

**now in our 40th year**  
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**40th**  
**Anniversary**  
**Issue**

# jazz & blues report

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Check out our constantly updated website. Now you can search for CD Reviews by artists, titles, record labels, keyword or JBR Writers. 15 years of reviews are up and we'll be going all the way back to 1974.

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Founded in Buffalo New York in March of 1974; began in Cleveland edition in April of 1978. Now this global e-zine edition is posted online monthly at [www.jazz-blues.com](http://www.jazz-blues.com)

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"Buffalonious"

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

# jazz & blues report

## Celebrating 40 Years



A spread featuring some of our early issues scanned by The University at Buffalo

Last year I was contacted by some folks at the University at Buffalo (the largest campus in the State University of New York System) about scanning all 58 of our earliest issues of the Buffalo Jazz Report and posting the digital files on their website. Someone in Buffalo happened to have all those issues and made them available to the University. When they contacted me, they asked if I would give them permission to post them, which of course I did. In fact, I was honored. It did not even hit me at the time that we were just a year shy of the 40th anniversary of the magazine.

Shortly thereafter I was contacted by Chua Ern Teck, who was from Malaysia and majoring in English at the university. He had an assignment to interview me for a story to accompany the BJR digital files on the website. Once again I said yes, and

once again I felt honored.

Ern Teck did such a good job on this interview, that I decided to run it in our 40th anniversary issue rather than for me to run down the same information. I'm not much for blowing my own horn, so this works out great! I contacted Ern Teck, who is now back in Malaysia, to let him know and he thought it was a great idea. He said he went back home in July of 2013, so I let him know that he got out well before one of the worst winters the US has seen in many years.

Set up like a story rather than an interview format, he does a great job of capturing the magazine's beginnings back in Buffalo, NY in 1974. I'll see you again at the end to fill in a few things that happened after we moved from Buffalo to Cleveland, and then on to San Diego. ~Bill Wahl

## Buffalo Jazz Report, which chronicled the Queen City's jazz scene in the '70s, is available via the University at Buffalo Libraries

By Chua Ern Teck

BUFFALO, N.Y. – The University at Buffalo Libraries has digitized the complete 58-issue run of Buffalo Jazz Report, the personal project of a passionate jazz fan and musician whose publication documents the history of jazz in Buffalo.

Thirty-five years after its last issue was published, the magazine survives online and is accessible through the Digital Collections' website at <http://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/cdm/landing-page/collection/BufJazz>. Individual issues are catalogued and available for

personal use or educational purposes at no charge.

The online archive, which chronicles Buffalo's rich jazz history, gives jazz fans an up-close-and-personal ticket to the parade of jazz greats who passed through the city.

Founded by Bill Wahl, Buffalo Jazz Report was a free magazine published monthly from March 1974 to December 1978. The first issue declared, "Jazz is not dead" and set out on a solitary mission to chronicle the Queen City's jazz scene.

Wahl and his team of writers reviewed jazz concerts and albums, profiled local and visiting jazz musicians and promoted live music through the magazine's calendar listings of performances throughout the region. The sixth issue, for example, reviewed a Miles Davis performance at the newly opened Artpark in Lewiston, which 1,000 people attended.

## **"We felt it was a good, community-based digital project."**

*~ Scott Hollander, UB Libraries web manager*

The effort to digitize it came about following a request from Craig Steger, who was coordinating the opening of the Colored Musicians Club's museum in Buffalo. Steger contacted UB's music library last May about the project.

"Craig was going to ask the publisher for copies of the Buffalo Jazz Report that could be digitized for inclusion in the museum," says Scott Hollander, web manager of UB Libraries and interim coordinator of Digital Collections. "But since we already have the entire run of the Buffalo Jazz Report, the UB libraries offered to scan it instead."

"We felt it was a good, community-based digital project," Hollander says.

Born and raised in Buffalo, Wahl did not grow up listening to jazz. He caught the bug on a serendipitous encounter one night at a club in Toronto, watching and listening to a performance by the Elvin Jones quintet.

"My wife and I sat there absorbing the powerful music all night long. On one break, for a reason still unknown to me, I introduced myself to Elvin and told him I was a drummer," says Wahl, who was in a rock band at the time. "I told him I wanted to start a free jazz magazine."

When Jones said that a magazine would be perfect for the jazz community, it inspired Wahl, who was then working at his father's printing company on Main Street, to start the Buffalo Jazz Report using the machines and facilities available to him.

"The first issue in March 1974 was just one legal size sheet folded in half. The mission was to increase awareness of jazz, as well as have a publication for the existing jazz community in Buffalo – wherever they were hiding," Wahl says. "The idea was to be able to get enough advertising to be able to keep producing it on a monthly basis and perhaps even make a little money as well."

Publishing the magazine was a one-man operation during the early days.

"I printed it and then folded it on the folding machine and it was ready to go," Wahl says. "When it started needing more pages, I bought a case or two of beer and invited some of my friends to the shop and we all sat around collating the

pages and stapling the magazines. My wife Paula helped me a great deal as well."

What started out as a bootstrapping operation quickly started to flourish.

"We started getting advertising rather quickly, as well as complimentary copies of record albums to review," Wahl says. "After a few years we were getting so much advertising from record companies, stereo dealers and the like that I had to have it printed at an outside printing company."

More magazines were printed due to increasing demand, and Buffalo Jazz Report grew from a being a four-page spread to a 24-page publication to accommodate the increased advertising, music reviews and news content.

At the height of the magazine's popularity, it co-sponsored a popular Jazz Report Concert Series with the Tralfamadore Café, inviting national acts to come and perform in Buffalo. It was even able to expand and publish a spin-off edition in Cleveland, where a bigger jazz market drew more advertising dollars.

In the meantime, Wahl, who went from being a printer-musician to being a publisher-writer-editor-turned-club-promoter-booking-agent, also managed to add radio to his multi-hyphenated career, hosting the weekly "Jazz Contours" program on WBFO-FM 88.7.



The good times did not last long. The manufacturing industry in Buffalo, which was already hurting, suffered another blow as more steel mills began shutting down, triggering a population exodus in search of other economic opportunities, devastating the previously vibrant jazz scene, Wahl said.

"The jazz scene in Buffalo, as far as advertising for the magazine and live jazz at clubs, was beginning to decline," Wahl says. "The Cleveland issue was doing quite well, so rather than losing money to try to keep the Buffalo edition going, I had no choice but to move to Cleveland."

The decline was so swift that even Wahl did not anticipate the writing on the wall, which explains why the last issue quietly went out of print, without any mentions of its demise. However, Wahl is not convinced that issue 58 was the last one, and is appealing to anyone who has knowledge or copies of issues beyond the 58th volume to contact UB Libraries' Digital Collections.

Meanwhile, the Cleveland edition was rechristened as the Jazz & Blues Report in 1987 and the magazine went online in 2003. After the economy went into recession in 2007, when the print version in Cleveland was no longer sustainable, Wahl moved to San Diego and worked on expanding the online issue to give it a broader, global appeal. The online edition now runs previews of jazz and blues festivals around the world.

Borne out of one man's labor of love, Buffalo Jazz Re-



port, now a proper historical document digitally stored at UB Libraries' Digital Collections, is like a time-travel portal, a paean to jazz, evoking in older residents a nostalgic remembrance for a time past while allowing newer members of the community a glimpse of Buffalo's storied jazz heritage.

"UB is an integral part of the Buffalo community," Holander says. "We are proud that the libraries' digital collections' team is able to play a part in strengthening the cultural ties between university and community."

Again, the website for these archived issues is: <http://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/BufJazz>

The website for Jazz & Blues Report is [www.jazz-blues.com](http://www.jazz-blues.com)

I am back. Thank you Chua Ern Teck for writing this fine story! As Ern Teck mentioned, we had no choice but to move to Cleveland since our well ran dry in Buffalo, but the Ohio city was, for some reason, enjoying a better economy. Plus, it was larger and several record companies had regional offices there. This made it much easier to secure advertising dollars. It was not unusual to have 3, 4 or 5 full pages of record company ads in those days. The first night club I went to there, along with my advertising manager from Buffalo Bob Riley, was Peabody's Cafe, which was co-owned by Dewey Forward. We hit it off great and it was not long before the Jazz Report Concert Series, originally at the Tralfamadore Cafe in Buffalo, started up again, but now at Peabody's, which held about 150 people. The national jazz acts were making the club very popular, and a few years later, in 1983, a second Peabody's opened in the Cleveland Flats entertainment district. Now we had a 500 seat venue for the concert series, which opened with the Stan Getz Quintet. It sold out two shows. We carried on with Elvin Jones (which we had brought to the Tralfamadore - about a 100 seat club), Jimmy Smith, Horace Silver, Kenny Burrell, Milt Jackson, Wayne Shorter, and many, many more from a list too vast to mention here. It lasted until 1987 when I burnt out from the night club business and left. Oddly enough, Dewey sold the club about a year later.

The magazine did quite well in Cleveland until about 2006, when the bottom fell out from under the record companies, and there was really only one jazz club left, and they could not have been doing well as they never paid for any of the ads they ran for a year. So with no record ads, and no club ads - I threw in the towel with the print version and just concentrated on the web version of the magazine. So you say, why stay in Cleveland? Well that's what I asked myself. And I answered myself pretty much immediately. That is why I have been living in San Diego since 2007. And here we are!

In closing, I would like to thank the many writers and helpers I have had over the years, especially Ron Weinstock, who has been on board for probably 39-1/2 of the 40 years. Also Nancy Ann Lee, Duane Verh, Mark Smith and Peanuts who have been with me for loads of years as well - since the early years in Cleveland. And the many others who wrote for us over the four decades. Also Ed and Bob Lawson from the Tralfamadore Cafe in Buffalo, and Dewey Forward of Peabody's in Cleveland for their partnership in the Jazz Report Concert Series. In fact, Dewey and I have remained best friends over the years and he travelled to Cambodia in 2010 to be the best man at my wedding. And of course thanks go to my ex-wives, Paula and Carol, as I could not have kept this thing going without them as well.

