



Chicago Jazz Festival Looking Back

jazz & blues report

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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!

Chicago Jazz Festival Looking Back

A Brief Review by Ron Weinstock

Circumstances led me to Chicago this past Labor Day weekend where I had the opportunity to sample the 35th Annual Chicago Jazz Festival. This was my first time at this event, which was for the first time in Chicago's Millennium Park. In prior years it had been in Grant Park, which is where the fabled Chicago Blues Festival is still held. This festival, while having several performance stages, attracts smaller audiences than the June Blues Fest, which I understand was one reason for the change. The festival is curated by the Jazz Institute of Chicago, which also produces and programs other concerts and events and is produced by the City of Chicago.

During the daytime, there are two substantial tent stages that house performances (The Jazz & Heritage Pavilion and the Von Freeman Pavilion) with



Ernie Krivda

There was plenty of music to be heard covering a range from traditional styled Chicago jazz to hard bop and to free jazz. Drummer-percussionist Hamid Drake was the Artist in Residence and was heard in four different settings. I heard a fair amount of music, but also did not get to hear some of the acts that I would have liked to, but whether and other factors prevented, so I have provided just a few observations of the performers that stood out to me.

Fat Babies is a traditional band playing in what may be called Chicago style. Influenced by King Oliver, the Austin High Gang and Jelly Roll Morton, this band played crisply and delightfully in this older style of jazz with high points including King Oliver's "Snake Rag," Eddie Condon's "Sugar" and Jelly Roll Morton's "The Crave." They have assimilated the style of twenties jazz so well that even originals come across as songs from that era.

Jack DeJohnette's Special Legacy Edition Chicago was a special band assembled to celebrate the great drummer-composer and bandleader's career. With Thursday, August 29 declared by the Mayor Jack DeJohnette



Evan Christopher

the evening headline performances featured in the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, a marvelous facility with several thousand seats and then plenty of lawn seating. There were a variety of events including a solo piano concert series that took place prior to the main Festival kickoff. On the main festival site, Chicago Jazz Magazine operated a CD tent.

Day in Chicago, he brought together legendary Chicago figures pianist Muhal Richard Abrams and multi-instrumentalists Roscoe Gordon and Henry Threadgill. These three, all associated with the AACM, all played roles in DeJohnette's musical development. Bassist Larry Gray completed this group with the ensemble playing a composition by each of the members. The music was demanding and free with a mix of fervor and abstraction in the performance. Compositions by Abrams and DeJohnette struck this listener as the most realized performances and Abrams was especially impressive throughout as was the leader. This performance was professionally recorded so those of you who were not at this show will have a chance to hear it at some point.

Guitarist George Freeman was part of the Friday celebration of his late brother Von, for whom a stage was dedicated at the Festival. George is perhaps the last living Chicago jazz musician to have played with Charlie Parker. He displayed his considerable chops on an unaccompanied guitar instrumental. He was followed by a band led by saxophonist Christopher McBride for a set of hard bop infused music. I should mention that heavy rain early Friday evening led me to miss Wadada Leo Smith's performance of selections from his "Ten Freedom Summers." Of the shows I did not attend, this was probably the one I missed the most.

Having heard about saxophonist Ernie Krivda for so long, and having liked his recordings, I really enjoyed seeing him perform. With a robust attack and a fine band, he would be well better known if he had not chosen to stay in Cleveland. I remember bassist Stafford James from seeing the Louis Hayes-Woody Shaw band in 1976. Having returned from Europe in the past few years, James led a String and Percussion ensemble that included a string quartet, a reed player and M'Boom, the percussion ensemble the late Max Roach founded. While James played arco throughout, his mentor Richard Davis was also part of this fascinating ensemble. James' compositions and the ensemble's execution of the arrangements was a fresh listen.

Gregory Porter followed and was spectacular. This was my second time to see him live and the first with his exceptional band. His rich voice, with echoes of Donny Hathaway and Marvin Gaye, his marvelous original material, and his ability to tell stories with his voice were enthusiastically received. He previewed a couple songs from his forthcoming Blue Note recording along with rousing renditions of "Painted On Campus," "On My Way To Harlem," "Be Good," Nat Adlerley's "Work Song" and "1960 What?" He is probably my favorite male vocalist in any genre now. He is that good!

Having been impressed by the most recent recording by the post-Ornette group, Fast Citizens, I was also impressed by their live performance that exhibited the same mix of composition, improvised playing and empathetic ensemble playing that made that recording so memorable. Saxophonist Juli Wood gave a standout performance with her robust sax playing and her strong singing backed by some fine players. I enjoyed her so much that I purchased her CD.

Evan Christopher also delights with his clarinet playing, as reflected by the fact he was a finalist in the Jazz Journalists Associations voting. He brought an exceptional quartet of Don Vappie on guitar and standup bass (Vappie

is usually associated with the banjo), keyboardist Joe Alpher and drummer Ocie Davis, that provided bright interpretations of songs associated with Duke Ellington (Alex Hill's "Delta Bound") and originals including a number inspired by the Creole traditions in Haiti as well and his own boogie woogie number. He received a particularly warm reception from the Von Freeman Pavilion audience.

The final act I wish to highlight was Hamid Drake & Bindu: Reggaeology. Hamid Drake, a drummer and percussionist of note, was the Festival's Artist in Residence and while his other Festival shows were likely more in the manner of free jazz, Reggaeology was notable for his mix of groove and lively musical textures and colors that likely made this performance more accessible to more casual listeners. His ensemble included trombonists Jeb Bishop and Jeff Albert, guitarist Jeff Parker, bassist Joshua Abrams, vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz and vocals and beat box by Napoleon Maddox. The performance reprised his 2010 recording (Rogue Art) and all of the persons on that recording were present, with the addition of Adasiewicz who provided a solo voice in addition to Parker, Bishop and Albert as Drake was marvelous in his roles as composer, leader and drummer.

This was an unusual Jazz Festival that included a significant chunk of free jazz along with core mainstream, straight-ahead offerings. The sound was generally quite good, especially in the Pritzker Pavilion. With a heavy dose of local talent mixed with its world-class headliners, the Chicago Jazz Festival was part of a wonderful vacation that I ended my summer with.

All photos, including cover photo of Hamid Drake, by Ron Weinstock.

INTERNATIONAL SONGWRITING COMPETITION (ISC) ANNOUNCES 2012 WINNERS

Nashville, TN – The International Songwriting Competition (ISC), widely recognized as the world's premier songwriting event, recently announced its 2012 winners. ISC's Grand Prize is awarded to Joshua Hanson of Irvine, California, USA, for his song "Monsters With Misdemeanors," entered in the Folk/Singer-Songwriter category. The Grand Prize winner is awarded \$25,000 in cash (US) and an additional \$40,000 in merchandise and services. A total of 68 winners from 119 countries worldwide were selected from over 20,000 entries, and for the first time ever, more than half of the winners are from outside the USA. Past ISC winners include Gotye, The Band Perry, Kasey Chambers, Amanda Palmer, Gin Wigmore, King Charles, Kimbra, Passenger, Andrew Bird, and many more.

"ISC's mission is to inspire and promote greatness in the field of songwriting," says Candace Avery, Founder and Director. "It is humbling to hear so many talented songwriters, and it is gratifying to play a part in the growth of the winners' careers." Established in 2002, ISC awards more than \$150,000 in cash and prizes to amateur and professional songwriters around the world.

Judges included iconic artists Tom Waits, Nas, Suzanne Vega, McCoy Tyner, Martina McBride, Susan Tedeschi, Bernie Taupin, Keane, Tegan and Sara, Bruce Hornsby, and many more. In addition to celebrity artists, judges also included seven 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 2012 ISC winners and to hear the winning songs, go to <http://www.songwritingcompetition.com/winners>

Winning ISC's highest honor, the Grand Prize, is California artist Joshua Hanson for his song "Monsters With Misdemeanors." The lead singer and songwriter of the award-winning indie folk/rock trio Yellow Red Sparks, Hanson is the son of a lounge-singing mother and a theatrically trained father. From a young age he was always fascinated with words and how the stories would unfold through the liner notes of some of his favorite songwriters. His own ability of expression is eloquent and effortless, crafting and delivering candid and poetic lyrics that elicit the slightest hint of bittersweet heartache. Candace Avery, Founder and Director of ISC, says "The judges loved the song for its sparse honesty and achingly tender lyrics. ISC is very excited to honor such a talented songwriter, and we anticipate a brilliant future for this promising artist." Yellow Red Sparks released their debut full-length CD in early 2013, and it has already garnered glowing reviews and the attention of music tastemakers.

In addition to the Grand Prize winner, many other deserving songwriters, ranging from talented amateurs to seasoned songwriting veterans, also share the spotlight for winning their respective categories in ISC 2012. See below for a complete list of ISC 2012 winners.

Applauded for its high caliber of judges, ISC compiled a stellar panel of judges for the 2012 competition, including:

Recording Artists: Jeff Beck; Nas; Tom Waits; Bernie Taupin; Martina McBride; Duran Duran; Janelle Monae; Susan Tedeschi & Derek Trucks; Robert Smith (The Cure); Bruce Hornsby; Suzanne Vega; Michael W. Smith; Darryl McDaniels (Run DMC); Mark Foster (Foster The People); Alejandro Sanz; Gerald Casale (Devo); Bill Evans; Anthony Hamilton; Brian Setzer; Avicci; Wynonna; Keane; Jeremy Camp; Tegan & Sara; McCoy Tyner; Ketch Secor (Old Crow Medicine Show); Francesca Batistelli; Craig Morgan; James Cotton; Robert Earl Keen; Black Francis (The Pixies); John Mayall; Anoushka Shankar; Chris Hillman (The Byrds, The Flying Burrito Brothers); Toots Hibbert (Toots & The Maytals); Los Temerarios; Billy Currington; Sandra Bernhard; Basement Jaxx; and Matt Thiessen (Relient K)

Industry Executives: Dan McCarroll (President, Capitol/Virgin Label Group); Monte Lipman (President, Universal Republic Records); Alison Donald (Co-President, Columbia Records UK); Ed Vetri (President, Wind-Up Records); Richard Stumpf (President, Iagem Music US); Bruce Iglauer (Founder/President, Alligator Records); Albert Schilcher (VP Music & Music Mktg, MTV International); Angel Carrasco (Sr. VPA&R, Latin America, Sony/BMG); Dan Storper (President, Putamayo World Music Records and Putumayo

Kids); Steve Smith (VP of A&R, Aware Records); Cory Robbins (Founder/President, Robbins Entertainment); Lori Tieg (VP of Talent, VEVO); Dr. Demento (Radio Host, The Dr. Demento Show); Steve Lillywhite (Producer); Kim Buie (Head of A&R, Thirty Tigers); Douglas C. Cohn (Sr. VP, Music Marketing & Talent, Nickelodeon); Allison B. Jones (VP of A&R, Big Machine Label Group); Jack Vaughn (VP, Comedy Central Records); Leib Ostrow (Founder/CEO, Music For Little People); and Jamie Masada (Owner, Laugh Factory)

Sponsors include: Presonus, Lowden Guitars, Marshall Amplification, Grooveshark, Solid State Logic, Berklee College Of Music, Mrs. Fields Cookies, Airplay Direct, DiscMakers, Thayers, SongU.com, The Music Business Registry, Independent Mastering, Indie Venue Bible, George Stein, Esq., Sonicbids, Songtrust, and Taxi

ISC is now accepting entries for 2013. Go to <http://www.songwritingcompetition.com> for more information and an entry form.

