with the orchestrated setting sweetening the sound to some extent in framing Hubbard's playing with the music fading at the end. Following is a melodically rooted interpretation of Paul and Linda McCartney's *Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey*. The arrangements are uncredited although likely are by Don Sebesky as this performance suggests similar pop-jazz recordings by Wes Montgomery. Guitarist Benson adds some interesting guitar set against Wyands electric piano.

There is a lovely rendition of the Mancini/Mercer standard *Moment To Moment*, followed by very appealing muted playing on a Don Sebesky/ Norman Martin plaintive ballad *Yesterday's Dreams*. The initial release concluded with some atmospheric playing on *Lonely Town* from the musical *On the Town*. On this reissue there are a couple of bonus selections that were not on the original recording. Cedar Walton's *Fantasy in D* (Polar AC) from the same sessions that produced this album with Hubbard and the rhythm section exhibiting a bit more fervor and rhythmic pulse with Laws taking a flighty solo before Hubbard takes this out soaring with

some more fire in his playing.

This particular reissue of *First Light* concludes with a lengthy live performance of the title track from Detroit in 1973 with Eric Gales on guitar, DeJohnette, Carter and an uncredited electronic keyboard player (Wyands?) on an extended performance that provides a fuller display of Hubbard's dazzling brilliance and range. Gales takes a solo that exhibits his blues-inflected playing and DeJohnette takes a brief solo before Hubbard leads everyone out.

There is plenty of Freddie Hubbard's often dazzling trumpet to be heard here, although there are some listeners that may not be fans of the orchestrated settings for his performances. **Ron Weinstock**



GUY DAVIS

**The Adventures of Fishy Waters:
In Bed With the Blues**
SMOKEYDOKE RECORDS

Guy Davis has over the past couple decades established himself as among the finest acoustic blues entertainers. Child of the celebrated couple, Ruby Dee and Ozzie Davis, acting and music might have been in his genes. In any case, his voyage to the blues started from the stage, and he was an understudy to the theatrical production "*Mulebone*" that was inspired by the folklorist and author Zora Hurston. One of his understudy roles was to bluesman Kenny Neal, and after his time with this production he created a one-man show "*The Adventures of Fishy Waters: In Bed With the Blues*." While the initial run lasted one week, it is a show that Davis has performed when he has an opportunity.

Davis has issued a memorialization of "*The Adventures of Fishy Waters: In Bed With the Blues*" on his Smokeydope Records with assistance from Bob Porter, which enables those who haven't had the pleasure of seeing Davis perform this show to enjoy it. The music and stories are about 91 minutes and therefore spread over two CDs.

The mix of performances and story-telling is quite engaging as it displays the warmth and humor that Davis brings to his performances. He mixes in a few interpretations of classic blues from Rev. Gary Davis, Blind Willie McTell, Robert Johnson and Big Big Broonzy with idiomatic originals that indeed have a

strong rhythmic impetus.

One might compare Davis to the late Brownie McGhee or John Cephas as an agile, adept and fluid picker who also conveyed considerable feeling in his singing. To these splendid musical performances, Davis also tells stories that are amusing about hobos, and catfish stew and at other times chilling as when he talks about the lynching. The result is an interesting, provocative and marvelous recording. **Ron Weinstock**



JOEL FRAHM QUARTET

Live At Small's
SMALLSLIVE

Small's Live, the label associated with the Greenwich Village Jazz venue Small's, has issued several new CDs, one of which is Joel Frahm Quartet's "Live at Smalls." Tenor saxophonist Frahm is joined by guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel, bassist Joe Martin and drummer Otis Brown III (although the cover lists him as playing piano, he is pictured behind his drum set).

Recorded the weekend of February 28 and March 1, 2011, the album consists of five Frahm originals and interpretations of Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge" and Charlie Parker's "Steeplechase." I have been impressed by what I have heard by him in the past and was not surprised by the blues-drenched opener "Short Rack" that is in the spirit of some of the great instrumentals by the likes of Hal 'Cornbread' Singer and King Curtis with Rosenwinkel taking a nice solo foil for Frahm's strong blues tenor.

It was some varied music at Smalls that weekend with interesting compositions such as "A Little Extra" with an unusual time signature followed by the groove inflected "What's You Beat?" that includes some surprising twists and turns as the performance unfolds with Rosenwinkel's guitar being outstanding. "Chelsea Bridge" features some lovely playing from Frahm and the closing rendition of "Steeplechase" gives it a imaginative arrangement with Rosenwinkel opening up with an discursive solo followed by the leader's spirited exploration of the theme.