I have been told by people who have been in the music busi-

ness as long or longer than I have that this is the longest running free of charge jazz (and blues) magazine in the world. I don't know if that is true or not, but it just might be as I doubt if anyone else would have been crazy enough to start such a thing back in 1974, and continue to be crazy enough to keep at it for 40 years. So... you think I need a shrink? ~ Bill Wahl

## BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

**New Release Blues....** Here's a few new nuggets to wet your appetite for the summer blues festival season: **Joanne Shaw Taylor- Songs from the Road; Kim Simmonds- Goin' To the Delta; Tinsley Ellis- Midnight Blue; Jim Suhler- Panther Burn; Lisa Biales- Belle of the Blues; Robin Trower-Compendium 1987-2013; Royal Southern Brotherhood- Songs From the Road; Joe Louis Walker- Hornet's Nest; Damon Fowler-Sounds of Home; Billy Branch & Sons of Blues- Blue Shock; Robert Cray- In My Soul; John Hammond- Timeless; Professor Longhair- The Last Mardi Gras; Shaun Murphy- Cry of Love; Pinetop Perkins- On the 88s Live in Chicago; Matt Andersen- Live From Phoenix; John Nemeth- Memphis Grease; Big Walter Horton-Live at the Knickerbocker; Sean Costello & His Jivebombers- Call the Cops; Harmonica Hinds-I'd Give You Anything If I Could; Miss Marcy & Her Texas Sugardaddys-Miss Marcy; Adam Gussow- Kick & Stomp; Holmes Brothers- Brotherhood; Paul Rodgers- The Royal Sessions; Johnny Drummer-Bad Attitude; Steve Dawson- Rattlesnake Cage; Trudy Lynn- Royal Oaks Blues Café; Hamilton Loomis-Give It Back; Catherine Russell- Bring it Back; Frank Bey & Anthony Paul Band- Soul for your Blues; Macy Blackman & the Mighty Fines- I Didn't Want to Do It; Billy Flynn-Pickin' 6; Mudcat- You Better Mind; The Nighthawks- 444; ..... Award time blues...**

The Recording Academy presented its annual Grammy® Awards on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup> in a star-studded multi-hour program. While artists of interest to blues fans were mostly awarded their accolades off-air, blues man **Gary Clark, Jr.** got to share the stage with Aussie-country rocker **Keith Urban** for a prime-time bit of guitar wizardry. The relevant awards for blues fans went to none other than **Gary Clark, Jr.**, who took home the bling for Best Traditional R & B Performance for *Please Come Home* which appears on his **Black and Blu** release. Other award recipients include **Ben Harper and Charlie Musselwhite** for best Blues Album, **Get Up!**, **Terrance Simien & the Zydeco Experience** for Best Regional Roots Music Album for **Dockside Sessions** and **Emmylou Harris & Rodney Crowell** for Best Americana Album for the release **Old Yellow Moon**. In other award season news, New Orleans Music Magazine, **Offbeat**, handed out its "Best of the Beat" awards in mid-January. Of interest to blues fans were awards Best Blues Artist- **Cyril Neville**, Best Blues Album- **Cyril Neville** for *Magic Honey*, Artist of the Year, Album of the Year, Best R & B Funk Artist, Best R & B Funk Album, Song of the Year all to **Trombone Shorty** for *Say That to Say This*, Best Rock Album- **Anders Osborne** for *Peace*, Best Brass Band- **Rebirth Brass Band**, Best Zydeco Artist and Album- **Terrance Simien & the Zydeco Experience- Dockside Sessions**, Best Roots Rock Artist and Album- **Honey Island Swamp Band- Cane Sugar** and Best Guitarist- **Tab Benoit**. Congratulations to all the winners! That's it for this month. See Ya! Mark Smith

# BLUE NOTE RECORDS CONTINUES 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



**100 ESSENTIAL BLUE NOTE ALBUMS TO BE REISSUED ON VINYL BEGINNING MARCH 25 WITH ICONIC LPS BY ART BLAKEY, JOHN COLTRANE, ERIC DOLPHY, WAYNE SHORTER, AND LARRY YOUNG**

**GRAMMY MUSEUM EXHIBITION 'BLUE NOTE RECORDS: THE FINEST IN JAZZ' SET TO OPEN MARCH 25 IN LOS ANGELES WITH Q&A EVENT FEATURING LABEL PRESIDENT DON WAS**

The 75th Anniversary of Blue Note Records, the most-respected and longest-running Jazz label in the world, is being commemorated throughout 2014 and beyond with a broad range of special releases and events. Blue Note is pleased to announce a new vinyl reissue series of 100 essential remastered Jazz albums spanning both the classic and modern eras of the label. The series will launch on March 25 with five iconic LPs: Art Blakey *Free For All*, John Coltrane *Blue Train*, Eric Dolphy *Out To Lunch*, Wayne Shorter *Speak No Evil*, and Larry Young *Unity*. On the same date, the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles will launch Blue Note Records: The Finest In Jazz, a one-of-a-kind exhibit offering visitors an in-depth look at the legendary record label. On the evening of March 25, the museum will host a special public event, "An Evening With Blue Note Records," featuring a Q&A with Blue Note Records President Don Was.

Blue Note Records was founded on January 6, 1939, when a German immigrant and passionate Jazz fan named Alfred Lion produced his first recording session in New York City. Blue Note has gone on to represent The Finest In Jazz, tracing the entire history of the music from Hot Jazz, Boogie Woogie, and Swing, through Bebop, Hard Bop, Post Bop, Soul Jazz, Avant-Garde, and Fusion, and into Jazz's numerous modern day incarnations under the leadership of Bruce Lundvall, who revived Blue Note in 1984, and the label's current President, Don Was, who took the helm in 2012.

## **GRAMMY MUSEUM EXHIBITION AND LAUNCH EVENT DETAILS**

On March 25, The GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles will unveil Blue Note Records: The Finest In Jazz. Located in the Mike Curb Gallery on the Museum's fourth floor, this

one-of-a-kind exhibit will offer visitors an in-depth look at the legendary record label through music, album artwork, photographs, artifacts, interviews and more.

On the evening of March 25, the museum will launch the exhibit with a special public event, "An Evening With Blue Note Records," a Q&A with Blue Note President Don Was, hosted by the museum's executive director, Bob Santelli, and the curator of the exhibit, Nwaka Onwusa, in the museum's Clive Davis Theater. Tickets for the event are available for purchase on the GRAMMY Museum website: [www.grammymuseum.org](http://www.grammymuseum.org).

## **BLUE NOTE RECORDS 75TH ANNIVERSARY VINYL INITIATIVE**

Blue Note will commence an extensive *100-album vinyl reissue initiative* on March 25 with the release of five classic titles (Art Blakey *Free For All*, John Coltrane *Blue Train*, Eric Dolphy *Out To Lunch*, Wayne Shorter *Speak No Evil*, and Larry Young *Unity*). The vinyl releases are set to continue monthly and will also include modern classics from Blue Note's recent catalog such as Joe Lovano Quartets: Live At The Village Vanguard, Jason Moran Soundtrack To Human Motion, Terence Blanchard Flow, Medeski Martin & Wood Combustication, and Cassandra Wilson Traveling Miles. Visit [www.bluenote.com/vinylreissues.html](http://www.bluenote.com/vinylreissues.html) for the full list of vinyl releases.

Blue Note President Don Was says, "Two years ago, we began remastering the jewels of the Blue Note catalog in hi-def resolutions of 96k and 192k. In order to develop a guiding artistic philosophy for this delicate endeavor, we donned our lab coats, ran dozens of sonic experiments and carefully referenced every generation of our reissues.

Ultimately, we decided that our goal would be to protect the original intentions of the artists, producers and engineers who made these records and that, in the case of pre-digital-era albums, these intentions were best represented by the sound and feel of their first-edition vinyl releases. Working with a team of dedicated and groovy engineers, we found a sound that both captured the feel of the original records while maintaining the depth and transparency of the master tapes... the new remasters are really cool!

While these new versions will become available in digital hi-def, CD and Mastered for iTunes formats, the allure of vinyl records is WAY too potent to ignore. This year, Blue Note - along with our friends at Universal Music Enterprises - is launching a major 75th Anniversary vinyl Initiative that is dedicated to the proposition that our catalog should be readily available at a low cost, featuring high quality pressings and authentic reproductions of Blue Note's iconic packaging. Although this program begins in celebration of Blue Note's 75th Anniversary, our catalog runs so deep that we will faithfully be reissuing five albums a month for many years to come!"

On March 11, Blue Note/UMe will release a new 2CD collection of 22 stellar tracks spanning the label's history, Best of Blue Note ICON, including Sidney Bechet Quintet/"Summertime," Thelonious Monk/"Round About Midnight," John Coltrane/"Blue Train," Sonny Clark/"Cool Struttin'," Lee Morgan/"Sidewinder," Wayne Shorter/"Speak No Evil," Norah Jones/"Cold Cold Heart," and more.

For Record Store Day in April, Blue Note will also reissue the label's first two releases as limited edition 12" vinyl: Meade iLuxi Lewis "Melancholy"/"Solitude" (BN1) and Albert Ammons "Boogie Woogie Stomp"/"Boogie Woogie Blues" (BN2). Other catalog releases, including a 75-track digital bundle spanning Blue Note's entire history, will be announced shortly.

### NEW RELEASES

Blue Note continues to maintain an incomparable roster of current talent, and 2014 brings new releases from Takuya Kuroda (Rising Son, February 18), Ambrose Akinmusire (the imagined savior is far easier to paint, March 11), Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band (Landmarks, April 29), as well as artists beyond Jazz such as Rosanne Cash (The River & The Thread, January 14) and Benmont Tench (You Should Be So Lucky, February 18). Additional new releases will soon be announced from Jason Moran, José James, Joe Lovano/Dave Douglas Soundprints Quintet, and two Blue Note legends: Bobby Hutcherson in a quartet with David Sanborn, Joey DeFrancesco and Billy Hart, and Wayne Shorter whose return to Blue Note, Without A Net, figured prominently in several Best of 2013 lists.

### UPCOMING LIVE EVENTS

May 11 – Jason Moran, who also serves as the Artistic Advisor for Jazz at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC will present **Blue Note At 75, The Concert**. As the culminating event of a celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Blue Note Records, artists from the label's present and past roster perform including Moran, Norah Jones, Wayne

Shorter, and surprise special guests. Additional live events will be announced throughout the year.

### BRUCE LUNDVALL'S BIOGRAPHY

Blue Note's former President and current Chairman Emeritus Bruce Lundvall – who re-launched Blue Note in 1984 and presided over the label's flourishing for over 25 years – recently released his biography **Playing By Ear** (written with author Dan Ouellette) through ArtistShare.