ISC WINNERS

Below is a list of winners in categories that pertain to this publication. The complete list of ISC 2012 winners as well as the list of Honorable Mentions, can be viewed at <http://www.songwritingcompetition.com/winners>

Blues

First Place

How Long To Heal - Nico Wayne Toussaint - Bayonne, France

Second Place

Don't Blow My Cover - William Troiani, Haykon Haye, Ian F. Johannessen, Alexander Pettersen (Billy T Band) - Oslo, Norway

Third Place

High Gas Prices - William Morganfield (Big Bill Morganfield) - Stone Mountain, GA, USA

Jazz

First Place

Angustia - Omar Sosa - Camagüey, Cuba

Second Place

Benny's Tune - Lionel Loueke - Brooklyn, NY, USA

Third Place

Black Lace Freudian Slip - René Marie - Warrenton, VA, USA

Latin

First Place

Ultimo Aire - Montserrat López Ros (Montse), Néstor Alejandro Martínez Lara - Mexico City, Mexico

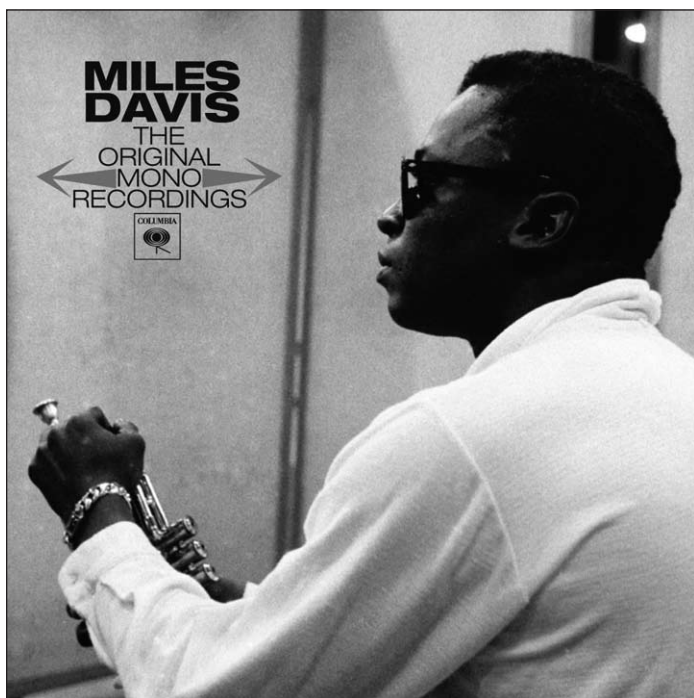
Second Place

Isabela - Oscar Jimenez - Sydney, NSW, Australia

Third Place

Hasta Que Te Vi - Oscar Olavarria - Santiago, Chile

jazz-blues.com



MILES DAVIS' THE ORIGINAL MONO RECORDINGS COLLECTS NINE OF MILES' EARLIEST COLUMBIA ALBUMS, RECORDED 1956 TO 1961

Landmark box set presents nine albums remastered in original, brilliant sound, as they were intended to be heard in the 1950s and '60s Available everywhere November 12, 2013, through Columbia/Legacy

Nine of Miles Davis' earliest albums on Columbia Records, encompassing music that he recorded for the label in monaural sound from 1956 to 1961 (and released from 1957 to 1964), will be issued together on CD for the first time as **Miles Davis: The Original Mono Recordings**. This historic box set, comprising nine CDs in mini-LP replica jackets, will be available everywhere November 12, 2013 through Columbia/Legacy, a division of Sony Music Entertainment. Pre-order at http://smarturl.it/milesmono_amzn. On November 29th in celebration of Record Store Day, Columbia/Legacy will follow up with vinyl mono editions of *Kind Of Blue*, *Miles & Monk At Newport*, and *Jazz Track*—capping a series of recently released mono LPs including *'Round About Midnight*, *Miles Ahead*, *Milestones*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Sketches of Spain*, and *Someday My Prince Will Come*.

Miles Davis: The Original Mono Recordings is a true landmark collection, with every album newly remastered in 2012-13, from the original analog master tapes. CD consumers will be able to hear Miles' early music in mono, the way virtually all popular music was recorded, marketed and intended to be heard in the 1950s and early 1960s. Mono was the norm before the home, broadcast and film stereo era began to develop fully in the mid-'60s, leading to stereo's all-encompassing takeover by the early '70s.

The Original Mono Recordings by Miles Davis in-

The six albums that trace the development of Miles' "first great quintet" at Columbia, all notably featuring John Coltrane, namely *'Round About Midnight*, *Milestones*, *Jazz Track*, *Kind Of Blue* (at 4-times RIAA platinum, the greatest selling jazz album of all time), *Someday My Prince Will Come*, and *Miles And Monk At Newport*; and

The three albums that placed Miles (and various group members) in sophisticated orchestral settings at Columbia, all notably arranged and conducted by Gil Evans, namely *Miles Ahead*, *Porgy And Bess*, and *Sketches Of Spain*.

Two of the albums included in *The Original Mono Recordings* are exciting rare editions that have never appeared in any Miles Davis CD collection in the U.S., and have not been generally available for many years:

Jazz Track, presenting 10 improvised tracks that Miles recorded in Paris with European musicians in 1957, for director Louis Malle's film *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (*Elevator To the Gallows*), combined with three tracks by Miles' own sextet in New York—featuring Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Bill Evans, Paul Chambers, and Jimmy Cobb—from their only other studio recordings of 1958, prior to the *Kind Of Blue* sessions in '59; and

Miles And Monk At Newport, featuring four jazz classics recorded live by the Miles Davis Sextet at the jazz festival in 1958, followed by two classics recorded at the festival in 1963 by Columbia's newly-signed Thelonious Monk Quartet.

The Original Mono Recordings will be housed in a slipcase similar to Bob Dylan's *The Original Mono Recordings* box released in 2012. The new box will contain a fully-annotated 40-page booklet with complete discographic information including personnel and production details, plus a 2,000-word essay by author and Wall Street Journal writer Marc Myers. The liner notes add in-depth, album-by-album comments on the new remastering processes, as told to Myers by three-time Grammy Award®-winning mastering engineer Mark Wilder.

Over the course of these nine albums, whose principal recording spanned barely a half decade (from June 1956 to March 1961), *The Original Mono Recordings* presents a clear vision of Miles' evolution as musician and bandleader, and as a composer graduating from hardbop to modal creations. He was famously signed to Columbia Records by George Avakian in the summer of 1955, after the A&R staff producer witnessed Miles' showstopping solo on a jam session of "Round Midnight" at the Newport Jazz Festival. Jazz critics acclaimed the performance as the "return of Miles," who was considered a difficult artist to work with, who did not even have a regular working group at the time.

Taking Avakian seriously, Miles assembled a group around bassist Paul Chambers and drummer "Philly" Joe Jones, with Red Garland on piano and, after several early contenders (Sonny Rollins, Hank Mobley), Philadelphia John Coltrane on tenor saxophone. This lineup cut four LPs' worth of material in late '55 and '56 to satisfy Miles' contractual obligations to Prestige Records. They also began to record the first Columbia LP, *'Round About Midnight*, named for the paraphrased Monk title tune. The LP, produced by Avakian, consisted of jazz and popular standards done in

Miles' inimitable style.

Most significantly, in terms of The Original Mono Recordings, Myers writes, "the word 'mono' did not appear on the cover. Instead, the jacket announced that the music inside was '360° Sound, Guaranteed High Fidelity.' Stereo technology wouldn't be in place at Columbia until 1958, so there was no need to add the word 'mono' to delineate a difference. 'Mono has always been truer to the studio sound and the original intent,' said Avakian. 'Mono featured less audio trickery and fewer audio distractions, so you can actually hear the musical conversation between Miles and the other musicians as it occurred in the studio.'"

For the second album, Avakian realized his intention to feature Miles in the presence of a jazz orchestra: horns, trumpets, trombones, bass trombone, tuba, alto sax, bass clarinet, flutes, and clarinets, along with bassist Chambers and drummer Art Taylor. Most significantly, Miles Ahead by Miles Davis + 19 reunited Miles with his late-1940s Birth of the Cool collaborator, arranger Gil Evans. With the exception of the title track, composed by Miles and Evans, the program again consisted of jazz and popular standards done Miles' way.

Although the third album, Milestones, was recorded in two productive days of sessions in February and March 1958, it proved to be Avakian's final LP with Miles. It reintroduced the quintet (Coltrane, Garland, Chambers, Jones) along with a new member from Florida, former schoolteacher Julian "Cannonball" Adderley on alto sax. Some of Miles' most iconic music is heard on Milestones: the quintet (sextet's) versions of Jackie McLean's "Dr. Jekyll," Dizzy Gillespie's "Two Bass Hit," and Monk's closing "Straight, No Chaser." At the same time, the album upped the ante of Miles' originals with two, "Miles" and the 13-minute "Sid's Ahead," which hinted at things to come from the inspired young (32-year old) artist.

Two months after the Milestones sessions, the quintet (sextet) was back in the studio for a day of recording with a new Columbia staff producer, Cal Lampley. The session yielded four classics, three of which, due to length, made Side B of Jazz Track: Miles' original "Fran-Dance," and two American Songbook standards, "On Green Dolphin Street" and "Stella by Starlight." (The fourth, "Love for Sale," running over 11 minutes, is included on Columbia/Legacy's Kind Of Blue 50th Anniversary sets.) The year before (December 1957), Miles had temporarily disbanded his group and gone to Paris to perform. There he was hired to create a soundtrack for French film director Louis Malle's suspenseful murder mystery *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (Elevator To the Gallows in the U.S.). Miles and several European jazz musicians improvised the music while seeing the film on a screen. The music, barely 25 minutes, was issued on LP in France in 1958, and was subsequently coupled with the three Lampley tracks on Columbia as the cleverly titled Jazz Track, one of Miles' most elusive and collectible LPs.