As typical with Smalls Live recordings, the sound is quite good and enhanced by the simple presentation with the black and white photography of Michelle Watt, who also designed the cover in the attractive format of recordings on the label. This is another excellent

album of contemporary jazz performances. Like other recordings in this series, it likely will have some look forward to visiting Small's when in New York City.

Ron Weinstock



BIG JAMES AND THE CHICAGO PLAYBOYS

The Big Payback
BLIND PIG

Recorded live at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Club in Paris, this release finds Big James and crew mining the funky blues territory occupied by the likes of Tower of Power, early Chicago and James Brown.

The disc starts on a solid note with the massive grooves of *The Blues Will Never Die* which features plenty of smoky trombone and hard hitting guitar and keys. The James Brown penned title cut was likely better live on the dance floor than on disc where its repeated funk riff overstays its welcome with a five minute plus running time. The self-penned *Coldest Man I Ever Knew* quickly redeems things with its dueling horns and stinging guitar leads. A pair of Magic Sam tunes, *All Your Love* and *That's Why I'm Crying* and the original, *Low Down Dirty Blues*, feature not only Big James' earnest vocals but take the band firmly back to its Chicago roots with their solid groove and adept use of dynamics. George Clinton's *I'll Stay* throws a change up into the mix with its unhurried pace and extended soloing by guitarist Mike "Money" Wheeler.

The band also dips into soul 70's era soul with the tale of a double dealer who uses your stuff and takes your lady, *Jody's Got Your Girl and Gone*. Bob Seger fans will immediately recognize the band's smoking version of the Eugene William's penned *Trying to Live My Life Without You* that Seger has often featured in his live shows. Seventies era rockers also get a nod on the band's instrumental version of the Deep Purple classic, *Smoke on the Water*. Overall, a fun listen for those times where you need some horn driven funky blues.

Mark Smith

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BILLY HART
All Our Reasons
 ECM RECORDS

Billy Hart doesn't take the egalitarian path of some drummer/leaders.

On *All Our Reasons*, the masterful Miles Davis and Charles Lloyd sideman leads from the rear rather than assume a spot on the front line, leaving most of the primary statements to tenor saxophonist Mark Turner and pianist Ethan Iverson. And both of these unique, resourceful players thrive on the vast space provided within the contemplative, free-form ballad environment frequently visited during this set: the leadoff track, Hart's "Song For Balkis", Iverson's "Ohnedaruth" and "Nostalgia For The Impossible" and Turner's "Wasteland".

The leader does step up and out on the urgent "Tolli's Dance" and takes his largest feature space six tracks in, on "Duchess". Bassist Ben Street's thoughtful, sparing presence is the ideal completion of this most inventive quartet.

Duane Verh



GENE TAYLOR
Let Me Ride In Your Automobile
 EL TORO

Pianist/vocalist Gene Taylor may be best known for his stint in The fabulous Thunderbirds, but prior to that he was an important component of the legendary roots rock band, The Blasters. Before that he had a stint with James Harman and according to Wikipedia he is currently living in Belgium. That perhaps might explain why the Spanish El Toro label has just issued his new recording "Let Me Ride In Your Automobile" backed by the Dutch band, CC

Jerome's Jet Setters with Nick Curran make a couple guest appearances.

The recording opens with some rollicking piano on "Evangeline Stomp" with some ripping tenor sax from Martijn Van Toor and rocking guitar riffs with Taylor's overdubbed organ adding to the full sound. He follows with some terrific Pete Johnson styled boogie woogie piano and a solid vocal on "Rockin' Little Honey," with crisp rocking guitar added for a tough performance." Just a "Midnight Girl" is a mid-tempo number with a rumba groove (like some of Tampa Red's latter recordings) and a nice brief harp solo followed by "The Golden Rule," a rocker with Nick Curran's stinging guitar which has a pointed lyric stating that he with all the gold makes the rules followed by a strong jump blues rendition of the classic hillbilly boogie, Moon Mullican's "Seven Nights To Rock," with a strong guitar solo from Jeroen Van Gasteren before Taylor's fluid boogie playing.

