

now in our 41st year
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Issue 359

jazz
& blues report

A portrait of Dianne Reeves, a Black woman with voluminous, curly dark hair. She is wearing a light blue, long-sleeved button-down shirt with a V-neckline and a bright red, draped waistband. She is also wearing large, colorful, patterned earrings and has bright red lipstick on. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Savannah Music Festival
Dianne Reeves

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 eventually we hope to 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

jazz & blues

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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!



Savannah Music Festival



Ruthie Foster (photo: Ayano Hisa)

Savannah Music Festival Georgia's Largest Musical Arts Event Announces 26th Season March 19–April 4

Savannah, Georgia – The historic district of downtown Savannah plays host to more than 100 performances during the annual

Savannah Music Festival (SMF), providing an ideal backdrop for an event that celebrates exceptional artistry in jazz, classical, and a variety of American and international musical traditions. The 2015 edition of SMF takes place from March 19 through April 4, with a lineup that includes the debut of opera at SMF, an expansion of the number of programs staged, and the organization's most international festival to date. "With the incredible success of the 25th anniversary season in 2014, our community made it clear that it has embraced SMF as a significant economic driver, arts education leader, and mainstay marquee event," explains SMF Executive & Artistic Director Rob Gibson. Tickets to the 2015 festival went on sale November 6, 2014, online at savannahmusicfestival.org, by phone at 912-525-5050 and at 216 E. Broughton Street in Savannah.

Last year, describing the SMF as "Georgia's most delightful music festival," the Atlanta Journal-Constitution marveled: "How did a city of 150,000 (360,000 in the metro area) create a music festival that rivals Spoleto in Charleston? How did Savannah slip past Atlanta and claim this prize? A visit to Savannah for the first three days of the festival offered a few clues: relentless hospitality, choice, and courage."

Jazz, blues, gospel, and R&B highlights

Jazz has always been integral to SMF programming, typically figuring most prominently during the week of SMF's Swing Central Jazz program



Buckwheat Zydeco (by Dragan Tasic)



Mavis Staples

featuring Associate Artistic Director Marcus Roberts. Highlights of the 2015 jazz programming are the Marcus Roberts Trio, the Warren Vaché Quintet on a bill with the Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet, Dianne Reeves, trumpeter Sean Jones's quartet sharing a bill with vibraphonist Warren Wolf & Wolfpack, the Julian Lage & Jorge Roeder duo, the annual late night jam with the Sean Jones Quartet, Wycliffe Gordon, and friends, and concerts designed to celebrate the music of jazz luminaries Bud Powell, Benny Carter, and Louis Armstrong. Blues, gospel, and R&B are prevalent in the 2015 festival schedule, with Mavis Staples, Heritage Blues Orchestra, and Irma Thomas joining the Dirty Dozen Brass Band for a "New Orleans Soul & Brass Party." The original cabaret production "Come Rain or Come Shine" welcomes theater and opera veteran Kurt Ollmann to the SMF stage.

Acoustic, rock, and global roots music highlights

Many of the country's finest bluegrass ensembles are scheduled for SMF 2015, such as IBMA Entertainer of the Year Balsam Range, The Boxcars, Jerry Douglas's Flatt & Scruggs project the Earls of Leicester, and Hot Rize. The Band Courtbouillon featuring Steve Riley, Wayne Toups and Wilson Savoy hosts SMF's 2015 Cajun Dance Party, while Buckwheat Zydeco brings his group for the 2015 Zydeco Dance Party. National Heritage Fellows The McIntosh County Shouters return to perform slave shout songs from the Georgia coast. A three-night run of western swing features the Hot Club of Cowtown and Asleep at the Wheel. Dirk Powell & Riley Baugus share the stage with South African Vusi Mahlasela, and songwriters abound with theater performances by "Southern Troubadours" Joe Ely, Ruthie Foster, and Paul Thorn, in addition to Josh Ritter, Lucinda Williams, and Rosanne Cash. Folk-rock artists Shovels & Rope share the bill with Austin's Shakey Graves, and The Barr Brothers perform alongside Apache Relay. The Wood

Brothers return to Ships of the Sea North Garden for an outdoor show with the AJ Ghent Band. Mike Marshall, mandolinist and Director of SMF's Acoustic Music Seminar, performs Brazilian music with his group Choro Famoso, composer Clarice Assad, and her ensemble Off The Cliff. The acclaimed Taiko drum troupe Kodo brings its "One Earth: Mystery" project to SMF 2015, both Kayhan Kalhor and Béla Fleck perform with Brooklyn Rider, Irish supergroup Lúnasa returns, Adonis Puentes & the Voice of Cuba Orchestra preside over the Latin Dance Party, and Ukrainian drum and song ensemble DakhaBrakha closes out the festival.

Opera, symphonic, chamber, and recital highlights

New in 2015, the Savannah Music Festival introduces opera to its programming through a co-production of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and Gianni Schicchi with the Savannah VOICE Festival (SVF), featuring the Savannah Philharmonic under Eugene Kohn with principals Mark Delavan, Verónica Villarroel, and Micaela Oëste. In celebration of Sherrill Milnes's 80th birthday, these three arts organizations join forces in presenting two nights of opera, a chamber orchestra concert with Daniel Hope & Friends, and a vocal concert with singers from the SVF.

SMF Associate Artistic Director Daniel Hope has again helped curate a ten-concert chamber music series that features his friends and colleagues from across North America and Europe, including the Emerson String Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. SMF 2015 recitalists include pianists Murray Perahia, Stephen Hough, Paul Lewis, and Nikolai Lugansky, and guitarist Milos Karadagli. The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under conductor Robert Spano is scheduled to appear at SMF 2015 with cellist Lynn Harrell performing the Dvorák Cello Concerto alongside Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony.

For the complete schedule, visit [www.savannah-](http://www.savannah-jazz.com)



Dirty Dozen Brass Band

musicfestival.org. In early February, a second wave of pop/rock concerts will be added to the SMF 2015 schedule.

About the Savannah Music Festival

A non-profit performing arts organization, the Savannah Music Festival (SMF) is dedicated to presenting worldclass celebrations of the musical arts by creating timeless and adventurous productions that stimulate arts education, foster economic growth, and unite artists and audiences in Savannah. In addition to year-round music education and broadcast initiatives, SMF produces one of the most distinctive cross-genre music festivals in the world. The 2015 festival runs from March 19 through April 4, including more than 100 performances in intimate venues throughout Savannah's historic district. For more information visit www.savannahmusicfestival.org.

Cover photo of Dianne Reeves by Jerris Madison.

Next Generation Jazz Festival Presented by Monterey Jazz Festival

**America's Top Young Jazz Musicians,
March 27-29 in Downtown Monterey**

**88 Groups from 11 States and Canada are Participants
42 Bands from 12 California Counties Selected as Finalists**

Monterey, Calif. — The 11th Annual Next Generation Jazz Festival Presented by Monterey Jazz Festival takes place March 27-29, 2015, at the Monterey Conference Center. The weekend-long event includes Big Bands, Combos, Vocal Ensembles, and individual musicians vying for a spot on the stages of the 58th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival. The event will be open to the public, free of charge.

With more than 1200 students participating in the Next Generation Jazz Festival, the public can enjoy the largest gathering of young jazz talent in Northern California, outside of the Monterey Jazz Festival itself.

In 2015, 62 groups from seven states and British Columbia are finalists in the adjudicated categories. Click here for a list of finalists.

Finalists from California are represented by 42 ensembles from 12 counties—including Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Los Angeles, Marin, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, and Yolo counties.

Other areas of North America for the finalists include Arizona, British Columbia, Canada; Florida, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, and Washington State.

In addition, 26 special guest groups from six states shall perform, including student ensembles from California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, and Washington State.

Altogether, 88 bands from 11 states will perform at the Next Generation Jazz Festival. "2015 is the largest gathering of student groups ever at the Next Generation Jazz Festival," said Paul Contos, Monterey Jazz Festival education director. "We are excited to present such an array of talent, from middle school through college-level ensembles."

The Next Generation Jazz Festival officially starts with the annual Opening Night Concert at 8 p.m. on Friday, March 27, at the Monterey Conference Center's Serra Ballroom. This year the concert, entitled Remembering Clark Terry: A Swingin' Celebration will be dedicated to the memory of the legendary trumpeter and jazz educator Clark Terry, who performed at Monterey Jazz Festival at least 19 times from 1965-1999, and whose impact on the Monterey Jazz Festival's education programs continues to be felt. The show features performances by the Festival's team of internationally-renowned artists and competition judges: trumpeter Terell Stafford; saxophonists Mary Fetting and Joel Frahm; trombonist Luis Bonilla; pianists Helen Sung and Reggie Thomas; guitarist Bruce Forman; bassist Ray Drummond; drummer Matt Wilson; and vocalist Mardra Thomas. Opening the concert at 7:30 p.m. is the Marika Galea Quartet from Berklee College of Music.

Prior to the Friday night concert, there will be the inaugural Next Generation Jazz Festival Gala, starting at 5 p.m., with a special reception, silent auction, raffle, dinner, and honoring of local educator Dr. Rob Klevan, who will be given the Monterey Jazz Festival's Jazz Champion Award for his three-decade long devotion and contribution to the Monterey Bay's musical landscape. Also included are Gold Circle Tickets reserved seating in the front rows as well as an invitation to the exclusive post-concert "meet and greet" dessert reception with the performers, Monterey Jazz Festival judges, and adjudicators. Tickets for this special reception are \$105 with a \$95 early bird discount through Thursday, March 19, and are available by calling 831.373.3366 or by emailing development@montereyjazzfestival.org.

Individual Gold Circle Tickets are available for \$50, and include reserved seating in the front rows as well as an invitation to the exclusive post-Friday night Judges Concert "meet and greet" and dessert reception with the



performers, and Next Generation Jazz Festival adjudicators. The \$50 tickets do not include the pre-concert reception, dinner and award presentation.

Throughout the weekend, all events in both the Steinbeck Forum and Serra Ballroom, including the Friday Night Concert, will be available as a live Web stream on Monterey Jazz Festival's Web site, provided by Next Generation Jazz Festival Media Partner, Access Monterey Peninsula.