In between, Miles got back together with Gil Evans in July and August 1958, for the jazz orchestral masterpiece, the Gershwins' *Porgy And Bess*, the final LP with Lampley. The scene was then set for the March-April 1959 *Kind Of Blue* sessions, with Columbia's Irving Townsend historically

attributed as having overseen the recording, with a slightly revamped quintet (sextet) lineup, as Jones was replaced by Jimmy Cobb on drums, and Garland was replaced on piano by Bill Evans (on "So What," "Blue In Green," "All Blues," and "Flamenco Sketches") and by Wynton Kelly ("Freddie Freeloader"). The impact of *Kind Of Blue*, not only on jazz but on popular (even classical) music in general, continues to reverberate. It is part of the Library Of Congress National Recording Registry, it is #12 on the Rolling Stone list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time, and it was even honored by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2009, the album's 50th anniversary.

Kind Of Blue's closing track, "Flamenco Sketches," might have hinted at the next project, the jazz orchestral Latin-tinged modal masterwork, *Sketches Of Spain*, the third of Miles' collaborations with Gil Evans. Under Columbia's staff producer Teo Macero (who would remain Miles' exclusive producer at Columbia through the 1980s), two standards of the Spanish national repertoire, Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" and de Falla's *Will o' the Wisp* (from "El amor brujo") were juxtaposed with three Evans originals, "The Pan Piper," "Saeta" and "Solea." Myers characterizes the conceptual framework as, "Davis' piercing, crying solos supported by Evans' sighing, sophisticated orchestrations that both provoked and mirrored Davis' lines."

The quintet lineup was again fine tuned in 1961 for *Someday My Prince Will Come*, Coltrane's final Columbia recording with Miles (on the opening title track, from Disney's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*, and a Miles original, "Teo"). Tenor saxophonist Hank Mobley actually doubles with Trane on the title track, but has the tenor chair to himself on the other tracks, Miles originals ("Pfrancing," "Drad-Dog"), and American Songbook staples "Old Folks" and Johnny Mercer's closing "I Thought About You."

Though separated in time by five summers, the Newport Jazz Festival performances by Miles' sextet in 1958 (Adderley, Coltrane, Evans, Chambers, Cobb), and Thelonious Monk's quartet in 1963, as heard on *Miles And Monk At Newport*, are remarkably seamless. As Mark Wilder told Myers, "I originally assumed that this album was going to need the most work to capture the original mono sound. After all, the Davis cuts were recorded in 1958, Monk's in 1963, and both were recorded outdoors. Surprisingly, though, the master tapes were exactly like the original LP pressing and needed no fine-tuning."

"For the producers and engineers who toiled on Davis' albums between 1955 and 1963, mono was considered the purest and most unadulterated recorded expression of the trumpeter's genius," Myers writes. "Stereo versions of Davis' albums weren't made available until *Kind of Blue* in August 1959, and even then mono continued to be a priority since stereo LPs were marketed initially only to the small number of upscale consumers with stereo systems."

The Original Mono Recordings follows in the tradition of the eight-time Grammy Award®-winning Miles Davis Series of multiple-CD box sets that began in 1996. The series culminated in the 2009 box set of 52 mini-LP replica jacketed albums, *The Complete Miles Davis Columbia Album Collection*, whose contents were all heard in stereo.

The Original Mono Recordings was produced for release by multiple Grammy Award®-winners Steve Berkowitz and mastering engineer Mark Wilder, who have overseen the Miles Davis Series since its inception more than 18 years ago, and the Miles Davis Bootleg Series since it was introduced in 2011.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

Blues Watch August

New Release Blues.... Ahh, summer. Ahh, new blues! Here's the soundtrack to a sunny August: **Buddy Guy- Rhythm & Blues; Trampled Under Foot-Badlands; Stephen Stills-Can't Get Enough-the Rides; Walter Trout-Luther's Blues- A Tribute to Luther Allison; Hugh Laurie- Didn't It Rain; Dana Fuchs-Bliss Avenue; Mike Zito- Gone to Texas; Too Slim and the Taildraggers- Blue Heart; Omar Dykes- Runnin' With the Wolf; Roomful of Blues- 45 Live; Lurrie Bell- Blues In My Soul; Rory Block- Avalon: A Tribute to Mississippi John Hurt; Watermelon Slim & The Workers- Bull Goose Rooster; Candy Kane- Coming Out Swinging; Various Artists- Bluesin' By the Bayou; Johnny Winter- Live Bootleg Series 9; Amos Garrett Jazz Trio- JazzBlues; Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk- Dirty Word; Studebaker John's Maxwell Street Kings-Kingsville Jukin'; Mick Abrahams- Cat Squirrel Blues; Dudley Taft- Deep Deep Blue; Aynsley Lister- Home; Lee Shot Williams- Country Disco; Moreland & Arbuckle-7 Cities; Franco Paletta & The Stingers- I Like It Just Like That; Kara Grainger- Shiver & Sigh; David Shelley & Bluestone- Trick Bag; The Dr. Izzy Band- Blind & Blues Bound; Shawn James & the Shapeshifters- The Bear; Diana Braithwaite & Chris Whitley-Scrap Metal Blues; The Kat- Kat Is Back in Town; Oli Brown-Songs From the Road; Barrelhouse Chuck- Driftin' From Town to Town; Patrick Sweany- Close to the Floor; RB Stone- Loosen Up!; Pam Taylor Band- Hot Mess....**

Blues Watch September

New release blues.... Here's the soundtrack to putting away your boat and camper and attending fall festivals....**Tedeschi Trucks Band-Made Up Mind; The Rides-Can't Get Enough; Jonny Lang-Fight For My Soul; Kara Grainger- Shiver & Sigh; Honey Island Swamp Band- Cane Sugar; Moreland & Arbuckle-7 Cities; Paul Allen and the Underthinkers-Everywhere at Once; Buddy Guy- Rhythm & Blues; Oli Brown-Songs from the Road; Todd Wolfe- Miles To Go; Patrick Sweany- Close to the Floor; Robbie Hill & the Blue 62's- Price to Pay; Studebaker John's Maxwell Street Kings-Kingsville Jukin'; Cyril Neville-Magic Honey; Laith Al-Saadi-Real; Samantha Fish- Black Wind Howlin; Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King- Road Dog's**

Life; Quinn Sullivan-Getting There; Eugene Hideaway Bridges- Roots & Vines; Little G. Weevil- Moving; Toronzo Cannon- John the Conquer Root; Gino Matteo- Sweet Revival; Juke Joints 4- That's All Right With Me; Cadillac John Nolden- Vol 1.- Red's Juke Joint Sessions; Bryan Lee- Play One For Me; Mike Zito & The Wheel- Gone to Texas; Patricia Vonne- Rattle My Cage; Pete Anderson- Birds above Guitarland; Little Mike & the Tornados- Forgive Me; J. T. Lauritsen & Friends-Play by the Rules; Randy Scott- Out of the Blue; Jeff Jensen- Road Worn and Ragged; Snarky Dave & the Prickly Bluesmen-Big Snark; Pam Taylor Band- Hot Mess; RB Stone- Loosen Up!; Sugaray Rayford-Dangerous; Barrelhouse Chuck & Kim Wilson's Blues All-Stars- Driftin' From Town to Town; The Hound Kings-Unleashed; Lisa Biales- Singing in My Soul; Travis Haddix-Ring on Her Finger, Rope Around My Neck; Frank Bey & Anthony Paule Band- Soul for your Blues; Janet Ryan- Mama Soul; Syl Johnson with Melody Whittle-Featuring Syleena Johnson; Finis Tasby & Kid Anderson- Snap! Your Fingers; Delbert & Glen- Blind, Crippled & Crazy; Detroit Frank Dumont-Let me Be Frank; Spencer Bohren-Tempered Steel; Luther Kent- Luther and Diana Braithwaite and Chris Whiteley- Scrap Metal Blues.... **Living Blues Awards....** The critics who fuel Living Blues Magazine have weighed in with their 20th annual Living Blues Awards. As reported in the current edition, here are a few of the selected winners: **Blues Artist of the Year-Male-Lurrie Bell; Female-Ruthie Foster; Outstanding Musician-Guitar-Lurrie Bell, Keyboard-Ironing Board Sam, Horns-Eddie Shaw, Vocals-Bobby Blue Bland, Drums- Kenny Smith, Bass-Bob Stoger, Harmonica-Billy Boy Arnold, Best Live Performer-Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials. Blues Album of the Year-Mud Morganfield- Son of the Seventh Son. New Recordings- Contemporary Blues- Joe Louis Walker- Hellfire; Southern Soul-Barbara Carr- Keep the Fire Burning, Best Debut-Heritage Blues Orchestra. Living Blues' readers had a different take with Buddy Guy winning blues artist of the year- male and outstanding blues singer, Janiva Magness winning blues artist of the year-female, Marcia Ball winning for Keyboards, Charlie Musselwhite winning for harmonica, Robert Cray winning for guitar and Buddy Guy winning for best blues album of the year for his Live at Legends release. Congratulations to all the winners! That's it for this issue. See ya!**

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BACK ISSUES AND
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IN THE WORKS!

jazz-blues.com

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

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

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

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



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

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

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KARA GRAINGER
Shiver & Sigh
ELECTO GROOVE

Born in Australia and now living in Los Angeles, Kara Grainger is described by Randy Chortkoff as “a triple threat ... Singer, Guitar Player and Songwriter.” She impressed him enough to have Chortkoff record her for his Eclecto Groove label. David Z, who produced the late Etta James amongst others, produced this recording “Shiver & Sigh” that has a stellar group of players backing her including Mike Finnigan, Jimi Bott, Kirk Fletcher and the Pacific Coast Horns.

Musically there is plenty to like of her mix of pop, soul and blues and this is certainly a recording that fans of Bonnie Raitt, Susan Tedeschi and the like will enjoy. Both as a vocalist and guitarist she shines with her naturally flowing soulful singing and her sharply focused fretwork, whether employing a slide or displaying her nimble single note work. Her songs include the opening “Little Pack of Lies” where she spins a story about her fast-talking ex and his little pack of lies. Her stinging slide guitar provides another voice to her wonderful, heartfelt vocals.

Mixed in with originals is a nice cover of Robert Johnson’s “Come On In My Kitchen,” titled here “C’Mon In My Kitchen,” with some very nice slide and her brother Mitch’s harmonica supporting her fine singing. Her take on “Breaking Up Somebody’s Home” benefits from not only a terrific nuanced vocal and short guitar breaks, but the backing as Finnigan is exceptional here and the horns add the right amount of punch.

She has come a long-way from playing in a blues band in Sydney, Australia and matured to a marvelous performer of the splendid blues and soul-infused sounds heard on “Shiver 7 Sigh.” **Ron Weinstock**



AVISHAI COHEN
Triveni II
ANZIC RECORDS

This writer missed “Introducing Triveni,” trumpeter Avishai Cohen’s first trio album with bassist Omer Avital and drummer Nasheet Waits.



Anzic Records has just issued “Triveni II,” recorded at the same two-day session in Brooklyn that produced the earlier album. Triveni is a Sanskrit word for “the meeting point of three sacred rivers: two physical rivers the Ganges and Yamuna, and the invisible Saraswati River,” which parallels the meeting of the three musicians. Like the earlier CD, this was recorded in one room, without separation, and without headphones that allowed the three to interact in a more natural fashion.

