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# jazz & blues



**Terance Blanchard**

**58th Monterey Jazz Festival**

# jazz & blues report

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# jazz & blues report

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## "Buffalonious"

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



# Monterey Jazz Festival

## 58th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival Single Day Tickets & 3-Day Packages On Sale

**Headliners Include the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Chick Corea, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Ambrose Akinmusire, Dianne Reeves, Chris Botti, Béla Fleck, Snarky Puppy, Pete Escovedo and Sheila E., Terence Blanchard, Ravi Coltrane, Geri Allen's Erroll Garner Project, Jaco's World Conducted by Vince Mendoza, and Many Others**



Trombone Shorty

Monterey, Calif – Three-Day packages and Single Day Arena and Grounds Tickets for the 58th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival, September 18–20 are on sale now. Tickets can be purchased online at [montereyjazzfestival.org](http://montereyjazzfestival.org) or by calling 888.248.6499.

The Festival features 500 artists, and nearly 100 performances from iconic and emerging jazz artists, educational events, conversations, and exhibits on eight stages, for 30 hours of live music spanning two days and three nights, accompanied by an array of 75 vendors selling international cuisine and merchandise on the oak-studded 20 acres of the Monterey County Fair & Event Center.

2015's GRAMMY Award-winning Arena lineup on Friday, September 18 includes Jaco's World: A Celebration of the Music of Jaco Pastorius (conducted by Vince Mendoza, and featuring Will Lee, Christian McBride, Felix Pastorius, Peter Erskine, Tierney Sutton, Sonny Knight, Bob Mintzer, Alex Acuña, and others); the Chick Corea Trilogy Trio with Christian McBride and Brian Blade; Geri Allen's Erroll Garner Project: Concert by the Sea, featuring Jason Moran, Christian Sands, Russell Malone, Darek Oles, and Jimmy Cobb.

The Saturday, September 19 Arena lineup includes Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Lucky Peterson, Nikki Hill, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orches-



Sheila E.

tra with Wynton Marsalis; Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour with Ravi Coltrane, Gerald Clayton, Joe Sanders, and Justin Brown; and the Ambrose Akinmusire Quartet +5 debuting the Festival's Commission, *The Forgotten Places*.

The Arena lineup on Sunday, September 20 includes the Pete Escovedo Latin Jazz Orchestra with special guest Sheila E.; Snarky Puppy; Next Generation Jazz Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis; Chris Botti; Dianne Reeves, and Chick Corea & Béla Fleck.

The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis will act as the 2015 Artist-In-Residence, with smaller JALC ensembles performing three additional sets on the Grounds, including the Walter Blanding, Carlos Henriquez, and a JALC Jam Session. Chick Corea will be the 2015 Showcase Artist, performing with Trilogy with Christian McBride and Brian Blade; in duo with Béla Fleck. 2015 Commission Artist Ambrose Akinmusire +5 will debut *The Forgotten Places* in the Arena and also performs with his quartet on the Grounds.

Single Day Arena Tickets offer a reserved seat to each of the five concerts on the Jimmy Lyons Stage in the Arena plus access to the seven additional Grounds stages and all Festival activities. Friday Single Day Arena Tickets are \$71. Saturday and Sunday Single Day Arena Tickets are \$142 each day.

Single Day Grounds Tickets offer access to seven

Grounds stages and activities on each day. Single Day Grounds Tickets are \$45 for Friday, and \$55 for Saturday or Sunday. Youth discounts are available.

Grounds activities include 80 events, conversations, films, and musical performances, with weekend highlights from the Monty Alexander Trio; Terence Blanchard E-Collective; Kurt Rosenwinkel; Cyrille Aimée; Allan Harris; Theo Croker; Lizz Wright, John Santos, Etienne Charles, top bands from the 2015 Next Generation Jazz Festival, and many others.

Also on sale are Single Day Premier Club hospitality passes, priced at \$75 for Friday, and \$125 for Saturday or Sunday. Benefits include a furnished setting offering closed-circuit Arena simulcasts, a no-host bar, complimentary food service and non-alcoholic beverages, live music, and private restrooms. Arena or Grounds Ticket purchase is required.

The 9th Annual Jazz Legends Gala, held at the Intercontinental The Clement Monterey on Cannery Row, will honor pianist Chick Corea on Thursday, September 17. Hosted by Terence Blanchard, special performances at this beautiful location will feature vocalist Cyrille Aimée, and the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra. Proceeds from this event will benefit Monterey Jazz Festival's jazz education programs.

Also on sale are *Full Weekend Arena and Grounds Packages*. See the complete 2015 lineup in order of appearance on the next page.



Chick Corea (© Dick Zimmerman)



Tierney Sutton (© Tati Shoan)

## Complete Lineup for the 58<sup>th</sup> Monterey Jazz Festival (in order of appearance)

Friday, September 18

### ARENA

**Jimmy Lyons Stage:** Geri Allen presents the Erroll Garner Project: *Concert by the Sea* featuring Geri Allen, Jason Moran, Christian Sands, Russell Malone, Darek Oles, and Jimmy Cobb; Chick Corea Trilogy with Christian McBride & Brian Blade; *Jaco's World: A Tribute to Jaco Pastorius*, conducted by Vince Mendoza, featuring Will Lee, Christian McBride, Felix Pastorius, Peter Erskine, Tierney Sutton, Sonny Knight, Bob Mintzer, Alex Acuña, and others)

### **GROUNDS**

**Garden Stage:** Berklee Global Jazz Institute; Musette Explosion; The Brothers Comatose **Dizzy's Den:** Kurt Rosenwinkel Quartet; Terence Blanchard E-Collective **Night Club:** Dennis Murphy Band; Cyrille Aimée; Theo Croker **Coffee House Gallery:** Monty Alexander Trio with John Clayton and Jeff Hamilton (Two sets) **Courtyard Stage:** James Francies on the Yamaha AvantGrand (Two sets) **Jazz Theater:** Simulcasts from the Arena

Saturday, September 19

### ARENA

**Jimmy Lyons Stage:** Nikki Hill; Lucky Peterson; Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue; Ambrose Akinmusire

Quartet +5; Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour; Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis

### **GROUNDS:**

**Garden Stage:** Sonny Knight & The Lakers; Nikki Hill; Lucky Peterson; Etienne Charles; Kneebody

**Dizzy's Den:** Conversation: Erroll Garner Jazz Project; *DownBeat* Blindfold Test with Pete Escovedo and Sheila E. hosted by Dan Ouellette; Crossing Borders featuring Jennifer Scott & Kristen Strom; Wasabi; Lizz Wright; Ernesto Oviedo with the John Santos Sextet

**Night Club:** SFJAZZ High School All-Stars Orchestra; United States Marine Corps All-Star Jazz Band; Dann Zinn with Peter Erskine and Chris Robinson; Allan Harris; David Gilmore & Energies of Change; Ambrose Akinmusire Quartet

**Coffee House Gallery:** Percussion Discussion with Peter Erskine and Jeff Hamilton; Berklee Global Jazz Institute; Monty Alexander Trio with John Clayton and Jeff Hamilton (Two sets)

**Jazz Education Pavilion:** Student Performances (Two sets) **Courtyard Stage:** James Francies on the Yamaha AvantGrand (Three sets)

**Jazz Theater:** Simulcasts from the Arena; Film: *Jaco*; Post-film discussion



Russell Malone (© Cole Thompson)

Sunday, September 20

**ARENA**

**Jimmy Lyons Stage:** Next Generation Jazz Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis; Snarky Puppy; Pete Escovedo Orchestra with Sheila E.; Chick Corea & Béla Fleck; Dianne Reeves; Chris Botti



Lucky Peterson (© Jean Marc Lubrano)

**GROUNDS**

**Dizzy's Den:** Conversation: *A Love Supreme* with Ravi Coltrane and Rudresh Mahanthappa hosted by Ashley Kahn; Michael O'Neill and Kenny Washington; Walter Blanding Sextet; Carlos Henriquez: *The Deal Maker*; Jazz at Lincoln Center Jam Session

**Garden Stage:** University of Miami Frost School of Music "Extensions"; Central Washington University Big Band; Jones Family Singers; Kyle Eastwood; Duchess; Justin Kauflin Quartet

**Night Club:** Berkeley High School Combo A; Monterey County High School Honor Vocal Jazz Ensemble; Folsom High School Jazz Choir; Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Jazz Choir; Folsom High School Big Band; Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Jazz Band; Northgate High School Jazz Band; Monterey County High School All-Star Band; Rudresh Mahanthappa's Bird Calls; Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour with Ravi Coltrane, Gerald Clayton, Joe Sanders, and Justin Brown

**Coffee House Gallery:** Remembering Clark Terry with Justin Kauflin; American Music Program Pacific Crest Combo; University of the Pacific Combo; Monty Alexander Trio with John Clayton and Jeff Hamilton (Two sets)

**Jazz Education Pavilion:** Jazz for Kids with Amy Cervini (Two sets) **Courtyard Stage:** James Francies on the Yamaha AvantGrand (Four sets)



Arena Rainbow People (© Monterey Jazz Festival)

**Jazz Theater:** Simulcasts from the Arena; Film: *Keep On Keepin' On*

The Monterey Jazz Festival 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



# Lil' Ed and Shemekia Copeland Headline 24th Pennsylvania Blues Festival

By Ron Weinstock



Lil' Ed



Shemekia Copeland

We featured the Pennsylvania Blues Festival as last issue's cover story. Since we still have a little time, and tickets are still available, here is a condensed version as a reminder.

