

now in our 41st year
November / December 2015
Issue 363

jazz
& **blues** report



2016
NEA
JAZZ MASTERS



jazz & blues report

Editor & Founder
Bill Wahl

Layout & Design Bill Wahl

Operations Jim Martin
Pilar Martin

Contributors

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

RIP John Hunt, Chris Colombi,
Mark A. Cole

Check out our constantly updated website. All of our issues from our first PDFs in September 2003 and on are posted, as well as many special issues with festival reviews, Blues Cruise and Gift Guides. Now you can search for CD Reviews by artists, titles, record labels, keyword or JBR Writers. 15 years of reviews are up from our archives and we will be adding more, especially from our early years back to 1974.

Comments...billwahl@jazz-blues.com
Web www.jazz-blues.com

Copyright © 2015 Jazz & Blues Report

No portion of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. All rights Reserved.

Founded in Buffalo New York in March of 1974; began our Cleveland edition in April of 1978. Now based in San Diego, this global e-zine edition is posted online bimonthly at www.jazz-blues.com

jazz & blues report

www.jazz-blues.com



"Buffalonious"

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

2016 NEA JAZZ MASTERS



Top, left to right: Archie Shepp (photo by Monette Berthommier), Pharoah Sanders (photo by Quentin Leboucher) Bottom: Gary Burton (photo by Bill Gallery), Wendy Oxenhorn (photo by Klaus Lucka).

Recipients of Nation's Highest Award in Jazz Announced

**2016 NEA Jazz Masters Will Be Honored at Free Concert
in Collaboration with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing
Arts in Washington, DC, on April 4, 2016**

**Nominations for 2017 NEA Jazz Masters
Open until December 31, 2015**

Washington, DC—The National Endowment for the Arts will honor four jazz leaders – three musicians and an advocate – with the 2016 NEA Jazz Masters award for their significant accomplishments in the field. This year's honorees range from fiery saxophonists who cut their teeth with the legendary John Coltrane, to a vibraphonist who reshaped the direction of jazz by introducing rock elements, to one who has dedicated her life to assisting jazz musicians in need.

The NEA Jazz Masters award is the highest honor that our nation bestows on a jazz musician and includes a cash award of \$25,000 and an award ceremony and celebratory concert, among other activities. As part of the National Endowment for the Arts' 50th anniversary events, the annual NEA Jazz Masters celebration will take place in April 2016 in the nation's capital, in collaboration with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The 2016 NEA Jazz Masters are (in alphabetical order):

• **Gary Burton—Vibraphonist, Bandleader, Educator**

Burton's four-mallet technique on the vibraphone gave the instrument a new musical vocabulary in jazz and a fuller, more piano-like sound than the traditional two-mallet approach. He was one of the progenitors of jazz fusion in the late 1960s, and had a decades-long educational career at Berklee College of Music.

• **Wendy Oxenhorn*—Musician's Advocate**

Oxenhorn is the executive director and vice chairman of the Jazz Foundation of America, an organization headquartered in New York, New York, committed to "providing jazz and blues musicians with financial, medical, housing, and legal assistance as well as performance opportunities, with a special focus on the elderly and veterans who have paid their dues and find themselves in crisis due to illness, age, and/or circumstance."

• **Pharoah Sanders—Saxophonist, Composer**

Sanders is a Grammy Award-winning jazz saxophonist who has shown a remarkable facility performing in a variety of styles, from free to mainstream, displaying what has been called "hard-edged lyricism." Emerging from John Coltrane's groups of the mid-1960s, Sanders is known for his distinctive sound marked by overblowing, harmonic, and multiphonic techniques.

• **Archie Shepp—Saxophonist, Composer, Educator**

Shepp is best known for his Afrocentric music of the late 1960s, a unique style of free-form avant-garde jazz blended with African rhythms, and his collaborations with John Coltrane, Horace Parlan, Cecil Taylor, and the New York Contemporary Five ensemble. His long career as an educator has focused on ethnomusicology, looking at the history of African-American music from its origins in Africa to its current state.