### BLUE NOTE APPS

Blue Note has proved itself to be an innovator not only musically but also technologically, most notably with the 2012 release of our much-heralded **Blue Note Spotify App** which created a space within the popular streaming service to explore and discover music spanning the entire history of the label, as well as the **Blue Note by Groovebug App** which is available for iPad, iPhone and iPod touch users. Now Blue Note has introduced a fun **Facebook App** that allows fans to insert their own face into classic Blue Note covers. Choose between six cover artwork designs by influential designer Reid Miles and see how you would look on the cover of your own Blue Note record!

It took the joining of many natural forces to create and define one of the greatest Jazz labels there has ever been: Jazz-loving German immigrants on the run from Nazism (Alfred Lion & Francis Wolff), a New Jersey optometrist moonlighting as a recording engineer (Rudy Van Gelder), a classical music-loving commercial designer (Reid Miles), and slews of the most incredible musicians that have ever walked the earth (too many to name them all here). The elements that each brought to the table—impeccable A&R instincts, elegant and insightful photography, sterling sound quality, strikingly original cover artwork, and consistently transcendent music—were all essential to the label's early success. Together they created a vivid Blue Note identity. The whole could not have existed without each of the parts.

Blue Note's legendary catalog traces the entire history of the music from Hot Jazz, Boogie Woogie, and Swing, through Bebop, Hard Bop, Post Bop, Soul Jazz, Avant-Garde, Fusion, and on. The label's stars from the early years form a true Who's Who: Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Horace Silver, Art Blakey, Jimmy Smith, Grant Green, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner, Donald Byrd, Andrew Hill, Ornette Coleman.

After a brief dormancy from 1981-1984 during which producer/historian Michael Cuscuna kept the label's legacy alive with a series of reissues on EMI, Blue Note returned reinvigorated by the leadership of Bruce Lundvall and has since established itself as the most respected Jazz label in the world. Blue Note is still home to some of the most prominent stars and cutting-edge innovators in Jazz today, and at the same time has broadened its horizons to include quality music in many genres.

Under Lundvall's stewardship, Blue Note had its share



of commercial successes from Bobby McFerrin, Dianne Reeves, Cassandra Wilson, Us3, Medeski Martin & Wood, Norah Jones, Al Green, Anita Baker, Amos Lee, Willie Nelson and Wynton Marsalis. The label also remained a haven for the most creative voices in Jazz including Ambrose Akinmusire, Patricia Barber, Brian Blade, Terence Blanchard, Don Byron, Kurt Elling, Robert Glasper, Stefon Harris, Charlie Hunter, Lionel Loueke, Joe Lovano, Jason Moran, Greg Osby, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, John Scofield, Jacky Terrasson, Chucho Valdes, and many more.

In 2011, veteran record producer and musician Don Was joined Blue Note as Chief Creative Officer and soon became President of the label with Lundvall continuing to

provide guidance as Chairman Emeritus. With Was at the helm, Blue Note has renewed its dedication to Lion's original vision that "any particular style of playing which represents an authentic way of musical feeling is genuine expression." In the 21st century Lion's words still ring true and provide a blueprint that includes Robert Glasper Experiment's visionary melding of Jazz, R&B, and Hip-Hop and Elvis Costello's funky collaboration with The Roots, as well as bringing the legendary saxophonist Wayne Shorter back to the label where he made his early classic albums, and continuing to sign singular voices in Jazz such as saxophonist Ravi Coltrane and vocalist Gregory Porter. Blue Note Records is one of the flagship labels of the Capitol Music Group.

## Cleveland's Tri-C Jazz Festival celebrates its 35th anniversary

By Ron Weinstock

Cleveland's Tri-C Jazz Festival celebrates its 35th anniversary with a big move to June 2014. The 35th Edition of the Festival will present three jam-packed days of concerts in the theaters of Playhouse Square plus free music outside on Star Plaza. The Festival was founded in 1980 by Dr. Thom Horning and Reginald Buckner with a mission to: (1) Foster the history and nurture the future of Jazz; (2) Provide educational opportunities for students of all ages and in all walks of life; and (3) Bring world-class Jazz to Cleveland. To accomplish these purposes Tri-C JazzFest features jazz performances, clinics master classes, lectures, broadcasts, and a breadth of other concert and community outreach activities. Local and national artists teach, compose, arrange, and perform.

The line-up for this year's festival includes the Sean Jones Quartet; Christian McBride; Gregory Porter; John Scofield Überjam; Trombone Shorty; Eddie Palmieri Salsa Orchestra; Jamey Haddad; Ernie Krivda; Eliane Elias; Terri Lyne Carrington; Raul Midón; Marcus Miller/Dave Koz; and Dave Holland Prism. As can be seen it is a pretty diverse group of artists.

To highlight a few of the performers, Christian McBride will be performing with the Cleveland Orchestra and with his trio of pianist Christian Sands and drummer Ulysses Owens Jr. McBride is one of the most in demand bassists on today's scene and is comfortable playing straight-ahead hard bop, Weather Report inspired fusion and some James Brown inspired funk. Whether leading his Big Band, his group Inside Straight, playing with Sonny Rollins, or his new trio with the brilliant Sands on piano and James on drums, McBride displays a facility and expressiveness on the double bass that few of his contemporaries can approach. He is also a marvelous composer.

Cleveland's Ernie Krivda would be one of the best known saxophonists in the Jazz Scene if he hadn't remained in Cleveland. His robust tenor saxophone swings hard and



Cleveland native Ernie Krivda

full of melodic invention. Krivda is scheduled to lead his Fat Tuesday Band on a program devoted to the music of Oliver Nelson and Jimmy Smith.

Drummer Terri Lynn Carrington's most recent recording "Money Jungle: Provocative In Blue," was the winner of the 2014 Grammy Award for Best jazz instrumental album. It is simply another example of her talent and musical vision that is increasingly being recognized, whether for her own projects as well as her collaborations with others.

Gregory Porter has become one of the most in-demand vocalists on the jazz scene. Bringing a warm vocal style



Gregory Porter

that incorporates a variety of influences bridging soul and jazz troubadours including Donny Hathaway, the warmth and joy he brings to his originals along with his terrific band have delighted audiences throughout the world. And those familiar with his recordings should not be surprised when he reworks some of these or such jazz standards as "Work Song" that are part of his repertoire.

More information on the Tri-C Festival including information on the schedule and tickets can be found at <http://www.tri-c.edu/enrichment/arts/jazzfest/Pages/default.aspx>.



Eddie Palmieri  
All photos by Ron Weinstock

**jazz-blues.com**

## Sonny Rollins and Doxy Records Sign Distribution Agreement with Sony Music Masterworks/OKeh



### New Album, "Road Shows, vol. 3," Due for May 2014 Release

Tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins has signed a distribution agreement with Sony Music Masterworks and its jazz imprint OKeh Records for the release of his new Doxy Records album, *Road Shows, vol. 3*. A street date of May 6 is planned.

Over the span of his storied and still-unfolding 65-year career, Rollins has established himself as one of the giants of jazz -- a towering influence, a trailblazer, a powerfully creative force in the music. From his earliest masterpieces, such as *Saxophone Colossus* and *Freedom Suite*, to his *Road Shows* archival series of live performances for his Doxy label in the 2000s, Rollins has presented his peerless music without compromise -- and to consistent international acclaim.

The new CD contains six tracks recorded between 2001 and 2012 in Saitama, Japan; Toulouse, Marseille, and Marciac, France; and St. Louis. "Patanjali," a striking new Rollins composition, is given its debut recording.

A Grammy winner for his CD "This Is What I Do" in 2000, Rollins received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences in 2004. In 2006 he was inducted into the Academy of Achievement at the International Achievement Summit in Los Angeles, and in May 2007 was a recipient of the Polar Music Prize, presented in Stockholm. In 2009 he became the third American (after Frank Sinatra and Jessye Norman) to be awarded the Austrian Cross for Science and Art, First Class; and in 2010 he was named the Edward MacDowell Medalist, the first jazz composer to be so honored.



More recently, Rollins was presented with the National Medal of Arts at a White House ceremony in March 2011, and later that year he received the Kennedy Center Honors. In the Jazz Journalists Association's 2013 Awards, Rollins was named Emeritus Jazz Artist/Beyond Voting.

"Having worked with Sonny on his previous Doxy albums, I am honored and pleased that he chose the newly launched OKeh label as the partner for his future musical adventures.

He is an inspiration to all of us at the label," says Wulf Müller, who oversees A&R for OKeh Records.

Sony Music Masterworks comprises the Masterworks, Sony Classical, OKeh, Portrait, Masterworks Broadway, and Flying Buddha imprints. For email updates and information, please visit [www.SonyMasterworks.com](http://www.SonyMasterworks.com).

Sonny Rollins Web Site: [www.sonnyrollins.com](http://www.sonnyrollins.com)

Photo of Sonny Rollins: John Abbott

## Tenth DC Jazz Festival



**By Ron Weinstock**

The Tenth DC Jazz Festival will bring a wide range of jazz to Washington DC June 24-29. First known as the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival, the festival changed its name a few years ago. This year the Festival also moves to later in June.

The Festival takes place in a number of venues in the Nation's Capital over this period. Once again The Hamilton Live, a few blocks from the White House, will feature a wide range of artists over the Festival span. Located at 1600 14th Street, NW, Performers at the Hamilton Live will include Paquito D'Rivera, The Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Cuban Experience, Snarky Puppy, Brass-A-Holics, Etienne Charles and Rudresh Mahanthappa, and a salute to Women in Jazz with rising stars Tia Fuller and Helen Sung. Also, the Roy Hargrove Quintet will be there for a Prelude Kickoff Concert, June 21.

There will be three days of performances at Yards Park at the Capital Riverfront. This is a follow-up to last year's highly successful show at Kastles Stadium with The Roots. Fans will enjoy jazz at the Capitol Riverfront overlooking the Anacostia River where there will be wine and beer tastings, chef demonstrations and a marketplace. Performers for Jazz at the Riverfront include Trombone Shorty, Gregory Porter, Rebirth Brass Band, Yasiin Bey (aka Mos Def) and very special guests, vocalist Akua Allrich and harmonica virtuoso Frédéric Yonnet.