All Next Generation Jazz Festival competition events—from the High School Big Band, Vocal Ensemble and Combo Competition on Saturday, March 28 to the College Big Band and Vocal Jazz Ensemble Competition on Sunday, March 29, as well as clinics, and workshops—are open to the public, free of charge, with music to be performed at the Monterey Conference Center, Portola Hotel, Turn 12 Bar and Grill, and the Museum of Monterey. The Next Generation Jazz Festival will also continue its Jazz Expo, allowing students an opportunity to visit with several colleges and organizations offering jazz and other music programs. For a complete schedule of activities and competition times, visit montereyjazzfestival.org/NGJF.

The High School Competition begins at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 28, in the Monterey Conference Center. Throughout the day, the high school groups will perform, with several educational clinics and performances featuring the Marika Galea Quartet from Berklee College of Music; Matt Wilson; and Reggie and Mardra Thomas.

The top Vocal, Combo, and Big Band divisions will be announced at 6:15 p.m. Saturday evening from the Serra Ballroom stage. At 8:30 p.m., the top finalists will perform a Showcase Concert—a preview of the groups performing at the 58th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival. The final rankings will be announced at the end of the evening.

The Next Generation Jazz Festival continues on Sunday, March 29, with Middle School, College, Conglomerate Big Band, High School and College Open Combos, and College Vocal Ensemble Divisions performing in the Serra Ballroom and Steinbeck Forum. The top college big band, college vocal ensemble, and conglomerate big band (to be announced during the day) will also earn a performance slot at the 58th Monterey Jazz Festival. Auditions will also be held for the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra, Monterey Jazz Festival's national all-star high school band.

Introduced in 1971 as the California High School Jazz Band Competition by Monterey Jazz Festival Founder Jimmy Lyons, the competition was conceived as a way to bring talented student groups to Monterey, and to cultivate musicians for the future. Notable participants of the Jazz Competition and Next Generation Jazz Orchestra members (formally the California High School All-Star Band) include saxophonists Joshua Redman, Dave Koz and Donny McCaslin; pianists Benny Green and Patrice Rushen; multi-instrumentalist Peter Apfelbaum; bassist Larry Grenadier, and many others.

Next Generation Jazz Festival Partners include

Alvarez Technology Group, Inc.; Macy's, McGraw-Hill Education, Scheid Family Wines, Yamaha Drums, and Yamaha Pianos. Supporters include California Jazz Conservatory, Stanford Jazz Workshop, Stevenson School, York School, Remo Drumheads, Gallien-Krueger, and Zildjian Cymbals. Other contributors include ACTION Council of Monterey County, Arts Council for Monterey County, Community Foundation for Monterey County, D'Addario Music Foundation, David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Harden Foundation, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation, and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Sponsorship opportunities, raffle donation instructions, program advertising information, and more details on the 2015 Next Generation Jazz Festival can be seen by visiting www.montereyjazzfestival.org/NGJF or by calling 831.373.3366.

Monterey Jazz Festival, a leader in the jazz world since 1958, celebrates the legacy of jazz, expands its boundaries, and provides opportunities to experience jazz through the creative production of performances and educational programs.

Monterey Jazz Festival Receives \$116,500 in Grants



Monterey, Calif. – Monterey Jazz Festival, a leader in the jazz world since its inception in 1958, is pleased to announce that it has received \$116,500 in grants, including a grant for \$50,000 from the Monterey Peninsula Foundation to support the Festival's jazz education programs; a \$40,000 Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the 58th Monterey Jazz Festival; a \$20,000 community impact grant from the Community Foundation for Monterey County to support the Traveling Clinicians program; a \$4,500 grant from the Arts Council for Monterey County and a \$2,000 grant from the Bill Graham Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, to support the Festival's jazz education programs.

As a nonprofit, Monterey Jazz Festival is devoted to education by presenting year-round local, regional, national, and international programs. Schools in Monterey County and thousands of students have been the benefactors of the Festival's educational efforts through the Traveling Clinicians Program, Summer Jazz Camp and Monterey County All-Star Bands, which embark on annual performance trips each summer. The Festival now spends over \$500,000 annually on its education programs, including the Next Generation Jazz Festival, gathering the best student bands from across the nation each spring, the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra, selecting the country's best musicians for summer tour each year, and the Artist-In-Residence program, which

brings an renowned artist to work with young musicians in performances and clinics at the Next Generation Jazz Festival, Summer Jazz Camp, and the Monterey Jazz Festival.

"The contributions received by Monterey Jazz Festival from individuals and organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Arts Council for Monterey County reflect the impact that we have on both the national and local scale," said Andrew Sudol, development director for the Festival. "Their support makes it possible for our staff to expand America's cultural legacy by providing jazz education and performances of the highest quality through our jazz clinics in schools, the Next Generation Jazz Festival, Summer Jazz Camp, the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra and of course, the Monterey Jazz Festival itself."

Monterey Peninsula Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations that benefit the community in the focus areas of arts and culture, community and environment, education, health and human services, and youth. The Foundation's principal source of funds is the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, started in 1937 by Bing Crosby. More than \$120 million has been raised for nonprofit organizations since that time. www.montereypeninsulafoundation.org

National Endowment for the Arts grants support the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence: public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and enhancing the livability of communities through the arts. In 2014, the NEA received 1,474 eligible Art Works applications, requesting more than \$75 million in funding. Of those applications, 919 were recommended for grants for a total of \$26.6 million. NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, "I'm pleased to be able to share the news of our support through Art Works including the award to the Monterey Jazz Festival. The arts foster value, connection, creativity and innovation for the American people and these recommended grants demonstrate those attributes and affirm that the arts are part of our everyday lives." For a complete listing of projects recommended for Art Works grant support, please visit www.arts.gov

The Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) is one of the oldest and largest grantmaking foundations in the Monterey region, partnering with individuals, families and businesses to create charitable funds and steward more than \$170 million in assets. In 2013, the CFMC awarded nearly \$10 million in grants to hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the areas of community and social services, arts and culture, health, education, the environment, animal welfare, historic preservation and more. In total, the CFMC has granted more than \$110 million towards a vision of healthy, safe, vibrant communities. www.cfmco.org

Since the legendary photographer Ansel Adams led dedicated civic, arts and business leaders to create the Arts Council for Monterey County in 1982 as part of a nationwide movement powered by the National Endowment for the Arts, Monterey County and the Arts Council has

improved the economic health of the region with funding from the Tourism Occupancy Tax. The Arts Council for Monterey County provides promotional, technical and financial support to more than 50 arts organizations thanks to funding from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors and a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. www.arts4mc.org

The Bill Graham Memorial Foundation was formed in 2008 in memory of the legendary rock impresario, Bill Graham. The foundation is a public charity that is funded through individual and corporate contributions and grants. The Foundation's mission—guided by a broad-based group which includes Bill's sons, several former long-time employees of Bill Graham Presents and other community leaders—is the giving of grants primarily in the areas of music, the arts and education, while also supporting social work, environmental protection, and spiritual and compassionate projects in the Bay Area and Northern California community. The mission includes education and outreach programs, the establishment of a museum and of an annual community award, the "Bill Graham Awards." The Foundation holds annual fundraising events in San Francisco and New York. www.billgrahamfoundation.org

Tampa Bay Blues Fest April 10, 11 & 12



Denise Lasalle

St. Petersburg, Florida – Each year since 1995, some of the biggest names in blues music have taken the stage at the Tampa Bay Blues Festival in St. Petersburg, Florida. Blues enthusiasts from all over the world come to scenic Vinoy Park to watch this spectacular showcase of American Blues music, performed right on the waterfront. With acres of plush grass and palm trees, Vinoy Park is the perfect tropical setting for one of the world's biggest and best blues concerts.

Tampa Bay Blues Festival has established itself as one of the world's finest blues concert festivals and was the recipient of the Blues Foundation's 2011 "Keepin'



Bernard Allison

the Blues Alive” award for Best U.S. Blues Festival. Over the years our stage has welcomed legends such as Buddy Guy, George Thorogood, Taj Mahal, Robert Cray, Delbert McClinton, Little Feat, Jonny Lang, Los Lobos, Jerry Lee Lewis, Koko Taylor, Jimmie Vaughan, Irma Thomas, Susan Tedeschi, and others, in what has truly become a magnificent celebration of music.

The Blues Music Festival is an ideal setting to enjoy Florida’s sunshine and warm spring weather. For guests seeking an enhanced festival experience, we offer a special VIP Package with “front” stage seating, a large VIP tent with free food, beer and soda, and beautiful views of Tampa Bay.

Throughout the festival grounds, you will enjoy tasty food, including seafood, barbeque, Cuban cuisine, and other culinary treats. Festival vendors also include arts & crafts. Premium beer, wine, and mixed drinks are also available.

In addition to great music and warm weather, you will also enjoy visiting downtown St. Petersburg, with its many restaurants, clubs, and art museums, including the world famous Dali Museum. From St. Petersburg you may also wish to travel 20 minutes to Treasure Island, Pass-a-Grille, and St. Pete Beach. The area’s Ft. DeSoto Beach offers a large, public park and was recently named one of the world’s finest beaches.

The Tampa Bay Blues Festival prides itself on providing the very best in live blues entertainment, in an ideal tropical setting. Proceeds from the event benefit our charity partner, Pinellas Association for Retarded Children. Please make your plans to attend the Tampa Bay Blues Festival, and join us for three great days of Blues by the Bay!

The Tampa Bay Blues Festival is staged at Vinoy Waterfront Park in downtown St. Petersburg, Florida. On Friday & Saturday, gates open at around noon. On Sunday, the gates will open at about 12:30 p.m.

The main entry gate is located on Fifth Avenue NE & Bayshore Drive. Tickets are available for sale at the main gate. Will Call is also handled at the main gate. All ticket sales, including beverage tickets, must be purchased with cash. Tickets are not required to purchase food products. ATMs are available at the main entry gate

and the northwest corner of Vinoy Park.

If you are driving to the event, please feel free to park in downtown St. Petersburg, in any legal parking spot.

Handicap parking is available to the west of the main stage area, directly across from the softball field. Handicapped guests may enter at the vendor/volunteer entrance at 7th Avenue NE and Bayshore Blvd. if they have their ticket. Tickets are not sold at this entrance (tickets are sold at the 5th Avenue NE and Bayshore Blvd. gate). Please call (727) 895-6153 for any special arrangements that need to be made in advance.

No coolers, bicycles, pets, recording devices, or alcohol are allowed in the park. Also, no umbrellas or shade canopies may be set up in front of the main stage area. An area designated towards the rear of the park is available if you intend to bring small umbrellas or shade canopies. No large tents may be set up under any circumstances.