Celebrating 24 years of Blues in the Poconos, the Pennsylvania Blues Festival takes place at Split Rock Resort on Friday July 24 through Sunday July 26. It moves to Split Rock in Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania after 4 years at the Blue Mountain Resort. The new location is close to the original Festival location on Big Boulder Mountain. "The Blues Lovers Blues Festival," as it calls itself, will be headlined by Shemekia Copeland on Saturday the 25th and Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials on Sunday the 26th. There will be zydeco from Dwayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hell-raisers as well as gospel from the Highway QCs, and such notable performers as Walter 'Wolfman' Washington, John Nemeth and Alvin 'Youngblood' Hart.

Friday night, July 24, the Festival opens with an Indoor Showcase with Mikey Junior's Blues Review, featuring the fine harmonica player and vocalist. It takes place inside the Galleria at Split Rock.

Saturday July 25, the Festival Main Stage opens with Dwayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hell-raisers. One of the sons of zydeco legend Rockin' Dopsie. Dwayne Dopsie's hard-driving and rocking music is also heavily influenced by Clifton Chenier, and similarly he is marvelous blues singer and player as well as traditional zydeco artist who will also do a Hendrix-influenced rendition of "Hey Joe." Besides opening the main stage he will close the Tent Stage that night. Alligator Recording Artist Selwyn Birchwood, winner of the International Blues Challenge a couple years back, brings his exuberant blues with his tight band, solid vocals and guitar, including lap steel (he was mentored by Sonny Rhodes). Severn Records artist Sugar Ray & The BlueTones follows and the group led by Ray Norcia has been laying down Chicago styled blues for nearly 40 years (This writer saw them in 1978 in New York backing J.B. Hutto. Norcia a marvelous singer, reminiscent of Junior Parker, and he had a stint fronting Roomful of Blues) and fine harpist is backed by Monster Mike Welch on guitar, Anthony Geraci on keyboards, Michael 'Mudcat' Ward on bass and Neil Gouvin on drums.

New Orleans Icon, Walter 'Wolfman' Washington and the Roadmasters is up next on the Main Stage bringing their mix of blues, soul and funk. Closing the Main stage will be Shemekia Copeland who recently re-signed with Alligator Records bringing her tight band and her powerful vocals on a mix of blues and blues-rooted material that underscores why she has been named Koko Taylor's successor as "Queen of The Blues."

In addition to the Main Stage, others acts will be presented in the Tent Stage. Electro-Fi Recording Artist Harmonica Shah & Carlton Washington will open the tent stage and play a second set later. Also in the tent performing two sets is John Mooney. Mooney mixes Delta Blues with the New Orleans second-line. Growing up in Rochester NY, Mooney was mentored by legendary Son House and his most recent recording is a tribute to the Delta Blues Icon. Dwayne Dopsie closes out the tent Stage after Mooney's second set. Later Saturday evening, Bobby Kyle will lead a Tribute to Johnny Copeland in the Galleria Governor's Ballroom.

Blues on Sunday July 26 starts with a Blues Brunch in the Governor's Ballroom featuring Slam Allen, a dynamic singer and guitarist who spent several years fronting James Cotton's Band. Sunday the Main Stage opens with the legendary gospel group, The Highway QCs. This Gospel Quartet was sort of the junior Soul Stirrers and members years ago included Sam Cooke, Johnny Taylor and Lou Rawls. Up next on the main stage is Vanesse Thomas, who is the terrific blues and rhythm singing daughter of Rufus Thomas. Victor Wainright and the Wild Roots bring this rocking keyboard wizard to the main stage and he is followed by the terrific soul-blues Blues Music Award winning vocalist John Nemeth. Closing the Main stage will be Alligator recording artists, Lil Ed & the Blues Imperials, who will bring their exuberant house rocking slide-guitar blues.

Sunday, the Tent Stage will have performances from Alvin 'Youngblood' Hart, The Peterson Brothers and Mikey Junior. Alvin 'Youngblood' Hart emerged over two decades ago laying down traditional Delta and Texas blues which has expanded to include a wide range of material, making him a 21st Century songster in the manner of a Leadbelly. He has been called a musical love child of Howlin' Wolf and Link Wray. The Peterson Brothers are youthful blues prodigies that show that blues can still inspire youth and have shared stages with Pinetop Perkins, Willie Smith, Michael Burks and Marcia Ball. Their website notes they are recording a debut album. They and Hart will play two sets before Mikey Junior closes the Tent Stage.

Once again, the festival sports a superb line-up of blues. Split Rock offers lodging as well as serves as the Festival site. There are a number of other accommodations available near the Festival site. Information on tickets and lodging can be accessed at the Festival's website, <http://www.pennsylvaniabluesfestival.com/>.

*Photos of Lil' Ed and Shemekia Copeland by Ron Weinstock*

## Colorado's Durango Blues Train Returns On August 21 & 22



Durango, CO - The Durango Blues Train returns on August 21st and 22nd for two consecutive evenings of music aboard the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in Durango, Colorado.

This unique music experience presents two consecutive evening of music featuring two full bands, and four solo and duo acts. Musicians perform in their own vintage coach, while passengers are free to sample each musical act by traveling from one coach to the next. Limited tickets are on sale now for the August Blues Train departure at [Durangobluestrain.com](http://Durangobluestrain.com).

"We are excited once again bring the Blues Train to Durango. Each year the train grows in popularity. This August event has performers from as far away as Texas and Minnesota - a testament to how unique this moving experience is." Said Steve Gumble, founder of the Durango Blues Train. "Hop aboard and join some of the Nation's premier folk and blues musicians on this rolling party."

The Durango Blues Train is pleased to announce the artists performing each night on August 21st and 22nd. The second weekend installment of the Blues Train welcomes musical guests Mark May Band, The King Stan Band, Possessed By Paul James, Charlie Parr, Reverend Deadeye, and Big Jim Adam.

This 3 ½ hour train excursion begins at the historic train depot at 7:00 p.m. (MST) where the steam engine fires up and it's all aboard for an experience of a lifetime. As the train departs, the performances begin with each artist filled coach treating passengers to a musical journey on the historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge steam powered train. In addition to a full night of music, passengers will experience spectacular canyon views from the "Highline," a world-famous section of railroad on the cliffs above the Animas River.

The Durango Blues Train is excited to announce Ska Brewing and Telluride Brewing Company as the

official beer sponsors for the 2015 Blues Train. Both local and regional breweries bring their award-winning beer aboard the Blues Train for passengers to enjoy. Additionally, guests can enjoy beverages including wine and light snacks while riding the train.

Tickets are \$95 per person, plus a 7% Historic Train Preservation fee. Tickets are limited and purchasers must be 21 years old to participate. For information and to purchase tickets visit [DurangoBluesTrain.com](http://DurangoBluesTrain.com) or call (866) 515-6166.

The Durango Blues Train is a unique 'moving' experience featuring live blues acts, while passengers travel aboard the Historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad's coal-fired, steam-powered train to the spectacular and breathtaking "Highline" canyon of Colorado's San Juan National Forest.



## Jackson Rhythm & Blues Festival August 14-15

Jackson, Mississippi – On August 14-15, 2015 the Third Annual Jackson Rhythm & Blues Festival takes place at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum right on the out-skirts of downtown Jackson. This booming festival presents Mississippi's Blues musicians coupled with regional and national Rhythm and Blues artists on a new scale with an urban flavor.



Bobby Rush

The location allows Jackson the ability to offer 36 acts performing on 5 stages, 4 of which are indoor with air conditioning and transformed into urban juke joints. Due to safety concerns chairs will not be allowed on the grounds.

Attendees are encouraged to move between the

indoor venues and enjoy the wonderful talent gracing the 4 air conditioned stages – with chairs – for resting your bones; until moving to catch another great artist in the next spot. Who needs a seat with so much boomin' music, jumpin' from stage to stage, you don't want to miss a beat! Food and drink vendors will keep festival attendees happy and well fed with an abundance of Southern cuisine, including Mississippi farm raised catfish, succulent barbeque ribs and chicken on a stick, along with signature festival alcoholic drinks, wine and beer.

Make plans to attend the 2015 Jackson Rhythm & Blues Festival and get a taste of the "City with Soul" during two unforgettable days of rhythm and blues that's destined to set your soul on fire.

Gates open on Friday at 5 o'clock p.m. and Saturday at 3 o'clock p.m.

The artists for this year are:

### Friday, August 14

**Chaka Khan**, Raheem DeVaughn, Macy Gray, Frank McComb, Bobby Rush, Vick Allen, Patrice Moncell, Eden Brent, Larry Johnson & The Beastly Tunes, Ana Popovic, Jj Thames, Taylor Hicks, Ayron Jones and The Way, Leela James, Nappy Roots

### Saturday, August 15

**THE ISLEY BROTHERS** Featuring **Ronald Isley and Ernest Isley**, Sebastian Mikael, Dorothy Moore, Eddie Cotton, John Nemeth, Cupid, Truck Patch Revival, Dexter Allen, Scott Albert Johnson, The Bo-Keys, Skylar Laine, Tonya Boyd-Cannon, Avery\*Sunshine, Tre Williams, Ben Payton, Shane Dwight

Big Joe Shelton, Adib Sabir, Mali Music, Street Corner Symphony, T-Baby

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

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# Second Verse, Same As The First? 2015 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

By Mark Smith



As the great Yogi Berra once said, "It's like déjà vu all over again." I've come to realize over the past few years that routine has crept into my life. Five Thirty a.m. Alarm: check. Head to work: check. Ten o'clock coffee: check. 12:00 run: check. Three o'clock coffee: check. Dinner, newspaper, bed. Check, check, check. Repeat. Endlessly. I take comfort in knowing what is coming next. On the other hand, while predictability is great for things like travel and finding your keys in the morning, the sameness of the daily routine can result in an auto-pilot existence that sometimes leaves me yearning for a change of pace. As a consequence I've come to treasure the surprises that break up the routine and make particular days memorable. Like finding \$20 in the pocket of shorts you haven't worn since last summer or finding out that I've been selected to help Nigerian royalty bring their fortune to the U.S.