The Festival Also promotes Jazz in the 'Hoods that takes place in over 40 venues with more than 80 performances in 21 neighborhoods around the city. Featured partners include



**Sharon Clark**

The Howard Theatre, Bohemian Caverns, CapitalBop D.C.'s Jazz Loft Series, East River Jazz, the National Gallery of Arts Sculpture Garden, and Late Night at Loews Madison, among other venues. Artists include Marc Cary, Corcoran Holt, Lafayette Gilchrest, Allyn Johnson, Orrin Evans, Sharón Clark, Sin Miedo, Matana Roberts, and many more.

Also taking place will be a program, "Dave Brubeck Reimagined," at the Sixth and I Historic Synagogue. Renowned pianist Cyrus Chestnut and his quartet will bring unique interpretations of the music of Dave Brubeck. There will also be the annual Jazz 'n Families Fun Days at the Phillips Collection that celebrates the synergy between jazz and the visual arts, with performances in the Phillips Collection's music room and auditorium by more than a dozen regional artists and youth ensembles. Performers will include Rochelle Rice, Noble Jolley, Herman Burney and the Jazzin' at Sitar Ensemble, Trio Caliente, Kayla Waters, and Tony Martucci

As can be seen, there will be quite a line-up of performers. There will also be a variety of educational programs taking place at this time as well. For more information (including the festival schedule when it is released), visit [www.dcjazzfest.org](http://www.dcjazzfest.org).

*Photo by Ron Weinstock*

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

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

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



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

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

Jazz is art, you dig? Art can

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).



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

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

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



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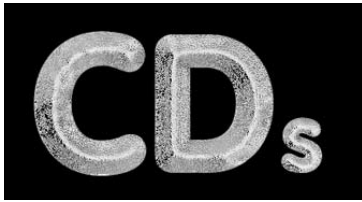
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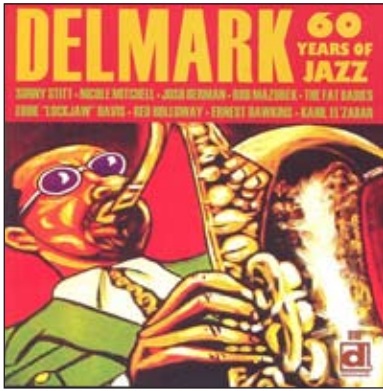
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**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Delmark 60 Years Of Jazz**  
DELMARK

Since Bob Koester founded Delmark Records in St. Louis in 1953, the label has issued many important jazz recordings, and over the years has built a catalog ranging from traditional New Orleans and Chicago style jazz to the first albums by members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago. It continues to produce new recordings that cover the entire range of jazz styles. Celebrating its 60 years, Delmark has issued a new compilation “Delmark 60 Years Of Jazz” that provides a small sampling of the jazz that is available on the label.

The twelve selections cannot convey the full range of jazz that Delmark has issued, but includes selections that range from the modernism of Josh Berman & His Gang reinventing the Austin Hill Gang twenties classic “Sugar” as if it was an out-take from Eric Dolphy’s “Out To Lunch,” to The Fat Babies’ traditionalist revival of Fletcher Henderson’s “The Stampede,” from this ensemble’s most recent Delmark effort.

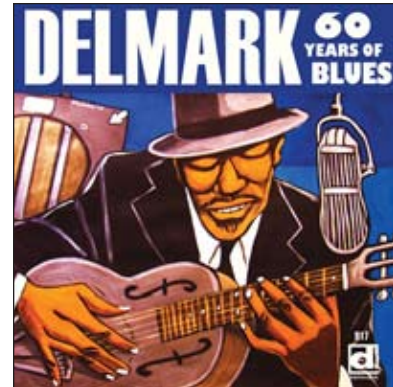
The earliest selection here is a 1952 rendition of the trad jazz warhorse “That’s a Plenty” by St. Louis trumpeter Dewey Jackson, and is followed by a bouncy original by the marvelous flautist Nicole Mitchell. An early Lockjaw Davis rendition of “Lover” from a forthcoming “Honkers and Shouters - Volume 4” is followed by Ernest Dawkins’ straight ahead take on Coltrane’s tribute to Paul Chambers “Mr. P.C.” and Ira Sullivan is backed by the Jim Holman Trio on the Benny Golson classic “Along Came Betty.”

More free bop can be heard on Rob Mazurek’s “Spiral Mercury,” Kahil El Zabar’s Ritual Trio on “Crumb-Puck-U-Lent” with saxophonist Ari Brown and the late violinist Billy Bang, and Jason Adasiewicz’s vibes led trio on “Bees.” Other tracks include a strong Red Hol-

loway track with organist Chris Foreman and the great Sonny Stitt tearing into Miles Davis’ “Four,” with Don Patterson on organ and Billy Pierce on drums.

There is a nice balance of recent and older recordings and the more contemporary styled selections strike me as not being too far out and should be accessible to most listeners. For those familiar with Delmark’s blues recordings, this and other samplers may be a way to get introduced to the diverse offerings available.

*Ron Weinstock*



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Delmark 60 Years of Blues**  
DELMARK

“Delmark 60 Years of Blues” is one of two compilations with which Delmark Records celebrates its 60 years. Blues has been a strong part of Delmark’s catalog, including recordings by Speckled Red and Big Joe Williams that were part of what the label originally called “Roots of Jazz.”

In fact, when the historic Junior Wells “Hoodoo Man Blues” was issued it was part of this series (I still have my monaural vinyl LP of this). Such a compilation provides a glimpse of the label’s history as well as a sampler of some of its more current (and upcoming releases). Additionally, Delmark provides us with some unissued tracks from earlier albums and selections from forthcoming releases.

There are plenty of delights here ranging from Studebaker John’s opening lament “When They played The Real Blues” to Giles Corey’s psychedelic funk blues from a forthcoming new release.

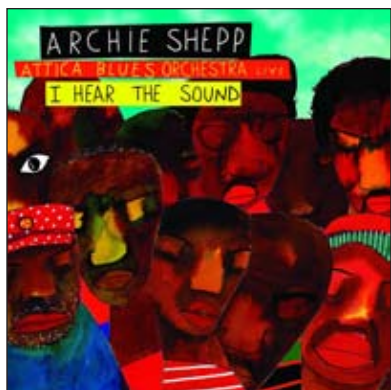
Recent releases by Linsey Alexander and Quintus McCormick are spotlighted along with selections from Eddie C. Campbell, Lurrie Bell (channeling Otis Rush), Sharon Lewis and Tail Dragger. Also among the delights are a previously unissued “Rock Me Baby” from Junior Wells taken from the sessions that produced “Southside Blues Jam,” an alternate take of the Little Walter Trio (with Muddy Waters and Baby Face Leroy Foster) doing “I Just Keep Loving Her,” Big Joe Williams on a 7-string guitar doing a strong “44 Blues,” a previously unissued “Key to the Highway” by Detroit Jr., and Sleepy John Estes (with Hammie Nixon) performing “Stop That Thing” from the forthcoming “Live



in Japan" CD.

There is a fabulous track by Magic Sam from the recent "Live at the Avant Garde album" and this compilation closes with Toronzo Cannon's fervent Hendrix-inspired "John The Conquer Root." There is over an hour of some solid blues to be heard here.

*Ron Weinstock*



## ARCHIE SHEPP ATTICA BLUES ORCHESTRA LIVE

*I Hear The Sound*  
ARCHIEBALL

It was in September 1971 when inmates rebelled at New York State's Attica Prison to protest the inhumane conditions. A few days later, Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered the prison to be retaken by force.

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AND THE PAIN KILLERS

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Thirty-nine people were left dead: 29 prisoners and ten hostages were all killed by the troopers' bullets. A month later there was another tragedy at San Quentin resulting in more deaths, including that of Black Panther George Jackson. These events inspired Archie Shepp to record "Attica Blues" a few months later in January 1972 to pay tribute to those whose lives were taken during these events.

In 1979 there were original and the repeat performances of Shepp's Attica Blues Orchestra at the Palais des Glaces. In 2012 Archie Shepp revived the ensemble, together with a brilliant and dynamic collective of performers. It is an orchestra that transcends styles and epochs. The band is international in scope, combining great American artists such as: Amina Claudine Myers, Jimmy Owens, Famoudou Don Moye, Ambrose Akinmusire, Reggie Washington and Tom McClung, along with some of Europe's brightest stars on the European horizon: Stéphane Belmondo, François Théberge, Christophe Leloil, Izidor Leitingner, Raphaël Imbert, Cécile McLorin-Salvant (a Franco-American vocalist), the remarkable and talented soprano Marion Rampal of Marseille and The String Quartet from Dijon.

Performances of this ensemble were recorded on Sept 9, 2012 at the Jazz à La Villette Festival, June 14, 2013 at CNCDC de Châteauvallon and on June 17, 2013 at Les Nuits de Fourvière Festival, and Shepp has released this on his own Archieball label as "I Hear The Sound." The production of this release was helped along by a Kickstarter crowd funding campaign that I was among the contributors to. The actual CD has 11 tracks with two additional tracks available as downloads. It includes a booklet with background information.

The music is captivating and often compelling, ranging from the revival of "Attica Blues" and "Mama Too Tight" to the moving rendition of Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday" and Cal Massey's "The Cry of My People," and on to the lovely "Ballad For a Child" and "The Stars Are In Your Eyes." Shepp, in addition to being featured throughout on tenor and soprano saxophones, adds his vocals to those of Myers, McLorin-Salvant, and Rampal. Shepp's vocals have a certain charm and contrast with Myers and McLorin-Salvant.

Reggie Washington's bass helps get things going on the funky "Attica Blues" before Myers comes in on piano joined by guitarist Pierre Durand and drummer Famoudou Don Moye before Shepp digs in with some tenor as a trombone growls with the ladies providing vocal coloring singing "I Gotta Feeling" while Shepp sings about things going wrong and folks not knowing what is right or wrong, and there is a story that's gotta be told, with the vocalists and the horns adding emphasis to Shepp's wail. The shifting textures and moods in this performance are indicative of the multi-faceted nature of the music here. It is followed by Amina Claudia Myers doing her original "Arms" with Shepp on soprano sax and the strings caressing

her vocal (on which Shepp joins in) of a tree being a gift from God that lives in a little world but the whole world needs a baby's smile.