"Never Took the Time" is a driving performance with a lyric about a faltering relationship with strong solos and ensemble playing, whereas "The Blues For Me" has a low-key, rustic feel in comparison with his lament about aspects of modern life. "The Walkout" has a bit of rockabilly flavor with an insistent beat and is followed by three covers. First up is Big Walter Price's "Shirley Jean," which is a nice swamp pop performance. It is followed by a lively version of Johnny "Guitar" Watson's "Motorhead Baby," greatly accelerating the tempo from Watson's



original into a rocking jump blues with plenty of boogie woogie blues. “Let Me Ride In Your Automobile,” which dates back to at least 1940 and Big Bill Broonzy. Taylor’s performance derives from Lowell Fulson’s recording, and Fulson receives the composer credit, and has a fine vocal that effectively highlights the wit of the double-entendre lyrics. “Flying With Whitey” is an instrumental that closes this recording on a hot jitterbugging note.

Taylor’s originals are solid and idiomatic, his vocals are unforced and the Jet Setters know the difference between rock and roll and hard rock. I have enjoyed Taylor’s work when I have seen him play, so I am not surprised he has put out such a strong blues and roots rock album. I bought it from bluebeatmusic.com, although it is available from amazon and cdbaby, so it should be relatively easy to find.

Ron Weinstock



ANGELO DEBARRE AND LUDOVIC BEIER

Swing Rencontre LE CHANT DU MONDE

I was introduced to the jazz accordionist (and accordina player) Ludovic Beier when he performed at the Kennedy Center as part of the Django Reinhardt Festival All Stars with Dorado Schmitt and others. This concert of “Gypsy Jazz” preceded the actual Festival run at New York’s Birdland and was among the best musical performances I have been fortunate enough to see in some time. The mix of their astonishing virtuosity, wonderful group interplay and melodically based improvisation was exhilarating to listen to.

Subsequent to the concert I purchased several recordings by participants and others in this musical tradition that takes its inspiration from the legendary Django Reinhardt and the Quintette du Hot Club de France. One such album was by guitarist Angelo Debarre and Beier, “Swing Rencontre” on Le Chant Du Monde. DeBarre is one of the leading guitarists in this style today and these recordings (originally recorded in 2001) have the two backed by rhythm guitarist Michel Delacroix and bassist Antonio Licusati. A drummer is added on two selections, and on one number Jean-Paul Jamot replaces Licusati.

This recording is comprised of interpretations of a few standards, several classic Django Reinhardt compositions, and some recent contributions from Debarre, Beier and Dorado Schmitt. Beier, on accordion, plays

a musical counterpoint to Debarre’s guitar, similar to Stéphane Grappelli’s violin to Reinhardt. The accordion has had a prominent place in the French musette tradition as well as in gypsy jazz and Beier brings a rich approach to complement Debarre’s dazzling fretwork, while Delacroix and Licusati lay a swinging backing.

After playing a couple bars of “There Will Never Be Another You” at a dreamy tempo, Debarre kicks up the tempo a couple of notches as he states the theme and launches his improvisation followed by an equally dazzling accordion solo. The dazzling, and crisp technique is matched with marvelous melodic improvisation and it’s a delight to hear them trade fours. Though instrumental, the music they produce sings and soars. Several of the selections are amongst the most famous of Reinhardt’s repertoire including “Swing 42,” “Dinette,” “Minor Swing” and the lovely “Nuages.”

“Minor Swing,” originally from Reinhardt and Grappelli, is a high-spirited romp and they certainly do justice to it. Most of the arrangements were contributed by the pair, but bassist Licusati provides the dramatic overtones to the rendition of “El Maintenant,” which is known in English speaking parts of the world as “What Now, My Love.” Beier penned “Paris Plage,” a lively duo with Debarre that opens with driving accordion and Debarre comping behind him before the two switch roles with Beier providing an organ-like texture under the guitar. Debarre’s “Have You Something?” is a lovely ballad, and Beier and bassist Jean-Paul Jamot contributed the lively original “Michel Got rhythm,” dedicated to rhythm guitarist Delacroix.

This is a recording that should be readily accessible with its strong melodic foundation, swing rhythms and driving inspired improvisations. The music on “Swing Rencontre” is exciting and brilliant.

Ron Weinstock



TAIL DRAGGER & BOB CORRITORE

Longtime Friends In the Blues DELTA GROOVE

Chicago blues performer Tail Dragger has a new release in collaboration with Bob Corritore on Delta Groove, “Longtime Friends In The Blues.” Tail Dragger has built a career on his Howlin’ Wolf inspired style while Corritore is not only a fine harmonica player, but also a terrific producer of classic Chicago styled blues recordings. Corritore and Tail Dragger met the day after

