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Issue 352

# jazz & blues report

Christian McBride

Mid-Atlantic  
Jazz Festival



# jazz & blues report

Editor & Founder  
Bill Wahl

Layout & Design Bill Wahl

Operations Jim Martin  
Pilar Martin

#### Contributors

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

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Comments...[billwahl@jazz-blues.com](mailto:billwahl@jazz-blues.com)

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

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# jazz & blues report

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"Buffaloonious"

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



Steve Turre

## Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival

### Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival Returns... Standing Up For The Real Jazz

By Ron Weinstock

Presidents Day Weekend is always a reason for celebration for jazz-lovers in the Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia area as the annual Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival returns. Standing up for real jazz, this year's edition "will celebrate the soulful side of Real Jazz, otherwise known as 'Soul Jazz.'" Among those featured will be the legendary Les McCann who will lead a group that includes saxophonist Javon Jackson. But there is much more to be heard Friday Evening February 14 through Sunday night February 16 at the Hilton Washington DC/Rockville Hotel & Executive Meeting Center, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

The Festival is organized under the leadership of saxophonist, composer and educator Paul Carr as a showcase and benefit for his Jazz Academy of Music. Performances along with workshops and educational programs characterize this event. Notable performers appearing this year include vocalists Giacomina Gates, Vanessa Rubin and Freddie Cole for Friday Night's

kickoff the Ronnie Wells Main Stage performance. Area vocalists Kristin Callahan and Heidi Martin will perform in the MAJF Club Room, while David Cole will play the blues in the Juke Joint.

Saturday, February 15, there will be atrium performances by a variety of high school bands. At noon on the Main Stage, the Festival will present the first The Mid-Atlantic “Jazz Voice”--Vocal Competition. Next on the main stage will be three of the area’s preeminent vocalists, Sharon Clark, Dick Smith, and Lena Seikaly, backed by the Chris Grasso Trio. The Ronnie Wells Main Stage that evening will present the Gary Bartz Quartet, a Trombone Summit with Delfeayo Marsalis, Frank Lacy and Steve Turre with the Christian McBride Trio closing the main stage. On Saturday, highlights of the Club Stage include Aaron Seeber Quartet (with saxophonist Tim Green); vocalists Janine Gilbert-Carter and Chad Carter; and Nadine Rae will be shouting her soulful blues in the Juke Joint.

Sunday, February 16 opens with saxophonist Bobby Watson and the Howard University Jazz Ensemble on the Main Stage. Vocalist Dee Daniels will be backed by the Eric Bryd Trio and then the legendary Benny Golson Quartet comes on. Starting the events on the Main Stage will be trombonist Reginald Cyntje and his Group that includes steel pan player Victor Provost. Cyntje’s CD “Love” was one of the most impressive and moving



Gary Bartz



Paul Carr



Sharon Clark



new jazz releases by a Washington DC area artist in 2013. After Cyntje will be the pairing of Les McCann and Javon Jackson with the festival's headline set. Paul Carr closes the Festival main stage with a tribute to the late pianist Mulgrew Miller with a group including Bruce Barth on piano and Steve Nelson on vibes.

Performances in the MAJF Club Sunday include the Kenny Rittenhouse Septet, The Jazz Academy Orchestra featuring Delfeayo Marsalis, and Leslie Sumney. Linwood Taylor will be playing in the Juke Joint. This night, like the other evenings, will conclude with a midnight jam in the club room led by Wes 'Sugar' Biles. For more information (including ticket packages and accommodations) and to support real jazz, visit the festival's website, <http://www.midatlanticjazzfestival.org>. *Photos by Ron Weinstock*



## February 20 – March 2, 2014

In case you missed it! Reprinted from Issue 351.

Dates for the 2014 U.S. Bank Portland Jazz Festival Presented by Alaska Airlines have been announced. The festival is set to take place February 20 – March 2, 2014.

The complete Jazz Festival lineup will be listed below, with the artists presented in alphabetical order.

The 2013 Portland Jazz Festival was the most well attended Festival to date. Regardless, PDX Jazz Managing Director, Don Lucoff, decided to move the Jazz Festival one week later, to allow music and movie fans the opportunity to support both the Jazz Festival, and International Film Festival, since both events previously ran during the same week. Said Lucoff, "In the spirit of community and collaboration, it made sense to push the Jazz Festival out a week."

### Aaron Diehl - February 22

Hailed by the New York Times as a "Revelation", Columbus, Ohio native and Juilliard graduate Aaron Diehl arrived onto the New York scene playing with the Wynton Marsalis Septet and has not looked back since. Winner of the prestigious Cole Porter Fellowship Competition in 2011 by the American Pianists Association, Diehl locked up a recording deal with Mack Avenue Records and promptly recorded on a Fazioli F-228 grand piano. He showcases a nuanced touch, a comfort zone with tempos ranging

from rubato to brisk, encyclopedic harmonic knowledge, an abiding sense of blues expression and a will – when necessary – to swing.

### Ahmad Jamal - February 21

NEA Jazz Master Ahmad Jamal is a living legend at the age of 83. Jamal is a soul survivor, who lived long enough to reap the benefits of his Olympian artistry – as evidence by his induction into the prestigious Order of the Arts and Letters by French Culture Minister Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, who named him an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2007. Jamal is joined in this rare Portland appearance by his long standing quartet in support of his latest album, *Saturday Morning*, which features bassist Reginald Veal, drummer Herlin Riley and percussionist Manolo Badrena.

### Bob Dorough & David Frishberg - February 23

Dave Frishberg, the 2011 Portland Jazz Master, has enjoyed a career remarkable for both its quality and diversity. Having worked with such greats as Ben Webster, Zoot Sims, Manhattan Transfer and Rebecca Kilgore, Frishberg has established himself as an internationally recognized composer and lyricist as well as a solo performer with a loyal following. Frishberg who rarely struts his vocal vocabulary will oblige in duo with acclaimed pianist and vocalist Bob Dorough. The 90 year old School House Rocker known for his work with Miles Davis and beat poet Allen Ginsberg are set to recast the 1999 Blue Note Records classic, *Who's On First* as part of the Blue Note @ 75 celebration. Dorough, a longtime resident of the Delaware Water Gap region, recorded three albums for the storied imprint and 22 recordings overall dating back to his 1956 debut, *Devil May Care*.

### Bob Mintzer - February 24 & 25

Bob Mintzer leads several musical lives that, at times, seem humanly impossible for one person to sustain. As a 20 year member of the Grammy® Award winning Yellowjackets, Mintzer also leads his own Grammy® Award winning Bob Mintzer Big Band and is the recipient of the Buzz McCoy endowed chair of jazz studies at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Having written over 200 big band arrangements, he honed his writing and playing skills in the bands of Tito Puente, Buddy Rich, Art Blakey, Jaco Pastorius and Gil Evans.

Mintzer will perform as a guest soloist with the PDX Jazz All Star Student Big Band and the PDX Jazz All Star Educators Ensemble lead by Darrell Grant. This education outreach event began in 2011 with Charles McPherson and last year was Gerald Wilson's turn. This one night only program features the compositions and arrangements of the guest soloist.

### Bobby Watson & Horizon - March 1

Horizon, under the leadership of saxophonist Bobby Watson, has stayed true to its sound. After completing his tenure as a member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (eventually becoming musical director), Watson co-founded Horizon with drummer, Victor Lewis as an acoustic quintet modeled after the Jazz Messengers but with its own slightly more modern twist, and recorded three

seminal albums from 1988-91 for Blue Note Records. Now celebrating their 30th Anniversary, hard bop masters Watson and Lewis have reunited and are joined by trumpeter Terell Stafford, Portland native bassist Essiet Essiet, and pianist Edward Simon. Watson, a Kansas City native and current professor at KU, galvanized last year's festival with his appearance as part of the Art Blakey Legacy Band.

#### **Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band - February 20**

Brian Blade is widely acknowledged as one of the most versatile and accomplished drummers in music, performing as a sideman on albums by Daniel Lanois, Herbie Hancock, Kenny Garrett, Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell. Since 2000, Blade has interacted with the Wayne Shorter Quartet alongside pianist Danilo Perez and bassist John Patitucci. He formed The Fellowship Band with pianist Jon Cowherd in 1997 and in the last decade toured with Chick Corea in the high profile 5 Peace Band. Fellowship made two remarkable albums for Blue Note Records (1997 and 2000) and original band members Cowherd, Myron Walden, Melvin Butler, and Chris Thomas will perform as part of Blue Note @ 75.

#### **Buster Williams - February 22**

For half a century, legendary bassist Buster Williams has delivered jazz with style. Playing with innumerable greats, such as Art Blakey, Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, and Sonny Stitt. At last year's festival he went back-to-back anchoring the Steve Kuhn Trio and the Art Blakey Legacy Band. This time around he assembled Something More, a For Portland Only experience with Seattle icon, the trombonist Julian Priester; multi-reedist Benny Maupin, pianist George Colligan and drummer Cindy Blackman-Santana. The reunion of Williams, Priester and Maupin recalls the collective spirit of the 1970 Mwandishi ensemble led by Herbie Hancock. Opening the program is the celebrated Cécile McLorin Salvant, an engrossing singer whose inflections are disarmingly musical with the class of Sarah Vaughan, the instinct of Betty Carter, and the dark lows of Carmen McRae according to Alex Dutilh, Radio France.