Muted trumpets and a bass ostinato introduce "Blues For Brother G Jackson" with the cry of there being no justice throughout the land leading to Shepp's tenor wailing on the strong blues groove. Shepp's love of Duke Ellington is displayed on "Come Sunday," where his tenor caresses the theme before Cecile McLorin-Savant delivers the prayer at the center. Three of the compositions of the 13 on "I Hear The Sound" are by Cal Massey, whom Shepp and John Coltrane both championed. Particularly moving is "The Cry of my People" with moving vocal choruses and soaring trumpet from Ambrose Akinmusire, in addition to strong playing from Shepp and a stunning blues-drenched piano solo (likely from Myers).

The rest of the album is equally stirring and full of passion. For this listener hearing the orchestrations and vocals for the renditions of "Steam" (with Shepp on soprano and McLorin-Savant taking the latter vocal), and "Mama Too Tight." The latter number certainly is quite a bit of fun, although the performance of this funky James Brown influenced classic is a bit looser than the original forty-five or so year old original. Shepp does blow hard and Myers pumps the piano here.

The physical CD has eleven tracks along with instructions to download the ballad "The Stars Are In Your Eyes" and the driving swing of "Ujaama." They complete the moving and exhilarating music by Archie Shepp's Attica Blues Orchestra. I have listened to "I Hear the Sound" a number of times over the past few months and each time I am drawn to the heart and power of the music here.

**Ron Weinstock**



**EDDIE COTTON**  
Here I Come  
DECHAMP RECORDS

Eddie Cotton produced two exceptional albums over a decade ago, "Extra" and "Live at the Alamo Theater," that perhaps did not receive the attention that the music deserved. It was a welcome surprise to discover that he has a new release titled "Here I Come" on the new DeChamp label associated with singer-harmonica player Grady Champion. Cotton and Sam

Brady produced this with Champion being Executive Producer. Others on this include Myron Bennett (bass), Samuel Scott, Jr. (drums) and guest artists Grady Champion (harmonica), Carlos Russell (harmonica) and co-producer Brady (organ).

Cotton has a university degree in music and spent time serving his father's church. He brings some of the church to his soulful vocals and clean, crisp guitar work. An overly simple description of his sound might be Little Milton crossed with some Bobby Rush or Bobby Patterson in his vocals. Other musical influences include Latimore, Al Green and Curtis Mayfield, as can be heard in his lyrics which treat relationships in a sophisticated manner. The Little Milton influence is perhaps most obvious on the terrific slow blues "A Woman's Love" that musically suggests "Walking the Back Streets and Crying."

Other songs here include a wonderful soul-laced ballad "Friend to the End," as he sings about needing a friend who will understand, that he's man who may make mistakes, but will never leave her alone, with a chorus "Don't look for me on Facebook; I've got a message I want to send; You can't fool me with no jive picture; but I'm looking for a friend, (yes I am), one who will go with me to the end." No guitar solo, just a tight, understated backing. "Get Your Own" is a message song with a funky groove followed by the slow Bobby Rush styled "Mr. Boo" in his lead as he sings about having a sweet thing while channeling Albert King a bit in his stinging playing. Grady Champion adds some down-home flavored ha

rp to "Leave Love Alone" as he sings when love gets a hold of one, there is nothing one can do. The soulful "No Love Back" (suggestive of Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye) has the memorable line that "love don't come with no love back guarantee."

While the playing time is somewhat short (38 minutes), the performances are crisply delivered. There are no overlong blues-rock guitar jams and Cotton's own solos are focused with plenty of bite. Hopefully we won't have to wait another decade for more from Eddie Cotton. "Here I Come" is a real blues gem.

**Ron Weinstock**

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## CATHERINE RUSSELL

**Bring it Back**  
JAZZ VILLAGE

The emergence of Catherine Russell on the music stage in the past few years has provided plenty of magical listening.

The daughter of legendary bandleader Luis Russell and bassist-guitarist-singer Carline Ray, Catherine Russell delights with her revival of classic and less-known swing and blues tunes. Her latest album, "Bring It Back" on Jazz Village, continues in this vein with her superb singing backed by a little big band rooted in swing with some gypsy jazz accents.

The album brings her back with the creative team from her last album, "Simply Romancin'," that earned the Grand Prix du Hot Club de France. Among those supporting Ms. Russell are guitarist Matt Munisteri, pianist Mark Shane, bassist Lee Hudson, drummer Mark MacLean, tenor saxophonist and arranger Andy Farber, trumpeter Jon-Erik Kellso, saxophonist Dan Block, trombonist John Allred and baritone saxophonist Mark Lopeman.

And, what a terrific team this is on a wonderful collection of songs ranging from the title track, a Peppermint Harris composition recorded by Wyonnie Harris, Duke Ellington's "I Let a Song Out Of My Heart," Johnny Otis and Preston Love's "Aged and Mellow" that Esther Phillips waxed, "Public Melody One," which Louis Armstrong had a hit with for Decca with a big band led by her late dad and a previously unrecorded song by her father, "Lucille," that was written for Louis Armstrong's wife.

And the music is simply top-rate, with Russell's horn-like phrasing, her warmth, joy and intonation superb throughout, whether strutting on "The Darktown Strutters' Ball," reflective on "Aged and Mellow" (which is how she wants her men like she wants her whisky), sassy on the title track, moody on "After The Lights Go Down Low," and getting the jitterbuggers out on the floor on Ida Cox's "You Got to Swing and Sway." She sings with the exuberance of Helen Humes and the nuance of Lavern Baker.

Then there are booting sax solos, growling trumpets, marvelous piano from boogie to deep swing, guitarist Munisteri jazzy electric blues playing on the title track as well as his deft acoustic chording else-

where and the wonderful arrangements with touches of Ellington and other classic big bands.

The only reason I would be hesitant in describing this as her best recording because her other recordings were also so marvelous, but "Bring It Back" is one of the finest vocal recordings I have heard in the past few months. Its an outstanding recording that retains its pleasures with repeated hearings as Catherine Russell not simply brings back, but reinvigorates some classics and other gems from the blues and swing worlds.

*Ron Weinstock*



## NUNO MINDELIS

**Angels and Clowns**  
SHINING STONE

Brazilian blues and roots ace Nuno Mindelis has a reputation as a guitar virtuoso, but on his debut American release, "Angels and Clowns" (Shining Stone), he appeals as much through his warm singing and the hook-laden pop songs he performs. He is wonderfully backed by the Duke Robillard band, and Duke plays on several tracks, even taking one solo.

Mindelís has an unusual background, having been born in Angola before moving to Brazil during Angola's Civil War. I would disagree with Ted Drozdowski's claim that Mindelis music is balancing tradition and innovation to keep the blues a vital living art form. I would respond that this is a wonderful recording that mixes some blues with rock, soul and other elements for a recording that might be better viewed as a modern recording in the vein of some of the better blues-infused rock recordings of the sixties and seventies. After all the qualities of good music and good melodies are common with the best in a variety of genres, not simply blues.

Mindelís is quoted in Drozdowski's notes as, in essence, wanting to write songs that reached beyond the blues and he succeeds with the marvelous music on this album. His vocals flow naturally with a sincerity and genuine charm evident throughout, and the fact it isn't his first language is moot. His guitar playing displays taste, fluidity and imagination (in a manner suggestive of Mark Knofler) and Robillard's band supplely supports him throughout.

The opening "It's All About Love," with Sunny Crownover adding a nice harmony vocal, suggests (to

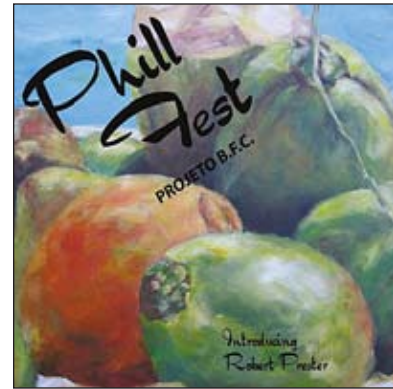


these ears) The Beatles much more than say Billy Boy Arnold or Slim Harpo with some really nice guitar riding the song out to its faded ending. "Its Only a Dream" might have a bit more of a Kinks flavor in the lyrics but is another number with a nice low-key vocal and delightful snap and crackle to its pop in the playing. The title track has a lyric about needing to get the big picture and one must not get bogged down with the devil in the details with Mindelis heartfelt singing standing out along with his carefully crafted playing, and Robillard adds a nice solo to this. "Miss Louise" has more of straight blues flavor and some nice guitar to take the song out.

Other selections include "Tom Plasir," a jazz-tinged instrumental with some very soulful playing with Mark Teixeira's restrained crisp drums helping set the pace, while Bruce Bears keyboards helps Mindelis develop the performance's mood. "Blues in my Cabin" is solid straight blues shuffle, nicely sung with some surging guitar as Bears plays some rollicking piano in his backing. "Happy Guy" is also one of the songs here with a strong blues feel with its lyrics of being happy and no matter what he sings, he tries to sing it true and it always comes out blues.

While I might not agree with Nuno Mindelis' claim everything he sings comes out as blues, the music on "Angels & Clowns" does ring true and honest. An album that brings together blues, rock, soul and jazz elements into a recording full of charm that is marvelously played.

*Ron Weinstock*



**PHILL FEST**  
**Projecto B.F.C.**  
**Self Produced**

Guitarist Phill Fest, son of piano bossa nova pioneer Manfredo Fest, has issued "Projeto B.F.C.," which explores jazz and bossa from high-energy samba and baiao rhythms to subtle bossa gentleness. B.F.C. refers to the Brazilian-Florida connection (as Phill has been in South Florida for over a decade). He is backed by pianist Robert Prester, Brazilian drummer Ronie Martinez and bassist Russ Howard, with Hendrik Meurkens adding his harmonica virtuosity to several selections. The material includes originals by Phill, pianist Robert Prester, drummer Martinez and genre defining compositions by Manfredo Fest.

A couple of short percussion features by Martinez open and close this lively album. Fest's own "Flori-

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Photo © Robyn Churchill

anoplis" was previously recorded by his father and is a brisk and lively number that displays his fleet guitar playing backed by the lively accented group. Kenny Drew Jr. paid tribute to Manfredo with "Samba De Cayo Hueso" and Meurkens adds his chromatic harp virtuosity to the scintillating solos by Prester and Fest. One also has to acknowledge the crisp and lively support of Howard and Martinez here (and he takes a short solo break on this selection) and throughout. On "Baiao Da Amizade" there is much charm in the interplay between Fest and Prester (who overdubs on acoustic guitars and vocalizes) before Howard solos.