Public restrooms are available in the rear of the park along the seawall. Re-entry to the park is allowed through the front gate only, provided you obtain a hand stamp.

Food vendors and merchandise booths will be set up along the perimeter of the park. All vendor sales are cash only. All beverage sales, including beer, wine, soda, PowerAde and water must be purchased with beverage tickets which are located next to all of the beer trucks in the park. All beverage tickets are good for the day of sale only.

The Tampa Bay Blues Festival is produced by the Tampa Bay Blues Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation. Proceeds from the event benefit our charity partner, Pinellas Association for Retarded Children. Guests are encouraged to make donations to PARC in the “Tip” jars located at all of the beer & wine operations.

This event was designed to provide equal opportunity for enjoyment to all participants. If you would like to request any particular aids or services pursuant to disability laws, please contact the event planner at (727)895-6153 or City of St. Petersburg Community Affairs Division at (727) 893-7357 or (727) 892-5259 TDD/TTY.

Enjoy three great days of Blues by the Bay!

Dates & Lineup 2015

Friday, April 10

Brandon Santini 12:30-2:00 p.m.
Denise LaSalle 2:30-4:00 p.m.
John Nemeth 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Rod Piazza & The Mighty Flyers 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Tower of Power 8:30-10:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 11

Bernard Allison Group 12:30-2:00 p.m.
Carolyn Wonderland 2:30-4:00 p.m.
Tab Benoit 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Boz Scaggs 8:30-10:00 p.m.

Florida Blues Showcase: Sunday, April 12

Betty Fox 1:00-2:00 p.m.
Albert Castiglia 2:30-4:00 p.m.
Bryan Lee 4:30-6:00 p.m.
The Lee Boys 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Southern Hospitality 8:30-10:00 p.m.

After Shows at the Palladium - \$20 Friday, April 10

Denise LaSalle 10:15 p.m.
John Nemeth 11:30 p.m.
Brandon Santini 12:45 a.m.
Saturday, April 11
Tab Benoit 10:15 p.m.
Bernard Allison Group Midnight

Kick Off Party – Thursday, April 9 The Palladium - \$20

Join in for the Festival "Kick Off" Party on Thursday, April 9 at the Palladium Theater (253 Fifth Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL). Rod Piazza & The Mighty Flyers will be performing from 8:00 until 9:30 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. You won't want to miss watching Rod up close and personal on harp and Honey on the keyboard!

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

New Release Blues.... Ah, a new year. Ah, new blues! David Honeyboy Edwards- The World Don't Owe Me Nothing; RJ Mischo- Everything I Need; Danny Bryant- Temperature Rising; Gov't Mule- Dark Side of the Mule; B. B. King and Joan Baez- Live at Sing Sing; Igor Prado Band- Way Down South; Tinsley Ellis- Tough Love; Roomful of Blues- With Big Joe Turner and Eddie Vinson; Otis Taylor- The Otis Taylor Collection; Lynwood Slim- Hard To Kill; Harvey Manel- Snake Box; Magnus Berg- Cut Me Loose; Lou Shields- American Relic; Howlin' Wolf- Absolutely Essential 3cd Collection; Johnny Winter- Remembrance Vol. 1; Smokin Joe Kubek & Bnois King- Fat Man's Shine Parlor; James Booker- Gonzo James Booker Live 1976; The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band- So Delicious; Eric Bibb- Blues People.... That's it for this month. See ya, Mark Smith.

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Photo © Robyn Churchill

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

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

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



*Royal dukes are 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



*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.



Art. Ask for More.

AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG



NAMM
Foundation

Image created by Corbis-Bettmann. TM 2008 Estate of Mercer K. Ellington by CMC Worldwide



We only bring you
the Cream of the Crop!



BERNARD ALLISON
In the Mix
JAZZHAUS RECORDS

"In the Mix" (Jazzhaus Records) is Bernard Allison's first studio recording in six years, and it certainly is a good one. Bernard produced this and is backed by a tight band of George Moyer on bass, Mario Dawson on drums and Mark 'Muggie' Leach on keyboards, with Bruce McCabe adding piano to two selections and Jose Ned James adding sax to four tracks. Bernard wrote five originals and the others are interpretations of songs from Colin James, Freddie King, Tyrone Davis and two from his late father, Luther Allison.

What impresses is both the strength and restraint Bernard displays throughout, whether playing a blues-infused rocker by Colin James, "Five Long Years" that opens this CD, or the marvelous relaxed shuffle rendition of his dad's "Move On The Hood" with his lean, muscular slide guitar. "Call Me Mama," co-written with his mother, is a terrific soulful number with marvelous sax from James and a vocal that suggests that Allison would have considerable appeal on the soul-blues circuit even without a guitar. The rendition of Tyrone Davis' "I Had It All The Time"

certainly reinforces this observation. Set against a lazy Jimmy Reed shuffle groove, "Something's Wrong" is a terrific blues performance again with wonderful slide and terrific playing by the band with McCabe adding some rollicking piano here. "Set Me Free" is an original that sounds like a classic Chicago blues from the late 70s and 80s. The album ends with a terrific rendition of "Moving On Up" which was one of his father's first recordings.

"In the Mix" is a terrific recording that displays the breath and maturity of Bernard Allison's music.

Ron Weinstock



FEDERICO BRITOS

Presents Hot Club of the Americas
3 KNOCKS ENTERTAINMENT

Violinist Federico Britos is one of the unsung Cuban musicians of the past half-decade. In his liner notes, Paquito D'Rivera notes that in addition to working in the Opera and Ballet Orchestras,

Britos led a group that introduced Bossa Nova to Cuba. His ability to span music of such a wide range can only be exhibited in small part on any recording. This virtuoso leads a terrific group for a recording on 3 Knocks Entertainment, "Presents Hot Club of the Americas." His violin is supported by a group that includes guitarist Jorge Garcia, pianist Felix Gomez, percussionist Edwin Bonilla, bassist Renyel and drummer Carlomango Arayo.

In addition there are guest appearances from pianists Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Antonio Adolfo, conga player Giovanni Hildago, vocalist Cecile McLorin Salvant, and Hendrik Meurkens.

The CD is subtitled "When Grappelli Meets Latin America" and features Cuban and Brazilian takes on the classic repertoire of the legendary "The Hot Club of France." D'Rivera suggests that this recording "gives the impression Grappelli was Cuban, Reinhardt was Brazilian, and that the Hot Club of France could very well have been based in Miami's Coconut Grove." My only disagreement with this is that the focus is on Grappelli in the takes on the music and the guitar is very secondary in these very spirited and enjoyable recasting of classic jazz, pop and songs of the French cabarets.

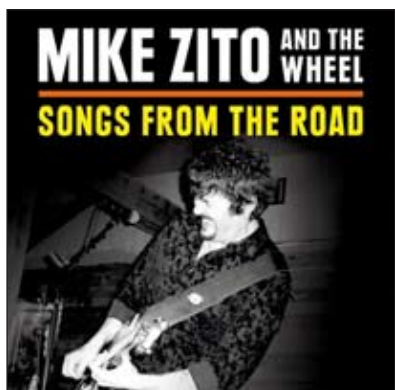
The sheer joy of the performances here is evident with the opening "Sheik of Araby," with the spicy backing supporting Britos' exhilarating playing with a showcase for the rhythm and pianist Gomez. "J'Attendrai," with Meurkens' harmonica, has a relaxed samba rhythm and is delightful as Federico and Meurkens both solo and trade fours.

Pianist Rubalcaba is heard on a lovely "I'm Confessin' That I Love You" while there are two renditions by Cecile McLorin Salvant of "La Vie en Rose" (French and English) with a string section added behind supple backing the ensemble while Britos' solos add to the enchantment and romance of the performances.

There are so many delights and classic staples of

Reinhardt's repertoire such as his immortal "Nuages" as well as the Razaf-Waller classic "Honeysuckle Rose" are presented in fresh renditions that will captivate listeners on what is simply a superb recording.

I would think Grappelli would be smiling profusely listening to this.
Ron Weinstock



MIKE ZITO AND THE WHEEL **Songs From the Road** RUF RECORDS

Mike Zito is featured in one of the latest in Ruf Records series "Songs From the Road." This latest release is a CD/DVD combo from a live performance by the blues-infused singer-songwriter-rockers. Recorded and videoed at Dorsey Doe in The Woodlands, Texas on January 24, 2014, Zito is backed by saxophonist Jimmy Carpenter, bassist Scot Sunderland, keyboardist Lewis Stephens and drummer Rob Lee.

The CD contains 11 songs of which 8 also appear on the DVD with five other songs. Songs on the CD not heard on the DVD include a cover of Prince's "Little Red Corvette" along with Zito's "Rainbow Bridge" and "C'Mon Baby," while the songs on the DVD include "Natural Born Lover," a blues medley by Zito and the Freddie King burner "Texas Flyer" that closes the video.

Listening to and watching the music herein one is impressed by Zito's performances and his rocking band. Vocally he evokes Greg Allman and while his music has blues elements to it, at the same time it suggests folks like John Mellancamp, Bob Seger, Warren Zevon, the Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen (with Carpenter's saxophone playing similar role to the late Clarence Clemons with the E Street Band).

Both the CD and DVD kick off with a funky shuffle "Don't Break a Leg" displaying Zito's songwriting skills as he sings about having bad luck with the other sex. "Greyhound" opens with guitar evocative of "Street Fighting Man" before a groove suggestive of Warren Zevon as Zito sings about taking the Greyhound to get away with Carpenter's sax providing a foil for the vocals.

Zito does a nice touch in reworking "Little Red Corvette," in a restrained rendition that invites comparisons to Springsteen, while Zito's "Rainbow Bridge"

is a crisply rendered Little Feat style rocker with rollicking piano from Stephens.

Highpoints on both the CD and DVD is "Pearl River," his collaboration with Cyril Neville, with his judicious use of tremolo in his playing with its lyric about what dark secrets does the River hold. With Carpenter's sax adding commentary, Zito is compelling. "Gone To Texas," on both CD and DVD obviously gets a warm reception from the roadhouse audience. After "Gone To Texas," the DVD includes a solo acoustic rendition of Blind Willie Johnson's "Let Your Light Shine On Me," as he strums a skeletal backing.

After this, the band returns for a blues, "Natural Born Lover," which interpolates lyrics from a couple of Willie Dixon classics, "You Shook Me" and "I Just Want To Make Love To You." Zito plays some nice slide guitar here complemented by Stephens pounding the ivories and Carpenter adding his raspy tenor sax.