#### **Cécile McLorin Salvant - February 22**

Cécile McLorin Salvant is easily one of the most highly anticipated jazz vocalists to emerge in years. Born in the U.S. to French and Haitian parents, the recently turned 24-year-old became the youngest winner of the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition in 2010. Since then, she has received critical acclaim for her debut Mack Avenue project, WomanChild, from media outlets such as The New York Times, Wall Street Journal and NPR's "All Things Considered" and "Fresh Air," comparing her to the likes of Billie Holliday, Besse Smith, and Sarah Vaughn, among others. McLorin Salvant will be accompanied by labelmate, musical director, and pianist Aaron Diehl, bassist David Wong and drummer Rodney Green.

#### **Christian McBride Trio - March 1**

Fully embracing his role as standard-bearer and mentor at age 41, Grammy® Award winning premier

bassist Christian McBride and Mack Avenue recording artist introduces his latest working group in a trio format. Comprised of pianist Christian Sands and drummer Ulysses Owens, Jr., these young and emerging talents have anchored McBride's smokin' Inside Straight ensemble. Since the early 1990s, McBride has released 11 recordings as a leader and performed on over 300 as a sideman for Pat Metheny, Chick Corea, Roy Haynes, John McLaughlin and Kenny Garrett, among others.

McBride who last played Portland three years ago with Inside Straight at Jimmy Maki's, will debut the trio on a co-bill with Horizon. McBride was given his first professional gig at 17 with Watson.

#### **Darrell Grant - February 21**

Pianist, composer and PSU professor Darrell Grant has appeared on major concert stages from the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall to the Monterey, and San Francisco Jazz Festivals. For his CMA commissioned work "The Territory," which Grant debuted last summer with Chamber Music Northwest, the sweeping nine-movement piece blends improvisation and composition and draws inspiration on Oregon's historical heritage as well as the incredible and diverse landscapes in the region.

Grant will be joined by award-winning vibraphonist Joe Locke and an all Portland support ensemble to include: bassist, Eric Gruber; drummer, Tyson Stubelek; saxophonist, John Nastos; bass clarinetist, Kurt Peterson; trumpeter, Tom Barber; singer, Marilyn Keller and cellist, Hamilton Cheifetz.

#### **Eliane Elias - February 20**

Transcribing the music of Bill Evans at age 10, chairing the piano department at São Paulo Conservatory at 15, touring at 17, and arriving in New York at 21, Eliane Elias is at home not only in her native Brazil but where ever she plays and sings: "I can't imagine not doing both." As a lyrical pianist, she has composed and recorded over 20 albums with her own bands, and others, including Herbie Hancock. Elias was nominated for a Grammy® in the Best Jazz Solo Performance category for her 1995 release, Solo and Duets with Herbie Hancock. Elias documented 20 albums for Blue Note records from 1989-2009. Her Blue Note @ 75 performance will captivate boasting the works by her favorites; Jobim, Evans and Chet Baker.

#### **Geoff Keezer - March 2**

Two-time Grammy® Award nominee, pianist and composer Geoff Keezer has worked with a myriad of jazz luminaries. As a member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers at age 18 and touring in the company of Joshua Redman, Christian McBride, Benny Golson, and Ray Brown in his 20s, Keezer is known as a superb technician and improviser. Barely into his 40s, Keezer has become one of the most sought-after artists on the modern jazz scene. His solo piano performance will be in support of his latest solo album, Heart of the Piano, songs by Peter Gabriel, Eva Cassidy, Rush, KT Tunstall,

and Alanis Morissette, among others.

### **Grace Kelly - February 26**

Dubbed a twenty-one-year-old wunderkind, alto saxophonist, composer, and educator Grace Kelly has already hooked the attention of Wynton Marsalis, and graced the stages of Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center. Her boundless musical spirit has netted copious awards and the attention of such jazz veterans as Phil Woods and Lee Konitz, with whom she's recorded. Kelly will make her Portland area debut.

### **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis - February 28**

Formed by Jazz at Lincoln Center Managing and Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis from members of his septet and surviving members of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra is one of the world's finest working big bands. The members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra are 15 of the best soloists, ensemble players, and arrangers in jazz. In residence since 1988, it is widely regarded as the 'finest big band in the world today' (Daily Telegraph, UK). This remarkably versatile band celebrates jazz's large-ensemble tradition by performing a vast repertoire of masterpieces by legends of the genre, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Fletcher Henderson, Thelonious Monk, Mary Lou Williams, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Charles Mingus, Chick Corea and many others, as well as original works and arrangements.

### **Kenny Werner - February 22**

With a gift for improvisation, pianist-composer Kenny Werner was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2010. His education includes the Manhattan School of Music, the Berklee School of Music and connecting with others, such as Joe Lovano, Toots Thielemans, Archie Shepp, Charlie Mingus, and Joe Henderson. A stellar writer-arranger for orchestras, he's worked with the Mel Lewis Orchestra and the Metropole Orchestra of Holland. Kenny's issued a score of CDs including his masterpiece, the classic 2007 Blue Note Records release, Lawn Chair Society featuring Brian Blade, Dave Douglas, Scott Colley and Chris Potter. His lauded publication on improvisation *Effortless Master – Liberating the Master Musician Within* is essential reading. For Portland he'll perform in trio with Ari Hoenig and Johannes Weidenmueller.

### **Oregon - February 24**

The genesis of Oregon took root in 1960 when guitarist/pianist Ralph Towner met pianist/bassist Glen Moore as students at the University of Oregon. The pair formed a musical friendship inspired by Bill Evans and Scott LaFaro, eventually leading them to travel to Europe and play with such greats as Ben Webster and Dexter Gordon. Later connecting with multi-instrumentalist Paul McCandless and percussionist Colin Walcott through a high profile association with Paul Winter the group has inspired audiences in renowned concert halls for over

three decades including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and the Berlin Philharmonic Hall. With Walcott's sudden passing in 1984, the percussion position moved to Trilok Gurtu from 1986-97 and since then, Mark Walker has brought a Latin undercurrent to the ensemble. This year's 2014 Portland Jazz Masters will make their Festival debut and welcome Towner's presence who currently resides in Rome, Italy.

### **Pat Metheny Unity Group - March 2**

Playing in jazz clubs at 15 and an international jazz musician at 20, guitarist, composer, educator, and 20-time Grammy® Award winning guitarist Pat Metheny has played with: Herbie Hancock, Ornette Coleman, Jack DeJohnette, Gary Burton, Jim Hall, David Bowie and countless others. With the Unity Group and a new album just in time for his festival appearance – comprised of saxophonist Chris Potter, bassist Ben Williams, drummer Antonio Sanchez and percussionist Giulio Carmassi – Metheny found a way to take the "Unity" concept all the way and form a platform for the first time that could cover the entire spectrum of things he has done as a bandleader over the years under one roof.

### **Spring Quartet: Jack DeJohnette, Joe Lovano, Esperanza Spalding and Leo Genovese - February 23**

Studying the vibrant history of modern music, not just jazz alone, you'd be hard pressed to find a major name that Jack DeJohnette, Joe Lovano, Esperanza Spalding and Leo Genovese are not connected to, whether it be on recordings, performances or collaborations. To have these musicians co-lead a modern multi-generational project showcases the linear path from the beginning source to the future of the lauded jazz idiom, is a spectacle in itself.

One of the most respected drummers on the planet, NEA Jazz Master Jack DeJohnette who led a brilliantly conceived quartet at last year's festival was hailed by the New York Times as "one of the greatest musicians in jazz history," Grammy® award winning saxophone giant Joe Lovano has distinguished himself as a prescient and path-finding force in the arena of creative music. As leaders over the past 25 years, these two forces of nature recorded upwards of 30 combined Blue Note albums. The young Portland bassist/vocalist/composer Esperanza Spalding was one of the biggest breakout stars of 2011—not just in jazz, but in all genres of music. Her receipt of the 2011 GRAMMY® for Best New Artist was unprecedented—the first time in history that a jazz musician has won the award— but Spalding continues to make the unprecedented the norm. She makes her fourth festival appearance since 2008 including her part in the trio collective ACS, last years west coast festival premiere. The all star frontline is rounded out by the amazing Argentinean pianist Leo Genovese a long-time collaborative partner of Spalding's, who has traveled the globe on her Chamber Music Society and Radio Music Society tours.

### **Tord Gustavsen Quartet - February 25**

Emerging on the scene in 2003 with a breathtaking ECM debut *Changing Places*, Norwegian pianist Tord Gustavsen



has since been met by a huge volume of critical approval around the world and has been honored with the Norwegian Grammy® Award. Gustavsen joins an illustrious recorded piano lineage that reads as a who's who of ECM jazz innovators—Keith Jarrett, Paul Bley, Bobo Stenson, Chick Corea, Art Lande, Steve Kuhn, Nik Bartsch, Craig Taborn and countless others. His working quartet features saxophonist Tore Brunborg, bassist Mats Eilertsen, and drummer Jarle Vespestad. Gustavsen will make his second festival appearance this time at the Mission Theater.

#### **Toshiko Akiyoshi and Lew Tabackin - February 22 & 23**

Over the course of a six-decade career, pianist, band-leader, composer-arranger and NEA Jazz Master Toshiko Akiyoshi has made a unique and vital contribution to the art of big band jazz. Discovered by the late Oscar Peterson while on tour in Japan in 1952, Akiyoshi developed her sound within the scene in New York and moved to Los Angeles where she met her husband, saxophonist Lew Tabackin, and subsequently formed the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra. Having received 14 Grammy® Award nominations, Akiyoshi is also the first woman ever to place first in the Best Arranger and Composer Category in the DownBeat Readers' Poll. A protégé of Bud Powell, the 84-year-old living legend will make an exceedingly rare Portland area appearance with Tabackin, bassist Boris Kaslov and drummer Mark Taylor.