Meurkens is also present on Manfredo's lovely "Clearwater Sunset," with Phill adding lovely guitar against the light swaying rhythm. Prester's "Commonwealth Ave" opens with some Gershwin-esque piano before Fest takes it into gear for another spirited performance. Manfredo's "Dig This Samba" is another lively performance that has Meurkens once again joining the group for another marvelous performance on a marvelous recording of Brazilian jazz that consistently delights the listener.

**Ron Weinstock**



## **MONKEY JUNK**

**All Frequencies**  
**STONY PLAIN**

The Canadian blues and roots trio, Monkey Junk, has a new recording "All Frequencies" (Stony Plain). The trio is comprised of Steve Marriner (vocals, harmonica, keyboards, baritone guitar), Tony D (lead guitar, background vocals) and Matt Sobb (drums, percussion, background vocals) and they bring together a tight, full sound without a bass player.

The band's name comes from a comment Son House made about blues and monkey junk, and they note Hound Dog Taylor and Little Walter as models for playing without a bass. The trio was a 3rd Place finisher at the 2009 International Blues Challenge.

Noting the trio's prior recordings had a more traditional blues influence, Marriner stated that on the new one they allowed, "... all sorts of influences through the door. It's really a mixed bag of songs and sounds: greasy rock 'n' roll, swampy blues, uptown funk and soul, and even a little taste of Appalachia." It's an appealing package here, a bit of traditional blues mixed with some garage, grungy grooves and Memphis soul.

PAGE SIXTEEN

Nine of the ten tracks are originals with a cover of the late Bobby Charles' "Why Are People Like That?" that is given a gritty rendition with Marriner shouting at times.

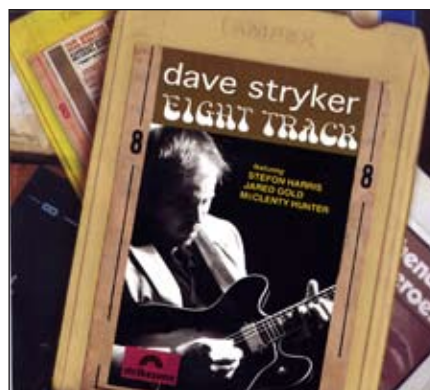
Marriner is an excellent singer who will remind many of Delbert McClinton on many of these tracks, such as the driving roadhouse rocker "You Make a Mess" that opens this album.

With a churning Texas shuffle groove and his wailing harp, Marriner launches into the lyric of "Right From Wrong." "Je Nah Say Kwah" has an amusing bit of word-play set against a funk groove (should appeal to Hall and Oates fans), while "Say What" is a solid garage flavored rocker. The closing "Swank," on which Marriner plays organ, is a terrific Booker T & the MGs styled instrumental.

Monkey Junk brings together impressive musicianship, strong ensemble playing and imaginative, varied material that may transcend their blues roots, but retains the integrity and honesty that marked their prior recordings.

"All Frequencies" may not be all blues, but it is all good.

**Ron Weinstock**



## **DAVE STRYKER**

**Eight Track**  
**STRIKEZONE**

For those for whom the groove is the "thing", guitarist Stryker and his crew bring glad tidings by way of a most spirited set of 60's and 70's hits, done up in the most righteous of jazz settings.

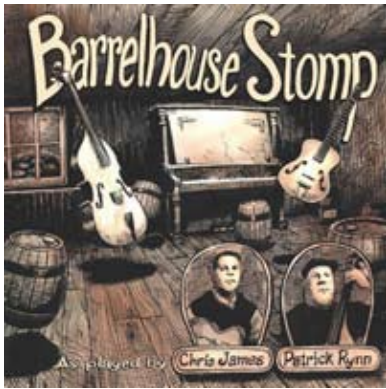
Reaching out to wider audiences by interpreting pop is a time-honored move in the jazz world, and Stryker and his extremely solid side crew- organist Jared Gold, vibraphonist Stefon Harris and drummer McClenty Hunter- breath fresh improvisational life into chart-topping oldies from the Jackson 5, Jimmy Webb, Curtis Mayfield, Pink Floyd and others, recasting them as legit jazz standards.

There's neither overstatement nor "playing down" to the material here, just groove after solid groove.

**Duane Verh**

**jazz-blues.com**





## CHRIS JAMES & PATRICK RYNN

### Barrelhouse Stomp

EARWIG

Earwig is distributing the latest release by guitarist Chris James and bassist Patrick Rynn, "Barrelhouse Stomp." The title, according to annotator Bill Dahl, refers to guitarist James' appreciation of the role of the piano in the blues ensemble. For this disc they recruited pianists Aaron Moore (who recently passed away), Henry Gray and Dave Maxwell along with guest appearances by guitarist Jody Williams (with whom the pair have often toured and played with) and saxophonist Eddie Shaw.

Their long-time collaborator Rob Stone adds harmonica to a couple tracks, while the late Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith, Willie Hayes and Eddie Kobek are heard on drums. In addition to Shaw, saxophonists Johnny Viau and Norbert W. Johnson are also on this recording, comprised of 7 originals and 5 interpretations of classic blues recordings.

It will strike the listener that the originals by James, Rynn and Stone are solid idiomatic blues with a mix of common sense and irony that are played in a striking fashion. The opening "Goodbye, Later For You" is a crisp shuffle with Maxwell laying down some rollicking piano with a strong solo while Rynn and Hayes lay down the swinging shuffle groove.

The great Jody Williams is the featured guitarist on "Just Another Kick in the Teeth" with its steady groove, a bass break and Eddie Shaw's easily recognizable sax also spotlighted here. Big Bill Broonzy's "I Feel So Good" is one of the two selections with pianist Moore and drummer Smith with saxophonist Viau very audible, and a capable, if unexceptional, vocal.

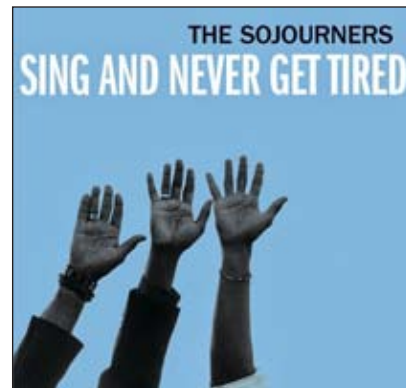
"Messin' With White Lightnin'," set to the Bo Diddley beat (based on "Who Do You Love"), displays more guitar from Williams (the title refers to Williams' guitar) as well as from James. Moore is in the spotlight on "Before It Gets Too Late" with James strong here vocally as well as instrumentally.

Henry Gray is on piano while James picks up his slide for some exceptional Elmore James-flavored slide on the jaunty "A Fact Is A Fact" with Viau and Johnson adding to the tenor of this first-rate performance. James even gives a taste of his own harp playing on "It Always Can Be Worse," while once again Williams

takes off on "I'm Gonna Stop Fooling Myself." James sings strongly on the classic "Vicksburg Blues" that has Stone on harp and Shaw blasting off on sax. James gets to showcase his slide playing on Elmore James' instrumental "Bobby' Rock" with the contrast between the slow tempo and James fiery slide adding to the track's appeal.

After the rocking shuffle rendition of Robert Night-hawk's "Take It Easy," done as a tribute to Pinetop Perkins, the disc closes with Henry Grey's exuberant piano for "Last Call Boogie," with its rumba groove and lyrics fit for a set or album closer. James and Rynn have provided us with another solid recording of Chicago styled blues played with an authority that is increasingly less common in today's world.

*Ron Weinstock*



## THE SOJOURNERS

### Sing And Never Get Tired

LITTLE PIG RECORDS

Fans of gospel music with a bluesy twist may find a new album by the Canadian gospel trio, The Sojourners, "Sing And Never Get Tired" (Little Pig Records) to their liking. Comprised of Marcus Mosely, Will Sanders and Khari McClelland, The Sojourners are backed by a small group that includes producer Paul Pigat on guitar and Steve B on harmonica for the Vancouver recording.

"Sing and Never Get Tired" explores the roots of the connection between gospel and social action by dipping into the deep well of American roots music to revisit classic songs associated with The Staples Singers, The Dixie Hummingbirds, Rosetta Tharpe and Nina Simone, along with songs from Stephen Stills and Bob Dylan. The songs speak of faith, struggle and the promise of redemption. Of this Mosely commented, "This album is grittier and has more of an edge than anything we've done before. These new songs have a groove to them. We're doing dance music, and if you come to see us, you should come ready to have a good time."

Pigat's trebly guitar evokes Pops Staples perhaps on the opening "Don't Knock," the first of the truth and gospel songs as the trio deliver the message that one does not knock heaven's door, simply walk right



in. Marriner adds some strong harmonica for the driving parable, "Christian's Automobile" where faith is one's steering wheel. Like the Staples might adapt a Bob Dylan song, the three provide a fresh setting and take of Stephen Stills' mid-sixties message song "For What It's Worth." "Ezekial" is a jubilant telling of the Jewish Scriptures story while "Milky White Way" with piano recalls some of the classic gospel recordings of the fifties.

Other selections include a terrific rendition of The Staples "Why Am I Treated So Bad," a rocking rendition of "This Train," with some fine harmonica in a backing that has some rockabilly tinges and Dylan's "I Shall Be Released," with Pigat being very effective in his guitar backing. The unaccompanied "I Ain't Got No Home," another number with a social message, ends this recording with more strong, committed vocals that make "Sing And Never Get Tired" such a fine recording. Fans of Mavis Staples most recent recordings along with those who loved The Staple Singers will ring plenty to enjoy.

*Ron Wienstock*



## DAVE RILEY AND BOB CORRITORE

### Hush Your Fuss!

SWMAF RECORDS/ VIZZTONE

Mississippi born guitarist Dave Riley and harmonica wizard Bob Corritore have just issued their third CD, the traditionally rooted "Hush Your Fuss!" (SWMAF Records/ VizzTone). Some duo sides, such as the opening title track based on some old traditional gospel themes, are mixed with some Delta to Chicago styled juke joint blues with Dave 'Yahni' Riley, Jr., on bass and Brian Fahey on drums, along with Gloria Bailey adding some keyboards.