A rocking rendition of "Texas Flyer," with some yackety-yak sax from Carpenter and a driving guitar solo closes the DVD which to these ears has more of an overall blues feel to these ears than the CD. Zito's ability to move an audience is quite evident on "Songs On the Road."

His mix of classic rock with some blues and R&B elements is certainly an appealing one and well-displayed here.
Ron Weinstock



JOE SAMPLE & NDR BIGBAND **Children of the Sun** PRA RECORDS

It was while playing the St. Croix Jazz Festival in 1995 that the late Joe Sample was inspired to compose the music of "Children of the Sun" (PRA Records), a posthumous release by Joe Sample & NDR BigBand.

While there he went to the highest point where there was "nothing but blue water, except for massive palomino colored stone buildings that had fallen into ruins, which served to remind me of the brutal and evil institution of slavery. ... This seemingly idyllic place had been an island of suffering and torment, floating in a blue abyss. ..."

Sample described his time on St. Croix as "an epiphany," and themes and melodies formed into his mind and floated until Nils Landgren asked him to cre-

ate a work for the NDR Bigband. Noting that African-American writers have referred to these early slaves as “Children of the Sun,” Sample concludes his brief overview “This is my tribute to them.”

The album was recorded in Hamburg in 2011 and finally was issued in early 2015. Most of the musicians on this recording are from the BigBand with Sample on piano and special guest Steve Gadd drums. Nils Landgren solos on trombone. Jorg Achim Keller did the arrangements for Samples eleven compositions and conducted the ensemble. Despite the variety within the compositions, Sample builds the melodies upon simple rhythmic riffs, which are enhanced by the voicings Keller contributes.

The music brings together a range of sounds from the African Diaspora to the Americas. The opening “I Wanna Go Home” evokes to me some of the township jazz grooves of Abdullah Ibrahim as well as the Blue Notes and the layering of the horns over the enchanting simple piano head is delightful with a trumpet solo evolving the great Hugh Maskela.

The core of “Buttermilk Sky” is a funky underpinning, while “Islands of the Mind” is a more impressionist performance. The intro to “Gold in the Cane” has a pensive feel before it transitions into a spirited Afro-Cuban manner with terrific tropical trumpet and sax solos. Keller’s arrangements judiciously employ brass mutes and flute choruses.

The title track, built on a blues-gospel foundation, has a sober tone and spotlights Landgren’s trombone on which he employs a mute.

Like the rest of “Children of the Sun,” it showcases Sample’s ability to craft memorable and hummable themes, play in a straight, very communicative manner, as well as the strong playing characteristic of the NDR Bigband on the latest of its collaborations with significant jazz artists and composers.

This may not only have been one of Joe Sample’s final musical statements, but a very engaging recording as well.

Ron Weinstock



BENNY TURNER

**Journey
NOLA BLUE**

Benny Turner has had a distinguished career playing bass and anchoring the bands of his brother,

the legendary Freddie King, another Chicago blues legend Mighty Joe Young, and the late Queen of New Orleans, Marva Wright (with whom this writer best knows him).

Additionally he pioneered playing bass behind gospel acts and played with the likes of Dee Clark. He has just issued his third recording (the first this writer has heard) as a leader, “Journey” on Nola Blue.

One often looks beyond a sideman who may sing a couple or two opening numbers before bringing on the main act. However, from the first notes of “Breakin’ News,” one quickly becomes aware of the authority Turner brings as a vocalist, not simply a strong bass player who anchors a band.

With the handsome production, solid shuffle groove, brassy horn arrangements (from Turner and saxophonist Jason Mingledorff), Marc Stone’s lead guitar and effective use of backing vocals he convincingly delivers his lyrics about the relationship being over and “ain’t no more crying.”

The mood turns down home on “Don’t You Ride My Mule” with Sunpie Barnes adding his harp and Charles Moore rhythm guitar, while Turner’s regular drummer Jeffrey ‘Jellybean’ Alexander lays down the groove and Josh Paxton adds the keyboards here in lieu of Turner’s regular collaborator Keiko Komaki, who plays on most of the recording. On other selections, Derwin “Big D” Perkins is on rhythm guitar.

Other selections display Turner’s way with a word as well as a singer including the reflective “How I Wish” as he sits in his rocking chair wishing his woman was here with him and the topical “What’s Wrong With the World Today” that touches on issues of homelessness, violence and other matters as Turner sings that “We need love” on this closing track.

Another number that should resonate is the soulful ballad “Worn out Woman” with its theme of a woman’s work never being done, getting the kids on the bus and then dust the house. Turner even takes up the guitar and kazoo for the relaxed, down-home instrumental “My Mother’s Blues.” with twin keyboards and Alexander playing lightly on bass drum and cymbal.

The variety and strength of material, the strong work by the band and Benny Turner’s heartfelt and persuasive vocals make “Journey” a gem of a recording.

Ron Weinstock

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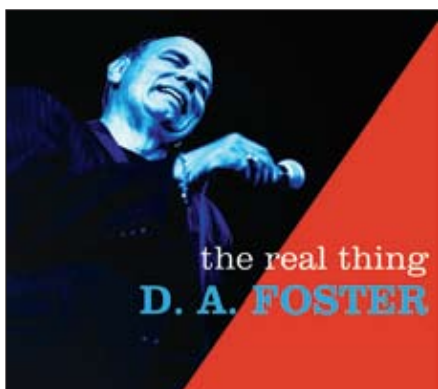


LARA DOWNES
A Billie Holiday Songbook
 STEINWAY & SONS

Celebrated classical pianist Ms. Downes brings an expected first-rate technique to this solo program of iconic songs from Lady Day's "book", but also a lyrical sense that should sit well with jazz listeners.

A professed fan of Holiday since childhood, Downes does transmit an engaging sense of the legendary vocalist's own emotional stance on each song: "Strange Fruit" is appropriately disturbing, "Yesterdays" and "Lover Man" are just as yearning.

Downes' consistently elegant touch does much to freshen the sound of songs so often played. Her takes on "God Bless The Child", "I'll Be Seeing You" and "Body And Soul" are standouts. *Duane Verh*



D.A. FOSTER
The Real Thing
 VIZZTONE

The Shaboo Inn was a fabled Connecticut club of the 70s and D.A. Foster was among those running it. He has also been singing music even prior to the Shaboo Inn and in recent years has been leading the Shaboo All Stars.

Foster has a new CD out on Vizztone, "The Real Thing," that was produced by drummer Tony Braunagel and keyboardist Mike Finnigan of the Phantom Blues Band, and has Foster backed by The Phantom Blues Band (Larry Fulcher on bass; Johnny Lee Schell on guitar; Lenny Castro on percussion; Darrell Leonard on trumpet and Joe Sublett on saxophone) with back-

ing vocalists.

Foster's deep-throated vocals cover a fairly diverse group of jump blues and urban blues starting with a strong soulful take Dave Steen's "Good Man Bad Thing." The Phantom Blues Band's backing provides a very different tenor to Foster's rendition from the more guitar-centered version by the late Michael Burks. It also quickly displays Foster's virtues as a singer with his phrasing and dynamics. The title track is a roadhouse blues rocker that suggests the bluesier side of Delbert McLinton with rollicking piano and an energetic guitar solo.

Foster does justice with his renditions of a couple of songs associated with the late Bobby Bland, "Ain't Doing Too Bad" and "This Time I'm Gone For Good." The former number sports a nice funky groove with Foster's raspy vocal being very appealing. On the latter number, Schell employs a jazzier tone that, along with the backing, lends a 3:00AM in the morning feel behind Foster's marvelous singing. Foster updates Eddie Hinton's "Super Lover" as a funky dance number, while doing justice to a rocking and swinging treatment of the classic penned by Jesse Stone (as Charles Calhoun) "Smack Dab in the Middle" with a booting tenor sax solo," along with a nice version of the classic Andy Razaf-Don Redman ballad, "Gee Baby Ain't I Good To You."

There is a wistful rendition of Bill Withers' "You Just Can't Smile It Away." The album closes with "Down Home Blues," that is solidly performed but not very distinctive. But even an ordinary closing performance does not lessen the fact that "The Real Thing" is full of choice musical performances. Wonderfully backed by The Phantom Blues band, D.A. Foster brings a fresh approach to some well-known material and sings with a soulful authority that the years of performing bring.

Ron Weinstock



GEORGE VAN EPS
Once In Awhile
 JUMP/DELMARK

A pioneering guitarist, George Van Eps' career spanned the swing era and the post-war era. As a young man he jammed with Eddie Lang, later played with Benny Goodman, then with George Noble as well as recorded with Adrain Rollini and others. A 1936 test

recording for Epiphone by him with Lew Green is said to have been the first use of electric guitar in recorded jazz, although he would stay with acoustic guitar while most guitarists were playing electronically. In 1939 he started playing a seven-string guitar of his design, which he became known for.

After World War II, he settled in Los Angeles participating in numerous recording sessions with Peggy Lee and Frank Sinatra while strumming acoustic guitar for amplified guitarists such as Barney Kessel. Sometimes around this time musical director Paul Weston urged him to focus on a solo career.

As Marty Grosz observed in his notes for Van Eps' "One In Awhile" (Jump/Delmark), Van Eps has been overlooked, even by jazz critics who should have known better. The Delmark reissue of the Jump CD brings together 1946 recordings, most with a trio of pianist Stanley Wrightsman and tenor saxophonist Eddie Miller. Drummer Nick Fatool is present on four sides, while bassists Jack Ryan and Phil Stevens both appear on two each.

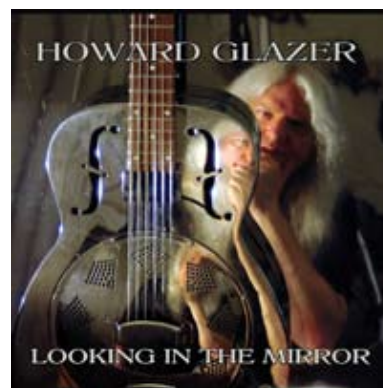
For recordings issued under George Van Eps' name, the trio selections are often as much a showcase for Miller's tenor sax and Wrightsman's piano as they are for the leader's marvelous playing; whether playing rhythmic chords or his melodic lines and single note runs that are full of intriguing twists and turns.