So how do I reconcile the desire for surprises with repeat trips to see the same bands over and over? For example, I've seen Jimmy Buffet 25 times. The drill is pretty well established. Massive tailgate party with much Tequila in the company of fellow parrot heads followed by a concert featuring many of the same songs I've heard virtually every other time I've seen him. Much fun, much frivolity. Even then, though, it isn't the communal singing of "Son of a Son of a Sailor" or other favorites, special as that may be, that keeps me coming back. It's the long lost deep cuts that he works into the set that gives each concert its own identity. I totally get why Dead Heads can hear the same basic set list over and over but still leave

satisfied because of the medley of old bluegrass that got snuck into the mix for the first time.

So what does all of this have to do with an article about Jazz Fest? I'm glad you asked. You see, since 1997 I've attended it 10 times and it is hands down my favorite festival. With 12 stages featuring upwards of 70 bands or artists per day on each of the 7 days of the festival, which always occurs the last weekend of April and first weekend of May, there is something for everyone. This year featured big names like the Who, Elton John, The O'Jays, Jimmy Buffet, Widespread Panic, and Wilco as well as New Orleans favorites such as Kermit Ruffins, Galactic, Terrance Simien, Shamarr Allen, the Meters, the Radiators and Trombone Shorty. There were also more blues, gospel and jazz bands than you can count including Jimmie Vaughan with Lou Ann Barton, Buddy Guy, Louis Prima, Jr., Sony Landreth, Irma Thomas, Robert Cray, John Mooney & Bluesiana, Hot 8 Brass Band, Monty Alexander, Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials, Royal Southern Brotherhood, New Orleans Nightcrawlers, Preservation Hall Brass and dozens more.

The festival occurs at a horse race track located in a fairgrounds north of the French Quarter. The music is performed on stages large and small. The Acura and Gentilly stages are at each end of the race track and tend to host the national or big name local artists. In between are the Congo Square stage which focuses more on soul, funk, world beat and R & B and the Fais Do-Do stage which is mostly devoted to Cajun, Zydeco or roots rock music. There are also massive tents devoted to jazz, blues and gospel. As if the music isn't enough of a draw, there is also a wealth of terrific food including boiled crawfish, soft-shell crab po-boys, fried green tomatoes, shrimp and grits, crawfish bread, and frozen café au lait. The festival is well organized and provides a perfect way to sample an amazing array of music and food over a short period of time as you jump from stage to stage and food booth to food booth. All perfect right? Yes, but after 10 times there was a tiny part of me that was apprehensive that my favorite festival was in danger of becoming just another routine event in my life. There was no doubt it would be a good time. But would it be a memorable time?

## Throwing down the gauntlet of fun.

It was the second day of the Festival and we had just set up our chairs for the day at the Acura Stage with the hopes of preserving some real estate to see Elton John in several hours when out of no-where they appeared: a band of tennis-clad hairy men wearing feather boas, wrist bangles, large Elton John Style sunglasses, wigs, headbands and sporting tennis rackets. Despite the fact it was only 9:00 in the morning they already had some significant

chemical help in their systems as they set up next to us and immediately commenced fake games of tennis with all manner of comically depraved fake shots. With shorts so short that nature was going to produce the balls that were missing in their game they kept worrying aloud that their "twig and berries" would be revealed. After exhausting themselves with 3 minutes of fake tennis they collapsed into laughter and explained that their garb was in honor of Elton's shout out to Billie Jean King and the Philadelphia Freedom tennis team. They slipped in and out of character: serious one moment, over the top comical the next. They vowed that if Elton played either Philadelphia Freedom or Tiny Dancer they would weep with joy. They were soon joined by their equally playful wives, girlfriends and others including a drunken samurai who all gamely played along with their day-long antics which successfully rode the thin line between hilarious and annoying. If nothing else had happened the entire festival, they made memories for all of us. But lots more happened.....

### **Rewind to Day One- Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Over the years I've mostly attended jazz fest in the company of buddies. This year, through a series of happy coincidences I attended with not only my buddies by my wife and two mid-20 year old kids. Instead of a nimble posse, we had an entourage! Our first official act as a group was to venture down to the French Quarter to take in some much needed coffee and some beignets at the storied Café Du Mond to start out the day. Good as usual. Routine. No surprises. But wait; look at that old dude with the full Beatles mop top. While fully gray, a pretty amazing set of hair for an old guy. That is until he turned to the side and revealed that he was sporting a comb over extending from the tip of one ear all the way to the bottom of the other, which changed it from amazing to fantastic! The time it must have taken each day to fake the mop top defies the imagination. We prayed for a side wind to see the flap do the flip. Sadly, it never came but we had plenty to talk about as we sugared up for the trip to the festival grounds. Memory day one: check!

We travelled the 20 some minutes to the festival at the Fairgrounds and sailed right into a decent parking spot at a local church. One thing you realize real fast is that the neighborhood surrounding the fairgrounds uses the opportunity to convert the hundreds of thousands of people attending the festival (this year drew over 460,000 people during its 7 day run) into some cash by selling parking spots, bottled water, lemonade and snacks. Even blocks away from the fairgrounds the atmosphere is festive with even the small kids wishing us a happy jazz fest.

Once on the grounds, we quickly made our way to see local favorite Johnny Sketch & the Dirty Notes over at the Acura stage. It was early in the day and the crowds were still thin so we were able to get up close to the front. Jazz fest marks off an area in front of each stage for those that want to stand for the show with the rest of the area behind that available for people to lay down blankets and set up chairs. Standing is tough for 8 straight hours so many take

advantage of the chair zone. This layout results in some interesting situations. Some people come early and set up for the day so that they have a spot when one of the national headliners takes the stage which is usually later in the day. They then either stay there for the day or simply leave their chairs there to hold their place while the take in other shows during the course of the day. With space at a premium, those that abandon their chairs often return to find that the area they have reserved for themselves has been reduced to the size of the chairs they left behind. Anger is pointless. Which of the 30 new people that set up next to you in your absence do you blame?

So, do you stay and hold your ground or do you check out the other stages? It's a mixed blessing. Those that stay find themselves in a neighborhood of sorts meeting interesting people from all over the country with similar musical tastes but miss great acts on other stages. They also risk hunger and full bladders as getting in and out of the space gets more and more difficult as the crowd grows dense. A trip from the middle of the crowd to the food lines or porta-johns can easily consume more than a half hour and involves more "excuse mes", "sorry about thats" and "are you kidding mes" than you can count as you step on blankets and hands and try to weave through the mass of humanity and randomly placed bag chairs which have morphed into tripping hazards with all manner of foot rests, sun roofs and other add on contraptions. Those that abandon their real estate for other stages have more musical options but risk the wrath of their neighbors as they try to cram themselves back into their space just before the big name hits the stage. There is really no wrong or right to either approach but with huge headliners the logistics of getting to and from your staked out spot can be daunting as you try to walk through the mish-mash of tarps and chairs to find your spot. My advice, set up only if you intend to spend a good chunk of the day at the same spot. Otherwise, the aggravation of getting to and from the spot will suck major amounts of the fun out of your day.

Back to the music! While we somehow thought that Johnny Sketch was a rockabilly outfit we soon learned that they were more of a jump blues horn-driven party band. The crowd responded with plenty of enthusiasm and we soon found ourselves doing the head bop to the hard beat. As soon as the set was over we headed further back into the crowd to find a place to set up our chairs for the balance of the day knowing that we all wanted to see Galactic with Macy Gray and the younger part of the entourage wanted to see No Doubt, which was slated to close out the day. Having snagged some real estate, and notwithstanding the advice about holding onto to it, (do as I say, not as I do!) we simply could not stay put and miss the roots rock of Gal Holiday and the Honky Tonk Revue over at the Fais Do-Do Stage, the big band blues of Luther Kent and Trick Bag on the Gentilly Stage and the smoking Zydeco of Rosie Ledet & the Zydeco Playboys back at the Fais Do-Do where my kid's musical DNA revealed itself as they quickly joined my wife and I grooving to the incessant beat of Rosie and her crew. Big Smile; bigger Memory. Taking



Rosie Ledet ([www.RosieleDET.net](http://www.RosieleDET.net))

in those three bands and a heap of food in the meantime, we then made our way back to see Galactic. As predicted, things had changed since we left with much of our space now occupied by others. No worries, though. They were cool people who didn't seem to mind us squeezing back in to catch the show. Galactic brought their hard edged funk to the proceedings and Macy Gray let her vocals rip. The mix was a little muddy but otherwise a great show. That finished, our entourage broke up with some of us heading to see Chicago and the others staying put for No Doubt. I was part of the group that left and so can't comment on No Doubt. Those that stayed raved.

A funny thing happened on the way to Chicago. We never made it. Exiting the Acura stage we realized that we would be going right by the Blues tent which was going to feature the Voice of the Wetland All-Stars- Tab Benoit, Cyril Neville, Johnny Sansone, Anders Osborne, George Porter, Jr., Mitch Woods, Michael Doucet and others. We agreed to check out a bit of the show. A bit became an hour and a half as we heard one stone cold great song after another. It was simply too good to pass up in favor of a band that would likely be appearing in a local casino with the same set-list in the near future. As good as the music was that we had already seen, this was hands down the highlight of day one for me.