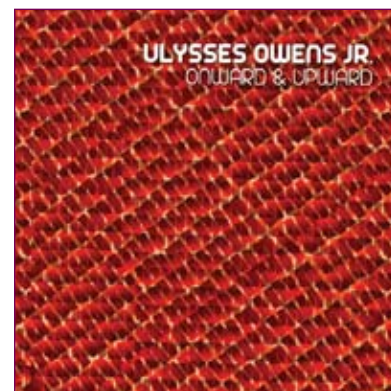
There is nothing fancy here, such as the easy rocking shuffle "Baby Please Come Home" with Riley pleading for her to return where she belongs with some nice harmonica. "No Cussin'" has an usual lyric, with Dave singing about finding he was cussing folks too much and no more cussing, for him set against a low-key chugging rhythm with some fine harmonica.

John Weston's "Stuff Dippin' Woman," with Corritore on chromatic harmonica is a moody slow blues about a woman with snuff juice running down her chin. In addition to the strong harp, Riley's guitar is spot on

here. It is the CD's longest performance and only one of two songs not composed by Riley or Corritore. Gloria Bailey adds organ on Harvey Watkins' "Mississippi Po Boy," where he sings about not having much money but so glad the Lord has been good to him.

"Home in Chicago" is a shuffle with the theme that one can take Dave out of the Country but can't take the country out of Dave, followed by Dave's tale of a "Hard Headed Woman" who acts like she don't care. This gentle rocker is set against a backing that sounds derived from Junior Parker's "Mystery Train" Perhaps not the most striking lyric, but an amiable performance that is typical of this entire recording.

"Hush Your Fuss!" is a solid, amiable recording of blues without any frills and no rock pretensions. The songs may be standard blues fare, but they are sung and played with heart and humor. *Ron Wienstock*



## ULYSSES OWENS JR.

### Onward & Upward

D CLEF

Some jazz crosses over out of a deliberate attempt to play to a pop audience. Other jazz does so on its own, projecting enough of a melodic character, energy and extroversion to make it accessible on its own terms.

The well-traveled drummer Mr. Owens' new offering fits squarely in the second category, "real" jazz that could attract the casual listener.

Owens, whose resume includes work with Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard and Mulgrew Miller, among others, is a highly charged leader here, driving small-to-medium sized configurations, big on fresh sounding charts and very respectable solo features.

Standing out in this latter area are trumpeter Jason Palmer and pianist Christian Sands. Classic urban fare- Thom Bell's "People Make The World Go Round" and Phyllis Hyman's "Just 25 Miles To Anywhere" work well, as do Wayne Shorter's "Fee Fi Fo Fum" and the light hearted, group-composed "Samba Jam".

*Duane Verh*

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## KARA GRAINGER

### Shiver & Sigh

ELECTO GROOVE RECORDS

With both a voice and slide guitar skills that echo Bonnie Raitt Australian Kara Grainger checks in with her Electo Groove Records debut.

Backed by some of the cream of the LA blues scene (including Hutch Hutchinson on bass, Jimi Bott on drums, Kirk Fletcher and Josh Sklair on guitars and the Pacific Coast Horns) Grainger works her way through five originals and covers by the likes of Mike Zito, *Holding Out for Love*, Robert Johnson, *C'mon in My Kitchen* and Al Jackson/Timothy Matthews, *Breaking Up Somebody's Home*. While she echoes Raitt, she's no copycat. Indeed, while Raitt can be edgy, ragged and funky, Grainger tends to sound a bit more polished and

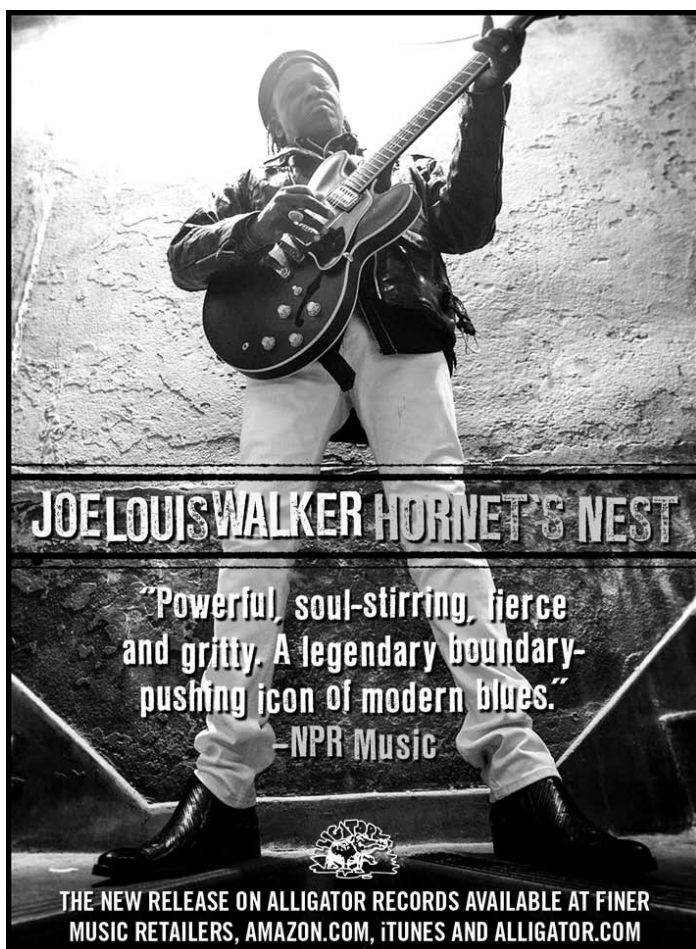
slick- and that's not a knock on either of them, simply a point of distinction. *I'm Not Ready* is an original that showcases Grainger's rich voice and tasteful guitar while *No Way You Can Hurt Me Now* is a chugging rocker that showcases a more forceful and energetic guitar style.

Two other originals, *Lost in You* and *You're the One*, find Grainger and crew flirting with funk and blues rock. Showcasing her versatility, *Holding Out for Love* is a soulful mid-tempo number that wouldn't sound out of place on a classic Heart or Fleetwood Mac disc. Make no mistake though, Grainger knows her way around the blues as evidenced by her slinky slide guitar fueled take on the oft-covered *C'mon in My Kitchen* the smoky lament, *Overdue for the Blues* and the forceful *Breaking Up Somebody's Home*.

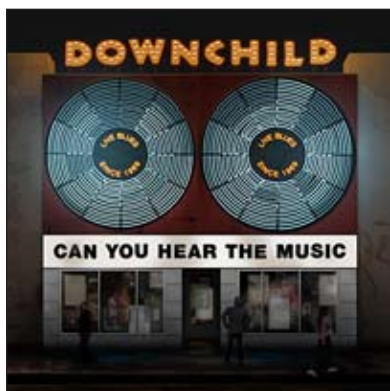
Based on the strength of this disc we can expect to hear much more from Kara Grainger. **Mark Smith**

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**DOWNCHILD**  
**Can You Hear The Music**  
 TRUE NORTH RECORDS

Listening to “Can You Hear The Music” (True North Records), the new recording by the venerable Canadian blues band Downchild, one is struck by the sound and the pace of the music. Given the four decades-plus Downchild has been around, this should be no surprise – but it is also refreshing in this age of guitar shredders whose idea of nuance is only occasionally turning the volume dial on their guitar or amps down. Don Walsh with his guitar, harmonica and songs may be the axis about which Downchild revolves, but Chuck Jackson’s gritty singing, Michael Fonfara’s keyboards and Pat Carey’s saxophone also stand out while the bass of Gary Kendall and the drums of Mike Fitzpatrick lay out a tight rhythmic foundation. On several tracks they are joined by Peter Jeffery’s trumpet.

The title track, a hot jump blues that musically evokes Louis Jordan’s classic “Choo Choo Ch’Boogie,” kicks this set off. The easy rocking “I’m Always Here For You,” like the opening track, benefits from crisply arranged horns in addition to the band’s solid groove. “I Need a Woman” musically suggests Little Richard’s “Directly From My Heart,” as Walsh’s fuzz-tone guitar break complements the urgency imparted by the Jackson’s vocal. “Blue Moon Blues” takes the band down into the alley, while “Fasten Your Seat Belt” is another hot jump blues with strong harp and a tough tenor sax solo.

After Walsh’s jaunty slide guitar on “The Road,” there is a nice swampy feel about “My Mississippi Queen,” where Jackson (who wrote this choice lyric) sings about meeting a lady near New Orleans who later one night caught the eye of everybody in every club on both sides of Beale Street before she broke his heart. She took his money, but more as when she took his heart it was the worst thing any woman can do. Walsh adds a strong harp solo to go with the strong lyric and backing resulting in quite a jewel of a performance.

There’s a full moon out and Downchild are on a rambling mood on the rocking shuffle “Don’t Wait up For Me,” with Fonfara’s rollicking piano accompaniment and Walsh’s crisp, slide guitar break. “Scattered,” a jumping harmonica feature, concludes a superbly played, and consistently entertaining blues recording.

*Ron Weinstock*

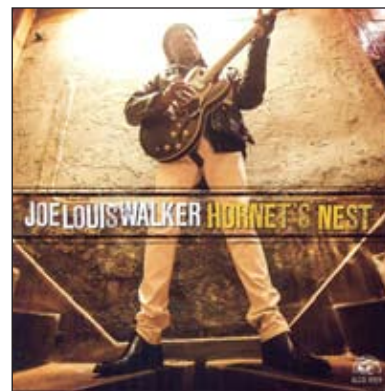


**BILLY HART QUARTET**  
**One Is The Other**  
 ECM

The same foursome that created 2011’s *All Our Reasons* displays the same simultaneous senses of cohesion and fluidity that graced that excellent release. The Hart quartet’s front line- tenor saxophonist Mark Turner and pianist Ethan Iverson- consistently provide individual and joint invention that subtly counter Mr. Hart’s masterfully controlled dynamics, generating a tension that keeps this creative mass together. As on *Reasons*, bassist Ben Street plays a deftly underplayed, indispensable role.

Ballads prevail in this group’s world, but they get to swinging on Turner’s “Sonnet For Stevie” and cooking on the leader’s “Yard”. If they continue to hang together, the Hart quartet could likely join the ranks of classic jazz ensembles.