This is exemplified on the title track (one of a

number of selections with an alternate included), or his original "Kay's Fantasy," both with bass and drums backing him as well as his solo on "Ol' Pigeon Toad Joe." This latter selection also showcases Miller's melodic tenor playing. Miller displays his warmth on the lovely rendition of "Ain't Misbehavin'" while the trio easily navigates the brisker swing of "Love Is Around the Corner," which also contains the leader's solo mixing chords and single note runs.

It is interesting to compare the previously unissued alternate of the title track that opens this set with bass and drums that showcases his stunning playing with the other take with the piano-sax trio that is paced a tad slower. There are 25 selections including alternates (a few songs have more than one alternate), and Delmark has programmed this Jump release for listening purposes. The resulting recording is full of charm in its melodic core and lively, imaginative playing.

Ron Weinstock



HOWARD GLAZER
LOOKING IN THE MIRROR
LAZY BROTHER RECORDS

Michigan bluesman Howard Glazer has accumulated quite a resume of late with his 2013 induction into the Michigan Blues Hall of Fame and his 2014 Detroit Music Award for Outstanding Blues/R & B instrumentalist.

Of course all of the awards in the world don't mean much in the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately world of music where it's today's product that makes the difference for all but the most famous artists. Fortunately for Glazer and his hot band, this new release delivers solid blues worthy of the award winning history. With Glazer's electric, acoustic and resonator guitars leading the way the band rips through 12 cuts of funky blues, Midnight Postman, blues rock, Take me Baby, shuffles, Walking in Detroit, slide guitar driven blues, Feeling So Bad, Wandering Trails and the title track, rock, Pushing the Limits, and psychedelic blues, Emergency.

While Glazer's guitar skills could easily carry the disc he wisely shares the spotlight with Maggie McCabe and Stephanie Johnson on vocals. Their saucy lead and background vocals add a vital element to the sound of this disc and broaden its appeal to more than just guitar fans.

Mark Smith

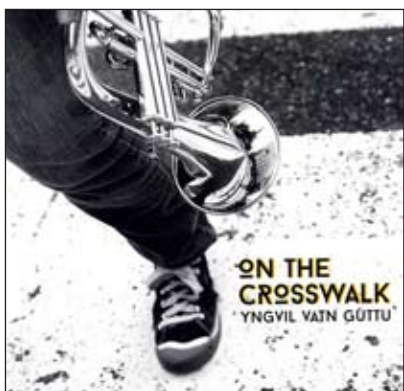
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YNGVIL VATN GUTTU

On The Crosswalk
KACHEMAK RECORDS

Oslo-born, NYC-based trumpeter Ms. Guttu here demonstrates a flair for composition varied in melody and personality, keeping this set consistently fresh and engaging. The brief title track builds off a single, quirky riff, the second track, “Blue North For 4” serving as the opening tune’s de facto bluesy coda. A busy funk-jazz bass-and-piano vamp, reminiscent of Weather Report, leads off “Broadway Bomb”, the ensuing horn mob ultimately morphs the affair into a serio-comic romp that may evoke Carla Bley to some.

Midway through, ballad mode becomes the focus, and Guttu provides several attractive “heads” and grooves suitable to her own sparing solo style and to the voices of tenor saxophonist Matt DiGiovanna and pianist Renato Diz. These tracks include “Love Carry Me”, “Sov” and “1741.”

Duane Verh



SHAWN HOLT AND THE TEARDROPS

Daddy Told Me
BLIND PIG

Shawn Holt is the son of the late blues legend, Morris “Magic Slim” Holt, and after the passing of his father has taken over The Teardrops. Blind Pig has just issued the first CD from Shawn Holt and The Teardrops, “Daddy Told Me,” and it is a strong recording very much in the vein of his father, with driving medium tempo shuffles and slow-drag, bump and grind, blues.

In addition to his guitar and vocals, he is joined by Levi William on guitar, Chris Biedron on bass and

Brian ‘B.J.’ Jones on drums. On two selections, John Primer, who had a long tenure playing with Magic Slim, replaces William on two of the selections.

The tone is set with the opening “Fannie Mae,” where the groove kicks in and Holt delivers the lyrics and throws in some stinging guitar. The title track is an original, but based on Howlin’ Wolf’s “How Many More Years” and “Baby How Long.” Holt is a terrific singer who sings a bit more forcefully than his late father, as on his rendition of A.C. Reed’s “Buddy Buddy Friends. This was a staple of Magic Slim’s repertoire, which might explain why it is erroneously credited to Holt and not Reed.

Other standout tracks include the rollicking rendition of Jimmy Reed’s “Down In Virginia,” and the Junior Wells classic “Little By Little.” Primer handles the vocal and lead on Bo Diddley’s “Before You Accuse Me,” with its incorporation of the “Dust my Broom” riff.

Besides his strong singing and guitar playing, Shawn Holt also contributed several originals including the title track and the powerful “Love Got me Walkin’.” The music here never sounds hurried or frantic and the medium tempos will undoubtedly appeal to dancers. Shawn Holt and the Teardrops may be perpetuating Magic Slim’s legacy with the performances on this first-rate recording, but he also shows that he is himself a significant voice for today’s blues. *Ron Weinstock*



SAX GORDON

In the Wee Small Hours
DELMARK JAZZ

Gordon Beadle, who performs under the name Sax Gordon, may be familiar as a member of Duke Robillard’s Band. As Sax Gordon he recorded an organ trio session, “In the Wee Small Hours” (Delmark) in Italy, with organist Albert Marsico (also co-producer with Gordon) and drummer Alessandro Minetto.

As Bob Porter observes in his liner notes, for Gordon jazz means such blues-infused jazz tenor players like Gene Ammons, Arnett Cobb and Willis Jackson.

This is a straight-ahead collection of standards with a few blues tossed in. Gordon exhibits a certain romanticism throughout, starting with the swinging “The Glory of Love” and the late night groove of the title track. His vibrato lends an appealing cottony sound while Marsico complements him on the KeyB

organ, suggestive of the Hammond B-3. The old torch song “My Old Flame” gets an engaging rendition, while “Whatever Lola Wants” is a nice medium tempo swinger with Marsico taking a solo and Minetto adding some nice rhythmic accents. Gordon’s performance of “Blue and Sentimental,” a feature for Herschel Evans (and then Buddy Tate) in the Count Basie Band, may be the highpoint of the album with the warmth and tone Gordon delivers.

Throughout, Sax Gordon displays how well he has distilled lessons learned from listening to a number of past tenor sax masters as well with his tenure playing the swing-rooted blues of Robillard. The result is the delightful “In the Wee Small Hours.”

Ron Weinstock



LINSEY ALEXANDER

Come Back Baby
DELMARK BLUES

I found Linsey Alexander’s first Delmark album, “Been There Done That,” to be “the most impressive blues recording which is one of the finer blues albums I have heard this year (2012).” Now Delmark has issued his follow-up “Come Back Baby,” which has the singer and guitarist joined by a band that includes guitarist Breezy Rodio, keyboards from Roosevelt Purifoy, bassist Greg McDaniel and drummer Pooky Styx with Bill McFarland leading a horn section and Billy Branch contributing harmonica to three selections.

The album opens with “Little Bit of Soap,” one of two songs Alexander did not write. This is a terrific performance as he sings about washing this women out of his life with a great vocal and guitar that brings to mind seventies B.B. King.

The album is at its best with his soulful vocals and clever lyrics. The playing behind him is strong, and the one criticism I have would be his guitar tone on several selections, including his intense original “I Got A Woman.” I assume the tone is supposed to match the intensity of his vocal here as he tears into the lyric of his woman being more woman than he will every need. The tone detracts from enjoying his fiery solo here. He employs this tone also on his reworking of “I Can’t Quit You Baby,” which has a new arrangement from the Otis Rush classic recording.

The excellent slow blues, “Too Old to Be a New

Fool,” features some searing guitar as well as superb chromatic harmonica from Branch.

Alexander’s wit is displayed on his shuffle “Call My Wife,” as he wants his wife to open the door for poor Linsey, who is so drunk he lost he car and car keys while Billy Branch channels Rice Miller mixed with Walter Horton with some exquisite harmonica. Alexander is also known as “The Hootchie Man,” as reflected in his funky dance number “Booty Call.”

“Things Done Changed” has a serious lyric as Alexander recalls Jim Crow days, segregated bus stations and buses and the like, set against horn riffs and a solid electric piano solo by the remarkable Purifoy (he turned in strong solo on “Booze and Blues”), followed by strong, stinging guitar.

Despite reservations on the guitar tone on several tracks, “Come Back Baby!” is a strongly played recording that exhibits plenty of fire from Alexander in his fervent singing and searing guitar. *Ron Weinstock*



PETER HAND BIG BAND

Out of Hand
SAVANT

A few years ago, guitarist Peter Hand led a big band featuring tenor saxophonist Houston Person on a wonderful live recording on Savant titled “The Wizard of Jazz: A Tribute to Harold Arlen.” The Peter Hand Big Band returns with a new studio recording, also on Savant, “Out of Hand.”

Again, Houston Person is present (on three selections) and a number of top notch players are also heard here including saxophonists Bruce Williams, Kenny Berger, Don Braden, and Ralph LaLama; trumpeters Eddie Allen, John Bailey and Valery Ponomarev; trombonists John Mosca and Vincent Gardner; and a terrific rhythm section of pianist James Weidman, bassist Harvie S and drummer Steve Johns.

Person is featured on three selections, a swinging rendition of Bobby Hebb’s “Sunny”, the classic Harold Arlen torch song “Blues in the Night” and the Strayhorn/Ellington classic “Day Dream.” Person’s warm, rich tone and the melodic quality of his improvisations is set against Hand’s wonderful arrangements as well as his own clean, crisp guitar. On the opening Sunny”, trumpeter Ponomarev takes one of several sharp-toned solos that exhibit an authority similar to that of Person.

Selections like these evoke a classic Oliver Nelson Big Band album “Live in Los Angeles,” that featured guitarist Mel Brown on a couple selections as well as Nelson’s arrangements for some of Wes Montgomery’s Verve recordings.

Hand is a wonderful guitarist in the vein of a Montgomery, Kenny Burrell, Grant Green and the like with a definite blues sensibility. Hand’s original “Out of Print Blues” (called “Out of Hand Blues” in Donald Elfman’s liner notes) is a nice swinging blues with strong solos from Bruce Williams, Harvie S and Vincent Gardner in addition to the leader. Another Hand original is the waltz “Listen to Your Heart,” with its effective use of muted brass, flute, flugelhorn and soprano saxophone with Braden taking a nice soprano sax solo set against the riffing horns while Ponomarev is in more melodic vein.