The music consists of originals by Cohen with inter-

JESSE DEE

ON MY MIND / IN MY HEART

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and rollicking,
rootsy R&B...
infectious revival-
meeting furor”
—Boston Globe*

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pretations of tunes by Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus, Don Cherry and Ornette Coleman. Cohen is hot right from the start on his "Safety Land" with some fiery playing and both Avital and Waits solo in the middle of the performance. Cohen exhibits his wonderful ballad approach on "Nov. 30" which is dedicated to his mother. He mixes his bright tone and fiery passages with smears and judicious use of mutes. While on "Nov. 30" his playing is in the vein of Miles Davis, on the rendition of "Willow Weep For Me" and his original "Get Blue," Cohen plays in a bluesy gutbucket fashion that evokes Bubba Miley and Cootie Williams.

There are two marvelous interpretations of Ornette Coleman compositions, the lively "Music News," and the swinging "Follow the Sound." One of these tunes was not previously recorded and Coleman taught it to Cohen in Cohen's apartment. Other tunes here come from the pens of Charles Mingus and Don Cherry (the closing "Art Deco" is an alternate take of a performance on the earlier disc).

Cohen's brilliant playing is so well supported throughout, and the interplay between him, Avital and Waits stands out as much as their individual contributions, resulting in the imaginative and terrific playing that make "Triveni II" the superlative recording it is and one of the finest recent recordings I have heard.

Ron Weinstock



JAMES COTTON

Cotton Mouth Man
ALLIGATOR RECORDS

Harmonica ace James Cotton is a living blues legend with roots that extend back to his plantation roots in Tunica, Mississippi. Taught harmonica by none other than Sonny Boy II (Rice Miller), Cotton went on to play, record and tour with Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters, before firing up his multi-decade solo career in the late 1960s.

Losing most of his voice to throat cancer, Cotton now focuses almost exclusively on his still robust skills on the harmonica and on lyrics to be delivered by others. Telling Cotton's tales this time around are Gregg Allman, Keb Mo, Ruther Foster, Warren Haynes, Delbert McClinton and his long time tour vocalist Darrell Nulisch. With a focus on Cotton's long experience in the blues, the songs included here cover a lot of ground.

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Cotton Mouth Man, *Bonnie Blue* and *He Was There* are quick autobiographical tours of his life including high profile rock tours with the likes of the Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, Steve Miller and Janis Joplin and stints at the fabled Fillmore West in San Francisco and Fillmore East in New York. *Mississippi Mud* focuses on his tough farm roots while *Wrapped Around My Heart* visits the broken heart waste-land so familiar to the blues and *Saint on Sunday* reveals his lady to be the devil on every day but Sunday.

Instead of aerobics and treadmills, Cotton suggests the path to better health can be found in the blues, fried chicken and collard greens on *Blues Is Good For You*. *Hard Sometimes* is a clever double entendre tale about longing and lust that finds a receptive audience in *Young Bold Women*. But Cotton's life hasn't been all fun and games as revealed on *Wasn't My Time to Go* where he recounts his many mundane jobs and his close call with a bullet. As befitting his status as one of the best in the game, Cotton has surrounded himself here with not only his first rate road band (Tom Holland-guitar, Noel Neal-Bass, Jerry Porter-Drums) but special guests including Joe Bonamassa on guitar, Chuck Leavell on keys, Rob McNelley on guitar, Glenn Worf on bass and Tom Hambridge on drums.

With Cotton still at the top of his game and this cast of musicians and vocalists you can't go wrong with this disc.

Mark Smith



BARBARA MORRISON

FEATURING HOUSTON PERSON

A Sunday Kind of Love
SAVANT RECORDS

Scott Yanow suggests that vocalist Barbara Morrison is one of those singers that transcend categories by simply being herself. Perhaps best known for the 21 years she spent with Johnny Otis, Ms. Morrison certainly demonstrates her way with a song on a new Savant Records release, "A Sunday Kind of Love." As stated on the cover, this recording features the tenor saxophone of Houston Person with a rhythm section of Stuart Elster on piano, Richard Simon on bass and Lee Spath on drums, which has been backing her for seven years.

From the opening moments of Duke Ellington's "I'm Just a Lucky So and So" to the closing notes of

the Al Green classic “Let’s Stay Together,” Morrison brings displays her roots in classic blues and rhythm music (as on the opening title track), as well as her ability to caress a lyric, displayed on the Billie Holiday classic “Good Morning Heartache.” The moods swing from romantic on the title track (and her rendition joins Etta James’ recording as among my favorites of this song) to being playful on “The Green Door.” Tinges of her maturity may be heard in her voice, but it lends character to her singing.

And then there is Houston Person. Is he ever not superb backing a singer? Throughout this recording, Person is marvelous. With the combination of the veteran song stylist, a swinging trio and the terrific Houston Person, “A Sunday Kind of Love” is simply superb.

Ron Weinstock



LISA BIALES
Singing My Soul
 BIG SONG MUSIC

Lisa Biales has a new recording out on Big Song Music titled “Singing My Soul.” The Ohio based singer, songwriter and guitarist is backed Cincinnati-based pianist Ricky Nye (who also produced the album) and the Paris Blues Band, which includes Thibaut Chopin on upright bass, Anthony Stelmazack on guitar and Simon “Shuffle” Boyer on drums. This is a change in pace for her as nine of the ten songs on this are interpretations of vintage material.

Biales interprets songs associated with Blu Lu Barker, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Sippie Wallace and others. Opening is her straight cover of Barker’s peppy “A Little Bird Told Me,” followed by her rendition of Sister Rosetta Tharpe’s “Strange Things Happening Every Day,” likely the most familiar song here. Biales roots includes country as well as blues as indicated by the lovely bluegrass-infused rendition of Mississippi John Hurt’s “Let the Mermaid’s Flirt With Me,” with fiddle and mandolin in the backing. Her country-based singing also lends a nice flavor to Sippie Wallace’s bawdy “You Got To Know How.”

“Magic Garden” is the only original here and her honey-sounding performance benefits from Doug Hamilton’s violin and Bill Littleford’s guitar. A lovely reading of “Careless Love” is followed by an evocative “I Only Have Eyes For You” (modeled on The Flamingo’s hit)

with Nye and Stelmazack playing tastefully behind her. Biales has played Patsy Cline onstage and “Write Me In Care of the Blues” was a song she uncovered researching the part, and she certainly does wonderfully on this traditional country gem.

The recording closes with the title track, another Sister Rosetta Tharpe composition, to which Lisa and the band provide a crisp reading. Lisa Biales is an appealing singer who brings a mix of roots influences to “Singing My Soul,” a delightful, if not earthshaking recording of old school country, swing and blues.

Ron Weinstock



KENNY BURRELL
Special Requests (And Other Favorites)
 HIGHNOTE RECORDS

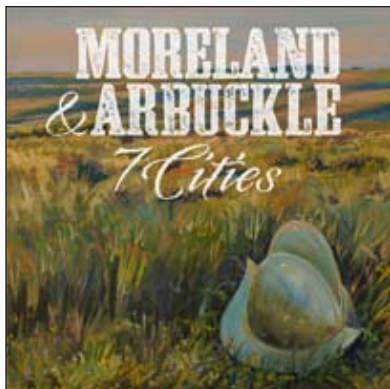
Recorded live at Catalina’s in Hollywood, “Special Requests (And Other Favorites)” on HighNote Records is the latest album by NEA JazzMaster Kenny Burrell.

It’s an auspicious career that started in 1951 with Dizzy Gillespie and has resulted in 108 records and CDs as stated by Bubba Jackson in the liner notes. On this release, he certainly shows no signs of slowing down in the least. It combines favorites and some audience requests (hence the title) and on this disc Burrell is supported by a group that includes Justo Almarino on tenor saxophone and flute, Tom Rainier on piano, Tony Dumas on bass and Clayton Cameron on drums. It is a wonderful group that swings effortlessly. Almarino specifically will certainly grab one’s attention with his very robust saxophone and lyrical flute, and Rainier has a clean and fluid style.

Burrell throughout is terrific. His clean, deft and precise playing is laced with melodic invention and wonderful tone that matches well with his band from his opening notes on Benny Golson’s “Killer Joe” (and Almarino’s tenor makes its first impression here to his fresh reworking of the classic “Chitlins Con Carne.” There are his interpretations of Duke Ellington from the familiar “In a Sentimental Mood,” to the lesser known “Sunset and the Mockingbird” (from “The Queen’s Suite”) along with an amiable vocal from Burrell on “The Feeling of Jazz.” There is a lovely rendition of Freddie Hubbard’s “Little Sunflower,” with lovely flute from Almarino, and Burrell plays his acoustic guitar on

"The Summer Knows."

Other songs are standards like "Make Someone Happy" and "Bye Bye Blackbird," as well as J.J. Johnson's "Lament." Listening to Burrell's spoken comments at the end of this CD, where he talks about the late show, one might hope more from this night at Catalina's by may be forthcoming. **Ron Weinstock**



MORELAND & ARBUCKLE

7 Cities

TELARC

Guitarist Aaron Moreland and harmonica man Dustin Arbuckle are back with their latest project, 7 CITIES, a musical ode to Coronado's tour of their home state, Kansas, in search of the 7 cities of gold, circa 1541.

Eclectic as always, the music uses a blues foundation as a jump off to many different styles, including straight ahead rock and roll via "Stranger Than Most" and "Road Blind," led by Arbuckle's harp. "Quivira" has a delta feel to it, helped along by Moreland's slide guitar work as "The Devil And Me" mixes in a taste of country into the musical soup. "Tall Boogie" lives up to its title as the two solo out on the instrumental "Red Bricks." The seeking of gold goes hand in hand with the cover tune on 7 CITIES, a slightly subdued re-make of Tears For Fear's 1985 charter, "Everybody Wants To Rule The World."

Blues purists might not like the variety here, but Moreland & Arbuckle are taking all their prairie roots and harvesting them into a pretty solid presentation.

Peanuts

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SHERRI ROBERTS

Lovely Days

BLUE HOUSE

San Francisco vocalist Sherri Roberts is joined by pianist Bliss Rodriguez for a delightful recording of jazz-laced pop vocals from the American songbook, show tunes and Brazilian bossa nova, "Lovely Days" (Blue House).

Roberts has a lovely voice, and her intonation and phrasing captures the longing of the ballad "What I'll Do," as well as the innocence of the Irvin Berlin lyric of "It's a Lovely Day Today," which segues into another Berlin song, "Isn't it a Lovely Day." Rodriguez's accompaniments complement Roberts' vocals and the under recorded pianist gets to display his deft lyricism in the solos he crafts throughout.

It's a charming program from the understated rendition of "Nice and Easy" (one of two songs done as a homage to Shirley Horn), the appealing "Soon It's Gonna Rain" from the Off-Broadway perennial "The Fantasticks," along with the romanticism of "Heart and Soul," Dave Frishberg's "Our Love Rolls On," and Mancini classic "Moon River."