#### **Yellowjackets - February 24**

Throughout their storied 32-year history, the Yellowjackets have undergone numerous lineup changes, never failing to rise to the inevitable challenges of adjustment. Comprised of longtime members - saxophonist Bob Mintzer, keyboardist Russell Ferrante, and drummer William Kennedy – the group's career spans 17 Grammy® Award nominations (and two wins), countless sold-out tours, and worldwide critical acclaim. With 2013's *A Rise In The Road*, the Yellowjackets introduced a new member this year with the departure of bassist Jimmy Haslip – Felix Pastorius (son of legendary jazz bassist Jaco Pastorius). Yellowjackets are making their first Portland appearance in nearly a dozen years.

PDX Jazz, a non-profit cultural arts organization founded in 2003 in partnership with Travel Portland, produces the annual Portland Jazz Festival. The organization's mission is to inspire, educate and develop future jazz audiences for generations to come.

The Portland Jazz Festival is a multi-venue series of jazz events presented each February within Portland, Oregon. Nationally and regionally supported as a cultural tourism initiative in celebration of Black History Month, Portland Jazz Festival is dedicated to preserving America's indigenous art form by presenting internationally recognized jazz masters alongside local jazz musicians. A series of jazz education and outreach programs that extend into Portland's schools and neighborhoods is at the heart of the annual event.

For more information, visit [www.pdxjazz.com](http://www.pdxjazz.com).

## **Winter Jazzfest and City Parks Foundation presents SummerStage/Charlie Parker Jazz Festival Showcase**

**Featuring: The Revive Big Band, featuring special guests Bilal and Dr. Lonnie Smith Celebrating Blue Note Records 75th Year Anniversary - January 9, 2014 Concert Tickets Available for \$15 in Advance**

NEW YORK CITY – City Parks Foundation, in partnership with the Winter Jazzfest is pleased to announce the SummerStage/Charlie Parker Jazz Festival Showcase, a special event taking place at Le Poisson Rouge on Thursday, January 9, 2014. The Winter Jazzfest turns 10 years old in 2014 and in celebration of this milestone, Winter Jazzfest is expanding to five nights from January 7th through January 11th. As a part of this expansion, Le Poisson Rouge will host a preview of artists that will perform as part of the 2014 SummerStage/Charlie Parker Jazz Festival lineup. This evening will feature The Revive Big Band, featuring special guests Bilal, and Dr. Lonnie Smith.

**The Revive Big Band** The musical styles, experience, and tastes of Revive's members vary widely, but their collective mission is the same. "We're carrying on, within the tradition of big bands, what would be relevant today," band-leader Igmarr Thomas says. "[We're] modifying the message and making it translatable, accessible to the people, so that they have something relevant to grasp on to. It represents that little bridge."

Revive's repertoire is an authentic gumbo, featuring original compositions by Thomas, as well as epic orchestrations of selected productions from different producers and notable Hip-Hop songs combined with the original sampled jazz record, all re-imagined and arranged into original works for a big band. "Our voice is one that has a foot deeply placed in the jazz roots and the tradition of that, à la Dizzy Gillespie and Count Basie – but also, another foot deeply invested in 2013, and so on. That's the direction: Dizzy, Dilla, and us," declares Thomas.

Website: <http://igmarthomas.blogspot.com>

**Bilal** A classically trained vocal veteran, Bilal released his debut album *1st Born Second* in 2001, which boasted the popular single "Soul Sista." The follow-up, *Love for Sale* (2006), was shelved but leaked entirely online yet was well received to fans and music critics and has become an underground classic. In the following years, Bilal has collaborated and performed with some of the industry's most prominent artists including, Beyoncé (*Fighting Temptations*), Common (*Like Water for Chocolate*, *Electric Circus*, *Be*, *Finding Forever*), Jay-Z (*American Gangster*), Erykah Badu (*New Amerykah Part One*, *New Amerykah Part Two*), Robert Glasper (*All Matter*), Boney James (*Better With Time*), Musiq (Soulstar) and The Roots among others. He also covered Radiohead's "High & Dry" for the 2006 Radiohead tribute, *Exit Music: Songs With Radio Heads*. Bilal also appears in Dave Chappelle's *Block Party*.

**jazz-blues.com**

**Dr. Lonnie Smith** Dr. Lonnie Smith is an unparalleled musician, composer, performer and recording artist. An authentic master and guru of the Hammond B-3 organ for over five decades, he has been featured on over seventy albums, and has recorded and performed with a virtual "Who's Who" of the greatest Jazz, Blues and R&B giants in the industry. Consequently, he has often been hailed as a "Legend," a "Living Musical Icon," and as the most creative Jazz organist by a slew of music publications. Jazz Times magazine describes him as "a riddle wrapped in an enigma wrapped in a turban!" Always ahead of the curve, it is no surprise Dr. Smith's fan-base is truly worldwide.

Note: Artists participation in SummerStage/Charlie Parker Jazz Festival subject to change

Tickets are required. Tickets are \$15 in advance/\$18 day of show Doors open at 7:00PM Concert begins at 8:00PM For more event information, including group ticket sales, please visit Le Poisson Rouge's website at [http://www.lepoissonrouge.com/lpr\\_events/wjf10-summerstage-showcase-january-9th-2013/](http://www.lepoissonrouge.com/lpr_events/wjf10-summerstage-showcase-january-9th-2013/)

**2014 Winter Jazzfest Ticketing Option:** The \$95 Full Festival Pass includes: Admission to the Jan 7th WJF Kickoff show at LPR w/ Bobby Previte's TERMINALS feat. John Medeski, Nels Cline and guests Orchestra seat/ticket for Jan 8th Blue Note 75th Anniv show at Town Hall w/ Jason Moran, Robert Glasper and guests Admission to the Jan 9th SummerStage/Charlie Parker Jazz Festival Showcase A 2-Day WJF Marathon Pass featuring over 80 groups at 8 different venues

**Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) Delegate Discounted Admission:** (RSVP Required for verification and discount codes) If you are a 2014 registered APAP delegate you have the opportunity to attend the 2014 NYC Winter Jazzfest Marathon at a reduced price, please [rspv@winterjazzfest.com](mailto:rspv@winterjazzfest.com) for more details.

SummerStage, a program of City Parks Foundation, is New York's largest free performing arts festival. SummerStage annually presents over 100 performances in eighteen parks throughout the five boroughs. With performances ranging from American pop, Latin and world music to dance, spoken word and theater, SummerStage fills a vital niche in New York City's summer arts festival landscape. Since its inception twenty-eight years ago, more than six million people from New York City and around the world have enjoyed SummerStage.

Website: [www.summerstage.org](http://www.summerstage.org) Twitter: @SummerStage Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SummerStageNYC>

Winter Jazzfest was established in 2005 with the goal of introducing underexposed artists – those that impacted the jazz scene of that period -- to professional presenters attending the Arts Presenters Conference (APAP). At that time, jazz groups were underrepresented, although they were (and remain) culturally essential to the continued development and future of the music and audiences. Winter Jazzfest is pleased to continue our mission of offering a forum for presenters and music enthusiasts to experience and support the future of jazz. Website: [www.winterjazzfest.com](http://www.winterjazzfest.com)

City Parks Foundation (CPF) is the only independent, nonprofit organization to offer park programs throughout the five boroughs of New York City. CPF works in over 750 parks citywide, presenting a broad range of free arts, sports, and education programs that empower citizens to support their parks on a local level. CPF's programs and community building initiatives reach more than 600,000 people each year, contributing to the revitalization of neighborhoods throughout New York City. Website: [www.CityParksFoundation.org](http://www.CityParksFoundation.org)

## Louis Armstrong House Museum Announces New Docent Program

The Louis Armstrong House Museum is calling on volunteers that are 18-118 years old to join its museum docent-training program. The volunteer position serves a vital link between the historic house and the museum's visitors by interpreting this extraordinary historic site for them. The museum offers flexible schedules for volunteers who wish to donate 5-35 hours per month as part of the program. The museum has only 25 spots open in its inaugural class. In addition to membership in the museum's AllStar Docent Corps, benefits include a certificate of recognition of service, free admission for up to four family members to the museum, employee discount in the LAHM shop, invitation for two to LAHM annual holiday party, gift book and Louis Armstrong House museum t-shirt.

Volunteers in the museum's AllStar Corps will guide visitors through the Louis Armstrong House Museum, introduce the orientation film and shape the visitor experience by accompanying guests throughout their time at the museum. Docents will also assist at museum special events and perform light clerical tasks as needed. Bilingual docents are welcome for our international visitors. Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to [volunteer@LouisArmstrongHouse.org](mailto:volunteer@LouisArmstrongHouse.org) by January 21st for the opportunity to be considered as part of the inaugural class of the AllStar Docent Corps.

In a city as rich in art and entertainment as New York City, the Louis Armstrong House Museum stands as a modern, living memoir of a true American Icon. LAHM, a nonprofit 501c(3) organization, is a National Historic landmark and New York City landmark. The Louis Armstrong House Museum tells the story of the extraordinary life and career of one of the greatest musicians in history. All of its furnishings are original and have been preserved, giving visitors the feeling that Louis and Lucille just stepped out for a minute. Since opening its doors ten years ago, LAHM has welcomed more than 100,000 visitors to the wonderful world of Louis Armstrong. LAHM holds seven collections of photographs, sound recordings, letters, manuscripts, instruments and artifacts, making it the largest publicly held archival collection in the world devoted to a jazz musician.