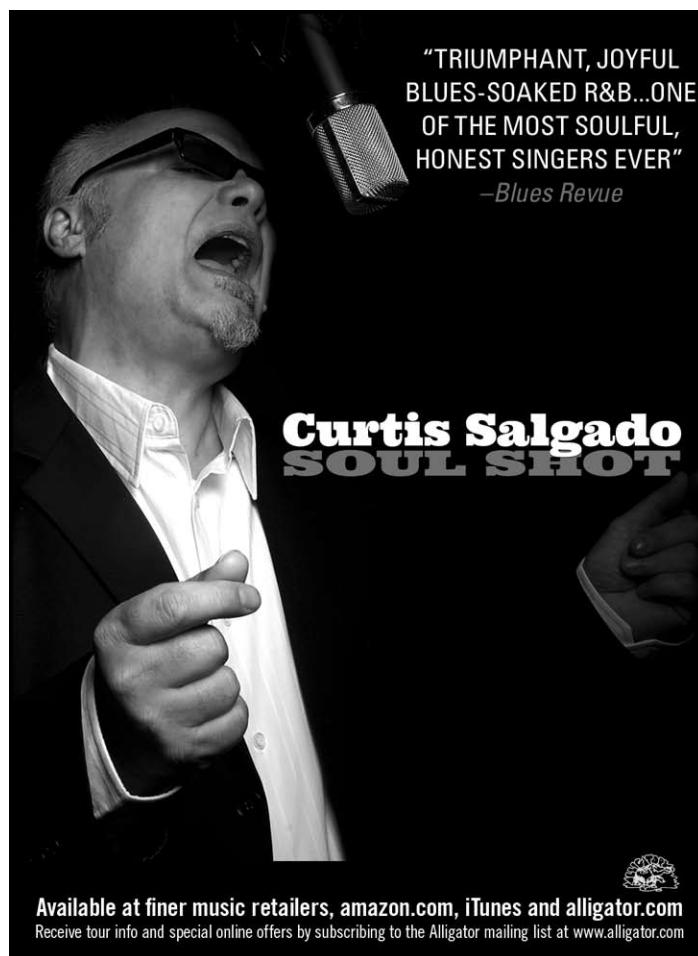
Wolf passed in 1976 at a tribute to Wolf and became friends, hence the album title. Corritore has assembled a terrific band here that includes former Howlin' Wolf pianist Henry Gray; guitarists Kirk Fletcher and Chris James with Patrick Rynn on bass and Brian Fahey to help evoke the spirit of the great Wolf.

Tail Dragger certainly does a credible job in suggesting the music of the legendary Wolf and the solid band provides performances firmly rooted in Wolf's style. The sound of Wolf is evoked from the opening moments of "I'm Worried" and "Sugar Mama" (the latter includes Gray sharing the vocal) through the relentless "Through With You, the driving shuffle of "Done Got Old," the rollicking "Boogie Woogie Ball" that spotlight's Gray two-fisted piano, and the closing "Please Mr. Jailer," where Tail Dragger pleads to the judge let his woman go free when she is accused of murder but she wouldn't hurt a flea.

Tail Dragger is not quite as powerful a singer as Wolf was, and his diction is a bit slurred, but like his prior recordings on Delmark, he has provided us with solid and idiomatic recordings backed by a thoroughly idiomatic and sympathetic backing band. There are some Wolf classics and originals here that are nicely performed.

This certainly will appeal to fans of Tail Dragger and more traditionally oriented Chicago blues.

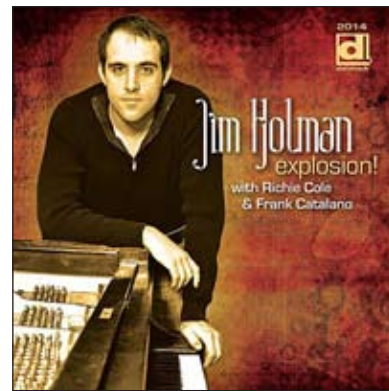
Ron Weinstock



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JIM HOLMAN Explosion! DELMARK

Jim Holman is an emerging pianist in Chicago's vibrant jazz scene and Delmark has just issued his debut recording, *Explosion!* His father is a jazz pianist but it was Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock, as well as Bud Powell, Horace Silver and Bill Evans that left a deep impression on him growing up. After studying at the University of Pittsburgh, he returned to Chicago where, with the recommendation of Ira Sullivan, he made this debut recording. It is comprised of two quartet sessions, one resulting in six tracks with tenor saxophonist Frank Catalano and the other four tracks with alto saxophonist Richie Cole. Each of the two sessions had a pair of piano trio selections.