"Lovely Days" showcases Sherri Roberts' engaging singing and Bliss Rodriguez's splendid piano, resulting in a very entertaining recording. **Ron Weinstock**



BRYAN LEE

Play One For Me

SEVERN RECORDS

I remember discovering Bryan Lee in the late 1980s at the Old Absinthe Bar during my first visit to New Orleans. With the sideshow that marked (and

still marks) Bourbon Street, discovering Lee's straight, no chaser, approach to blues was a real joy. I picked up his self-produced vinyl LP at the time and it was a solid souvenir of the music I heard that evening. Since discovering Lee, I have been pleased to see him again on several later visits to New Orleans and at some music festivals as well as hear his body of recordings, mostly for a Canadian label.

David Earl's Severn label has just issued a new CD by the Blind Giant of the Blues, "Play One For Me." On it Lee is supported by, amongst others, Fabulous Thunderbirds guitarist Johnny Moeller on rhythm guitar; Kevin Anker on keyboards; Steve Gomes on bass; Robb Stupka on drums with Kim Wilson adding harmonica to a few tracks. Also the great Willie Henderson has arranged and conducted strings and horns on several tracks with some of the Washington, DC area's finest players including trumpeter Kenny Rittenhouse, baritone saxophonist Leigh Pilzer and trombonist Reginald Cyntje.

As expected with Severn, the production and recording are first-rate, and the result is a fresh take on Bryan Lee and his music. There is plenty of his guitar to be heard here, but it is with his vocals that he really shines as he sings so soulfully.

The album opens with his take on "Aretha (Sing One For Me)," a hit for George Jackson and includes wonderful renditions of Freddie King's "It's Too Bad (Things Are Going So Tough)," Little Sonny's "When Love Begins (Friendship Ends)" that was a hit for Bobby Womack, and Lee's soulful original "Let Me Love You Tonight."

Lee's take on the Womack recording undoubtedly will be a surprise for some of Lee's family with his fine soulful singing and Albert King-laced guitar backed by strings and horns that musically is on par with some of today's best soul-blues recordings.

Lee's "Let Me Love You Tonight" is a terrific soul-blues performance that has an infectious groove that should get dancers up and on the floor. For a bit of more of a down-home feel there is a nice rendition of Howling Wolf's recording, "Evil Is Going On," and the down home flavored original "Poison." Kim Wilson adds his harmonica to both selections.

In its mix of straight blues with southern soul-blues, this recording provides a change from Lee's prior recordings that perhaps focused more on him as a solid singer and guitar slinger.

While there is plenty of fine guitar here, this recording, perhaps more than his prior ones, displays just how exceptional a singer Bryan Lee is. He is that good here and "Play One For Me" is that good a recording.

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



CHICK COREA
The Vigil
CONCORD JAZZ

With his new crew of very simpatico players: reedman Tim Garland, guitarist Charles Altura, bassist Hadrien Feraud and drummer Marcus Gilmore, the venerable keyboardist Mr. Corea continuously cross-pollinates his various musical "sides" with one another, rendering differences between these elements less relevant as he goes.

Electric and acoustic sounds, "pure" jazz and fusion, extroversion and introspection; each are present but all are equal and grounded in the guiding force of the band-leader's unique, dynamic blend of invention, emotion and exploration.

This character makes for seamless transits of tone, mood and approach within most tracks here that resemble dissolves in film, Corea's and Garland's multi-instrumental skills playing key roles. Tracks such as "Portals to Forever" and "Pledge For Peace" evolve more like mini-suites than singular compositions.

Mr. C's undeniable Spanish soul emerges on the minor-keyed "Planet Chia", Altura providing kindred acoustic spirit within his solo. And the afore-mentioned high-energy "Pledge" features some hard, serious swing. *The Vigil* is an exciting, rewarding piece of work.

Duane Verh



OMAR DYKES
Runnin' With The Wolf
PROVOGUE RECORDS

Omar Dykes has been pretty busy with new releases lately and he has another new release with his band, The Howlers, titled "Runnin' With The Wolf" (Provogue Records). As the title suggests, this is a

tribute to Howlin' Wolf. Given Omar's gravelly, gruff vocals, an album of Wolf songs would seem a natural and Dykes approaches the material not to copy Wolf's recordings, "but to stay close to the spirit. ... I tried to modernize the songs ... Why copy something note for note ... when it's already available in the original form. ... I wanted to have fun with songs that I've loved ever since I was a kid."

Those backing Omar on his journey through the Wolf's music include Derek O'Brien, Casper Rawls or Eve Monsees on guitar, Ronnie James or Bruce Jones on bass, Wes Starr or Mike Buck on drums, Ted Roddy on harmonica, Nick Connolly on keyboards and Kaz Kazanoff and Lex Ismore on saxophones. Settings range from a trio (as on the tough renditions of "Killing Floor," and "Little Red Rooster" as well as the rollicking interpretation of "Riding in the Moonlight") to a larger band with horns (as on the Latin groove of "Who's Been Talkin'," the uptown urban funk groove of "Do The Do" (admittedly a pretty trite Willie Dixon lyric) and the all night party vibe of "Wang Dang Doodle"). Even on these sides with a larger band, the backing is supple and never heavy handed.

There are plenty of delights to be savored here including the title track that Omar penned with his imaginative incorporation into his song of titles and phrases from Wolf's recordings. A particular highlight for these ears is the rendition of "Worried All The Time" which comes across as if Hank Williams had recorded a Wolf number. It's hard to find fault with the take on "Spoonful," which is structured similarly to Wolf's original recording and includes some short Sumlin-like guitar accents. In contrast, there is a country boogie guitar line used in the backing for "Back Door Man," which is quite imaginatively reinvented here.

Marvelously played and sung, "Runnin' With the Wolf" is a tribute to one of the greatest of all blues artists and another fine release from Omar Dykes.

Ron Weinstock

DICK HYMAN & KEN PEPLOWSKI

... Live at the Kitano
Victoria Records

Pianist Dick Hyman and clarinetist and saxophonist Ken Peplowski have been together for some 25 years, but in 2012 the duo spent a week at The Kitano Hotel New York City. A new CD on Victoria Records captures the two in performance that weekend "... Live at the Kitano," and the two certainly play quite well together.

There is quite a nice group of songs that the two are heard on including Rodgers and Hart's "The Blues Room," Hawkins and Monk's "I Mean You!," W.C. Handy's "Yellow Dog Blues" and "My Ship" by Ira Gershwin and Kurt Weil.

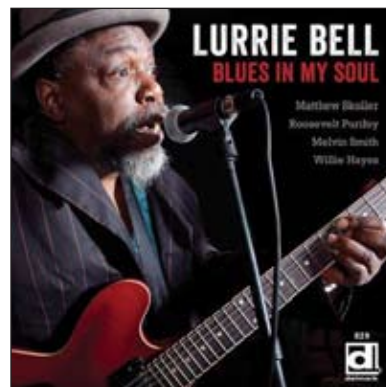
The really opening "The Blue Room" may be familiar to some from the hot swing rendition by Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra or Benny Goodman's Carnegie Hall rendition. The rendition here opens in a stately, reflective manner before the pair explore it in

a bit quicker manner. Peplowski is on tenor for "Gone With The Wind," and to this listener the performance has some allusions to the Art Tatum small group recording with Ben Webster. Hyman's crisp, clean playing compliments Peplowski's tenor which evokes the great ballad player with his tone. They get playful and spirited with Peplowski back on clarinet on the Hawkins-Monk classic.

Hyman opens "Yellow Dog Blues" with some two-handed boogie-laced barrelhouse piano before Peplowski states the theme and takes some leaps on clarinet here. The two shine on the rendition of Monk's "Ugly Beauty," with Hyman's restrained stride-based solo here marvelous and Peplowski's clarinet conveying a pensive mood. The album closes with Peplowski back on tenor sax on a medley of "Lover, Come Back to Me" with Horace Silver's "Quicksilver."

Listening to this makes one envious of those who were in the audience when this was recorded. David Kowalski is responsible for the fine location recording of the performances on this. One can hear clarinet squeaks, the rumbling bass on the piano, the vibrato of Peplowski's tenor sax playing and the audience's enthusiasm with considerable clarity. Hyman and Peplowski are both skilled veterans rooted in the swing era and whose empathy for each other is obvious throughout this delightful recording.

Ron Weinstock



LURRIE BELL Blues In My Soul DELMARK

Lurrie Bell's latest album "Blues In My Soul" marks his return to Delmark, with whom he made some of his finest recordings. His last two recordings on Aria displayed a bit of his musical range while the present set is a set devoted to traditional Chicago blues.

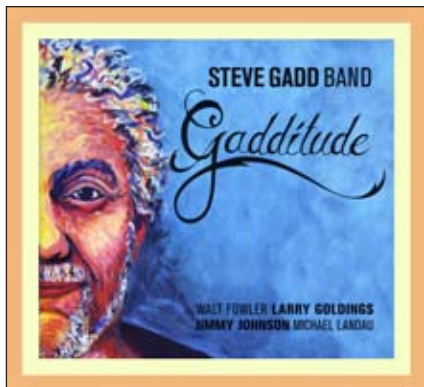
On this, he is joined by Roosevelt Purifoy on keyboards; Melvin Smith on bass; Willie Hayes on drums and Matt Skoller on harmonica with a couple selections featuring horns. The 14 songs include three originals and eleven interpretations of classic blues recordings associated with T-Bone Walker, Jimmy Rogers, Junior Wells, Otis Rush and others, produced by Dick Shurman for some straight Chicago blues.

Bell is an appealing, if not compelling singer with his unforced, heartfelt grainy vocals, and his imagina-

tive, quirky guitar playing adding unexpected twists and delights to his music. My use of the word interpretation as opposed to cover is deliberate, because Bell's renditions of T-Bone Walker's "Hey Hey Baby," or Jimmy Rogers' "Going Away Baby" are fresh re-workings of the source recordings. Bell's originals include the title song where he sings about liking what he is doing cause he feels the blues deep in soul. He has a backing that might suggest "As the Years Go Passing By" or Somebody Loan Me a Dime." Purifoy's organ is wonderful here while he is equally fine with the rollicking piano on Lurrie's rendition of Big Bill Broonzy's "I Feel So Good," with nice harp from Skoller to go with Bell's snap crackle and pop guitar here.

"Bout the Break of Day," Junior Wells rendition of "Early in the Morning," is done in a gut-bucket fashion with Bell's restrained fire adding to this marvelous version. One of Bell's other originals, "24 Hour Blues," is a relaxed shuffle done as a tribute to his friend Magic Slim, who had passed earlier that day. There is a briskly tempoed shuffle rendition of "I Just Keep Loving her," one of Little Walter's early recordings with crisp, rocking breaks from Skoller and Purifoy in addition to Bell.