The Louis Armstrong House Museum is located at 34-56 107th Street in Corona, Queens. The Museum is open Tuesday - Friday from 10 am to 5 pm and Saturday/Sunday from 12:00 noon-5 pm. Parking is available within the neighborhood and the museum is accessible by subway via the 7 Train.



# 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 rified



*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.



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

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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can



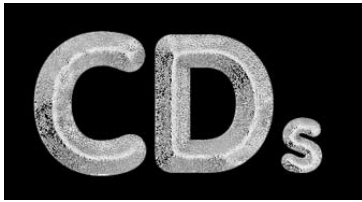
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## FRANK WESS

### Magic 201

IPO RECORDINGS

Jazz master, Saxophonist and flutist Frank Wess, was one of a number of jazz giants who passed away in 2013. From the same sessions that produced the marvelous "Magic 101" comes the follow-up "Magic 201" on IPO Recordings. The Washington DC native came to general notice during his tenure with Count Basie, but was one of the earliest jazz players to make a strong impression playing flute in addition to the tenor saxophone. Returning from the prior album are pianist Kenny Barron and drummer Winard Harper. On this recording they are joined by guitarist Russell Malone and bassist Rufus Reid for more ballads and blues.

As on the prior recording Wess exhibits a warmth and tenderness in his playing that evokes the other great tenor balladeers, most notably Ben Webster. Things get off to a terrific start on "It Could Happen To You" with Barron taking a lovely solo along with Reid while Harper keeps the pulse steady. "A Cottage For Sale" opens as a duet with Malone before the full band joins in and Malone's guitar solo (followed by Barron) complements Wess' own lovely feathery playing. Sir Roland Hanna's "After Paris" has more romanticism with nice playing by Barron under Wess' sax, which is followed by Wess on flute for a lovely solo rendition of the Bergman and Legrand classic "The Summer Knows."

Other musical delights include the duet with Barron on "Embraceable You," with Barron's playing matching Wess for its tuneful joy. As Chris Vandercook observes in the notes, "On ballads, especially, the lyrics hover just out of reach; if Frank Wess plays a song you know, you'll hear every word."

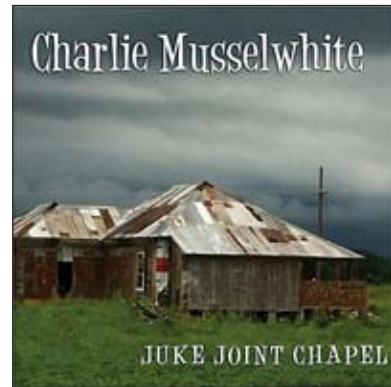
Malone kicks off Wess' gently rocking "Blues For Ruby," with some single note runs and even quotes Billy Butler's classic 'Honky Tonk' solo before Wess takes us into the late hours with some down home cooking, followed by a nice Malone solo and some restrained playing from Barron. Wess' ballad, "If You Can't Call, Don't Come," also conveys a morose, late night feel.

The recording closes with a rendition of the Chaplin-Cahn standard, "If It's The Last Thing I Do," that starts as a brief duet with Reid before the whole band joins in. Reid takes a solo on this one with Malone and Barron lightly comping in support with the leader taking this recording out with more marvelous sax.

This additional installment of the late Frank Wess' final recording session is a reminder of the void his passing has left us. One will rarely hear an album of blues and ballads played today with the feeling, warmth and tone that Frank Wess played with. Frank Wess left us with musical magic.

This is being released on February 11, 2014.

*Ron Weinstock*



## CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE

### Juke Joint Chapel

HENRIETTA RECORDS

Over 45 years ago a young Charlie Musselwhite recorded his first album for Vanguard Records. His career has found him become an elder statesman of the Chicago styled blues which has seen him playing with so many legends of the music, exploring Brazilian music (and incorporating aspects of such music in his own) as well as leave a legacy of over twenty albums. His latest album is "Juke Joint Chapel" on his own Henrietta Records label. This was recorded at The Shack Up Inn, on Highway 49 in Clarksdale, Mississippi and had him with a band including guitarist Matt Stubbs, bassist Mike Phillips and drummer June Core (an alumnus of the late Robert Lockwood Jr's Band).

It's a fine band that plays with a rootsy, idiomatic approach. June Core's drumming is particularly noteworthy, but it is Musselwhite himself who sings and plays with a vigor that has not been apparent on some of his recent recordings. On those outings, his vocals conveyed a sense of world-weariness to some extent and his harp playing was somewhat more evocative



of the second Sonny Boy Williamson. Here his vocals are a bit more direct and his harp playing has a harder sound. This is apparent in the opening rendition of Eddie Taylor's "Bad Boy" as well as his reprisal of Shakey Jake's "Roll Your Money Maker," with Stubbs evoking Magic Sam's guitar playing and Phillips providing a backing vocal.

There is a strong cover of Little Walter's "It Ain't Right" that brings back memories of forty year old albums on Arhoolie, and on his "Blues Overtook Me" he sings about how the blues took over when he was a child. Another Musselwhite original, "Strange Land," has a lyric about getting lost and having to find his way set against a rocking "Catfish Blues" groove. Stubbs crisp, trebly playing is quite effective, and Core again displays his ability to push the groove and add interesting accents in a manner few blues drummers today do. Another choice original is "Feel It in Your Heart" where he takes us on his journey to Brazil as he celebrates show music can bring us together with a driving groove that has a Brazilian accent.

The album closes with Duke Pearson's "Cristo Redentor," originally recorded by Donald Byrd and covered by Musselwhite on his debut album. It remains a showpiece for him and his nuanced playing evidences not simply his virtuosity, but his good taste. The recording is fine and Musselwhite and his very fine band sound almost as if this was a studio, not location, recording. The result, "Juke Joint Chapel," may be of Musselwhite's finest recordings in some time. *Ron Weinstock*



**VOLCAN**  
Volcan  
5 PASSION

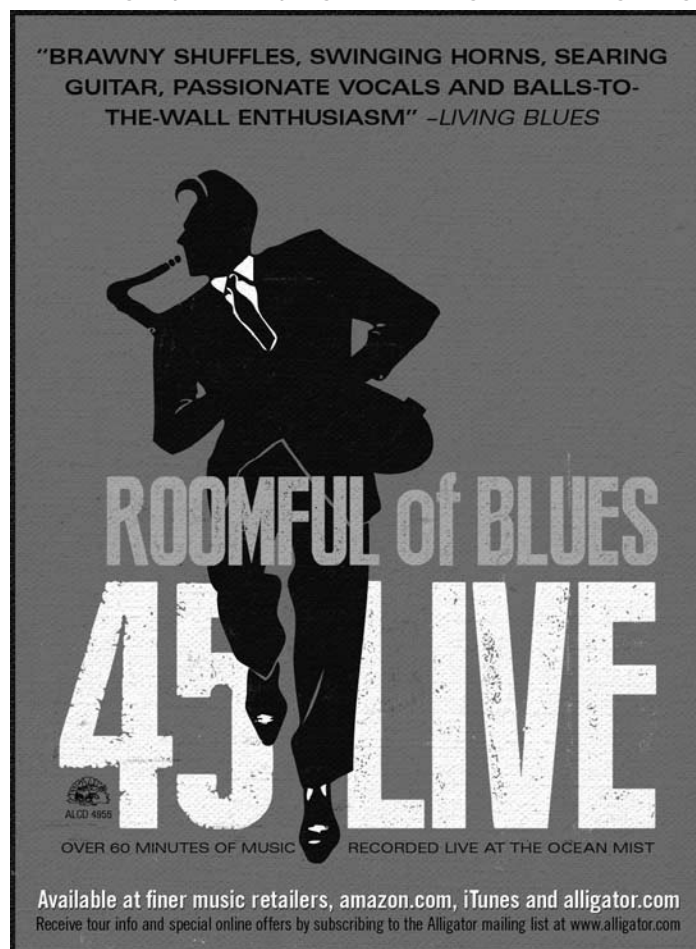
Four accomplished Latin players: keyboardist Gonzalo Rubacaba, bassist Jose Armando Gola, and percussionists Horacio Hernandez and Giovanni Hidalgo, here create a fresh fusion sound both strong on roots feel and absent of cliché. Mr. Rubacaba's play, predominantly on acoustic piano, rides atop a constant bed of simmering rhythm. He uses his wide allotment of space sparingly, employing a precise touch with an equal flair for the elegant and the exploratory. Mr. Gola gets ample opportunity to work his solid solo chops as well. Fusion with this much earthiness and personality is an all-too-infrequent pleasure. *Duane Verh*



**DEB RYDER**  
**Might Just Get Lucky**  
BEJEB MUSIC

A surprising delightful and varied set of blues comes from Southern California vocalist Deb Ryder titled "Might Just Get Lucky" on Bejeb Music. Originally from Chicago, she displays a strong, nuanced voice as well as a songwriter full of wit and wisdom who also produced this recording. With her husband Ric and drummer Brad Swanson anchoring a studio band that includes guitarists Albert Lee and Kirk Fletcher amongst others, "Might Get Lucky" provides ten originals that will certainly catch one's ear.