*Duane Verh*



**JOE LOUIS WALKER**  
**Hornet’s Nest**  
 ALLIGATOR

Somewhere I saw that Joe Louis Walker’s new CD, “Hornet’s Nest” (Alligator), is his 25th. Whether or not that is the actual case, it gives a sense of the substantial body of work he has recorded since his first Hightone album some quarter-century ago. Walker, recently inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame, has produced some of the finest blues recordings of this time span displaying both passion and substance as a songwriter and performer.

The CD was produced by Tom Hambridge, who has produced Buddy Guy’s recent recordings, and Hambridge also is on drums and contributes backing



vocals. The other member of the studio band that will be familiar is Reese Wynans on keyboards. The Muscle Shoals Horn Section is present on one of the 11 selections. Hambridge contributed to 8 of the 11 selections on this (4 of which Walker contributed to).

Hambridge's production brings a rock-tinged edge to the music here, some of which is pretty 'in your face.' And this CD is not strictly blues as there is a fair amount of hard blues-rock present along with some blues. Folks with a preference for a more traditional blues sound might want to pass on this while folks that like their blues mixed with hard rock will be quite happy with it.

The title track is a bit of blues-tinged rock with Hambridge pushing the groove with the subtlety of a sledgehammer operator while Walker lays down a fiery blues-rock solo against the dense backing. "All I Want To Do" has more of a laid back feel as the Muscle Shoals Horns add punch with Walker singing soulfully, although his voice sounds a bit strained. A shuffle, "Stick a Fork in Me," has a clever lyric along with a lively performance, and it is followed by an imaginative rendition of the old Roy Hamilton hit "Don't Let Go."

Walker plays slide on the terrific, "I'm Gonna Walk Outside," as Walker channels Muddy Waters as he sings "A married woman, a back door man, a loaded pistol in you husband's hand." "Ramblin' Soul" is some more heavy blues-rock as he bellows about hellhounds can't

find him as he lays down slide while the backing pounds things along. It is followed by a Jagger & Richards cover, "Ride On, Baby," which sounds to these ears like a Bruce Springsteen cover.

"Soul City" is a rocker lyrically akin to James Brown's recording of "Night Train" and musically evokes the classic Stax instrumental "Soulfinger" with screaming guitar. I would love to hear someone interpret this as a horn based funk number. "Not in Kansas Anymore," with an opening that evokes The Who's "We Won't Get Fooled Again," has a lyric about Dorothy, Toto, wicked witches and the Wizard of Oz, and is straight hard rock.

Joe Louis Walker establishes on "Hornet's Nest" that he can rock as hard as anyone out there, and is more than capable of playing something other than blues. Hopefully it is a recording that will enable him to enlarge his audience beyond blues and enable him to play not simply to blues audiences but to other music venues and events that rarely feature blues performers. "Hornet's Nest" shows he continues to invest his performances with considerable power and passion, although it will not be an album this listener will be listening to regularly, but that is a matter of personal musical taste.

*Ron Weinstock*

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## FRANK BEY & ANTHONY PAULE BAND

**Soul For Your Blues**  
BLUE DOT RECORDS

Frank Bey shared gospel bills with the Soul Stirrers with Sam Cooke, the Blind Boys of Alabama and others when singing gospel with his mother. As a teen he opened shows for Otis Redding and after committing himself to the blues, his career progress was undercut by a failing kidney. After several years of dialysis, he had a successful kidney transplant. A couple of years later he started making appearances with the Anthony Paule Band at Biscuits & Blues in San Francisco. In February 2013 they issued a solid live recording and now a year later Frank Bey & Anthony Paule Band have a new recording, "Soul For Your Blues" on Blue Dot Records.

What is striking is just how strong the musical pairing of Philadelphia singer Frank Bey with San Francisco's Anthony Paule Band is. Presented is a nice mix of lesser know blues and soul classics with choice originals and interpretations of lesser know numbers. The opening number is Willie Mitchell's "I Don't Know Why" with Bey's strong singing suggesting the late Solomon Burke and Mighty Sam McClain. Tony Lufrano plays deep soul organ here and on most of this disc. Paule and guest Kid Anderson are featured on Paule's driving blues "I'm Leaving You", followed by the Muscle Shoals groove of Christine Vitale's deep soul original "I Just Can't Go On." Paule evokes Steve Cropper with his fills and brief solo on this. Rick Estrin adds harp to a humorous Vitale-Paule blues, "Don't Mess With The Monkey."

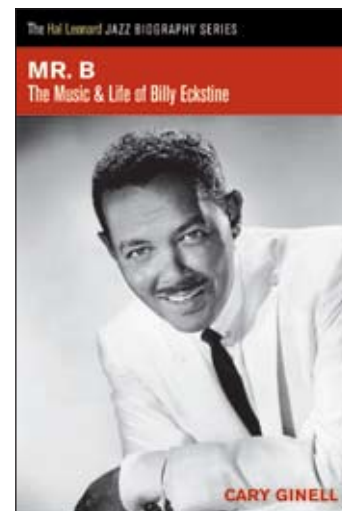
There is a jump blues feel to Wyonnie Harris' "Buz-zard Luck" with riffing horns behind Bey's strong vocal and a T-Bone Walker styled guitar solo. Vitale, Paule and Karen Falkner wrote "You're Somebody Else's Baby Too" that has the feel of mid-sixties B.B. King flavor. There is a nifty arrangement of Percy Mayfield's "Nothing Stays the Same Forever," with Mike Rinta on tuba (he is on trombone most of the recording. In addition to Rinta, kudos go to Nancy Wright's tenor sax and Steffen Kuehn's trumpet for their playing throughout. Bey is superb here with a vocal that suggests what Solomon Burke might have done with this song. There is also a wonderful interpretation of John Prine's "Hello In There," which again displays how Bey brings some of the same interpretative magic to a lyric that Burke

did and MacLean still does, while marvelous restrained backing by the Paule Band.

The funky "Smokehouse" and an instrumental rendition of "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" showcase the band. Rinta takes an outstanding trombone solo on the former as does organist Lufrano, while Paule displays a crisp delivery and imaginative playing on "San Francisco" which closes this disc out. It should be noted that I have attempted to highlight this album but the performances by Frank Bey & Anthony Paule Band on "Soul For Your Blues" are first-rate throughout." This is simply a terrific recording.

*Ron Weinstock*

## books



## MR. B.: THE MUSIC AND LIFE OF BILLY ECKSTINE

by Cary Ginell

2013: HAL LEONARD BOOKS

Cary Ginell, author of a recent biography of Cannonball Adderly, has a new book as part of the Hal Leonard Jazz Biography Series, **Mr. B.: The Music and Life of Billy Eckstine**. Like his biography of Adderly, this is intended to be a concise and accessible biography. I found this, like the Adderly book, a brisk and well done read. In researching Eckstine's life, Ginell mined print source sews reports, interviews and like from like the Pittsburgh Courier, DownBeat, Metronome and other sources along with interviews with those that knew him well. Ginell provides a chronicle of Mr. B's life from growing up in Pittsburgh, going to school, his early days as a performer, changing the spelling of his last name from Eckstein to Eckstine, joining the Earl Hines Orchestra and later after that band disbanded his formation of the legendary bebop big band, his days as one of America's most popular singers and more.

His lengthy recording career is recounted as well from the big band days to his substantial legacy as a singer of classic pop songs. Ginell recounts his suc-



cesses and triumphs as well as frustrations and the obstacles of racism that limited and frustrated some of his ambitions. It was ironic that with Earl Hines he had two major hits, *Jelly, Jelly* and *Stormy Monday Blues* (a very different song than the T-Bone Walker song), as he generally resisted singing blues, in great part because record companies at the time generally limited most Black recording and artists to blues.

Ginell details his recording career and goes in detail about his time with Savoy, with whom his big band made so many legendary recordings, and then his signing with MGM. He had signed with MGM as a single with the hope of also having a career in films, but a factor that the Studios provided a lack of suitable (that is non-stereotypical) roles for Blacks led to his hopes and ambitions being dashed. Racism was also a factor in the decline of his status as one of America's leading popular vocalists who at a time had a status on the level of Frank Sinatra.

Ginell recounts the unintended consequence of the 1950 publication in *Life Magazine* of a pictorial on Eckstine that included an innocent looking picture (included in the pictures and illustrations incorporated in this biography) of Mr. B with admiring white teenage girls after a show. The reaction to this included a letter from a Georgian saying he was disgusted with *Life* for printing these pictures, and that was a printable response. As Ginell observes, this photo with an indication of racial tolerance was much "too early to do anything but alienate the still regressive and prejudiced American society." It did not open doors and in fact shut doors for Eckstine with Ginell quoting Tony Bennett and Dr. Billy Taylor.

Mr. B continued to be a significant recording artist and performing through the fifties and sixties and Ginell traces his sessions for MGM, and then Mercury and Roulette with whom he made some of his greatest recordings. And he went from headlining the Paramount in New York in the forties to becoming a major attraction on the night club circuit such as New York's Copacabana and Las Vegas as well as the Catskills and Pocono Mountains. His active involvement with the Civil Rights Movement is also recounted.

Ginell also details Eckstine's various aspects of his domestic life, including his divorces. His children's recollections of growing up with his as their dad also provide perspective on his life. He had some financial issues including apparently some tax debts although Ginell does not explain the reason underlying these debts. The IRS did seize and sell property to pay off a quarter million dollar debt in 1986.

Billy Eckstine was a trailblazer as well as a great artist. Ginell observes that he was "popular music's first romantic African American icon," his legacy was obscured because while he had many hits, he lacked an iconic recording like Sinatra's *My Way* or Bing Crosby's *White Christmas*. He made his mark in live performances, of which few were documented on a recording and a substantial body of his recording

career remains un-reissued. Be he deserves better. He struggled to be treated as the equal of white entertainers, which "showed a resiliency, sense of purpose and defiance that is as essential to the American experience as the efforts of Jackie Robinson, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. The possessor of one of the most glorious voices in history does not deserve his anonymity." 2014 will be the centennial of his birth and it is time to reassess his talent and career "as one of the most important and essential bodies of work of the twentieth century." Gary Ginell's *Mr. B.: The Music and Life of Billy Eckstine*, makes a strong case for this re-assessment and is an important addition to jazz literature.

*Ron Weinstock*

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