While the Festival was over for the day, we intended to dive into even more music on Frenchman Street, which

is where you need to go if you want to stay in the French Quarter and see real music instead of the over-amped cover bands polluting Bourbon Street. Unfortunately, by the time we showered away the grime of the day and grabbed some dinner every show at every bar on Frenchman was sold out including the Blue Nile where we had intended to see Big Sam's Funky Nation and the Honey Island Swamp Band. Since our other options were across town and we knew we had a long day ahead of us on Saturday we abandoned the quest for more music and called it quits at a very civilized (by Jazz fest Standards) 1:00 a.m.

## Day Two – Fest Goes into Gridlock.

Saturday broke bright and early with no clouds in the sky and temperatures predicted to hit the 80's. Great for the beach, not so much for jazz fest. Given its location in the interior of a horse race track, there is precious little shade so a day at Festival can burn you to a crisp. In fact, most of us were sporting some bright red sun souvenirs from missed sun tan applications the day before. This was a potential problem because we already knew we were going to set up for the entire day at the Acura stage and so would have a full day in the sun. But we had no choice: the Acura stage was going to host a piano extravaganza starting with Mississippi Rail Company and then progressing through Marcia Ball, Davell Crawford doing a tribute to Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis and then Sir Elton. Most of the entourage wanted to see this great line up and there was no doubt that if we didn't get there early and set up there would be no prayer of joining the fun later on. It seems like everyone was of the same mind as people literally ran to the stage when the gates opened. Our planning paid off and we secured a great spot that soon found us in the company of the twigs and berries crew. The comic relief they provided almost made worthwhile the logistics of getting in and out of the space for food, drink and an occasional defection by an entourage member or two to take in Kermit Ruffins and the Soul Rebels.

As the day progressed, the fairgrounds went into gridlock. Not only was the entire seating area filled to capacity, it was difficult to move around even in the open areas between stages and tents. The food lines were similarly clogged up. Thank goodness the music was worth it. Marcia Ball played her normal stellar set of west Louisiana roadhouse blues and Davell Crawford educated the mostly clueless Elton John fans in just how important Fats Domino was to anyone playing popular piano music, including Elton himself. When Crawford finished his terrific set it was time for Jerry Lee Lewis. Things started out with the killer nowhere in sight. Instead, his sister, Linda Gail Lewis, took on the piano duties and reeled off a couple of energetic numbers accompanied by her daughter on vocals. When she exited, the band, which looked like a wax museum collection, announced "Ladies and Gentlemen welcome the great Jerry Lee Lewis" only to keep looking back stage and playing the same introductory riff over and over. Just when it seemed the wheels had fallen off and he would be a no-show, Lewis gingerly made his way to

the piano hunched over a cane. He eased himself onto the bench seemingly there to have a cup of coffee with friends. And then all hell broke loose. Lewis turned a leering grin to the audience and attacked the piano as if the years had disappeared and he was back in his 20's. While he didn't maintain the frantic pace for his entire set he did show you can rock well into your 80s. When he was done, it was time for Sir Elton. Even though his pop music isn't everyone's cup of tea he is a great showman and played a solid two hour set with his well rehearsed band. He played pretty much every song on all of his greatest hits discs including Philadelphia Freedom and Tiny Dancer. Hey are those guys weeping? More unique memories!



George Porter Jr.

While the Festival was done we weren't. We caught dinner at a local joint just outside of the Festival grounds, and soon made our way to the Mid-City Lanes Rock N' Bowl to catch the Iguanas, Mingo Fishtrap and Eric Lindell. While I had seen the Iguanas and Lindell numerous times in the past, Mingo Fishtrap was new to me. They put on an amazing set of roots rock and blues that stood as the musical highlight of the day which seems almost unbelievable following our day of national acts. While there, my daughter learned that dancing alone can earn a marriage proposal in New Orleans and my son was introduced to the fine distinction between being charming and being drunk as he sought the long-term attention of the lovely bar tender. A four-peat of great memories for the day!

### Day Three- Time for the Buffet!

Unlike Saturday, none of the stages had a line-up that made us want to set up camp to stay for the day or to endure the hassle of moving in and out as we jumped from stage to stage. As a consequence we left the chairs in the car and spent the day on our feet at the front of various stages. We approached the day like a buffet, taking in a little of this and a little of that. We started with a half hour of bass god George Porter Jr. and his Running Partners laying down his New Orleans Funk on the Acura stage. We then moved all the way to the other end of the fairgrounds to catch big band jump blues artist Deacon John leading his well greased orchestra through a number of blues and

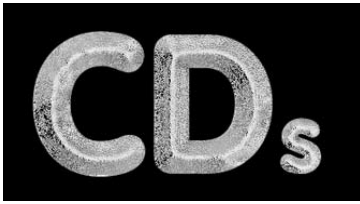
New Orleans party classics. Before his final notes faded away we headed to the blues tent to take in Glen David Andrews who could have just as easily been in the gospel tent with his high energy tent revival show.

After a quick stop by the food booths, we caught some of the Meters reunion and then the end of the Radiators show back at Gentilly. The Radiators absolutely ripped it up with great guitar riffs and pianist Ed Volker's deadpan lyrics. Once they concluded we stayed put for Steve Winwood who took us back in time with a set heavy on Spencer Davis, Blind Faith and Traffic tunes. By the end of his 90 minute set we had been standing for over seven hours and so we decided to skip both Dr. John and Trombone Shorty, who were closing out the festival at the big stages which were packed tighter than a Tokyo subway, in favor of catching a seat at the blues tent to see Buddy Guy bring it on home. The place was rocking and Buddy was clearly having a great time as the day's blues headliner. As the day came to a close, we sadly exited the Fairgrounds for the last time on this trip. While the day didn't have the unique moments that highlighted the other days, it was special nevertheless. Great Music: check. Great Food: Check. Great Company: Check. Repeat: I hope so. Bring on Jazz Fest number 12! Sometimes the routine is its own reward.

Mark Smith



The 2015 Jazzfest Poster - Big Chief Bo Dollis - Portrait of an Enduring Legacy by Randy "Frenchy" Frechette can be purchased along with other cool stuff - follow the link at [www.nojazzfest.com](http://www.nojazzfest.com) - on the front page.



We only bring you  
the Cream of the Crop!



## ALEX NORRIS ORGAN QUARTET

**Extension Deadline**  
BJU

Trumpeter Alex Norris has had a pretty busy and notable career since graduating from the Peabody Conservatory in 1990. He worked with the late Betty Carter, the Vanguard Jazz Band, Toshiko Akiyoshi's Jazz Orchestra, Maria Schneider's Band and Ron Carter's Big Band, along with Brian Blade, Brad Mehldau, Paquito D'Rivera and Chico O'Farrill to give a short idea of how well regarded he has become. He has also appeared on over 80 CDs, but he has just released only his second album as a leader, "Extension Deadline" by the Alex Norris Organ Quartet on BJU Records.

The quartet includes long-time musical cohort George Colligan on Hammond A-100 organ; old friend, inspiration and colleague, Gary Thomas on tenor saxophone (Thomas is head of Jazz Studies at the Peabody Conservatory of Music where Norris is an adjunct Professor), and one of NYC's premier jazz drummers, Rudy Royston. Most of the compositions are from Norris, although there is one from Bobby Hutchinson and a Colligan original.

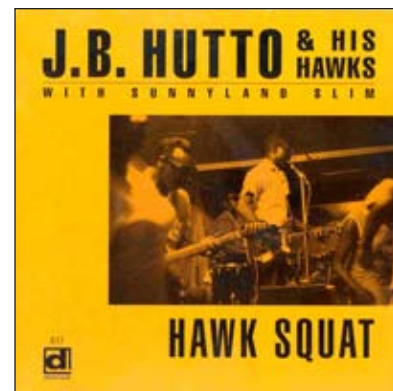
The title track opens this recording in a highly spirited manner. The song has a double meaning, as it was composed during tax filing season, during which Norris filed for an extension, and simultaneously, the trumpeter came to the conclusion that he had put off releasing this recording long enough. There is plenty of fire and invention heard from all four here. For a reference point, one might look to the classic Larry Young recording "Unity" which had similar instrumentation and strong material.

The mood changes with the more relaxed "Night Watchman," with its loping groove and the more me-

lodic flavor of the performance with Colligan adding nice coloring under Norris' lyrical playing before taking a taut solo followed by Thomas' brawny and thoughtful playing. Royston is outstanding here as he is throughout "Extension Deadline." "San Jose," composed after performing with three Latin bands at the 2004 San Jose Jazz Festival, has some Latin accents with a bit more heat in the playing here, but Norris shines with his crisp attack. Hutchinson's 3/4 tune, "Little B's Poem," is taken at a slower tempo and again displays the leader muted lyricism with more choice playing from Colligan. Colligan's "Optimism" opens with the horns stating the theme before Colligan takes a driving first solo with his horn like lines followed by a husky tenor sax solo.

Avoiding the blues and standards that are characteristic of many organ based jazz recordings, Norris and his quartet captivate with fascinating compositions along with strong ensemble playing and thoughtful, fervent solo statements. "Extension Deadline" is an impressive recording and one hopes that Norris is back leading another recording date in the not too distant future.