She belts out her feeling that she is better off alone on the opening "Get a Grip," with Kirk Fletcher's fine B.B. King-styled playing enhancing her strong sing-



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ing with a shuffle jump band shuffle backing. The big voice she displays here perhaps reflects a bit of Etta James influence, who was one of several mentors she has been fortunate to have. “These Blue Collar Blues” is a rocking number to jitterbug to as she cajoles us to get out and have fun and dance all night long. Albert Lee provides the guitar solo while Stan Behrens adds some saxophone commentary. “Really Gone” is another strong blues as she sings about her man this time being really gone with some excellent harp from Behrens and guitar and Fletcher on guitar on this Chicago-styled blues. Her singing again impresses with her subtle phrasing in addition to her big voice.

Ryder turns down the volume but turns on the heat with smokey, sultry singing on the title track with lyrics about buy her a scotch on rocks and dance with her like one means it and one might just get lucky. Pianist Greg Hilfman is outstanding here and drummer Swanson’s use of brushes is very effective. After the strutting funk of “Come On Home To Me” (with more outstanding Fletcher guitar), Ryder takes us on a zydeco-flavored ride on “Ce Soir Ce Soir” (with Gee Rabe on accordion). The atmospheric minor key blues, “Bad Bad Dream,” is followed by another number about relationships falling apart, “The Angels Cried,” with a strong lyric and searing guitar from Fletcher.

The closing performance is the gospel original “These Hands” where she is backed only by James McVay’s dobro as she sings about how she has used her hands and pleads, “Take these hands and use them Lord.” It concludes a most impressive recording of varied and strong blues performances that we are lucky to be able to enjoy.

*Ron Weinstock*



### **THE WEE TRIO** **Live at The Bistro** **BIONIC RECORDS**

The Wee Trio, a Brooklyn, NY based trio comprised of vibraphonist James Westfall, bassist Dan Loomis and drummer Jared Schonig, recently issued their fourth album “Live at The Bistro” (Bionic Records).

The trio is known for transcending musical genres (one of their prior records was devoted to the music of David Bowie), but this live recording made in St. Louis in February, 2013 perhaps has a bit more straight focus

in a mix of interpretations of classics and originals.

The opening to Ray Noble’s “Cherokee” is a bit dreamy until Westfall states the melody and then leads the trio on a hot interpretation of this swing era standard. Westfall displays a crisp attack with a clear lyricism in his solos as Loomis and Schonig push things along. Schonig takes a drum solo to introduce his “Sabotage” with a driving groove with bassist Loomis helping state its theme before Westfall’s clean, rhythmically infused solo.

Westfall’s “White Trash Blues” is a bouncy original followed by the trio’s rendition of David Bowie’s “Queen Bitch,” with seamless navigation of the composition’s changing motifs and tempos. Loomis’ bass solo introduces the rendition of Isham Jones’ “There Is No Greater Love,” with he and Westfall soloing with Schonig accenting their solos. Westfall’s “Space Jugglers” is a spirited original with a bit of hi-life feel, while his “New Earth” opens more reflectively before Schonig sets forth a more dynamic feel. Loomis’ “Ranthen” is a number with changing tempos and dynamics.

After a drum solo, the performance concludes with Schonig’s exhilarating “White Out,” that is energetically and imaginatively played and further showcases the tight interplay that makes The Wee Trio’s “Live at The Bistro” to be such serious and delightful fun.

*Ron Weinstock*



### **MAGIC SAM** **Live at the Avant Garde** **DELMARK**

The blues world was abuzz when word got out that a previously unknown live recording of the legendary Magic Sam was coming out on Delmark. “Live at the Avant Garde” makes available a June 22, 1968 performance at a Milwaukee coffee house and is a revelation among the live recordings of Magic Sam by the clarity of the location recording.

Jim Charne, who made the recordings, describes how it all came about in the liner notes as well as background on the coffee house, which would close several months after this performance. The sound of Sam’s vocals and guitar, as well as that of his backing musicians, bassist Big Mojo Elem and drummer Bob Richey, sounds almost like they were in a recording studio.

In addition to the clean, crisp sound, the music is



exceptional. I am not claiming that Sam is better than the prior live recordings, which I have not listened to recently. Just that Sam's playing is terrific and his vocals are right on, from the first notes of his cover of Freddie King's "San-Ho-Zay" to the closing B.B. King instrumental, "Hully Gully Twist."

There are strong renditions of "I Don't Want No Woman," "I Need Your Love So Bad," "Feeling Good," "That's All I Need" and "Looking Good," all from the West Side Soul album that had been issued a few months previously. There are also his rendition of Lowell Fulson's "It's All My Fault" (a source of Sam's "All Your Love"), his own "Bad Luck Blues" and "You Belong to Me," Muddy Waters' "Still a Fool," Junior Wells "Come On In This House," Jimmy McCracklin's "Every Day, Every Night," Jimmy Rogers' "That's All Right," and Otis Rush's "All Your Love (I Miss Loving)".

One thing that is worth noting is the range of artists and songs Magic Sam covered this June 1968 evening. Yet whether singing a Muddy Waters classic or Otis Rush, Sam brought his own voice and distinctive guitar while supported by the marvelous duo of Elem and Richey. The songs are performed at a nice tempo and lack the frenzy or overwrought vocals that mar a couple of performances on "West Side Soul" ("Mama Talk To Your Daughter" and "My Love Will Never Die" on that classic album).

With this wonderful sound and superb music, "Live at the Avant Garde" is more than the best sounding live Magic Sam recording. It is another terrific Magic Sam album.

**Ron Weinstock**



## CAROLYN LEE JONES

**The Performer**

**SELF-RELEASED**

If Dallas doesn't come to mind right off as a mainstream jazz haven, this top-notch session, and the fetching vocals of Ms. Jones, may be cause for consideration. Fans of Diana Krall should be attracted to the casual sounding confidence and subtle sultriness in Jones' delivery, which makes for a most appealing presence throughout this set of well-chosen fare.

The nicely tailored arrangements, principally the work of pianist Brad Williams, spell Ms. Jones with smart solo breaks; the sax and trombone play being particularly solid. Top tracks include "Small Day Tomorrow", "If You Were Shakespeare", and Stevie Wonder's "Creepin'". Those thirsting for a fresh jazz vocal fix should run this one down.

**Duane Verh**



## CYRIL NEVILLE

**Magic Honey**

**RUF RECORDS**

Cyril Neville's new recording "Magic Honey" (Ruf Records) under his own name is one that will certainly appeal to many with its mix of New Orleans grooves, funk and blues-rock.

This is his first album for Ruf and he is backed by Cranston Clements on guitar, "Mean" Willie Green on drums, Carl Dufrene on bass and Norman Caesar on keyboards with Cyril on percussion as well as singing. Making appearances here on selected tracks are Allen Toussaint and Dr. John on keyboards, and guitarists Mike Zito (a fellow member of the Royal Southern Brotherhood), David Z (who produced this set) and Walter Trout, with backing vocals from his wife Gaynelle and son Onari.

For these ears, this release is a mixed bag. The title track certainly opens this music on a strong note with its tough, strutting groove and a terrific vocal about his queen bee, who drips her honey on him with some fine, uncredited harmonica in the backing. Its followed by a terrific piece of New Orleans funk on Dr. John's "Swamp Funk" (on which Dr. John is on organ and Allen Toussaint on piano) that could have been from three decades ago.

However the following track, "Something's Got a Hold On Me," is a heavy handed blues-rock performance that is tightly played perhaps but the backing including David Z's guitar solo will come off to many besides myself as a bit over-the-top. The Latin-flavored "Another Man" (co-penned with his wife) is an appealing song that will evoke Santana's bluesier recordings including Clements spicy guitar.

"Still Going Down Today," that Mike Zito co-wrote with Neville, is one of several topical lyrics on this and followed by a cover of Paul Butterfield and Henry Glover's "You Can Run But You Can't Hide." The blues-rock backing perhaps contributed to neither performance standing out to these ears. I found the rendition of Warren Haynes "Invisible" catching my attention with Neville singing about acting as if he was invisible.

"Blues Is The Truth" is an original blues about what the blues is and sometimes the down home blues can heal the pain with some intense singing, although the backing might have benefited from a bit more nuanced

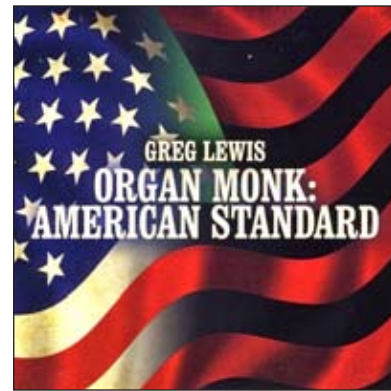
guitar.

Walter Trout co-wrote "Running Water," with a relaxed, funky groove and a very clever lyric with Trout providing the effective guitar pyrotechnics on a short guitar break as well as responding to Neville's vocals during the song's coda. Otis Rush's original recording of "Working Man" was originally done as a Stax oriented R&B performance, while Neville's vocal fronts a heavy metal blues-rock jam. The closing "Slow Motion," is infectious with its steady rocking reggae groove and the more supple backing.

As my comments above suggest, I found "Magic Honey" a mixed bag of performances with some first-rate tracks mixed in with others that did not stand out (and a couple tracks were forgettable). I recognize that there are fans of album rock and blues-rock who will differ with that opinion and may you enjoy it.