Bell closes this disc out with a fine rendition of Otis Spann's "The Blues Never Die," again showcasing not simply Bell (with a superb solo), but the band as well. The result is another one of the very solid blues performances on "Blues In My Soul." **Ron Weinstock**



STEVE GADD BAND

Gadditude
BFM JAZZ

The group-as-artist identity is key here, for this set is clearly a group effort. Veteran drummer Gadd leads this outfit, to borrow a term from the White House, "from behind", guiding the groove from the drum throne, but keeping the focus on his very capable front line- trumpeter/flugelhornist Walt Fowler, guitarist Michael Landau and keyboardist Larry Goldings.

This quintet pivots between spacey and warm, soulful modes. The opener, "Africa", simmers in a very post-Miles manner, the soloists dancing atop Gadd's constant pulsing cymbals and well-placed accents. Bassist Jimmy Johnson provides the proper ostinato-

ish anchor for such a tune. The dark, dreamy "Ask Me" and a laid-back ballad, Keith Jarrett's "Country", follow.

The pace picks up a tad with a mix of Spanish flair and second-line rhythm, "Cavaliero". Another Jarrett piece, "The Windup", and Abdullah Ibrahim's "The Mountain" are other nice inclusions on a mostly original set.

Duane Verh



STUDEBAKER JOHN'S MAXWELL STREET KINGS

Kingsville Jukin'
DELMARK

Studebaker John's Maxwell Street Kings is back with his gritty, grungy blues on a new CD on Delmark, "Kingsville Jukin'." John Grimaldi on vocals, guitars and harmonica is joined here by guitarist Rick Kreher, bassist Bob Halaj and drummer Steve Cushing on 16 songs that range from driving rockers like the opening "Mississippi Blues" to the closing evocation of Elmore James (and Hound Dog Taylor and J.B. Hutto) "Bad Gasoline," performed without band.

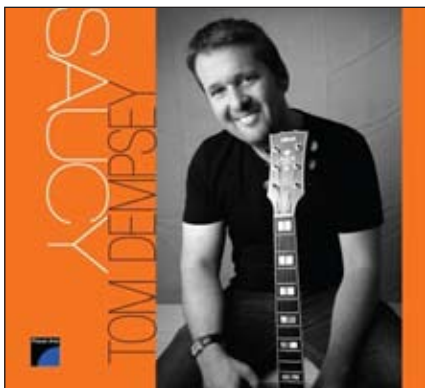
There is some Jimmy Reed styled harmonica against a lazy shuffle groove on "When They Played The Real Blues" in which he proclaims "doesn't it make feel good when you hear that simple low-down groove." There is some tough harp on "She's Alright" with its insistent beat, although the lyric is not much more than him proclaiming she's all right with him. "The Rest Is Up To You" is a hot shuffle with hot amplified harp followed by an affectionate salute to one of his inspirations, Hound Dog Taylor on "I Am the Houserocker," with some grungy sounding slide that would make Hound Dog smile. It in turn is followed by an evocation of Howlin' Wolf on "Howlin' in the Moonlight."

"Kingsville Jukin'" is a showcase for John's harmonica and might be viewed as a slower musical cousin to Little Walter's Roller Coaster," with the Kings providing somewhat skeletal backing on this, although it seems to end somewhat suddenly. "Cold Black Night" is a nice, moody atmospheric slow blues where he proclaims he follows this road to the end and if he had it to do over he would travel it again. Stop-time is effectively employed on "Mojo Hand," an original of him wanting to find a mojo because she is

a voodoo woman and he wants to be her man with a solid harmonica solo.

John's gravelly vocals are supported throughout by dirty, fuzzy toned backing. I did find it enjoyable this listening to several selections at a time as opposed to listening to this album in one sitting. At the same time, I have no fault with any of the specific performances, resulting in the simple, direct house rocking blues on "Kingsville Jukin'."

Ron Weinstock



TOM DEMPSEY

Saucy
PLANET ARTS

It was not long after guitarist Tom Dempsey's first exposure to jazz guitar (Wes Montgomery's "Smokin' at the Half Note," that led him to Wes' recordings and later the classic Jimmy Smith recordings with Kenny Burrell. This has been a crucial part of his music especially since moving to New York City in 1991. It is obvious on Dempsey's organ trio recording, "Saucy" (Planet Arts), with Ron Oswanski on organ and Alvin Atkinson on drums.

Dempsey cites Wes Montgomery, Kenny Burrell, George Benson, Jim Hall and Grant Green as key influences and inspiration, and who "remain at the root of my soul as a musician." He does a fine job of displaying that on his peppy original "One Hundred Ways," that opens up this recording which ranges from originals to interpretations of well known songs ("Bridge Over Troubled Water") to the somewhat obscure (Buddy Montgomery's "Bock to Bock").

"Bock to Bock" is a particularly appealing selection with a jaunty groove and Dempsey exhibiting a clean, skilled and imaginative sense with Oswanski adding the right amount of grease. The title track is a lively blues with some nice playing that would make Burrell and Green happy. It is the type of instrumental that the late of Albert Collins might have easily adapted and Atkinson gets to trade fours with Dempsey and Oswanski.

Dedicated to Ted Dunbar, one of his teachers and mentors, "Ted's Groove" has a loping rhythm and an intriguing melody. Atkinson sets forth a medium march tempo to start, "Bridge Over Troubled Water," with fascinating interplay between Dempsey, Oswanski and Atkinson who is quite imaginative with his stick work. Dempsey plays an acoustic Martin guitar that the widow

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of Joseph Grana entrusted to him after he passed, and his very clean and restrained playing marks the lovely ballad "Always Around." Another lovely performance is the trio's rendition of Lee Morgan's "Ceora," with a Brazilian touch.

The CD closes with Dempsey's driving "Pat-a-Tat-Tat," a nod to the great Pat Martino. It is the coda for a wonderfully played and delightful recording.

Ron Weinstock



SUGARAY RAYFORD

Dangerous
DELTA GROOVE

I was familiar with Caron 'Sugaray' Rayford prior to his joining The Manish Boys. About his self-produced debut album "Blind Alley," I observed, "Not many sing-

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ers can take us from the delta to the modern chitlin' circuit as easily as he does. A big man with a big voice and plenty of personality that makes "Blind Alley" a recording to savor."

He can be heard on "Double Dynamite," the most recent recording by The Manish Boys where he shared vocal duties with Finis Tasby. With Tasby's recent health problems, Sugaray Rayford has become the primary vocalist for the rotating talent that play in that group.

Delta Groove has just released the label's first release by Sugaray Rayford, "Dangerous." Producer Randy Chortkoff has brought together an impressive group of supporting players including harmonica players Sugar Ray Norcia, Kim Wilson, Big Pete and Chortkoff himself; guitarists Kid Andersen, Franck Goldwasser;

Gino Matteo and Monster Mike Welch; keyboardists Anthony Geraci and Fred Kaplan; bassists Willie C. Campbell and Bill Stuve; and drummer Jimi Bott. Several tracks have the horns of saxophonist Ron Dziubla and trumpeter Mark Pender. This is a first-rate studio band to back Sugaray's vocals.

There is a nice mix of material from the Chicago blues shuffle that Sugar Ray Norcia penned, "Country Boy," a song reminiscent of Dave Bartholomew's similarly titled track, which sports Norcia's harp as well. Sugaray and Norcia trade vocals on Norcia's amusing "Two Times Sugar" with Monster Mike superb here.

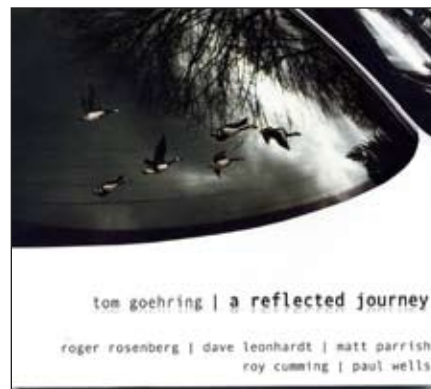
Sugaray's "Stuck For a Buck" is an amusing up-town number as his woman has maxed out his credit cards with punchy horns. Chortkoff contributed "I'm Dangerous," a fine lyric that evokes Muddy Waters (especially Muddy's recording "Evil") as Rayford shouts that he is a natural born lover. "Going Back To Texas" is another fine Muddy Waters styled number with a melody that goes at least back to Otis Spann's "Hungry Country Girl" that the great pianist recorded with Fleetwood Mac.

Goldwasser channels T-Bone Walker on the excellent rendition of Pee Wee Crayton's "When it Rains It Pours" as Sugaray gives a wonderfully nuanced vocal while he shouts out Gatemouth Brown's "Depression Blues," with some terrifically slashing guitar in the manner of fifties Johnny 'Guitar' Watson from Kid Andersen. Andersen and Chortkoff also shine backing Sugaray on the cover of Junior Parker's "In The Dark."

Closing out "Dangerous" is a rendition of Son House's "Preaching Blues" with some nice slide guitar from Goldwasser. It is an interesting and enjoyable performance, if not completely successful to these ears. It does not diminish the overall excellence of the blues heard here.

Sugaray Rayford is such an impressive singer, and with excellent material and the superb backing band, "Dangerous" is another terrific album from a gentleman who is quickly solidifying a place in the upper ranks of blues singers today.

Ron Weinstock



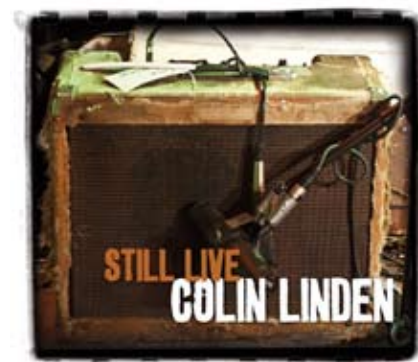
TOM GOEHRING **A Reflected Journey** **MENGLI MUSIC**

Trumpeter and flugelhornist Tom Goehring and crew- reed player Roger Rosenberg, pianist Dave Leonhardt, drummer Paul Wells and alternate bassists Matt Parrish and Roy Cummings- separate themselves from the post-bop pack here with a fresh mix of smart originals and nicely worked covers.

Key to the cut-above results are the constant sonic variations that multi-instrumentalists Goehring and Rosenberg bring. The latter is partial to his lower registered axes, co-joining his baritone sax and bass clarinet with the leader's brass in distinctive, engaging blends. Rosenberg is a standout soloist as well, heard primarily on baritone but also turning in nice soprano sax work on "The Walkdown". Goehring and Leonhardt have their moments as well, the pianist making a nice, reflective debut on the leadoff track, Goehring's cleverly crafted title composition. Among the covers, Thad Jones' "Bossa Nova Ova" and Dizzy's "Con Alma" prove most suitable vehicles for the leader.

Worth running down.