*Ron Weinstock*



## J.B. HUTTO & HIS HAWKS

**Hawk Squat**  
DELMARK

The latest classic Delmark blues CD to receive an expanded, deluxe treatment is J.B. Hutto & His Hawks, "Hawk Squat." Hawk Squat is perhaps my favorite J.B. Hutto album and one I have been listening to since it was initially released back in the later sixties. Backing J.B. were Sunnyland Slim on keyboards; Herman Haskell on guitar for one track; Lee Jackson on guitar for six songs (8 tracks); Junior Pettis or Dave Myers on bass; Frank Kirkland on drums; and Maurice McIntyre on saxophone for one session. The original twelve tracks are supplemented by one new song and alternates of four selections (one song has two alternates).

J.B. Hutto was an Elmore James disciple, yet only on "Speak Your Mind," does he employ the familiar "Dust My Broom" lick, but in the context of his own song. His forceful vocals and take no prisoner slide guitar are strongly supported with Sunnyland's organ

providing some additional musical coloring. There are two alternates to this track, the more interesting one is a slowed down rendition that closes this reissue. In contrast, with some typical Sunnyland Slim piano in the backing, on “If You Change Your Mind” Hutto lays down some tough slide to go with his powerful singing. It should not be lost that J.B.’s songs were first-rate as displayed here on the next selection “Too Much Pride,” where J.B. sings about having too much pride to beg his woman to stay. This is the first track to sport McIntyre’s saxophone and it is fascinating to listen to how responsive his playing is behind J.B.’s vocals.

The declamatory vocal delivery on “Too Much Alcohol” is followed by the slide guitar boogie “Hip Shakin’,” and then the “The Feeling is Gone,” about “feeling like crying but the tears would not come down,” with his keen slide responding to his vocal. They do not simply write or play blues like this anymore. “Hawk Squat” is a raucous number as J.B. introduces everybody for a solo take. It is almost a blues equivalent of Louis Armstrong’s “Gut Bucket Blues.” “I’ll Cry Tomorrow” is the one new selection, and is a slow blues with nice interplay between Hutto and Lee Jackson, which followed by the alternate takes.

In addition to the previously unissued material, Bob Koester provides new notes that supplement the original liner notes in the accompanying booklet. There are also a number of previously unissued photos from Turner’s, then J.B. Hutto’s home base, and the recording sessions in the booklet. The original recording was selected for the Blues Hall of Fame in 2013, and the music still resonates here over forty-five years after first listening to “Hawk Squat.” J.B. Hutto’s music was direct and full of passion. He was not fancy, just full of spirit of heart. Needless to say, this reissue of “Hawk Squat” is highly recommended. **Ron Weinstock**

throughout his legendary musical career. Also caught are some moments with the late Quincy Jones, who Terry mentored when Jones was a teenager and who takes Justin on the road with him towards the film’s end. Interspersed are clips of Terry playing with Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, and various big bands along with Justin performing at the Monk competition and later being featured with Quincy Jones in Europe where he performs his composition dedicated to Terry, “For Clark.”

Ashley Kahn notes that the soundtrack is not simply an encapsulation of the film, but an overview of Terry’s career interspersed with dialog by Terry, Kauflin and Quincy Jones, and some solo performances from young Kauflin. There are some excerpts of his playing although with full performances with Duke Ellington (a very fresh take on “Harlem Air Shaft”), Oscar Peterson (including “Mumbles”), a terrific “Stardust” with his Quintet as part of jazz at the Philharmonic, Count Basie (a blistering “Blee Blop Blues”), a marvelous orchestral rendition of “Misty,” and “I Remember Clifford” with Quincy Jones. Young Kauflin displays his wonderful touch and imagination on his solo piano that is heard under Terry’s narration of “Letter to Justin #1,” and the closing “For Clark” that ends this soundtrack.

Ashley Kahn notes that is the first collection of Terry’s music although it certainly only provides a sample of his remarkable legacy. It is a document of more than simply Clark Terry’s music with the dialogue and advice presented here. One cannot recommend the movie “Keep On Keepin’ On” highly enough and the soundtrack, while probably enjoyed most by those who have seen the movie, certainly stands up well on its own. Recommended, and perhaps may we get a fuller career retrospective of Clark Terry.

**Ron Weinstock**



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Keep On Keepin’ On**  
VARÈSE SARABANDE RECORDS

“Keep On Keepin’ On” is a remarkable documentary about the late Clark Terry and his relationship with a young blind pianist, Justin Kauflin. The documentary captures Terry, who was suffering severe health issues related to diabetes, and young Kauflin in several different episodes interspersed with clips of Terry from



## TAD ROBINSON

**Day Into Night**  
SEVERN RECORDS

Blue-eyed singer Tad Robinson returns for another helping of soul and blues on Severn Records “Day Into Night.” Robinson has matured as a singer and his vocals (and occasional harmonica) are backed by the Severn house band of Johnny Moeller, guitar, Robb Stupka, drums, Steve Gomes, bass and Kevin Anker, keyboards.

DC area organ wizard Benjie Porecki is on one track and Anson Funderburgh and Alex Schultz also add guitar while trumpeter Kenny Rittenhouse provides the handsome horn arrangements.

With the exception of a cover of "Lead Me On," Robinson, Gomes and Anker contributed these solid originals that evoke the classic Memphis sound, especially Hi Records, with the understated, smoldering feel of many of these performances. One highpoint is "Lonely Talking," with Robinson's soul vocals on this modern urban blues enlivened by Funderburgh's guitar bursts. Rittenhouse's arrangement for "He's Moved On" perhaps has a touch of the Philadelphia Sound with backing vocals employed as Robinson tells his lady she will realize that he has moved on. "Lead Me On" has a fresh arrangement allowing Robinson to place his own spin on this Bobby Bland classic with a heartfelt moaning vocal. "While You Were Gone," has a bass pattern that evokes "Take Me To the River" and on which Robinson adds a dose of harmonica.

The overall tenor of the performances (including the backing and arrangements) on "Day Into Night" is very much in the manner of the late Severn soul-blues legend Lou Pride. Severn has produced another modern urban and soul-blues recording that showcases how striking a singer Tad Robinson is.

*Ron Weinstock*



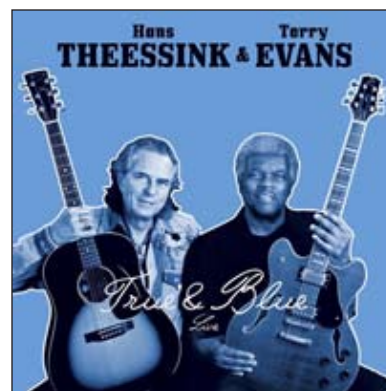
## MATHIAS EICK

**Midwest**  
ECM

Norwegian trumpeter Mr. Eick's roots-inspired homage to the American Heartland is a succession of elegant themes, gracefully melodic and highly atmospheric. And while the stated geographic inspiration for this work is a vast, open region - widely settled historically by Eick's countrymen - these performances seem highly contemplative rather than celebratory in character. This is definitely not Copland.

The leader's horn presence is most prominent in vivid opening statements, setting up the consistently compelling articulation of pianist Jon Balke, who emerges as the star of the set. Bassist Mats Eilertson's and drummer Helge Norbakken's suitably sparing section play and the folk flavorings of violinist Gjermund Larsen complete an exceptionally appealing effort.

*Duane Verh*



## HANS THEESSINK & TERRY EVANS

**True & Blue**  
BLUE GROOVE

While not previously aware of the collaboration between the Dutch blues-roots veteran Hans Theessink and the Mississippi born gospel-rooted vocalist Terry Evans, the new release by the two "True & Blue" (Blue Groove) is a live recording from the Metropol in Vienna, Austria that certainly will be of interest to fans of the pair in a blues-anchored roots music program.

Included are covers of songs associated with such legends as Memphis Slim, J.B. Lenoir, Chuck Berry, Leadbelly, Wilson Pickett and Robert Johnson with original songs from Theessink.

The blend of Theessink's baritone and Evans' gospel-rooted tenor (with falsetto) and the interplay between their guitars is full of charm that infuses the performances starting with a spirited folk-blues original "Demons," followed by a rendition of "Mother Earth" where one can hear Robert Johnson's influence on Theessink's guitar accompaniment for his vocal with Evans adding his embellishments. "Evans takes the vocal lead on the standard "Glory of Love," which is based on Big Bill Broonzy's rendition with some wonderful fingerstyle guitar as the two trade leads and Evans scats.

Evans wrote "Gotta Keep Moving" with Bobby King and Ry Cooder, and features some clean, crisp slide along with some fine singing. Theessink adds some rack harmonica on the lively rendition of Leadbelly's "Bourgeois Blues," which is followed by a folk-funk rendition of Wilson Pickett's "Don't Let The Green Grass Fool You."

The two cover of Robert Johnson's "Cross Road Blues" with a hot interpretation inspired from the original and not the rock rendition by Cream. They have a lively cover of Chuck Berry's "Maybelline with lively slide guitar and some country finger-picking. Another standout track is the boogie rendition of J.B. Lenoir's "Talk To Your Daughter." "Shelter From the Storm" is an appealing folk-ballad that Theessink's laconic baritone provides some of its appeal.

"True & Blue" appeals with the obvious empathy Theessink and Evans have for each other, which is manifested through this most enjoyable live recording.

*Ron Weinstock*



## TWIN DANGER

Twin Danger

DECCA/UNIVERSAL MUSIC CLASSICS

As seductive as this duo's "noir" image is, they quickly prove the real seduction lies in their simultaneously fresh and retro craft.