*Ron Weinstock*

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**GREG LEWIS ORGAN MONK**  
**American Standard**  
**SELF-PRODUCED**

Greg Lewis' Organ Monk, an organ led group that has focused on the music of Thelonious Monk, has a unique focus in their third album, "American Standard" (self-produced). While previous recordings have interpreted Monk's compositions, "American Standard" plays songs that Monk did not write but did perform.

Those who have heard Monk's renditions of songs from Duke Ellington as well as songs such as "Liza", "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea", "Dinah" and "Just a Gigolo" know how distinctive Monk's renditions of these songs are. Lewis takes Monk's renditions as inspiration and a starting point for his group's performances on this recording.

For this recording, organist Lewis' Organ Monk

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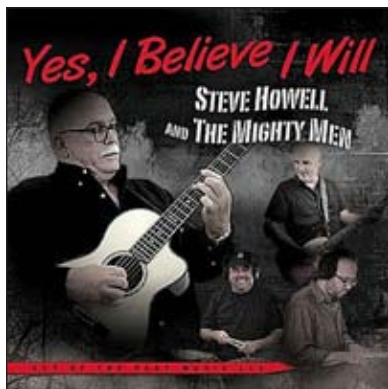
Photo © Robyn Churchill



includes tenor saxophonist Reggie Woods, guitarist Ron Jackson, drummer Jeremy “Bean” Clemons and trumpeter Riley Mullins. This writer is familiar with some of Monk’s recordings of these standards with his angular lines, his spare phrasing and his stride-rooted piano. The Hammond B-3 does not lend itself to such an attack, but the group does provide distinctive renditions in the performances heard here.

I was very impressed by the playing throughout. Lewis is a strong organist with a punchy attack on “Nice Work if You Can Get It,” that also displays gritty tenor sax by Reggie Woods. Mullins displays fire on Lulu’s Back In Town, while he takes a bit softer and rounded approach on “Dinah,” before Woods plays in a bit more gut-bucket manner. The ballad, “I Should Care,” is a showcase of Mullins as well as for the leader. “Tea For Two” in contrast is a trio number that showcases the nimble, fleet guitar of Jackson. On “Everything Happens To Me” Woods helps construct the mood with some bluesy-playing against the leader’s organ backing.

Drummer Clemons sounds heavy handed at a few points, but it is not a serious issue on this strong, fascinating organ jazz recording. **Ron Weinstock**



## STEVE HOWELL & THE MIGHTY MEN

**Yes, I Believe I Will**  
**OUT OF THE PAST MUSIC**

A Living Blues review described the music of Texas acoustic singer and guitarist Steve Howell as “a gentle, Deep South-inspired acoustic troubadour daydream that is sure to appeal to a diverse set of country, blues and roots music fans.”

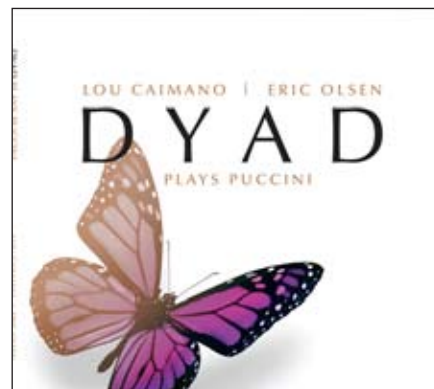
It is an apt description of his new release “Yes, I Believe I Will” on “Out of the Past Music.” Howell brings his low-key and genial vocals to a variety of folk, blues and country material backed by the deft support of his band, The Mighty Men, comprised of Chris Michaels (electric and acoustic guitars, bass), Dave Hoffpauir (drums) and Jason Weinheimer (keyboards).

While inspired by the likes of Mississippi John Hurt, Howell’s music is perhaps even more in the vein of such sixties folk troubadours as Patrick Sky, Eric Anderson and Tom Rush. Listening to him sing about meeting his gal on Sugar Hill on the opening blues “I

Had the Notion,” he will never be mistaken for John Lee Hooker. The restrained approach gives a certain appeal to his interpretation of Willie Brown’s “Future Blues” if lurking the urgency of the classic Paramount 78. His country roots are evident on a fine reading of Mel Tillis’ “Walk on Boy” (a reminder of what a great songwriter this country legend was) and Doc Boggs “Country Blues (AKA Hustling Gambler),” a wonderful moody rendition of an old time ballad. Also nice is “Wasted Minds” a contemporary country ballad and a folkie rendition of The Fleetwood’s “Mr. Blue.”

Listening to this brings memories when I was in graduate school at the University of Buffalo when the folk club brought in the likes of Steve Goodman, Utah Phillips, Rosalie Sorrels and John Prime and while Howell may not reach of the heights of Goodman singing “City of New Orleans” and “Penny Evans” but “Yes, I Believe I Will” is a delightful, congenial mix of folk, country and blues that will appeal to a wide range of roots music listeners.

**Ron Weinstock**



## LOU CAIMANO AND ERIC OLSEN

**Dyad Plays Puccini**  
**RINGWOOD RECORDS**

Dyad is a partnership between alto saxophonist Lou Caimano and pianist Eric Olsen, and the two have a new recording of duets “Dyad Plays Puccini” (Ringwood Records).

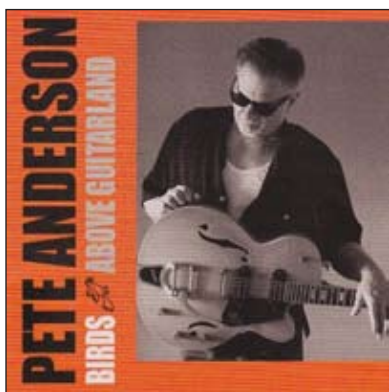
Olsen’s wife, operatic singer Pamela, mentioned to him that Caimano’s alto saxophone reminded her of an opera singer and this fact led to this duet recording which fuses the lovely melodies of the great opera composer Puccini with the jazz instincts and inventions of Dyad. Each contributed more than simply their playing as Olsen contributed seven arrangements and Caimano three.

While I am not overly familiar with Puccini’s operas, there was instant recognition of “Musetta’s Waltz” from “La Boheme,” and one is struck by the lovely, almost clarinet tone of Caimano along with Olsen’s stately accompaniment and his own lyrical solo. Other songs the duo interprets may be less familiar to my ears, but the performances are equally enchanting and one can hear echoes of his music in more contemporary

music. Portions of the rendition from of “Ch’ella mi credo” (from *La Fanciulla del West*) evoke Paul Simon’s “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” and make me wonder whether Simon was a Puccini fan in his youth. Caimano’s arrangement and very vocalized playing here certainly leaves a strong impression on the listener. There jaunty rendition of the “Act I Overture” for “*Madame Butterfly*” that contrasts with the delicate, wistful “Che gelida manna,” but both are beautifully rendered in their own manner with some exquisite interplay between the two.

Puccini left us a body of some of the most memorable and lovely melodies in all of music and the marvelous jazz duo interpretations from Lou Caimano and Eric Olsen make “*Dyad Plays Puccini*” one of the most intriguing and delightful surprises to come along.

**Ron Weinstock**



**PETE ANDERSON**  
**Birds Above Guitarland**  
 LITTLE DOG RECORDS

After a long career backing and producing the likes of Dwight Yoakam, Michelle Shocked, Lucinda Williams and Rosie Flores, guitarist Pete Anderson took the roll of bandleader and launched his solo career as a jazzy bluesman. This is the fifth disc in that adventure.

As always he’s slinging a Telecaster and singing up a storm, but he also spends some time on the baritone guitar, bass, harmonica and percussion. Joined by Michael Murphy on a variety of keys, a couple of horn players and a host of drummers, Anderson works his way through a batch of well crafted originals by himself and a number of co-writers. On *36 Hour Day* his twangy guitar groove is propelled by rocking horn accents as he works through the reasons he needs 36 hours to be with his lady. The country inflected *Talkin’ Bout Lonely* is a cry in your beer weeper while *Talkin’ My Baby Down* is an upbeat bluesy number with the bouncy music in stark contrast to the warning shot he throws out to anyone dumb enough to mess with his baby. *For You* is a sophisticated, jazzy, number that features a fat guitar tone and lyrical grooves that would make Santana envious.

*Big Money* is a funk/jazz number featuring a well-timed indictment of those making the big money while

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sending work overseas. While many guitarists tend to fall into a range of predictability, Anderson keeps the listener guessing. On *Empty Everything* he avoids the jazzy leads of some of the other tunes in favor of brittle single string guitar notes that stand out not only for their difference from other tracks but because of their stark contrast to the warm b3 grooves that carry the melody. In contrast, *Red Sunset Blues* could come from a spaghetti western with its reverb drenched groove and *Rock in My Shoe*, has a deep, swampy groove that could come off a Tony Joe White or CCR disc. As a bonus, the later tune gets reprised at the end of the disc with Bekka Bramlett on vocals. All killer, no filler. This is a terrific disc.

**Mark Smith**



**CHRIS BIESTERFELDT**  
 Urban Mandolin  
 SELF-RELEASED

One can easily get the impression that mandolinist Biesterfeldt is on a mission to bust through genre stereotyping in a big way, given the range of material found in this set. It likely would be hard to regard this axe strictly in Mediterranean or bluegrass terms after hearing it cover ground trekked by Dizzy, Bird, Eddie Harris, Zappa, Jimmy Smith and Weather Report.