Hand displays a romantic sensibility of a lovely ballad “Barbara Rose,” while the up-tempo “The Elevator” is a feature for LaLama’s robust and forceful playing and will evoke the Ellington classic “Cottontail.” After the light Latin groove of “Night Echo” (Hand, Bailey and Weidman stand out here), we are treated to the splendid “Day Dream” before Hand enlivens “Summertime” with his arrangement in 6/4 and employment of flute, clarinet, bass clarinet and muted brass to provide musical colors for Allen’s vibrant trumpet and Weidman’s piano. It is a superb close to this splendid big band recording.

Ron Weinstock



LISA MILLS

I'm Changing

MILLSBLUZ RECORDS

Gulf Coast chanteuse Lisa Mills refers to herself as “a blue-eyed-soul singer armed with a guitar,” who speaking about her music says, “If anything, I would refer to what I do as American Southern roots music.” Her new release “I’m Changing” (MillsBluz Records) is mostly a re-constructed version of tracks Lisa originally recorded and released in 2005.

For this updated release she employed groundbreaking producer Trina Shoemaker, the first woman to win the Grammy Award for album engineering. Her backing musicians include guitarist Rick Hirsch and drummer T. K. Lively of Wet Willie fame, guitarist Corky Hughes and bassist Ian Jennings. Lisa notes, “There

are two fully re-recorded tracks on the album, ‘Take My Troubles’ and ‘Tell Me,’ and three new [original] songs.” While she thought she would have to redo vocals on other songs, Trina Shoemaker’s mixing resolved many issues so only two songs needed to be totally redone.

The opening track “Better Than This/ I Don’t Need You Anymore” grabbed the attention of this listener. With Hirsch’s uncluttered guitar lead and a backing that evokes classic Muscle Shoals, Mills vocals ring true. This song with lyrics of leaving a cheating man is followed by another strong performance, “I Don’t Want to Be Happy” (“I just want to be with you”). Again kudos to the backing musicians, whose direct, uncluttered backing lets the full warmth of her singing to be felt and appreciated.

“I Need a Little Sunshine,” co-written with bassist Jennings, is another display of her soulful vocals, while the title track has a country-folk flavor with Pat Murphy’s fiddle being prominent. The pace changes with “Eyes So Blue,” an expression of love set to a joyful reggae groove. This may not be the musical highpoint, but it may be this writer’s favorite selection. There are a couple gospel numbers including an a cappella rendition of her original “Tell Me,” and Rev. Robert Wilkins’ “Wish I Was in Heaven Sitting Down,” with Corky Hughes on resonator guitar. “Rain in the Summertime” is a folk-flavored performance where she is backed only by her own acoustic guitar.

“I’m Changing” closes with a marvelous interpretation of Jimi Hendrix’s “Little Wing.” Lisa Mills is an extraordinary singer and also songwriter and with the backing provided and the production supplied by Trina Shoemaker, she has come up with a superb recording that should appeal to a wide range of listeners.

Ron Weinstock



ALEX BELHAJ'S CRESCENT CITY QUARTET

Sugar Blues

RAYMOND STREET RECORDS

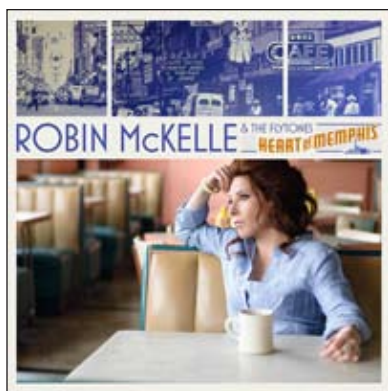
Fans of early jazz styles might find this release “Sugar Blues” by Alex Belhaj’s Crescent City Quartet of interest (Raymond Street Records). The self-produced release by guitarist Belhaj and his Ann Arbor, Michigan based drummer-less quartet mines material by

the likes of Artie Matthews, Clarence Williams, Louis Cotter, the Mississippi Sheiks, Sidney Bechet and others. Besides the leader's chordal rhythmic guitar and vocals, the group includes Ray Heitger – clarinet and vocals, Dave Kosmyrna – cornet and vocals, and Jordan Schug – upright bass.

There is nothing fancy about this recording featuring Heitger's clarinet and Kosmyrna's trumpet up front with spirited, idiomatic playing. They bring solid solos and interweaving of horn lines on the ensemble passages. The recording is a mix of material from the lively opening "Weary Blues," a lilting "Careless Love" (sporting some nice mute work from Kosmyrna and lovely clarinet by Heitger and a bass solo), a spirited "Viper Mad" (Sidney Bechet's ode to Mezz Mezzrow's favorite herb), an affecting rendition "His Eye Is On The Sparrow," and "Four or Five Times" with a group vocal. There is a restrained "Tiger Rag" along with a pensive "Sittin' On Top of the World." Many of the selections have affable, if not memorable, vocals.

After a rendition of "Take My Hand Precious Lord" there is a brief hidden track that starts with what sounds like several of the performances mixed into one track that sequel into a fragment of solo piano. It is a strange end to an entertaining traditional jazz recording.

Ron Weinstock



ROBIN MCKELLE & THE FLYTONES

Heart of Memphis
VIZZTONE

Rochester, NY native and a graduate of Berklee, Robin McKelle first attracted attention as a jazz vocalist. Starting with her album "Mess Around" (E1 Music), she has moved more in the direction of singing classic soul rooted in the classic Memphis sound of the Stax and Goldwax labels and the Muscle Shoals sound, first explored in the recording "Soul Flower." Her latest album, with her band The Flytones, in this vein is "Heart of Memphis," with is being distributed by Vizztone in the US and Canada.

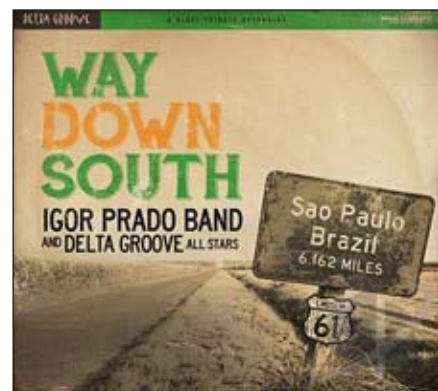
Besides singing, McKelle contributed 11 originals along with the two covers, helped by her bass player and musical partner Derek Nievergel. Scott Bomar of the Bo-Keys produced this and did capture the spirit and flavor of so many classic Memphis sound recordings of the 60s and 70s. Vocally McKelle comes across

more convincingly to these ears than on "Soul Flower." There was nothing poor about her singing on that recording, but little rose above being merely pleasant, as was particularly evident listening to her duet on that CD with Lee Fields on the old Bee Gees tune "To Love Somebody." That rendition was based on James Carr's rendition and McKelle was overshadowed by Fields' vocal. On "Heart of Memphis" she revisits another James Carr recording "Forgetting You," and this time the cover is quite nicely done.

In addition to a solid vocal on "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," her original songs certainly capture the feel of classic Memphis soul, whether the title track with its celebration of the City of Memphis and its music; "Good Time" with its somewhat frantic groove as she urges listeners to get up and move their hips so we can all get down; and the heartfelt soul lament "Like a River."

The Flytones certainly do their part under Bomar's direction in bringing us those classic grooves to support McKelle's strong vocals on a contemporary recording that successfully conjures up the feel of the "Heart of Memphis."

Ron Weinstock



IGOR PRADO BAND AND DELTA GROOVE ALL STARS

Way Down South
DELTA GROOVE

Several years ago this writer praised Brazilian blues guitarist Igor Prado and his band for his stunning guitar playing, the band's crisp playing and the varied, intriguing song selections.

The band of Igor Prado on vocals and guitar, Yuri Prado on drums, Rodrigo Mantovani on bass and Denilson Martins on saxophone has become a go to band to support American blues performers while touring Brazil.

Delta Groove has issued Igor Prado's latest recordings on which he is joined by a group of various American blues performers under the rubric of the Delta Groove All Stars, and is titled "Way Down South." The guests include Kim Wilson, Sugaray Rayford, Rod & Honey Piazza, Mud Morganfield, Lynwood Slim, Mitch Kashmar, Junior Watson, J.J. Jackson, Wallace Coleman and Omar Coleman.

The album is dedicated to Lynwood Slim who recorded a marvelous Delta Groove album with the Prado band several years ago for Delta Groove and recently passed away.

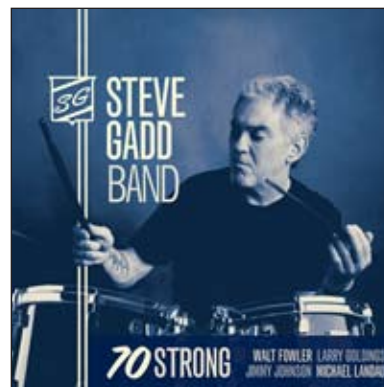
What makes this collection of mostly blues covers is in part the choice of material that is not songs that have been done to death, the strong playing and a definite twist on the songs. There is plenty to delight in with Sugary Rayford's forceful singing along with the evocation of Ike Turner's whammy bar guitar playing on the opening rendition of Turner's "Matchbox," followed by similar slashing guitar by the leader backing Kim Wilson on an almost rockabilly treatment of Long John Hunter's "Ride With Me." Mud Morganfield channels his father Muddy Waters on a powerful "She's Got It," while Slim handles a revival of an early Lowell Fulson jump blues "Baby Won't You Jump With Me" with Martin's tenor sax and Ari Borger's piano standing out.

Prado handles the vocal on a funky rendition of Junior Walker's "Shake & Fingertip" as well as adds some stinging guitar, while Rod Piazza sings and plays harp on "Talk With Me Baby" as Prado rips out a staggering solo followed by Honey's rollicking piano. Kim Wilson takes the vocal and adds harp on the swamp blues "'If You Ever Need Me," while Wallace Coleman transforms Lightnin' Slim's "Rooster Blues" into a Chicago blues shuffle and Sugary Rayford contributes a tough original Muddy waters' styled blues with some

slashing slide guitar and a terrific vocal.

Igor Prado band's "Way Down South" has a baker's dozen of performances taken at a high level with solid, often exceptional singing that makes for some fun listening.