Vocalist Vanessa Bley and saxophonist Stewart Matthewman back their individually compelling voices up with considerable savvy as writers and arrangers. Bley, daughter of piano great Paul Bley, convincingly delivers on a chanteuse persona with nimble lyric readings, enhancing them on multiple occasions by smart sounding harmonic multi-tracks.

Matthewman, a key contributor to the sophisticated and highly successful 80's sound of Sade, is a strong and clean toned player who provides a most suitable second voice. His moody retro charts, however, are the ultimate driver of this appealing and inventive set.

*Duane Verh*



## DEBBIE DAVIES

Love Spin

VIZZ-TONE

Debbie Davies has a new release of interest, "Love Spin" on VizzTone. In addition to her usual band mates, including her longtime drummer Don Castagno, the album has appearances from Terry Hanck (sax, vocals), Dana Robbins (sax), Dave Keys (piano) and Jay Stollman (vocals). There is a nice mix of material that Davies delivers with more than a little panache.

No questions can be raised about Davies fluid, biting fretwork. She learned a lot playing with the late Albert Collins, and, like her former boss, makes use

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of space as well as tone to compliment her fleet playing. Her vocals are heartfelt and sung without artifice. Certainly the rhythm section is on point and there are some fine tunes, like the opening "Life of the Party," which is a straight-forward boogaloo number with interesting, ironic lyrics. "Let the Heartaches Begin," a duet with Terry Hanck, is a superb swamp pop styled number with wonderful vocals from the two, and some fine, precise guitar followed by Hanck's sax with a slight bit of rasp in his tone.

Vocalist Jay Stollman joins Debbie on the funky R&B flavored "Don't Change It Up" on which Scott Spray guests on bass with nice organ in the backing under Debbie's focused guitar pyrotechnics. On "As Long As It Sets Your Soul Free" she sings against a loping rhythm on "It's All Blues." She gets playful on the rocker "I'm Not Cheatin' Yet," with a booting Hanck solo while she certainly displays a certain bit of humor as her man thinks he is sexy and dreams of trading Debbie in for "Two Twenty-Five-Year-Olds," while ingeniously incorporating an Eddie Taylor riff into the performance. She displays a jazzy sophistication on "A Darker Side Of Me," which adds to the variety heard here.

A slide guitar showcase, "Way Back Home" closes this recording with its use of the "Rollin' and Tumblin'" groove. "Love Spin" is another quite enjoyable release of blues by the very talented Debbie Davies.

*Ron Weinstock*



## FRANK VIGNOLA & VINNY RANIOLO

Swing Zing

FV-15

The duo of Frank Vignola & Vinny Raniolo brings together the veteran Vignola, who is certainly one of the most remarkable guitarists today with the younger Raniolo, who serves to complement Vignola's often astounding playing. The two have a new recording "Swing Zing" on Vignola's FV-15 label that has the two (with guests) playing 13 swing era classics.

There is more than a hint of Vignola's Gypsy Jazz style, especially on the jaw-dropping "Joseph Joseph," on which Olli Soikelli joins the two. Bucky Pizzarelli, and Gary Mazzaroppi join in backing a lovely vocal from Auda Mariel on the classic Jerome Kern ballad "All the Things You Are." There are so many delights,

including the brilliant interplay between Vignola and Gene Bertoncini on the brisk “Whispering.”

From the opening delightful elegance of “Cheek to Cheek” to the lovely rendering of “Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans” and the closing medley of “Peg O My Heart”/“I’m Confessin’,” listeners are treated to the mix of lyricism and dazzling improvisational take-offs that prove that jaw-dropping technique matched with musical taste and intelligence that can make for compelling performances that can move the heart and lift one’s spirits. “Swing Zing” is simply wonderful.

**Ron Weinstock**



## TOOTS LORRAINE

**Make It Easy**

**TOOTS LORRAINE MUSIC**

The first time I heard Toots Lorraine’s new recording, “Make It easy” (self-produced), I was impressed by the presence and unforced quality of her vocals. Her band, The Traffic, led by husband Chad Mo on guitar, is terrific and the recording by Chris ‘Kid’ Andersen (who also guests on this on guitar, bass, piano and backing vocal) is spot on. The rest of the band is Lorenzo Farrell on keyboards, Mike Phillips on bass and June Core on drums and percussion with Aki Kumar adding harmonica, and they provide strong support, whether on a straight Chicago styled shuffle or a T-Bone Walker styled song.

The title track opens this set with Kumar on chromatic harp with a nice relaxed shuffle fed by June Core, who has to be in the running for best blues drummers out there today. Mo adds some guitar in the vein of B.B. King’s “Please Me Love Me” on the hot shuffle cover of Big Mama Thornton’s “Let Your Tears Fall Baby,” with her forceful vocal as she reminds her lover he was the one who said goodbye, and Farrell adds some rollicking piano in his accompaniment. This is followed by a marvelous original, the late night West Coast blues “Get Back to Lovin’,” with Farrell taking a choice organ solo and Mo conjuring up T-Bone Walker.

Andersen is featured on “Satisfied” which is followed by the traditional spiritual, “Wade In The Water” on which Mo and Andersen add backing vocals. “Wrong Side of Love” musically evokes Ray Charles’ “I Believe,”

on this strong original as Toots sings how he should be on her side but she is on the wrong side of love as Mo and Farrell adds choice solos enhanced by the spare, subtle backing. The crisply played instrumental “Chad Mo Shuffle,” is followed by a hot reworking of “Big Joe Turner’s” “Low Down Dog,” with Mo in a jazzy vein here suggestive of such early fifties jump blues guitarists like Johnny Rogers and Tiny Grimes.

The original “Hindsight” is a terrific slow blues as she pours her heart out about picking up the pieces of what is left of her heart. The Jimmy Vaughan - Mac Rebennack gospel-laced lyric “Love The World” with a spare swampy backing (Andersen plays guitar and bass on this) finishes off a most impressive recording.

Toots Lorraine is a first rate vocalist and the backing is wonderful on a nice mix of material and I look forward to more from her.

**Ron Weinstock**



## WILD BILL DAVISON

**The Jazz Giants**

**SACKVILLE/DELMARK**

“The Jazz Giants” was a group assembled for a performance at Toronto’s Colonial Tavern. The nominal leader of this group was cornetist Wild Bill Davison, although pianist Claude Hopkins was the musical director. Others in the group included clarinetist Herb Hall, who like Davison was a mainstay of Eddie Condon’s New York club; veteran trombonist Benny Morton, whose career stretched back to Fletcher Henderson in the 1920s; bassist Arvell Shaw of Louis Armstrong’s All Stars and drummer Buzzy Drootin.

This group was recorded following the gig at the Colonial and the release “The Jazz Giants” was the initial release on Sackville. Delmark has re-released it under that title but under Wild Bill Davison’s name.

Davison was a highly energetic cornet player, who like others of his generation was inspired by Louis Armstrong and his brash, driving attack and was complemented by a fine band that on the surface is similar to Armstrong’s All Stars (trumpet or cornet, clarinet, trombone, piano, bass and drums).

The group’s repertoire is grounded in a number of songs that are associated with Armstrong starting with the bustling swing of “Struttin’ With Some Barbecue,” on which Hall contributes serpentine clarinet lines against the swinging rhythm section prior to Davison taking

off with his marvelous attack, with Morton, Shaw and Hopkins all spotlighted with a short drum break at the end. The warmth Hall was able to convey is exhibited on the bouncy “Darnanella.” “Black and Blue” (which is also presented in an alternate), was one of Armstrong’s seminal recordings and receives a wonderful interpretation here (and Hopkins piano accompaniment merits notice). Listening to the performance here, one has a sense of the spirit of Pops’ music.

Hopkins was one of the writers of “I Would Do Anything For You,” which was first recorded by Hopkins and his Orchestra in 1932. The ensemble provides a nice small ensemble rendition with Davison’s vibrato and use of tonal effects being quite enjoyable while Morton adds a gruff lyricism.

It is followed by a relaxed groove for the trad staple “I Found a New Baby.” One of the surprises of repertoire on this date is “Blue Again,” revisiting another of Armstrong’s classic performances from the late twenties and early thirties. If Pops had heard this performance, it would likely have made him smile. Davison displays a bit of his own lyricism on a lovely “I Surrender Dear” while “Yesterdays” is a feature for Shaw’s Arco bass playing.

“The Jazz Giants” were a marvelous ensemble brought together for one gig and we are fortunate that John Norris and others collaborated on financing the recording of this group. This is swinging music of energy and high spirit that gets one toes dancing and one’s spirits lifted.

*Ron Weinstock*



**SCOTT AINSLIE**  
**The Last Shot Got Him**  
 CATTAIL

“The Last Shot Got Him” is a project by Vermont singer/songwriter/guitarist/historian Scott Ainslie that was put together over the love of an instrument. The guitar in question was a unique 1934 Gibson archtop, which a friend played for Ainslie. The material on the disc all dates from 1928-1941 with the exception of the Ainslie original “Late Last Night” from 2008, which is based on the Russian invasion of the country Georgia. That tune, though, has the feel of one from the 1930’s and blends in with the rest of the material.

While a lot of “The Last Shot Got Him” are blues tunes per se, some like Irving Berlin’s “Say It Ain’t So

(made famous by Sippie Wallace) have more Broadway in their roots. Delightful is the remake of “When I See An Elephant Fly” from the 1941 Walt Disney movie “Dumbo.” Included are Robert Johnson’s “Cross Road Blues” (or, as you Cream fans know it, “Crossroads”) and Johnson’s “Love In Vain.”