Brian Sandstrom on bass and drummer Rusty Jones are heard on the first six selections which opens with the appropriately titled "Explosion," by Catalano, with the composer's fiery tenor sax taking the lead with some intense playing on this feverish tempo-ed number with Holman's piano handling the tempo as well as displaying some nice dynamics. Cataldo sits out the trio's rendition of Joe Henderson's "Recorda Me," with some nice playing, but one wishes the drummer was either a slight bit more restrained or was a bit down in the mix on this selection. Cataldo returns and lends a bluesy flavor to "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," which is followed by the trio on a marvelous rendition of John Coltrane's "Lazy Bird," with Holman's solo sparkling with his fluid playing and touch. On "Bye Bye Blackbird," Cataldo opens with some honking sax flavor before providing an extroverted statement of the theme which leads into a lengthy, thoughtful melodic solo from Holman into which short drum breaks from Jones are interspersed before Catalano returns and gets really gritty while Holman adds accents with nicely selected chords.

At an earlier session, Richie Cole joined Holman (with Rick Shandling taking over the drum chair) for a solid rendition of Thelonious Monk's "Straight No Chaser," with the rhythm laying down a nice Latin-tinged groove with Cole delighting with some quotes mixed in on his solo. Its followed by a lively version of Coltrane's "Moment's Notice," as Holman's display of his ability to use space as well as his considerable

technique here also has the bonus of Cole's strong playing.

The trio is heard on the only Holman original, "Bill." This performance, inspired by Bill Evans, has a flamenco tinge. Another trio performance, Herbie Hancock's "Cantaloupe Island," closes this CD. "Explosion"! is a solid debut for Jim Holman and suggests that he is a voice we will be hearing more from.

Ron Weinstock



LITTLE G. WEEVIL

The Teaser
APIC RECORDS

Little G. Weevil is a guitarist and storyteller. This 12 cut disc features ample doses of both. Turning his attention to everything from the indignity of working around the clock for a lousy wage, 8.47, to the satisfaction of a good drink, *Liquor Store*, Weevil follows the long tradition of the blues and turns tales that most of us have lived into some pretty compelling songs.

Apple Picker is a Muddy Waters style boast regarding his way with the ladies and features Weevil's adept guitar riffing over a slow shuffle laid down by the band. On *She Used to Call Me Sugar* he crafts a tale of love that has found its way into the rearview mirror, a point made all the more clear by the rib stabs he lays down with his guitar.

As bad as losing a lover can be, Weevil finds the real blues when his ex moves in with his parents on *Losing Cool*. *Big City Life* finds him suffocating in the hustle and bustle of daily city life so he uses his guitar to blast free with some energetic riffing.

Fueled by boogie guitar grooves and harmonica, compliments of Maurice Nazzaro, on *Highway 78* he exults in the freedom of the road as he travels between Birmingham and Memphis. On *Back Porch* he lays his electric aside in favor of a 1940 Kay Archtop and laments blasting free with a bit too much gusto at the club the night before.

Real Men Don't Dance is an energetic number with lots of harmonica and boogie piano driving the tale of nature's mating ritual.

While this disc travels a well trod road, Little G. Weevil is a fine companion on the trip with stories that make the time fly by.

Mark Smith



THE COOKERS

Cast The First Stone
PLUS LOIN

Taking their name from a series of classic Blue Note live recordings, The Cookers is an ensemble built upon some of the strongest jazz musicians of the past half-century or so. With the tenor saxophone of Billy Harper and trumpet of Eddie Henderson they are supported by a rhythm section of pianist George Cables, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Billy Hart. These five have graced clubs, stages and recording studios with the likes of Dexter Gordon, Max Roach, Lee Morgan, Herbie Hancock, Art Blakey and countless others, with each also establishing a formidable legacy of their own.

More recently they have been joined by younger players in their tradition: trumpeter Dan Weiss and alto saxophonist Craig Handy. Weiss in fact has become the band's straw boss and produced the group's latest disc, "Cast the First Stone" (Plus Loin Music). Saxophonist Azar Lawrence guests on several tracks on this. The compositions are originals from Harper, McBee and Cables with one exception.