Ron Weinstock



STEVE GADD BAND

70 Strong

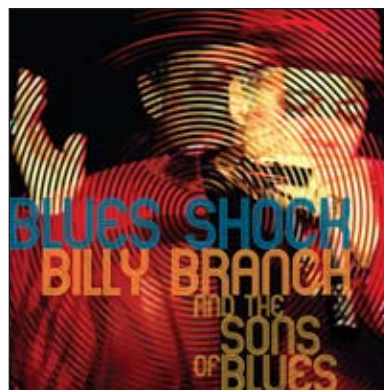
BFM JAZZ

Storied drummer Mr. Gadd celebrates the big Seven-oh with a set stacked with sufficient groove and mood power to find its way into discerning "smooth" formats while satisfying present-day fusion listeners with a sound possessed a strong group identity and, compositionally speaking, a goodly number of imaginative "heads".

Gadd's savvy play is never far from its soulful component and bassist Jimmy Johnson proves a reliable section partner. Multiple-voiced guitarist Michael Landau and keyboardist Larry Goldings and, most particularly, trumpeter Walt Fowler deliver consistently tasty solo work.

As distinctive as the originals that make up the majority of the set, the most compelling track is the band's er-grabbing workup of Eddie Harris' classic "Freedom Jazz Dance". Gadd proves how much push can be found in his brushes on one the disc's strongest groove pieces. Nice work.

Duane Verh



BILLY BRANCH AND THE SONS OF THE BLUES

Blues Shock

BLIND PIG

It has been years since Billy Branch's last recording, a Japanese CD shared with guitarist Carlos Johnson, a decade ago. Thankfully Blind Pig has issued a new

release by Branch and the Sons of the Blues, “Blues Shock,” that is a thoroughly entertaining, wonderfully played recording that showcases Branch’s heartfelt singing and songwriting on an imaginative, varied program. He is joined by Dan Carelli on guitar, Sumito ‘Ariyo’ Ariyoshi on keyboards, Nick Charles on bass and Moses Rutles Jr. on drums (and one vocal). Ronnie Baker Brooks guests on one track on guitar and vocal and the Chicago Horns led by Bill McFarland add punch to three tracks.

There is plenty of funk, down home grooves and stellar musicianship. The CD opens with “Sons of the Blues” penned by Branch and poet Sterling Plumpp, on which Branch sings “some people don’t know my name because all they got is a very weak game, I am the son of the blues (2x).”

Set against a strutting funk groove Branch lets us know he “is the man who makes the news” before blasting off a fiery harp solo set against the punchy horns. It’s followed by Branch picking up the chromatic for a terrific cover of “Crazy Mixed Up World,” which would make Little Walter smile, especially his solo, and special note should be made of the contributions Carelli and Ariyoshi provide with their fills in supporting the lead.

The title track is a punchy number built over Carelli’s slide guitar riff with the horns, with Branch singing about a feeling coming over, it ain’t pneumonia or the flu, but it’s a crazy, funky feeling one can’t shake, the “Blues Shock.” It’s followed by the amusing “Dog House” as Branch and Brooks sing about sleeping on the couch and the spouse leaving kibbles and bits for dinner.

After this wonderfully paced performance, there is a straight cover of Shorty Long’s early Motown groover, “Function at the Junction” followed by the disc’s most remarkable performance, “Going to See Miss Gerri One More Time,” about Gerri Olivier who owned the legendary Palm Tavern in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood for about 50 years. The Palm was a legendary place near the Regal Theatre and Branch recounts her coming from Jackson, Mississippi as part of the Great Migration and celebrates the Palm and the many legends who performed there before the Palm was torn down a few years back. There is a definite country-soul flavor to this remarkable performance that serves as a tribute to a likewise remarkable lady.

Ariyoshi contributed the instrumental “Back Alley Cat” which allows Branch to showcase his harp set against Ariyoshi’s rolling piano. A rousing boogie rendition of John Lee Hooker’s “Boom Boom” is followed by Moses Rutles Jr.’s amusing vocal on “Slow Moe” highlighted by Rutles’ almost stuttering vocal and effective use of stop time by the band. Branch’s lyric about Slow Moe taking his time, as well

as being built to last, is supported by some superb harp in the backing. “Baby Let Me Butter Your Corn” is a burner with an amusing lyric (I’ll keep on churning till that butter comes”) and rollicking piano and

harmonica solos.

An instrumental “Song For My Mother” closes this recording exhibiting his marvelous tone as well as his construction of his solo. It concludes one of the most stimulating recent blues recordings. “Blues Shock” mixes a variety of material and moods and will make one laugh as well as listen to Branch’s storytelling here along with some stunning musicianship.

Ron Weinstock



HILARY GARDNER

**The Great City
ANZIC RECORDS**

Vocalist Hilary Gardner’s inspiration for her debut album “The Great City” (Anzic Records) is her adopted hometown of New York City.

The Alaska native has been enchanted by New York, where she performs at such venues as Birdland and Cafe Carlyle as well as guests with symphony orchestras. This recording was produced by Eli Wolf, with a wonderful backing group that includes Ehud Asherie (piano), Randy Napoleon (guitar), Elias Bailey (bass), Jerome Jennings (drums), Jason Marshall (saxophone), Tatum Greenblatt (trumpet) and Jon Cowherd (organ).

Gardner impresses throughout, sometimes singing in an understated manner as on the opening “No One After You” with Napoleon’s guitar and Asherie’s piano adding to the flavor. She sings with warmth and clean delivery of her lyrics with a marvelous sense of phrasing as she conveys a sense of longing on “Brooklyn Bridge” (with marvelous sax from Marshall), while she is quite playful on “Sweetheart (Waitress In A Donut Shop)” (with Greenblatt’s muted trumpet in support).

She brings new life to familiar standards and captivates with less well-known material. She nails the classic Shirley Horn song that provides the disc with its title, “The Great City,” singing with authority with Bailey’s bass anchoring this gem. She also sings a lovely “Autumn in New York,” and a less familiar ballad, “Drunk on the Moon” (with more saxophone).

A dreamy “Manhattan Avenue,” has her accompanied only by Asherie. It closes a very impressive debut by a singer we will hear more from.

Ron Weinstock



DAVE "HURRICANE" HOERL

Un-Twisted FULL SWING

Born in San Francisco, but a resident of Vancouver, British Columbia for over three decades, harmonica player and singer Dave "Hurricane" Hoerl is best known as a member of the jump blues band, The Twisters.

"Un-Twisted" on Full Swing is his first solo recording and has him backed by members of The Twisters and others. Hoerl's originals and covers are supported by Double D (Dave Dykhuizen) on a variety of guitars, Chip Hart on drums, Roger Brant - Fender bass, Dave "Cob" Webb on Piano and Hammond Organ, Johnny Ferreira on Soprano and Tenor Sax, James "Buddy" Rogers on guitar, Brandon Isaak on guitar and Keith Picot on upright bass.

No track displays the direct character of Hoerl's music better than "Pure & Simple Blues," as he proclaims that when by one's self, play some of that pure & simple blues, and music for the head may leave him cold but what sets his spine a tingle must come from the heart. Nothing fancy with the simple shuffle beat and guitar backing for his singing and assured harp playing followed by Double D's sharp lap steel solo. The opening "Soul Mate" is a love song to his wife with a lazy Jimmy Reed style shuffle rhythm. He gets energetic singing O.V. Wright's "I'd Rather Be Blind, Crippled and Crazy," with Webb's Hammond B-3 adding to this track.

"Snake Charmer" has an amusing lyric about a belly dancer, with Hoerl on chromatic harp while Ferreira adds fills as well as takes a serpentine solo on soprano saxophone. The peppy "Grand Old Game" (with a Bo Diddley groove) is a rare new song celebrating the sport of baseball while "She Took Back Her Heart" is a lament about a sweet love that has soured. The recording closes with a charming, short solo harmonica rendition of "I Left My Heart In San Francisco."

Dave Hoerl is an amiable singer and a fine harmonica player with a crisp attack and tone, but also displays a definite melodic quality in his playing. With supple, straightforward backing, he has produced a small gem with "Un-Twisted." Un-Twisted can be purchased from cdbaby and itunes.

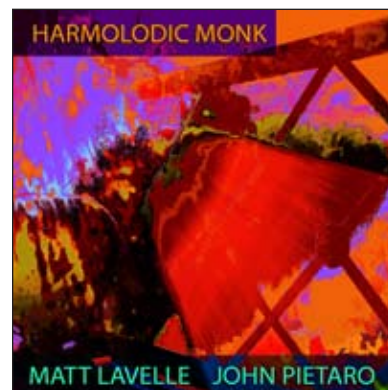
Ron Weinstock

Please Note - Unfortunately, shortly before this CD was is-

sued, Dave Hoerl suffered a massive stroke that left him hospitalized and fighting for his life. As with many stroke victims, his future is uncertain. He had great care in the hospital and is currently in a long-term care facility undergoing intensive therapy and is making great progress. Benefits are being held for him and folks can send funds through paypal.

His website is <http://www.davehoerl.com/> and it has information on how folks can donate funds to assist him.

There is also a Facebook page with more information, <https://www.facebook.com/hurricanehoerl>.



MATT LAVELLE/JOHN PIETARO

Harmolodic Monk UNSEEN RAIN

Matt Lavelle is a reed and brass player who has studied with Ornette Coleman while John Pietaro is a percussionist, and the two have collaborated on duos for ten compositions of Thelonious Monk approached from the musical philosophy of Ornette Coleman. The resulting recording on Unseen Rain is "Harmolodic Monk," that provides intriguing and in some cases radical deconstruction and rebuilding of some of Monk's celebrated compositions. Lavelle is heard on cornet, flugelhorn and alto clarinet while Pietaro plays vibraphone, bodhran, congas and percussion.

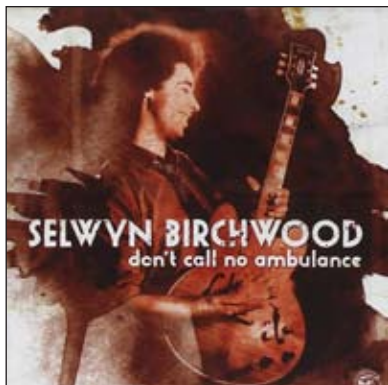
The radical nature of their approach can be heard on the opening rendition of "Epistrophy" taken at a slower tempo than usual with the development of the performance in art involving breaking down the composition and reconstructing it. In addition to his percussion coloring Lavelle's alto clarinet, he employs the vibraphone to offer his own musical construction. Lavelle's alto clarinet is also featured on "Pannonica" with swoops, leaps and bluesy cries suggestive of Eric Dolphy on bass clarinet, while Pietaro's vibes playing provides a shimmering musical backdrop on the performance as well as takes a reflective solo followed by Lavelle returning on cornet to restate the theme.