Closing out the proceedings is a heartfelt version of “Over The Rainbow” from “The Wizard Of Oz.” While it won’t make anyone forget Judy Garland (to tell the truth, nor Livingston Taylor’s stab at it), it is great hearing this magical tune (which the stupid suits at MGM almost left out of the flick until saner, smarter voices prevailed).

Mostly done with just Ainslie’s voice & the acoustic guitar (exceptions being the banjo added on “First Shot Missed Him” & “Honey Right Away”), it boils down to if you like old time country blues, you are really going to like “The Last Shot Got Him.”

*Peanuts*



**BEAT FUNKTION**  
 Olympus  
 DO MUSIC RECORDS

Beat Funktion’s brand of fusion can rightly claim old-school funk among its lines of lineage. The unflinching rhythmic repetition found in abundance on the Swedish sextet’s current set bears a kinship with that which was a staple of James Brown’s fare.

In BF’s case, this provides principal soloists trumpeter Karl Olandersson and tenor saxophonist Olle Thunstrom with ample room up top, Olandersson, the definite swinger of the pair. Thunstrom adds to the “retro” vibes present, going electric on “The Hydra”.

Keyboardist Daniel Lentz’s “heads” are clean and sparing. He and rhythm partners guitarist Johan Oilen, bassist Pal Johnson and drummer Jon Eriksson make for a most suitable machine. Other tracks of note include “Game Of The Gods,” “Viper Lady” and “Chimera.”

*Duane Verh*

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## THE HENRY GRAY/ BOB CORRITORE SESSIONS Vol. 1 Blues Won't Let Me Take My Rest DELTA GROOVE

Bob Corritore has been championing the greats of blues, especially Chicago blues, for several decades. He is the host of a terrific blues radio program in Phoenix, where he also operates the Rhythm Room, and he also has produced a variety of blues recordings. His latest production celebrates pianist Henry Gray, who turned 90 in January 2015.

The Henry Gray/ Bob Corritore Sessions comes our way with "Vol. 1 Blues Won't Let Me Take My Rest" (Delta Groove). Included are 14 selections featuring the pianist perhaps best known for his 14 years with Howlin' Wolf as well as session work with a variety of artists for Chess and other labels. It's been about 45 years since Gray left Chicago and moved to Louisiana where he has been playing festivals and clubs.

For "Blues Won't Let Me Take My Rest" Corritore has put together 14 selections from 12 sessions over a 19 year period (including one on Henry's 90th Birthday) with Gray and Corritore joined by a wide range of blues legends and players including Robert Lockwood, Jr., John Brim, Willie 'Big' Eyes Smith; Nappy Brown, Tail Dragger, Chico Chism, Dave Riley, Bob Margolin, Bob Stroger, Chris James, Patrick Rynn, Kirk Fletcher, Kid Ramos, and Junior Core.

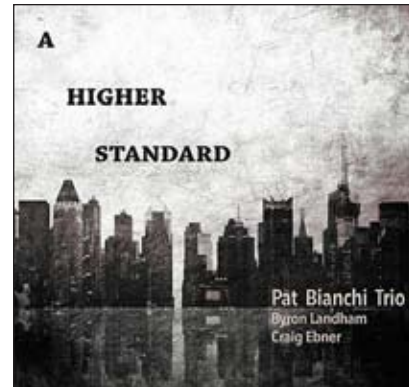
Gray has been overshadowed by Pinetop Perkins amongst his contemporaries in general recognition, and while folks might argue on who is the stronger pianist, Gray, although an untrained singer, is more forceful and displays more personality, as reflected on his impassioned singing on the title track (most associated with Jimmy Rogers). But he certainly captures the spirit of shouter Grant Jones, "Let's Get High" and Hot Lips Page, "They Raided The Joint."

On several tracks he provides strong support behind some legendary figures including Robert Lockwood, Jr. on "Ramblin' On My Mind," and Nappy Brown on a superb rendition of "Worried Life Blues," that was a signature song of Gray's major piano influence, Big Maceo. Dave Riley tackled "Ride With Your Daddy Tonight" while John Brim sings "That Ain't Right." Lowell Fulson's "Trouble Blues" features one of Gray's

top vocals here with Bob Margolin adding slide guitar while Tail Dragger adds some color commentary to the rollicking "Boogie Woogie Ball."

After a credible Jimmy Reed cover, "Honey Don't Let Me Go," this CD concludes with a moody swamp blues flavored rendition of B.B. King's "She Don't Move Me No More," with Corritore (outstanding throughout) heard here in a Walter Horton vein. This is a solid and delightful collection of classic Chicago blues with a touch of Louisiana swamp blues mixed in. Given that this is labeled Vol. 1, one looks forward to a further release of Henry Gray's blues sessions with Bob Corritore.

*Ron Weinstock*



## PAT BIANCHI A Higher Standard 21 H RECORDS

One of today's top practitioners of the Hammond B-3 organ, Pat Bianchi has a new release, "A Higher Standard" (21H Records). The release has Bianchi with his current trio of Byron Landham (drums) and Craig Ebner (guitar). This writer saw and was impressed by Bianchi as part of a group backing tenor saxophonist Paul Carr at the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival (and he recorded with Carr) and he is known for working with Lou Donaldson. This recording allows us to enjoy him and his working band.

There is a nice mix of material from the opening "With Out a Song" and Horace Silver's "Blue Silver" to Oscar Pettiford's "Bohemia After Dark," John Coltrane's "Satellite" and Stevie Wonder's "From the The Bottom Of My Heart," along with a couple of Bianchi originals. Bianchi certainly is impressive, and his greasy, sometimes orchestral, playing contrasts with the lean and clean chords and single note lines of Ebner, while Landham (celebrated on Bianchi's "The Will of Landham") pushes the performance with considerable swing. "Blue Silver" is certainly a good selection to note the trio's considerable strengths and empathic ensemble playing.

Ebner opens "So Many Stars" with some Spanish laced guitar before Bianchi lays down some low-key organ on a performance that showcases Ebner's acoustic playing. The groove on the greasy "The Will of Landham" brings a bit more heat to the surface, while "Bohemia After Dark" has some of Bianchi's

most explosive playing. Landham kicks off Bianchi's "Blues Minus One," a marvelous blues by the trio, before the disc closes on a nice adaptation of a Stevie Wonder number.

Bianchi is a terrific player who leads a strong band and the mix of material exhibits the trio's considerable talents. As a result, "A Higher Standard" is a wonderful organ trio recording.

*Ron Weinstock*



**BOBBY BLUE BLAND**  
**Live & Righteous 1992**  
**ROCK BEAT**

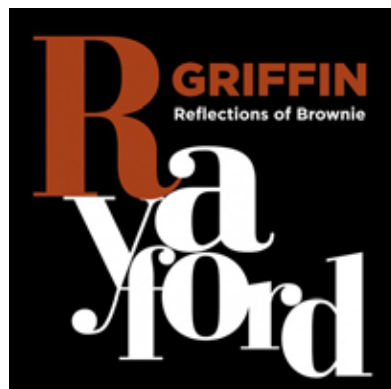
Among recent blues and rhythm recordings issued on the Rock Beat label is a nineties live recording of Bobby Blue Bland, "Live & Righteous 1992." The CD contains 13 selections from the Hotel Meridien in Paris from 1992 and four selections from a performance in Indianapolis also in 1992.

Mark Humphrey provides a concise overview of Bland's life and career but no specific dates are provided or personnel listed. These are likely air checks as indicated from some French narration over the performance from Paris. During the track entitled "I Don't Know," (actually the song known as "Grits Ain't Groceries" or "24 Hours a Day"), the personnel are introduced although guitarist Mark Lee's name is mentioned several times.

The 1992 selections are particularly nice representatives of the "World's Greatest Blues Singer" as might be heard in the early 1990s. The repertoire is fairly representative, including "Today I Started Loving You Again," "Share Your Love With Me," Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine," "You've Got To Hurt Before You Heal," and "Members Only." A high point is the medley entitled "Sunday Morning Love/Stormy Monday" that also segues into "Drifting Blues" at the end. Bland's voice is typical. If he no longer possessed the range of his younger days and his squeals became squawks, his phrasing and intonation are invested in his performances with real depth.

The Indianapolis selections include brief renditions of "That's The Way Love Is," "Further On Up the Road," and "I Pity The Fool" along with a workout on "Soon As the Weather Breaks." Audio throughout is acceptable and, if not essential, this CD certainly should appeal to Bobby's fans.

*Ron Weinstock*



**RAYFORD GRIFFIN**  
**Reflections of Brownie**  
**RAZOR EDGE**

Drummer Rayford Griffin's tribute to his legendary and highly influential uncle, trumpeter Clifford Brown, is an exhilarating cross-weave of "then" and "now". Working a set list of originals and standards associated with "Brownie," Griffin and his cohorts provide enough crossover appeal to make multiple playlists while generously dosing this program with classic jazz feel and attack. The latter provided primarily by the especially exuberant trumpet posse present: Roy Hargrove, Michael "Patches" Stewart, Rick Braun and Nicholas Payton, and tenor saxophonist Everette Harp.

Contemporary touches come courtesy of Griffin and his section partners- the late George Duke and bassist Brian Bromberg. Rhythms are updated for present-day ears and the sadly departed Mr. Duke provides synth strings and occasional quirkiness. The leader commands plenty of spotlight himself, providing aggressive punctuation throughout the set.