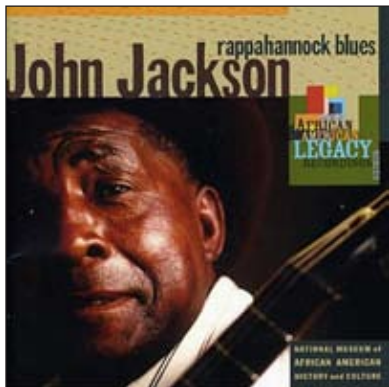
The title track is a Harper original built around a punchy four note figure that sports tempo changes in its melody and displays the band's fiery approach that may suggest some of the recordings by Woody Shaw and others from the seventies and eighties, with the energetic ensembles and surging solos from Harper, Weiss and Cables. The latter mixes in a more melodic segment as McBee buzzes around him and Hart mixes in adept use of accents on his cymbals, before Harper takes the lead with some fiery playing. The nature of the composition gives the performance a rougher feel. McBee's "Peacemaker" has a lighter, more supple tone with Henderson taking the initial solo employing a mute. He is followed by a lengthy solo from Craig Handy and then McBee, as Cables and Hart softly play under him.

Cables' "Looking For Light" has an elegance to it. Guest Azar Lawrence adds some alluring soprano, soloing along with Henderson (again using a mute) and Cables reinforcing the spirit of the performance. Harper's "The Seventh Day" has a more forceful cast, followed by the uplifting "Croquet Ballet." Harper, Weiss and Cables solo on both numbers while the latter tune also includes a solo from Handy. After Cables' "Think of

Me”, where Henderson soars, the recording concludes with Harold Mabern’s “The Chief,” that features dynamic tenor sax solos from Lawrence and Harper, and a drum solo by Hart. It concludes a strong recording.

This is not simply an all-star band put together for the studio, but a working group as evident through the striking performances of fresh, engaging material.

Ron Weinstock



JOHN JACKSON
Rappahannock Blues
SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

I was at John Jackson’s last performance on New Year’s Eve, 2001 as part of the City of Falls Church Virginia’s annual celebration. Alternating sets with an old time string band, John was his usual warm self and the vigor of his performances belied the fact that

he would soon go into the hospital for treatment for cancer. Less than three weeks later he passed and the church where his funeral was held was full of his many friends, some who came from great distances to pay their respects to a wonderful musician, but also one of the most wonderful persons one could ever meet. In the release of Jackson’s music, “Rappahannock Blues,” Smithsonian Folkways, the late Piedmont blues master is lovingly represented by 20 selections (18 previously unissued) that demonstrate his marvelous finger style playing, his untutored vocals and the warmth of his personality that comes out through the nearly hour of music here.

The songs, taken from various performances, represent the breadth of his repertoire that extend from his interpretations of songs associated with his main influence, Blind Blake (“Too Tight Rag”, “Diddy Wah Diddy,” and “West Coast Rag”); standards of the Piedmont tradition such as Blind Boy Fuller’s “Truckin’ Little Baby,” and “Step it up and Go,” along with “Red River Blues;” adaptations of country songs such as Tom T. Hall’s “The Year Clayton Delaney Died” and the Delmore Brothers “Brown’s Ferry Blues,” and traditional songs and ballads like “Cindy” (played on banjo), and “Railroad Bill.” Also included are religious songs like “Don’t You Want to Go Up There,” and “Just a Closer Walk With Thee,” and Jackson’s adaptation of “Candy Man,” from his friend Mississippi John Hurt.

“Frankie and Johnny” has been performed numerous times by numerous folk, but listening to Jackson’s vocal and his nimble and precise picking is like listening to this number afresh. Perhaps no better demonstration of John Jackson’s superb guitar playing is “John Jackson Breakdown,” a brilliant guitar tour de force that is proof that he was amongst the greats of the Piedmont style guitarists, and was on the same level as Blind Blake and Reverend Gary Davis. For further proof, one can listen to his sterling recreation of Blind Blake’s “West Coast Rag” which closes this album.

There were only six albums by John Jackson issued during his lifetime. Fortunately two CDs on Arhoolie and one on Alligator are still readily available. “Rappahannock Blues” is a terrific addition to this body of music. Anyone who has any interest in acoustic blues, especially the Piedmont tradition, will find this an essential purchase. Included is a booklet with copious notes on John and the songs from producers Barry Lee Pearson and Jeff Place that matches the quality of John Jackson’s exquisite performances.

For information on this release and others from Smithsonian Folkways, visit <http://www.folkways.si.edu/index.aspx>. For this release follow this link: <http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=3273>.

Ron Weinstock

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VARIOUS ARTISTS

Walkin' & Swingin':

Highlights From the Kennedy Center Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival No. 2

KENNEDY CENTER JAZZ RECORDS

One centerpiece of the Jazz program that the Kennedy Center initiated a number years ago under the direction of the late Dr. Billy Taylor is the annual Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival. At the 2010 festival, held May 19-21 in Washington, Kennedy Center Jazz Records issued "Walkin' & Swingin': Highlights From the Kennedy Center Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival No. 2."