Duane Verh



COLIN LINDEN **Still Live**

Yellow Dog Records

Canadian Colin Linden's latest recording "Still Live" (Yellow Dog Records) is a live recording at a neighborhood Nashville tavern, the Douglas Corner Café. He has been living in Nashville since the 90s. It is Linden's 11th album under his own name, although he has contributed to many recordings by a variety of artists of a variety of stripes. He was backed on this

by John Dymond on bass and harmony vocals, Gary Craig on drums and the legendary Spooner Oldham on organ. One selection, a new version of his “John Lennon in New Orleans” was recorded in a studio during a rehearsal for this performance.

Linden impresses with his songs, his playing and his singing over a program of mostly originals (the one cover is a nice restrained rendition of Howlin’ Wolf’s “Who’s Been Talking”). The opening “Big Mouth” is a blues rooted number displaying his considerable picking skills as well as his restraint and sense of dynamics. A country-folk flavor marks “Between The Darkness and The Light of Day,” while “Smoke Them All,” a collaboration with his wife Janice Powers, is a solo performance which displays Linden’s considerable finger picking guitar (with some jazzy accents) as Linden sings “barrelhouse at midnight the piano moans.” It is a moving tribute to his late friend, pianist Richard Bell.

Other performances include “Sugar Mine,” a lovely rootsy ballad with Linden’s touch on the electric guitar complemented by the light backing he receives. “Dark Night of the Soul” has a lovely lyric that Linden will be there for his friend and lead them from the dark night of the soul while “Too Late To Holler is an exuberantly performed rocker with a very soulful vocal. “Remedy” was written with Jim Weider and recorded by the post Robbie Robertson The Band on their comeback album, and Linden’s bluesy-roots rendition with Oldham gritty on organ is a strong performance that has some of the same feel to it that The Band imparted to so much of their music.

I called Linden’s “From The Water” a stunning recording, and “Still Live” is a similar appealing mix of blues and roots songs.

Ron Weinstock



YVONNICK PRENÉ
Jour De Fête
STEEPLECHASE RECORDS

Paris-born harmonicist Yvonnick Prené has traveled a long way (physically and musically) before recording his Steeplechase Records debut, “Jour De Fête.” Currently living in New York, he started playing blues harmonica at the age of 8 before switching to the chromatic at the age of 17 after hearing Charlie

Parker, as the chromatic is more suited for playing jazz. Influenced by Toots Thielemans, Gregoire Maret and Stevie Wonder, he has developed his own vision and style playing with a lyrical sense with crispness, clarity, and, as appropriate, speed. He has been a participant in the Betty Carter Jazz Ahead Program in Washington DC and was the first harmonica player to audition with the Thelonious Monk Institute in Washington DC,

With respect to this debut album he says “My vision for this debut album is to take the harmonica into uncharted territories, expose it to challenging situations, and in the process create something pleasing for the ears.” On this disc he is accompanied by a band that includes Michael Veanu or Isaac Darche guitar, Javi Santiago piano, Or Bareket or Phil Donkin bass, and Jesse Simpson or Owen Erickson drums. Included are seven originals that are mostly inspired by his living in New York, although there is one tribute to the late writer Ray Bradbury. There are four interpretations of classic jazz tunes included here.

The program is engaging and full of charm. The opening “Obsessions” is a bright and lively number with Prené displaying his facility, fluidity and lyricism, followed by lively solos from Drache and Santiago and a short drum solo. “Thais,” starts in a lazy mode before the pace and intensity increases.

Michael Veanu is impressive here with his thoughtful and fleet guitar. Prené’s playing is especially lovely on Jay Livingston and Ray Evans’ “Never Let Me Go,” followed by the lively interpretation of John Coltrane’s “Satellite.” Santiago’s driving piano evokes McCoy Tyner while the leader imaginatively navigates Coltrane’s composition displaying his crisp and clean articulation. Note should be made of the percussive accents added by drummer Jesse Simpson here. Dizzy Gillespie’s standard “Con Alma” is well suited to this group with some excellent playing from Prené. His tribute to Ray Bradbury, “A Billion Stars,” incorporates clips of the late author’s speech interspersed in the performance.

The disc ends with the upbeat title track. “Jour De Fête” is an engaging and highly accessible recording that is an auspicious introduction to another marvelous jazz harmonica voice.

Ron Weinstock

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VARIOUS ARTISTS

Remembering Little Walter

BLIND PIG

This live disc features modern day harmonica masters Mark Hummel, Charlie Musselwhite, Billy Boy Arnold, Sugar Ray Norcia and James Harmon each taking on two cuts from the songbook of the legendary Little Walter Jacobs. While this would be a fool's errand in the hands of lesser talents, the five acquit themselves well with attention to not only phrasing and tone but, more importantly, feel.

Accompanied by Little Charlie Baty and Nathan James on guitar, June Core on drums and RW Gregsby on bass, each soloist has the expert instrumental support needed to reveal Jacob's talent in not only soloing but in adding just the right spice to tunes that otherwise could fall flat. Included here are such well known numbers as *You're So Fine*, *Mean Old World*, *Can't Hold Out Much Longer* and the oft covered *My Babe* which gets a solo from everyone including Baty, who puts his guitar aside for a turn on the harmonica. Wisely moving beyond just the big hits, also featured are lesser known tracks including *I Got to Go*, *It's Too Late Brother*, *One of These Mornings* and *Crazy Mixed Up World*.

Well worn, often covered or somewhat obscure, everything here is a gem in the hands of this quintet. Even though they draw from the same musical well, the fact that each musician also sings on their featured cuts makes this feel like more than just a collection of hot harmonica licks. If you are late to the Little Walter game, this is a pretty good place to get your bearings before digging back for the originals.

Mark Smith

THE McCRARY SISTERS

Go All The Way

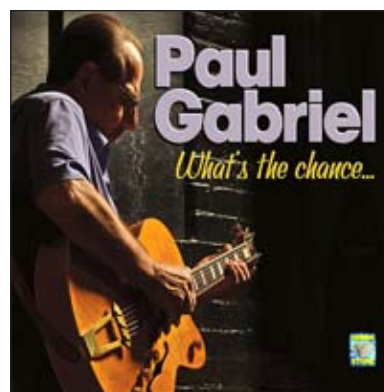
McCRARY SISTER PRODUCTIONS

Featuring the four McCrary sisters (Ann, Deborah, Regina and Alfreda) and a host of first call musicians including co-producers Kevin McKendree on keys and Tommy Sims on guitar this disc hits that glorious sweet spot where gospel, soul, blues, funk and R & B gather to party. Calling on their deep experience backing the likes of Dr. John, Paul Thorn, Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan and as headliners themselves, the sisters have no problems negotiating their way through this diverse collection. Things kick off with *Come On* which has

gospel lyrics and a deep groove propelled by funky horn charts more at home with southern soul than with a Sunday morning in the pulpit. Changing things up, the Tom Hambridge/Gary Nicholson/Buddy Guy penned *Skin Deep* and the Regina McCrary penned *Hum and Moan*, feature rich atmospheric textures perfect for deep listen. Right Where You Are and Let It Go each feature one of the sisters taking the lead vocal duties with the others providing plenty of support echoing her lines with energetic gusto.

Hello Jesus is straight up gospel while *Victory, You Can Make It* and *The Ways of the World* have an old school R & B vibe. *You Can Make It* is a sugary ballad straight out of the 70's that doesn't pack the punch of the rest of the material. *Talk to You* treads closer to the blues than much of the rest of the material although *Train* is certainly near the tracks with it Mavis Staple sass and hard-edged groove. With its rich collection of songs and terrific vocal performances his disc should move the McCrary Sisters from the side of the stage to the front.

Mark Smith



PAUL GABRIEL

What's the Chance

SHINING STONE RECORDS

Paul Gabriel has been a regional treasure in New England, and in a career that spans over 40 years he has appeared on three albums by legendary singer/songwriter Harry Chapin, played slide guitar on Rory Block's Grammy-nominated album "Mama's Blues," toured with Michael Bolton and recorded and toured with his several of his own bands. His friend (and mentor), Duke Robillard has produced Gabriel's new release, "What's the Chance ..." on Shining Stone Records. On this disc he steps into the spotlight on an album of 13 tracks that showcases him as a distinctive, bluesy guitarist, a talented songwriter and a master of diverse musical styles.

On "What's the Chance," Gabriel is backed by a core band of Billy Bileca on bass, Nick Longo on drums and Larry "Buzzy" Fallstrom on keyboards. Special guests on the new album include Duke Robillard on guitars and background vocals; former Butterfield Blues Band alumnus Mark Naftalin on piano; Bruce Bears on keyboards; Steve Pastir on guitar; and the Roomful of Blues Horns consisting of Rich Lataille on alto/tenor sax, Mark Earley on tenor/baritone sax, and

Doug Woolverton on trumpet. With the exception of Chris Kenner's R&B classic "Something You Got," and bassist Bileca's "C.M.C.," Gabriel penned the songs on this.

As Gabriel observes, he first saw Duke Robillard perform with a new band, Roomful of Blues, around 1968 and Duke became an influence and a mentor. Gabriel's music certainly will not provide any surprises for those familiar with early Roomful or Duke and The Pleasure Kings. Gabriel's "Old Time Ball" is a jump blues clearly derived from T-Bone Walker's "T-Bone Shuffle" and is sung and played with a nice graceful swing. "Ride, Ride, Ride" is an appealing bluesy rocker while the title track is a reflective rootsy R&B tinged ballad. "328 Chauncy Street" is a punchy, jazzy instrumental with Robillard and Bears (on organ) taking solos before Gabriel comes in swinging with a bit of buzz-saw in his tone. "Baby I Wish" is a nice uptown blues original with a touch of Percy Mayfield's Tangerine and Brunswick recordings in the arrangement with Bears and Gabriel taking tough solo breaks.

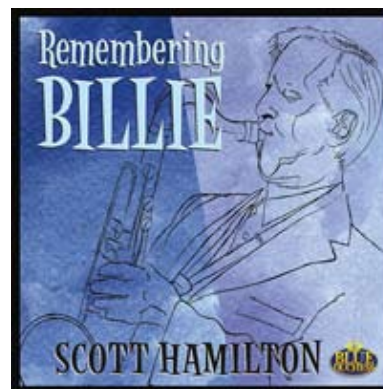
"Devil's Daughter" is an original lyric about a gold digger set to a melody derived from "Nobody Knows You When Your Down and Out," with Mark Naftalin on piano, followed by a fine original jump blues "All That Time Gone." Bileca's "C.M.C." provides Gabriel a chance to display a jazzier side of his guitar playing he as navigates the changes of this interesting original. While the title of "Roomful of Blues" may be inspired by the band, the song is not a homage to the band. With a bass line that evokes Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine When She's Gone," Gabriel, having been lied to once again, pleads to be taken from that room full of blues. Rich Lataille takes a marvelous tenor sax solo on what may be the standout track on this album. "Fine At'Tire," is a change of pace as Gabriel, only backed by Naftalin's piano, recalls a visit to Memphis.