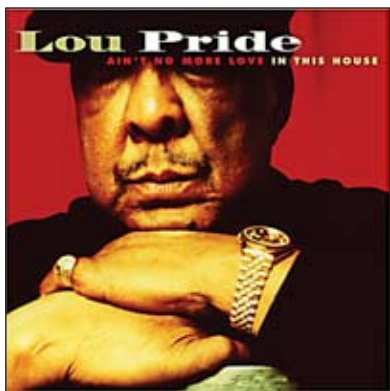
This ambition aside, Mr. Biesterfeldt and his sturdy rhythm partners, Adam Armstrong (bass) and Eric Halvorson (drums), simultaneously serve up a lively, straight-up trio session, energized by the leader’s fleet, smart fretwork as well as the tasty variation present. Dizzy’s “Bebop”, the Eddie Harris classic “Freedom Jazz Dance” and Jaco Pastorius’ “Teen Town” are standouts.

**Duane Verh**

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**LOU PRIDE**  
**Ain't No More Love In This House**  
 SEVERN RECORDS

There is a bittersweet feeling Severn Records' David Earl expresses in his brief liner notes to his label's release of the final recording by the late soul-singer Lou Pride, "Ain't No More Love In This House."

Expressing great joy in releasing this final work by Pride for his fans a year after he passed away, Earl notes "Maybe as the years go by I will be able to listen as [his loyal fans] will." Earl was close to Pride as this comment shows.

Like recent Severn releases, this is handsomely produced with an excellent studio band of guitarist Johnny Moeller, keyboard whiz Benjie Porecki, bassist Steve Gomes and drummer Robb Stupka. Trumpeter Kenny Rittenhouse arranged and conducted the punchy horn section and the backing vocals are well integrated into the recordings. What a marvelous recording this is with memorable originals and choice covers, excellent musicianship and Pride being in top form.

One of the themes of the songs are marriages and relationships breaking apart such as the title song that Pride penned where he comes home to discover that his wife has moved out and left a note that Pride hadn't done anything wrong, just that she found another. "Daddy Don't You Walk So Fast" has a similar theme with his marriage being over and as he is leaving his child cries for him not to leave.

"I Didn't Take Your Woman" is a wonderful recasting of an Ann Peebles recording as Pride tells a man that he didn't take the man's woman, rather it was the man's failure to take care of her. It is set against a smoldering backing in the manner of classic Willie Mitchell productions for Hi Records.

"Take It Slow" is a marvelous slow jam, soul ballad, while "She Boom Boom Me" is a blues with Moeller playing sizzling guitar with riffing horns in support. Here Pride sings about his Mississippi woman and whom he has a special package for delivery (maybe a mojo or black cat bone or maybe her ya ya that Lou just can't leave alone).

"I'm Gotta Move On Up" is a strong uptown reworking of a 45 odd year old Luther Allison recording that Pride nails with his controlled, yet fervent vocal. Pride's lovely "We Can Do What We Want" is listed as a duet

with Caleb Green. Knowing Caleb Green from his singing the National Anthem at Washington, DC sporting events, I would never have guessed that was Green's falsetto providing harmony here.

The closing interpretation of the Simply Red pop hit "Holding Back The Tears" sounds like it was from a classic R&B album from the seventies. It fits in seamlessly with the other songs on this recording. Lou Pride may be gone but his music more than lingers on and "Ain't No More Love In This House" stands up as amongst the finest soul recordings of the past couple decades.

*Ron Weinstock*



**THE PLANET D NONET**  
**FEATURING MICHAEL RAY**

**Rays of the Sun**  
 EASTLAWN RECORDS

The Planet D Nonet is a Detroit based big little band that plays a range of music from jump blues to repertoire jazz performances. The music of Sun Ra has been one of the sources that they mined in the past, and they were joined at the end of the last year by trumpeter Michael Ray, an alumni of Sun Ra's Arkestra, who has continued to play Sun Ra's music in his own groups. The result is a new album "Rays of the Sun" on Eastlawn Records that provides new interpretations of Sun Ra's repertoire.

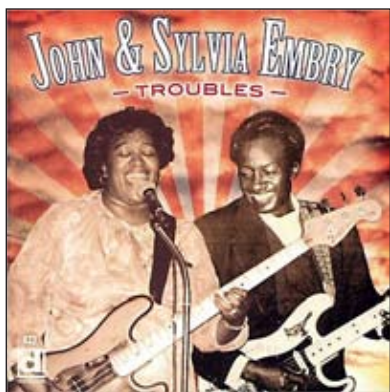
The origin of this recording happened when drummer RJ Spangler, one of the leaders of Planet D, heard from Michael that he would be in Detroit. It was recorded at bassist Joel Peterson's place, Trinosophies, and recorded (in Spangler's words) "in the style of a Grateful Dead taper," given a small budget. Co-leader trumpeter James O'Donnell and trombonist John Paxton have also known Ray for a number of years. Ray apparently fit in well with the Nonet and the band either played Joshua James arrangements or Rob E. Cohen's transcriptions.

Joshua James is one of the standout players here on baritone and soprano saxophonists as well as clarinet and bass clarinet. Mention also must be made of the keyboards of Mike Malis and Daniel Bennett's clarinet. Ray is of course playing familiar music (some of which he also plays in his own Kosmic Krewe) and contributes some lead vocals as the rhythm section percolates in support of the marvelous interplay amongst the horns

and some nice soloing. While there is some chanting, it is briefer than one might experience during Sun Ra's live performances which were very theatrical in addition to musical.

The music here is more of Sun Ra's cosmic 1960s and 1970s mode with a bit less focus on some of the more Tadd Dameron-ish bop stylings of Sun Ra's fifties band or Sun Ra's revisiting of classic Fletcher Henderson arrangements as with the prior East Lawn recording of Sun Ra's music "We Travel The Spaceways." The band sounds pretty solid and plays the interstellar numbers with a real feel for Sun Ra's own performances (that have been well documented) although the sound lacks some bite (likely a result of how it was recorded) which is the only quibble with this production. It should be noted that poet John Sinclair recites one of Sun Ra's poems for a bonus performance of "There is Change in the Air."

This can be obtained from <http://cdbaby.com> and more information can be found on <http://www.east-lawnrecords.com>.  
**Ron Weinstock**



## JOHN & SYLVIA EMBRY

Troubles  
DELMARK

The release of a long out-of-print album by the late John & Sylvia Embry, "Troubles" on Delmark, is an occasion for blues fans to rejoice.

The album by the two (who had divorced when they recorded it) was originally titled "After Hours" when issued on Razor Records and the present release also includes a 45 by Johnny, "I Love the Woman" and Johnny's Bounce" (which are the last two cuts here), along with previously unissued tracks (tracks 8-12). Embry was working at Buddy Guy's Checkerboard Lounge, Theresa's and other clubs, sometimes with Sylvia who was a regular member of Lefty Dizz's Band (playing bass) at the time. Others on these recordings include Riler Robinson on guitar and vocals, and drummer Woody Williams on drums and second vocals.

The result is some raw Chicago blues mixing Sylvia's gospel-rooted vocals and Embry's direct, searing guitar. The songs are straight-ahead blues best exemplified by Sylvia's crying shout on the title track as he forcefully delivers a line about being accused of murder "but God knows I don't even have a gun." This

raw blues is simply played. Like the late Son Seals, there is no artifice or emoting. Sylvia Embry sings her heart out while John Embry's guitar compliments the pain expressed by her vocals.

There is a nice mix of material including the opening medium tempoed shuffle "I Wonder Why"; a cover of Brook Benton's "Lie To Me," with Sylvia showing a bit more subdued attack; and "I'm Hurtin'" with Embry's nice "Dust My Broom" slide guitar backing. Woody Williams trades vocals and raps on a soulful medley of The Falcons' "I Found a Love" with Jerry Butler's "Rainbow" as John Embry adds responsive fills. The Jimmy reed classic "Going To New York" is taken at a brisker tempo than the original with a nice driving solo. It is followed by a solid rendition of "Mustang Sally" with Williams taking the vocal initially before Sylvia delivers the chorus before John Embry takes a sharp guitar break. This is far from the hackneyed renditions of this song one hears three decades later.

Among the previously unissued songs, Sylvia's "Gonna Find My Baby" is a strong original blues while "Early Time Blues" is a raucous reworking of Junior Parker's Mother-in-Law Blues," and "Razor Sharp" is a hot instrumental shuffle feature. The spirited rendition of Roosevelt Sykes' "Keep Your Hands Off Her," with Sylvia and Williams splitting the vocal, is evocative of "Got My Mojo Working." "After Work" is a fine atmospheric instrumental followed by a strong vocal and

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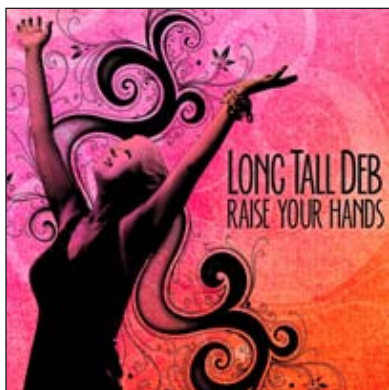
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playing by Riler Robinson of "Worry Worry." These two performances were location recordings.

John Embry stands out throughout as a strong guitarist, and displays much fervor on his rendition of Freddie King's "I Love The Woman." Listening to this and most of this release, one can imagine a somewhat smoke-filled club where John and Sylvia Embry would be laying down the blues in the same forthright fashion as heard on this very welcome reissue.