It is fascinating to hear Lavelle's machine gun brass blasts on "Green Chimneys," matched by percussion and congas while Pietaro states the theme of "Round Midnight" before Lavelle enters at an unhurried tempo on alto clarinet. "Ruby My Dear" is performed as a solo interpretation by Pietaro. Pietaro's vibes then open "Let's Cool One," serving as an intro before the entrance of Lavelle's cornet playing which is mostly

unaccompanied. “Blue Monk,” another brass-vibes duet, does not seem as satisfactory a performance until Lavelle transitions into “Straight No Chaser.” Overdubbing may have been employed to enable Lavelle play alto clarinet and brass on “Monk’s Mood.”

Monk’s compositions seem to work especially well with spare instrumentation (including the absence of piano) and the imaginative playing of Lavelle and Pietero intrigues listeners while the familiarity of the compositions provide a foundation to help engage those who listen. “Harmolodic Monk” is a fresh, imaginative approach to one of modern music’s iconic composers of considerable merit.

Ron Weinstock



SELWYN BIRCHWOOD
Don't Call No Ambulance
 ALLIGATOR RECORDS

Mentored by Sonny Rhodes and winner of the 2013 International Blues Challenge, Selwyn Birchwood impresses with his enthusiasm as well as his talent. This writer had the pleasure of seeing him in Fall of 2013 before he signed with Alligator Records, who have recently issued his first CD for the label titled “Don’t Call No Ambulance.”

On this album, Birchwood brings his vocals as well as guitar and lap steel with an excellent band comprised of Regi Oliver on saxophones, bass clarinet and flute; Donal ‘Huff’ Wright on bass and Curtis Nutall on drums. Guest appearances are made by Joe Louis Walker on Slide Guitar, Josh Nelms on Rhythm Guitar, RJ Harman on Harmonica and Dash Dixon on Keyboard.

Selwyn’s raspy, gravelly voice have led some to liken him to Tom Waits, a comparison that does surface several places on this recording of originals. He is a fairly solid guitar slinger as displayed on the rocking opener “Addicted,” but much of the appeal of “Don’t Call No Ambulance” is the interaction between Selwyn and the saxophones of Oliver and the tight backing Wright and Nutall provide.

Oliver’s baritone sax often functions like a rhythm guitarist as he doubles on the bass line and adds to the drive like on the title track, where Birchwood conjures up a North Mississippi Hill Country groove as he sings that he feels so good and if he falls down, don’t call no ambulance. This strong selection is followed by

“Waiting in the Lion’s Den,” where Birchwood evokes Waits with his raspy, almost spoken, vocal as Oliver, supporting him on sax and flute, takes a muscular baritone sax solo.

Joe Louis Walker guests on slide guitar on “The River Runs Red.” This is a funky tune with Oliver providing punchy Memphis styled horns. “Love Me Again” is a soulful ballad on which Birchwood sings about a love he lost and wants back as he “can smell the rain in the air, thunder rolling in... Feel the mist kiss against my skin, I was a fool in the past, did not know what I had ... let the rain fall so my tears don’t show, can you find the strength to love me again.”

There are a couple of topical songs including “Tell Me Why” with the leader’s buzzing lap steel guitar over Wright’s funky bass. The hard rocking feel contrasts with the low-key, down-home playing on “Overworked and Underpaid.” RJ Harman’s harmonica enhances the atmosphere while Birchwood adds a lap steel solo on his complaint about working life.

Dancers will savor the pop-flavored “She Loves Me Not” with Oliver again standing out. The slow blues, “Brown Paper Bag” about a destructive drinking problem, has some of Birchwood’s most fiery playing.

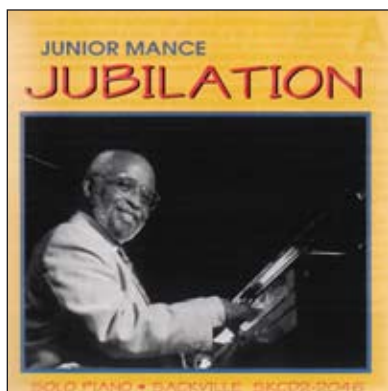
The album closes with a return to a Hills Country groove and some slide guitar that suggests Mississippi Fred McDowell for “Hoodoo Stew,” as he sings about the thirteenth day on a Friday night. This is an impressive, varied recording that is sure to get Birchwood a higher profile.

Ron Weinstock

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



JUNIOR MANCE

Jubilation
SACKVILLE/DELMARK

Delmark's acquisition of the Canadian Sackville label continues to make available some wonderful recordings covering the whole spectrum of jazz. Among the latest releases to get back into circulation is a live solo piano recording from the wonderful Junior Mance, "Jubilation" (Sackville).

Mance, who established himself with Dizzy Gillespie, Cannonball Adderley and the two tenor team of Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis and Johnny Griffin, has been working leading his own trios, and also in duos in New York from the 1960s. He was recorded at Toronto's The Montreal Bistro in September 1994 and

this album was a result.

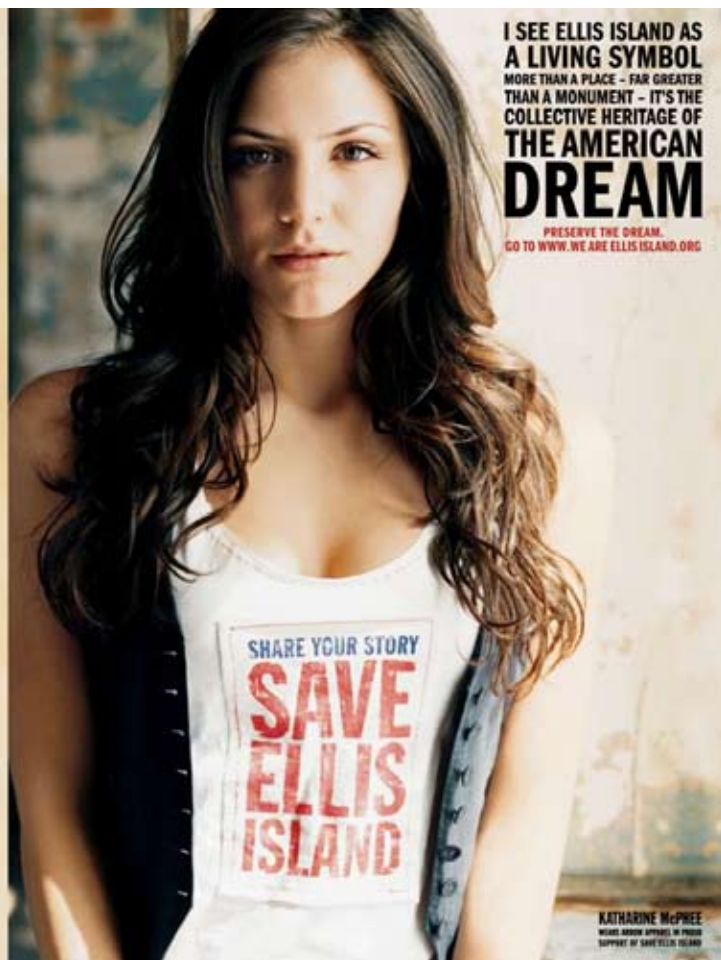
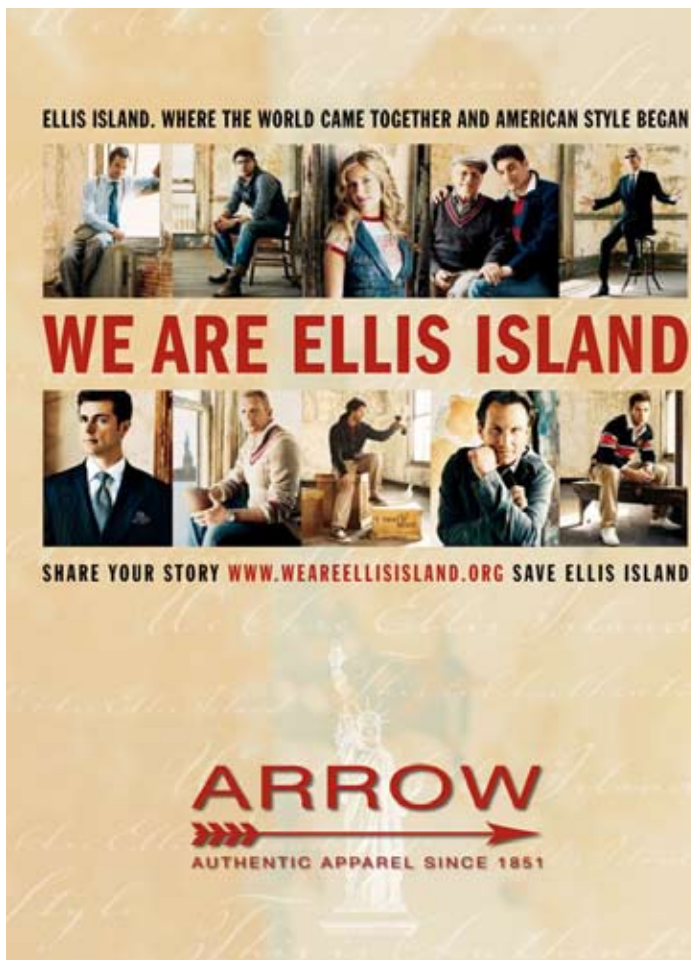
"Jubilation" was originally released in 1996 and likely will be new to most ears. In a program ranging from Hoagy Carmichael, Ellington and Strayhorn, W.C. Handy, Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, Dizzy Gillespie and Cole Porter, Mance showcases throughout his considerable ability in mixing gospel and blues roots with florid Tatum-esque runs. The title track is a particularly exhilarating performance, but his touch and tenderness is shown on a rendition of "George On my Mind."

Mance gets playful on "Lady Be Good," while his take on "All the Things You Are" is a high point on this exceptional release. Mance also puts his own stamp on a marvelous take of the venerable "St. Louis Blues," as well as on "Birks Works," while he invests a morose tone to "Lover Man." "What Is Thing Called Love" starts in a reflective manner before Mance turns his interpretation into a stride-rooted romp. This track exhibits a wide-ranging musical imagination mixed with his formidable technique making "Jubilation" such a delightful recording.

Ron Weinstock

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