* Wendy Oxenhorn is the recipient of the 2016 A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy, which is bestowed upon an individual who has contributed significantly to the appreciation, knowledge, and advancement of the art form of jazz.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, "As we celebrate the National Endowment for the Arts' 50th anniversary this year, it is especially important to honor the musicians and advocates whose efforts have helped to shape and expand our cultural heritage. Through their talent, creativity, passion, and curiosity, these four individuals have made invaluable contributions to jazz and I look forward to celebrating them in Washington, DC, next year in collaboration with the Kennedy Center."

A free concert honoring the 2016 NEA Jazz Masters will be presented at 8:00pm on Monday, April 4, 2016, at the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall and also available

in a live video stream at arts.gov, Kennedy-Center.org, and NPR.org/Music. In addition, as a way of expanding opportunities for the public to engage with the artists and their music, the celebration will include other activities April 2-5, such as moderated panel discussions and listening parties at NPR headquarters in Washington, DC, and educational opportunities for local DC students, which will feature some of the 2016 NEA Jazz Masters. More details on these events, including how to obtain tickets for the April 4 concert, will be announced in early 2016.

"We are honored to host the 2016 NEA Jazz Masters ceremony and to welcome four mainstays of the jazz world to the nation's center for the performing arts. Washington has a unique place in the history and evolution of jazz, having been the home of legends including Duke Ellington, Frank Wes, and our very own Dr. Billy Taylor. Jazz also has an exciting place in the Kennedy Center's programming with the leadership of our extraordinary Artistic Director for Jazz, Jason Moran," said Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter. "This celebration brings us even closer to the jazz community, and we are elated to be a part of such an important recognition of outstanding artistry and inspiring advocacy for a true American art form."

NEA Jazz Master awards are bestowed on living individuals on the basis of nominations from the public including the jazz community. The NEA encourages nominations of a broad range of men and women who have been significant to the field of jazz, through vocals, instrumental performance, creative leadership, and education. The NEA is currently accepting nominations for the 2017 NEA Jazz Masters (deadline: December 31, 2015). Visit arts.gov/honors/jazz for more information and to submit a nomination.

The NEA Jazz Masters

Each year since 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts has conferred the NEA Jazz Masters award to living legends in recognition of their lifetime achievements and exceptional contributions to the advancement of jazz. With this new class, the NEA has honored 140 great figures in jazz. More information about the NEA Jazz Masters and the agency's collection of free jazz content is available [here](#).

The NEA also supports the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program, an effort to document the lives and careers of NEA Jazz Masters. In addition to transcriptions of the comprehensive interviews, the website also includes audio clips with interview excerpts. This project has transcribed the oral histories of more than 90 NEA Jazz Masters.

The National Endowment for the Arts

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the

philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the agency is celebrating this milestone with events and activities through September 2016. Go to arts.gov/50th to enjoy art stories from around the nation, peruse Facts & Figures, and check out the anniversary calendar.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America's living memorial to President Kennedy, and the nation's cultural center. Under the leadership of Chairman David M. Rubenstein and President Deborah F. Rutter, the nine theaters and stages of the nation's busiest performing arts facility attract audiences and visitors totaling 3 million people annually; Center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts welcome 40 million more. Opening its doors on September 8, 1971, the Center presents the greatest performances of music, dance, and theater; supports artists in the creation of new work; and serves the nation as a leader in arts education. With its artistic affiliates, the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera, the Center's achievements as a commissioner, producer, and nurturer of developing artists have resulted in more than 300 theatrical productions, and dozens of new ballets, operas, and musical works.