*Ron Weinstock*



**LONG TALL DEB**  
**Raise Your Hands**  
VIZZTONE

It's always a pleasure to hear a previously unfamiliar talent, and to my delight I discovered Long Tall Deb with her release "Raise Your Hands" (VizzTone).

A Texas native, but currently based in Ohio, Deb Landolt, is a marvelous singer that can range from a whisper to a scream (to paraphrase an Allen Toussaint song title) and is backed by some marvelous musicians including John Popovich on keyboards, Sean Carney and Dave Clo on guitars, Melvin Powe on bass and Jan Roll on drums. Added to this core band are appearances on various tracks by (amongst others) Damon Fowler, JP Soars, and Jimmy Thackery on guitars, Victor Wainwright and Reese Wynans on organ, Phil Pemberton, Shaun Booker, Big Llou, Nikki Scott, Michelle Swift on vocals and background vocals, and the Roomful of Blues Horns.

This album has its origins in a series of impromptu writing sessions, affectionately referred to that began in the fall of 2011. Landolt, John Popovich and bassist Melvin Powe would gather with new song ideas and jam on themes and variations. Often in between his international tour dates, Columbus stalwart Sean Carney joined the fun. These songs would be developed by their collaboration and Nashville producer Dave Clo further refined these originals along with two covers, Tom Waits' "New Coat of Paint" and Ian Moore's "Muddy Jesus," that comprise "Raise Your Hands."

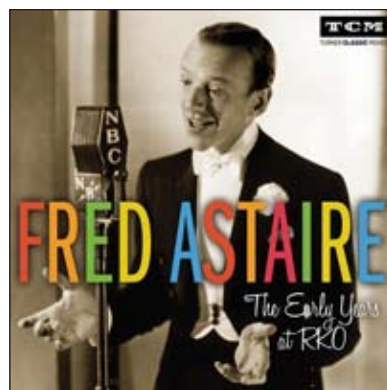
The music here is quite striking. It's wonderfully produced but Deb Landolt is clearly the star who possesses a rich, expressive voice and sings in a natural fashion exhibiting nuance as well as power. The songs are first-rate as well starting with the opening "What Would A Good Woman Do," in which Deb sings her

complaints about an overbearing husband that wants her to do her bidding and ends in a spirited verbal repartee with Phil Pemberton. A theme of unworthy men also marks "Hush Your Mouth," where she basically is telling the fool the best time is when he just shuts up, and "Finally Forgot Your Name." These are wonderfully soulful performances but contrast with "Let's Get Lost," where she tells her man that they need to get away and just get down to it.

"Train To Tucson" is a lively celebration of taking the westbound train to Tucson with some nice slide guitar from Colin John with the band providing a rockabilly feel. The title track is a gospel-tinged song about lifting herself (and listeners) from down times and the efforts of naysayers to cut oneself down. Damon Fowler's blues-rock guitar and Victor Wainwright's organ add punch to Ian Moore's "Muddy Jesus," which transfers the Christian story from the Middle East to the Rio Grande. Colin John's slide guitar opens "To Find His Home" with Nikki Scott sharing the lead vocal on a gospel-based plea for tolerance and love of one's fellow man no matter what their race, nationality or religion ("I see so-called Christian people killing their brothers in your name.").

This recording closes with Deb, backed just by Popovich's piano, providing a lovely rendition of Tom Waits' "New Coat of Paint." It is an intimate sounding performance, which provides a nice contrast to the varied band performances. Long Tall Deb shows poise and maturity throughout "Raise Your Hands." There is plenty of heart and soul exhibited by Deb and band on this excellent album.

*Ron Weinstock*



**FRED ASTAIRE**  
**The Early Years At RKO**  
SONY MASTERWORKS

Sony Masterworks, in conjunction with Turner Classic Movies, has issued a double CD by the legendary Fred Astaire "The Early Years At RKO." Astaire was the star of the month on Turner Classic Movies for December 2013 and is known for the classic movies he starred in along with Ginger Rogers for RKO including "Top Hat," "Swing Time" and "Shall We Dance."

Backed by orchestras led by the esteemed conductors Leo Reisman, Ray Noble, and Astaire's friend Johnny Green, Astaire introduced the world to many of

the cornerstones of what we call today “The American Songbook.” Among the songs heard here, written some of American’s greatest songwriters and composers including Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern and George and Ira Gershwin, are “Night And Day,” “Cheek To Cheek,” “The Way You Look Tonight,” “They All Laughed,” “They Can’t Take That Away From Me” and “Nice Work If You Can Get It.”

In his liner notes, Michael Feinstein observes that Astaire is “considered by many to be the most sublime popular singer and dancer of any generation.” These were recorded around the time of the films these appeared in and Astaire’s vocals seem as effortless as his stunning dancing, coveting a fair amount of his sophisticated charm. The orchestrations are sublime with very skillful use of strings along with some muted trumpet obligatos, some doses of stride piano and some showcase his dancing (for example “Let Yourself Go”).

As Michael Feinstein notes, Fred Astaire was a favorite singer for songwriters such as Berlin and Gershwin, although he hated his voice. Yet listening to the controlled exuberance as he sings about going out on the town in “Top Hat, White Tie and Tails,” as well as the humor of sailors who looked to see the world, but instead sings that “We Saw the Sea.” Fred Astaire’s performances on “The Early Years At RKO” still enchant over 75 years after when they first were recorded, and help us realize that even apart from his movies, he was a superb interpreter of songs. Ron Weinstock



**BUDDY GUY**  
**Rhythm & Blues**  
**SILVERTONE**

Let’s get this out of the way, right up front. At the age of 76 Buddy Guy has still got it. The two disc release features one side of Rhythm and the other of Blues. With his voice still ringing clear and his prowess on guitar fully intact, Guy gets right to it on the Rhythm disc with *Best in Town* where he doesn’t shy away from the title.

While some may be put off by that bold sentiment, his well deserved confidence is tempered by his acknowledgment that no matter how good you are that lasts only until the next best in town comes along. On the reflective *I Go By Feel* he reveals that his gifts are

the result of feel more than design and that he uses the same sense of feel to find the right woman. Guy’s old partner Junior Wells’ classic *Messin’ With the Kid* is reprised here on a duet with Kid Rock that is more bombast than blues but a fun listen nevertheless. Other highlights on Rhythm include the nod to Guitar Slim on the guitar showcase, *Well I Done Got Over It*, the show stopping duet with vocalist Beth Hart, *What You Gonna Do About Me*, and the country inflected *One Day Away* where he trades vocals with Keith Urban and urges that no time be wasted in telling parents and loved ones how much they mean to you lest you be a day too late to share your feelings.

Blues starts with Guy’s homage to his adopted hometown, *Meet Me in Chicago*, which features not only Guy’s fleet fingered fret work but a name-dropping tour of the City’s big attractions. The standard blues shuffles of *Too Damn Bad* and *Never Gonna Change* could be the soundtrack of any blues bar on a Saturday night- as long as the blues bar featured an on-fire Buddy Guy! *Evil Twin* features Aerosmith’s Steven Tyler swapping vocals with Guy and its guitar duo of Joe Perry and Brad Whitford having fun trading leads on something other than classic rock.

While much of the material is high intensity electric blues Guy gets down and dirty on the slinky *I Could Die Happy* where he makes a valiant run at a younger woman and on *All That Makes Me Happy is the Blues* where he trots out well-worn insights about the redemptive power of the blues. Even though Guy spends a lot of time walking down a bumpy memory lane on *My Mama Loved Me* and *I Came Up Hard* he ultimately admits the blues will get you no matter how rich your life and memories, *Blues Don’t Care*.

The disc ends on the upbeat *Poison Ivy* where Guy continues to extol his many gifts to the ladies. As great as it is to discover the next big thing, it is even better to discover that storied musicians such as Buddy Guy still have their gifts intact and deserve reverence not only for what they’ve done in the past but for what they continue to do today.

**Mark Smith**

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## LIL G WEEVIL

**Moving**  
VIZZTONE

Winner of the 2013 International Blues Challenge for solo/duo, Little G Weevil obviously impressed Richard Rosenblatt of VizzTone, not simply winning, but also the fact that he bested the duo of Erin Harpe and Rosenblatt on his way to winning.

The result is his VizzTone debut, "Moving." Weevil is an impressive, traditionally rooted blues artist who was born overseas, but who has immersed himself in playing the blues in Memphis and Atlanta. He impressed many with his prior recordings where he displayed his mastery of older blues traditions including marvelous originals that evoked early John Lee Hooker.

The present release will certainly cause additional fans of blues to take notice of his talents. This is apparent on the original "Shook It and Broke It," that opens this. His slide guitar accompaniment suggests Fred McDowell and Bukka White on a song that sounds like it was from the thirties. His adroit use of repetition and riffs is exhibited on "On My Way To Memphis" with some nifty guitar lines set against a repeated riff, while a small group provides him with an insistent pulse on "Mean and Dirty." Within these three songs we get quite a varied look at Lil G Weevil's approach that is manifested throughout this collection.

Other selections include the North Mississippi Hills groove on "Deep Bow" and the title track with hints of swamp pop with a lazy walking groove and some Slim Harpo styled harmonica. Another highpoint is his deliberative, reflective interpretation of Walter Davis' classic "Let's Talk It Over (Come Back Baby)."

"Moving" is another substantial recording by Lil G Weevil who demonstrates an uncanny ability to cast original down-home blues styled in the manner played decades ago by blues legends and perform with authority and soul. He is a most impressive talent.

*Ron Weinstock*

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