The CD compiles performances from the 2010 Festival which celebrated the centenary of the birth of Mary Lou Williams. Williams was a renown jazz pianist, composer and arranger whose career spanned the territory big bands to modern jazz where she befriended numerous visionary jazz artists including Herbie Nichols, Thelonious Monk and even played duets with Cecil Taylor. Last year's festival celebrated Williams in a program devoted to her music (with the exception of the closing Ellington "Cotton Tail").

The recording opens with a rendition of "Walkin' and Swingin'," the Williams composition that was the theme for Andy Kirk and His Clouds of Joy, the Territory Band that helped Williams gain prominence. It is one of three performances by Sherrie Maricle & The Diva Jazz Orchestra and the contours of the performance are not far removed from the Clouds of Joy original. The other two selections featuring this Big Band have them fronted by the wonderful vocalist Catherine Russell on "What's Your Story, Morning Glory?" (Pha Terrell sang on Kirk's 1938 original recording), and "In the Land of Oo Bla Dee." The latter number was an amusing original that she composed during the hey day of bebop and Ms. Russell provides a fine treatment that I am sure Dizzy Gillespie would have approved of. One other performance employs a big band and that is Ann Patterson's Maiden Voyage on "Scratchin' In the Gravel/ Truth." Scratchin' was originally for a septet and then arranged for Duke Ellington in 1966 and the performance here is a medley of the two treatments, wonderfully scored and played with a very impressive tenor saxophonist (Ms. Patterson?).

A couple of performances showcase pianists. "Miss D.D." showcases some wonderful playing by Geri Al-

len as part of The Women in Jazz All-Stars, joined by Esperanza Spalding on bass and Terri Lynn Carrington on drums, while Carmen Staff interprets "Aries" from the ambitious "The Zodiac Suite" with the incorporation of boogie woogie and strides in this intriguing solo showcase. Tenor saxophonist Virginia Mayhew transcribed several Williams solos that Mayhew employs in her performance of a hot blues, "Medi II." The phenomenal young saxophonist Grace Kelly, displaying her somewhat incisive, dry tone, is featured on the Women in Jazz All Stars as they play Terry Lynn Carrington's arrangement of "Pisces," the last movement of "The Zodiac Suite." Kelly's playing shows a maturity far beyond her years while displaying the influence of Lee Konitz with whom she has recorded with.

This disc concludes with Dee Dee Bridgewater joining the All-Stars for a rousing "Cotton Tail," a feature in the Ellington Band for Williams' friend, Ben Webster. It is a remarkable performance with Bridgewater leading with a stellar scatting performance with a rousing piano solo from Allen and solos from the others. Its the longest performance here and a moment of musical magic including trading fours with Kelly that ends this terrific celebration of the 2010 Festival and the music of Mary Lou Williams. It is available from the Kennedy Center, http://www.kennedy-center.org/giftshop/html/itemDetail.cfm?item_sku=1023989&categ_id=2003092214202595.

Ron Weinstock



WHITEBOY JAMES AND THE BLUES EXPRESS

Extreme Makeover

RIP CAT RECORDS

Whiteboy James and the Blues Express is a blues, boogie, rockabilly and rock party machine from Southern California. On this newly recorded version of the band's 1992 debut, the band takes on an unabapologetically retro view of life dominated by lust for a *Big Butted Woman*, a taste for cheap wine, *Night Train Wine*, an ear for Johnny Cash, *Zerg*, *Shotgun and You*, jazzy late night jams, *The Big Man*, and much deserved wild Friday nights at the bar, *Gold Brick Bar*.

James leads the charge with big vocals that sound uncannily like Phil Alvin on early Blasters discs and are delivered with such conviction that it is almost easy

to miss the tongue planted firmly in his cheek as he struts his stuff. Much harder to miss are James' fine harmonica licks and the stellar guitar work of Scott Abeyta who even finds a way to breathe new life into the Willie Dixon classic, *I'm Ready*. Holding down the bottom are Blake Watson on bass and Max Bangwell on drums who expertly negotiate even the fasted paced numbers such as the *Big Blue Train* which closes out the disc with a bang.

Like a great night at the club but without the smoke and the hangover, this is a fine release that demands repeated listens.