A relaxed shuffle "Spoda Be," closes out "What's the Chance," ending a varied and most appealing blues recording with some roots extensions. Strong material, solid playing mixed with the leader's warm, heartfelt vocals makes for an impressive release.

Ron Weinstock

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SCOTT HAMILTON
Remembering Billie
BLUE DUCHESS

Veteran tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton's new album "Remembering Billie" (Blue Duchess) is a delightful set of ten performances of songs recorded by Billie Holiday. Hamilton had hoped to do a Holiday tribute with Ruby Braff but it ended being something else.

Hamilton's friend Duke Robillard produced the present recording and has Hamilton supported by pianist Tim Ray; bassist Dave Zinno and drummer Jim Gwin. On two selections, Robillard contributes rhythmic acoustic guitar in the manner of Freddie Green. His backing trio provides supple, swinging support to Hamilton along with occasional solos.

Hamilton's saxophone playing is rooted in the swing era's tenor sax masters such as Lester Young and Ben Webster (and I might suggest Benny Carter as another source).

Hamilton displays a warm and robust sound with a slight vibrato and a definite melodic flair, and his playing most likely will appeal to fans of such modern tenor masters Buddy Tate, Houston Person, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims and Gene Ammons.

While the songs on "Remembering Billie" all were part of Lady Day's recorded repertoire, most of the performances only hint at Holiday's recordings. The renditions of "Fooling Myself" (with a lovely arco bass solo from Zinno) and "Good Morning Heartache" (with a solo that is structured somewhat on Holiday's vocal and a nice restrained piano solo) perhaps evoke her recordings more than the other performances.

Throughout this album Hamilton does a wonderful job of musical story telling with his swinging, lyrical playing throughout from the opening of "When You're Smiling" to the closing notes of "If Dreams Come True."

Scott Hamilton's "Remembering Billie" is a splendid celebration of the music of one of jazz' finest singers and iconic personalities.

Ron Weinstock

jazz-blues.com



TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT

Badlands
TELARC

In the history of rock, there have been many bands with siblings included in the line-up, some for the good, some for less than good. Ray and Dave Davies of the Kinks having fist fights on stage during some of their shows come out in the negative side of the ledger, while sometimes it goes for the good as Johnny and Edgar Winter have shown in their work together, for that main example.

Trampled Under Foot (I assume the name was taken from the Led Zeppelin tune) is a Kansas City trio with three siblings in the line-up, bassist/lead singer Danielle Schnebelen and her two brothers, guitarist Nick and drummer Kris. This trio is out to prove the family that stays together, plays together to use an old album title by Spirit.

A mix of rock, blues and funk, BADLANDS is filled with originals although the cover tune at the end may wind up with the most attention as the band does a slow, bluesy take of James Brown's "It's A Man's Man's World," with Danielle's howling vocal leading the way. Best overall number here may be the kick-off "Bad Bad Feeling," where Danielle is thinking her man is not being true. Guitarist Nick welds a solid solo into the title cut while "Pain In My Mind" rides on a floor board of funk.

Guest keyboardist Mike Finnigan pops up in a couple spots, most notably "You Never Really Loved Me" and "I Didn't Try." Danielle channels KoKo Taylor during "Home To You" as Finnigan wraps up the end in a neat, little package.

This Kansas City trio shows some power and flash in their first major label release. And I seriously doubt they are going to be trampled by anyone in the near future.

Peanuts

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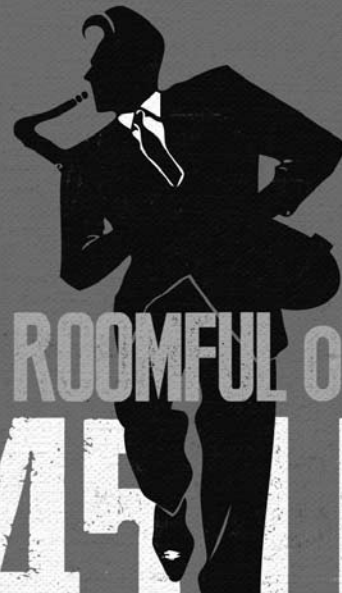
PASCAL LE BOEUF

Pascal's Triangle
NINETEEN EIGHT RECORDS

Known equally for his use of electronics, Pascal Le Boeuf has an intriguing acoustic release, "Pascal's Triangle" (Nineteen Eight Records). Le Boeuf leads a trio with bassist Linda Oh and drummer Justin Brown on a collection of originals that reflect influences as diverse as Radiohead, Herbie Hancock and Brad Mehldau. About the recording, he said, "This album is a collection of original music meant to highlight the conversational voices of the individuals in the band. We trust each other's choices and share an orientation towards self-expression through group improvisation."

Le Boeuf originally conceived the recording ses-

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sion for Pascal's Triangle as a jazz/electronic crossover project. The compositions the trio recorded were connected to a larger vision involving layered recording techniques and replacing electronic instruments in beats that were sequenced in Le Boeuf's computer prior to the session. While he believed this conception was successfully realized (and will be issued in the future), he found he "enjoyed the spontaneity of the more acoustic songs, and when I took the electronics away, the compositions all had an intimate conversational feeling." The result is the present release.

The leader's piano open's wistfully on the first selection, "Home in Strange Places" before Oh and Brown enter with a fervent passage followed by another plaintive solo passage. "Variations on a Mood" is aptly titled as the performance moves from relatively quiet passages to more energetic ones (suggesting The Bad Plus at times). The leader displays a fluid and precise attack with bassist Oh anchoring the trio as Brown drives the performance forward with a mix of precision and energy. "Song For Ben Van Gelder" is a lovely lyrical performance with embellishments added from Roberts with his restrained use of brushes. The energetic tenor of "What Your Teacher ..." is built on a spicy Latin underpinning, while the short solo performance, "Jesse Loves Louise," exhibits a pastoral mood with LaBoeuf precise and uncluttered here. Oh is especially outstanding on "Revisiting a Past Self" where she sets up the performance and takes a strong solo.

In the CD era, this is a relatively short recording of 33 minutes for its 8 tracks, but that might be the only quibble about the playing of Pascal LaBoeuf and his trio. LaBoeuf's imaginative compositions and playing, with their shifting moods and tempos, are complemented throughout by the marvelous playing of Oh and Roberts resulting in this fine piano trio recording. When he adds the electronics of his original conception, it will be interesting to hear the result but "Pascal's Triangle" is marvelous as is.

Ron Weinstock

ROOMFUL OF BLUES

45 Live
ALLIGATOR

"45 Live," the new Alligator CD by Roomful of Blues is a live performance that celebrates the band's 45 years. The band started as a jump blues oriented group inspired by the music of T-Bone Walker, Roy Milton, Johnny Otis, Big Joe Turner, Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson and the like, and even recorded behind Turner and Vinson for a couple of quite well regarded recordings. Over the years it evolved into more of a modern urban blues band (think Bobby Bland's Duke recordings). Originally Duke Robillard fronted the band on guitar and vocals, and when he left Ronnie Earl spent a stint on guitar with Chris Vachon eventually taking over that spot, which he has held for a couple decades. Philip Pemberton has been handling the vocals for some time now. Roomful has become an institution, and I say that

in a positive manner in their having an immediately recognizable sound and approach to the music.

Recorded at The Ocean Mist in Rhode Island over 3 nights, this kicks off with the rocking "Just Keep On Rockin'," followed by the insistent urban blues "It All Went Down

the Drain," although on this latter number and the following "Jambalaya," Vachon sounds like he is trying to copy Lonnie Mack's tone. A cover of Magic Sam's "Easy Baby" gives a chance for Vachon to stretch out with the horns riffing in support. "That's Right" is a superb hot jump blues performance, and it is Rich Lataille who is wailing on tenor sax (Lataille has been with Roomful for 43 years). Lataille's homage to Illinois Jacquet, "Straight Jacquet," allows Lataille, fellow saxophonist Mark Earley and trumpeter Doug Wolverton (growling with his mute) to display their chops on a number that evokes "Flying Home." There are also first rate renditions of "Crawdada Hole," and "Somebody's Got To Go" that Big Joe Turner and Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson respectively recorded with Roomful thirty-five odd years ago. As good as these are, the interpretation of Jimmy Rushing's "I Left My Baby" is really special with Pemberton being terrific and I suspect Buck Clayton would be smiling listening to Wolverton's playing here."

Providing the foundation is the excellent rhythm section of keyboardist Rusty Scott (nice solos on "Crawdada Hole" and "I Left My Baby"), bassist John Turner and drummer Chris Rivelli. They lay down the solid groove and cover a lot of blues genres as Rich Lataille notes, "Though we cover all the bases, our mainstay is horn-driven, hard honking R&B." And there is plenty of that hard driving R&B here.

Ron Weinstock

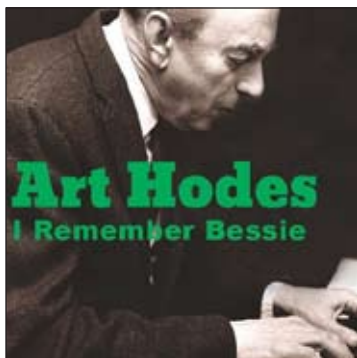
ART HODES

I Remember Bessie
EUPHONIC/DELMARK

Born in Russian but having emigrated to the US as a young boy, Art Hodes established himself as a blues and jazz pianist of note as well as a chronicler of the music. He has an extensive discography and now Delmark has reissued his 1970s Euphonic album "I Remember Bessie" with five additional selections. Hodes grew up in Chicago and had the opportunity as a young person to see King Oliver, Louis Armstrong and Jelly roll Morton as well as Bessie Smith. The Empress of the Blues left such a deep impression on his music and the present album is comprised of solo piano interpretations of songs associated with Ms. Smith and also Ma Rainey as the cover of the original Euphonic LP noted.

As is noted in the liner booklet (which reproduces the original liner notes), Hodes plays in a two handed





orchestral approach mixed in with some ragtime and stride elements. He has a hard touch, but also plays often with restraint, so we go for the low-key “Baby Won’t You Go Home” to more of a stomp approach to “Alexander’s Ragtime Band.” There is a wistfulness to his rendition of Ma

Rainey’s “Yonder Comes The Blues,” along with a tempered enthusiasm for “Cake Walkin’ Babies From Home,” which is also heard here on an alternate take. The restraint he shows on blues like “You’ve Been a Gold Ole Wagon” and “Yellow Dog Blues” is one reason for the appeal of these performances. There is also a lovely performance of “St. Louis Blues” here, a number he would record on several occasions. A later Hodes rendition of this W.C. Handy classic was a favorite of the late Ann Rabson. This specific recording is intriguing, as it starts wistfully before Hodes starts barrel housing.

Listening to Art Hodes from these over three decade old recordings is a chance to listen to a master of blues and jazz piano whose playing is rooted in the early days of jazz, yet remains fresh and accessible to contemporary listeners. “I Remember Bessie” is a delight. *Ron Weinstock*

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