*Duane Verh*



**STACY MITCHHART**  
**Live My Life**  
**DR SAM RECORDS**

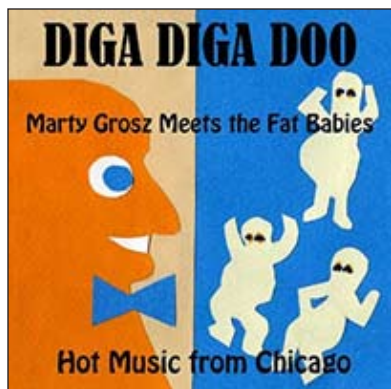
A fixture on the Nashville music scene, singer, guitarist and songwriter Stacy Mitchhart has a new recording "Live My Life" (Dr. Sam Records) that clearly establishes that there is far more to the music scene in Music City than simply country. Mitchhart wrote most of the 11 selections on this recording with a few choice covers and on this his vocals and guitars is mostly supported by Michael Dearing on bass guitar, Darin James

on drums, James Tipton on keyboards and harmonica, Cory Distefano on trumpet, Jules Caldarena on saxophone and John Hinchey on trombone.

Mitchhart has put together quite an engaging, diverse set of performances that are marvelously played. Mitchhart's vocals are suggestive of Delbert McClinton with an appealing touch of raspiness. His delivery of lyrics are solid as well and his writing produces its share of gems such as the opening "Drink Whiskey," where he sings about drinking whiskey not to forget but rather to remember why "I ain't with you." While the groove is a bit too heavy for my personal taste, there are plenty of nice tastes such as saxophonist Caldarena's phrases and Mitchhart contributes a slashing solo. In contrast is the rollicking slide guitar (sort of a frenzied Fred McDowell) gospel setting of "Live My Life" as he shouts he will live as he chooses and not how we want him to do as Tipton adds some down home harp for this blues hoedown.

While the promotional material highlights a cover of the Beatles' "Come Together," it is a rendition of a lesser known Bill Withers song, "Better Off Dead," that is the disc's highpoint as he sings about how his drinking caused his wife and children to leave him and he's better off dead as he's too scared to live alone. He conveys quite an emotional wallop singing against a swampy-guitar backing. Also nicely done is the smooth funk of Gil Scott Heron's "Legend In His Own Mind," with nice jazz-inflected guitar. Other standout selections include "I'm the Reason (She Walks That Way)," a celebration of his relation with his lady. This selection sports some fine horn solos. "Soul Stroll" is a marvelous instrumental with a solid groove and Mitchhart and Tipton (on organ) shining on a tune that sounds like an homage to Booker T & the MGs.

"Live My Life" is a recording of blues, soul and roots that will travel far from Stacy Mitchhart's Nashville home with its strong musicianship, nuanced and soulful singing and excellent material. *Ron Weinstock*



## MARTY GROSZ

**Diga Diga Doo - Marty Grosz Meets The Fat Babies**  
DELMARK

In an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer, guitarist and vocalist Marty Grosz proudly states "...his art has always sought to entertain rather than lull audiences

into a stupor with what he calls "egghead jazz." Grosz, who is 85, has a new album on Delmark with the traditional Chicago Jazz band The Fat Babies entitled "Diga Diga Doo - Hot Music From Chicago."

As Grosz states in the liner notes for the CD, he last recorded for Delmark in 1959 as a sideman for an Albert Nicholas and Art Hodes session. Matching him with string bassist Beau Sample's "Fat Babies" made sense, although he already had pianist Jim Dapogny, while at the time of recording tenor saxophonist Jonathan Doyle was in town and his pal Panic Slim played on the 2014 session (the album was recorded in 2013 and 2014).

Grosz brought his guitar and banjo for these sessions and the presence of Doyle along with the reeds of John Otto make for some fascinating and fun listening. Cornetist Andy Schumm impresses throughout, as does Doyle's robust old-school sax. Grosz is primarily a chordal acoustic player and his solos are really more in the nature of short breaks.

There are plenty of musical delights, and fans of hot Chicago-styled jazz will find so much to enjoy. While Grosz may be limited as a vocalist, he does have a Fats Waller-ish charm on "Sweet Sue." A delight is "Prince of Wails," a number I am familiar with from the incendiary Benny Moten Band version (at the session that also included "Moten Swing"). This is a marvelous rendition with pianist Dapogny putting this together and contributing some fine piano while Doyle and Schumm excel. The title track by McHugh and Fields was a staple of Duke Ellington's Cotton Club revue and Schumm opens playing a comb wrapped in newspaper while pianist Asaro shows some stride influence with Otto on clarinet. Plenty of fun.

A couple of numbers include Grosz' spoken instrumentals including "The Lady of Red," as he scats and conjures a club with these lovely exotic ladies before the Hot Babies jump right in with spirited playing. There is the charm and humor of "Rose of Washington Square," a feature for Fanny Brice from the 1920 Ziegfeld Follies and a lovely rendition of Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is The Ocean." There are tunes from the repertoire of the Louisiana Five, Red McKenzie and Eddie Lang as well as the chestnut "A Good Man Is Hard To Find."

After "The Lady in Red," this CD concludes with "Marty Talks" as he reminisces and indicates his preferences for hot music - it is tagged on at the end, so folks can easily skip if they choose. There is nothing deep, or "egghead" about the music on "Diga Diga Doo," just highly entertaining and well played hot Chicago jazz that will delight those who love "trad" jazz.

*Ron Weinstock*

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## BILLY PRICE - OTIS CLAY

**This Time For Real**  
BONEDOG RECORDS/VIZZTONE

This writer remembers listening to the legendary Washington DC radio programmer, Jerry "The Bama" Washington, in the 1980s playing some deep soul along with blues on his Saturday afternoon WPFW program, and it is where I first became introduced to the remarkable blues-eyed deep soul singer, Billy Price.

Price grew up and modeled his music on the Hi Records greats like O.V. Wright, Al Green, Syl Johnson and Otis Clay. On his first album, the title track was his take on Clay's "Is It Over?" On the basis of that recording, Clay joined Price, in the early eighties, on stage to sing it as a duet in a Washington DC club, and the two have been doing it together for years on stage, but finally Price and Clay have an album together, "This Time For Real" on the VizzTone distributed Bonedog Records.

Duke Robillard produced this and brings his guitar along with his band of Brice Bears on keyboards, Brad Hallen on bass, Mark Teixeira on drums, Mark Earley on saxophones and Doug Woolverton on trumpet (Earley did the horn arrangements), with Theresa Davis, Dianne Madison and Diana Simon adding backing vocals. Together they produce some strong idiomatic backing modeled after the classic Stax and Hi recordings that provides a solid foundation for Price and Clay.

Otis Clay is a remarkable singer although one might detect slight aging in his voice, but it is not reflected in the character or phrasing here. Price's urgent style complements Clay so they come off quite well, like a modern Sam and Dave or Bobby and James Purify.

The album kicks off on a strong note with the driving "Somebody's Changing My Baby's Sweet Mind," with the two taking things down on the ballad "I'm Afraid of Losing You." Clay did the Spinners classic "'Love Don't Love Nobody)" on his "Live in Japan" recording, and the two interpret it in a manner that captures a bit of the Philly Soul feel of the Spinners original.

"Going to the Shack" captures the classic Stax sound while the two reprise a Joe Tex ballad "I'll Never Do You Wrong." The funk of "Broadway Walk," with a choice Robillard solo, is followed with the country soul feel of "Book of Memories." This disc closes with

a ripping rendition of Sam and Dave's "You Got Me Hummin'," that closes wonderful deep soul collaboration. It took three decades but finally Price and Clay got it done on "This Time For Real."

*Ron Weinstock*



## SIMON PHILLIPS

**Protocol III**  
PHANTOM RECORDINGS

Present at Jeff Beck's first ventures in fusion music, drummer Simon Phillips here carries on with the same, decidedly melodic slant evident on Beck's work in the genre. "Heads" and tempos on these eight tracks are distinct and varied; headliner soloist guitarist Andy Timmons providing further definition via his tonal and voicing shifts.

The leader offers himself his share of up-front moments while providing his predictable drive and power to this classic four-piece fusion lineup. Keyboardist Steve Weingart and bassist Ernest Tibbs fill things out. Standout tracks include the majestic "Imaginary Ways," the searing rocker "Outlaw" and the breakneck tempoed "Undercover."

*Duane Verh*



## BILL TOMS & HARD RAIN

**Deep In The Shadows**  
TERRAPLANE

Pittsburgh singer/songwriter/guitarist Bill Toms is back with his latest effort (not sure what number at this point, I know this is the third one I've reviewed in the Jazz & Blues Report). Eclectic is always the key adjective for Toms, but "Deep In The Shadows" is

leaning towards blues and R&B with a touch of gospel added in.

It runs the gauntlet from the boogie woogie of "The Air Feels Like Rain (Paris, 1943)" to the melancholy "Man Who Won The War." It isn't all war topics, as the tune I find most interesting is the soulful opener "I Got No Use (For What You're Selling Me)," which is somewhat reminiscent of the Miracles' 1968 hit "Special Occasion." "Sudden" Steve Binsberger's piano gives "Times Ain't Nothing Like They Use To Be" its boogie woogie and Phil Brontz throws some mean sax into "Darkest Side Of Town" as Bernie Herr's drums levels the foundation throughout.

Another good effort by Bill Toms, who is starting to pick up a following in Europe due to his frequent dates in Italy. Now I guess I'll have to find another word to use instead of eclectic before Tom's next release shows up

*Peanuts*

## BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

Will be returning - Mark has been busy with festivals, as you can see by his review of his New Orleans JazzFest experience in this issue on pages 9 through 12.

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