Mark Smith



SHAREL CASSITY

Just For You
DW RECORDS

An Oklahoma City native, saxophonist Sharel Cassity has become a presence on New York City's scene, having obtained Degrees in Music from The New School and Julliard. She has been honored by the IAJE's Sisters In Jazz and Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead programs and her compositions have won Downbeat Music Awards and ASCAP's Young Jazz Composer Award. She is an educator as well as working with such small groups as Harry Whitaker, Ingrid Jensen and Mark Whitfield to DIVA and Jimmy Heath Big Bands.

Looking at the cover of her CD, one does not know what to expect. Once the music starts, one is taken by the clarity and focus of her alto playing (although she plays multiple saxophones). It is produced by Michael Dease (who also contributed three originals to the seven song program) who has brought together some of the musicians she regularly works with in the New York club scene. These include Tom Barber on trumpet (who contributed one number) and flugelhorn, Pete Reardon-Anderson on tenor sax, Adam Birnbaum on piano, Paul Beaudry on bass, and Vincent Ector on drums.

Cassity really draws attention with her bluesy tone which will suggest Sonny Stitt as much as Charlie Parker with a bit of Lee Konitz tossed in. Dease's "Phibe's Revenge," is a brisk hard bop number that kicks off this release. The bouncy title track has a dreamy flavor before Cassity enchants with her chops and tone followed by Barber's "Irazu (Wish You Were

Here);" again, more standout playing from her along with the marvelous ensemble work. The rhythm section supports her so well and the full ensemble playing is tight. On the quartet rendition of Ram Ramirez's "Lover Man" her tone is a bit drier with less Charlie Parker and more Lee Konitz. It is followed by Lennie Tristano's "Wow," with its intricate interplay between the horns as well as intriguing solos.

Dease's "Roditi's Dream" has a Latin accent, before the album concludes with her tearing into "Cherokee," with shorter spots allotted to her bandmates, but throughout the superb music here, she burns the brightest on this fantastic album of hard swinging bop. Sharel's website is www.sharelcassity.com, and this disc is available from cdbaby.com, amazon.com and other better retailers.

Ron Weinstock



MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT

Discovery: The Rebirth of Mississippi John Hurt
SPRING FED RECORDS

The year 2011 brought a number of new biographies of blues legends including Phillip R. Radcliffe's "Mississippi John Hurt: His Life, His Times, His Blues" (University Press of Mississippi).

Hurt made some recordings for Okeh Records in 1928, some of which were reissued on Harry Smith's "Anthology of American Folk Music." Tom Hoskins, a Washington DC area record collector, headed towards Avalon, Mississippi 35 years later on the hunch that Avalon, Mississippi" which Hurt sang about in "Avalon Blues," might be his home.

Hoskins journey to the Delta, ironically at a time civil rights workers from the North were murdered in that state, proved fruitful as Hoskins located the legendary recording artist which led to his relocation for several years to the North and what would be three years of celebrity and fame as one of the great rediscovered blues artists.

Hoskins recorded and interviewed Hurt on March 3, 1963. These recordings have just been issued on a fascinating new release on Spring Fed Records, "Discovery: The Rebirth of Mississippi John Hurt." Wonderfully remastered, the CD has 19 tracks including a previously unissued and lengthy interview where Hurt and his wife talks about his early life and recordings, and life after those recordings. It opens with Hoskins

introducing Hurt who plays a deft instrumental, presumably as a test, which he names after he finishes "Cow Hookin' Blues."

Many of the songs will be familiar to Hurt's many fans, including "Stack'O'Lee," "Coffee Blues" (known also as "A Spoonful Blues"), "Richland Woman Blues," "Candy Man," "Spike Driver Blues," and "Louis Collins." His playing is facile although the field tape recording makes the sound a little bit muffled (especially his vocals as Hoskins seems to have miced the guitar better) and the guitar has a slightly harsh tone.

Recording limitations aside, the renditions of "Stack-O-Lee" and "Richland Woman Blues" are superb. As noted on the back cover, he re-recorded some of his Okeh recordings as well as other songs that would become staples of his performances and be recorded by various labels) over the next three years.

Also there were some religious songs like "Do Lord, Remember Me," which his wife Jessie, joined by another woman sings backed by Hurt's guitar.

Hurt biographer Radcliffe along with Bruce Nemorov wrote the very informative accompanying booklet that detail this recording and include some of the photographs Hoskins took of Hurt and his home community as well as from performances and old 78s. Radcliffe, Nemorov and Evan Hatch produced this marvelous and historically important release, which despite the unavoidable audio flaws contains some marvelous music. This is not an essential recording, but those interested in Mississippi John Hurt will want to at least hear this and likely will be buying it.

Ron Weinstock



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