Los Angeles Hosting Monk Institute International Jazz Vocals Competition and All-Star Gala Concert

By Ron Weinstock

The Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Vocals Competition, which will be held November 14–15 in Los Angeles. This year's Competition will feature the some of the world's most outstanding young jazz vocalists who will perform before a judging panel that includes Patti Austin, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Freddy Cole, Al Jarreau and Luciana Souza. The Jazz Vocals Competition Semifinals will be held on Saturday, November 14 from 12 to 5 p.m. at Schoenberg Hall on the UCLA campus. Each of the eleven semifinalists will perform for 15 minutes, accompanied by pianist Reginald Thomas, bassist Rodney Whitaker and drummer Carl Allen. Three finalists will be selected for the Competition Finals on Sunday, November 15 at 7 p.m. at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood. They will vie for scholarships and prizes totaling more than \$100,000 including a \$25,000 first place scholarship and a guaranteed recording contract with Concord Music Group.

The 11 semifinalists are: Liam Burrows, Sydney, Australia; Christie Dashiell, Greenville, North Carolina; Jazzmeia Horn, Dallas, Texas; Sirintip Phasuk, Stock-

holm, Sweden; Walter Ricci, Naples, Italy; Lena Seikaly, Falls Church, Virginia; Vuyolwethu Sotashe, Butterworth, South Africa; Veronica Swift, Charlottesville, Virginia; Katie Thiroux, Los Angeles, California; Danielle Wertz, Falls Church, Virginia; and Lucy Yeghiazaryan of New York, New York and Armenia. This writer has been privileged to have seen several of the semi-finalists perform including Vuyolwethu Sotashe, the winner of the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival's 1st Vocal Competition in 2014. Immediately after the Competition Finals, The All-Star Gala Concert on Sunday, November 15 will bring together some of the most renowned artists of our time. Legendary producer, composer, bandleader and humanitarian Quincy Jones, will receive the Institute's 2015 Herbie Hancock Humanitarian Award. Herbie Hancock, Seth MacFarlane, Andy Garcia, Jeff Goldblum and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar will host the event. Artists will include Patti Austin, George Benson, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Terri Lyne Carrington, Freddy Cole, Dave Grusin, Jimmy Heath, Paul Jackson, Jr., Al Jarreau, Hubert Laws, Gretchen Parlato, Arturo Sandoval, Wayne Shorter, Luciana Souza, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Ben Williams and others. John Beasley will serve as the evening's musical director.

The Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Competition is regarded by many as the most prestigious jazz competition. Each year, the Competition features a different instrument, and major scholarships and prizes are awarded to talented young musicians. For 28 years, the competition has launched the careers of a number of major jazz artists including saxophonist Joshua Redman; vocalists Cécile McLorin Salvant, Jane Monheit and Gretchen Parlato; pianist Marcus Roberts; bassist Ben Williams; and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire. Cécile McLorin Salvant was the winner the last time the competition focused on vocals and the other two finalists, Charenée Wade and Cyrille Aimée, have also led successful solo careers.

Proceeds from the Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Vocals Competition and All-Star Gala Concert will support the Institute's public school jazz education programs across the U.S. and around the globe. In recent years, the performances of the semifinals have been broadcast over the worldwide web, and one should check the Monk Institute's website to see if they web-cast this round this year. Tickets for the gala start at \$40 and are available at dolbytheatre.com. For more information about the competition and the Monk Institute's other programs, visit monkinstitute.org. Ron Weinstock

(In addition to the Monk Institutes press release, this writer also used Nate Chinen's New York Times story for background).

Issues, Special Issues, Back Issues and
Thousands of CD & DVD Reviews From Our Archives

jazz-blues.com



Sonny Rollins
(Photo by John Abbott)

Sonny Rollins Receives Lifetime Achievement Award At the Jazz Foundation of America's 14th Annual "A Great Night in Harlem"

New York NY - Tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins was presented with the Jazz Foundation of America's Lifetime Achievement Award on Thursday, October 22, at the Apollo Theater during the foundation's 14th Annual "A Great Night in Harlem" gala concert.

The concert segment honoring Rollins featured performances by Donald Fagen (of Steely Dan), Jimmy Heath, Jack DeJohnette, Gary Bartz, Billy Harper, Randy Brecker, Clifton Anderson, Kenny Garrett, Ravi Coltrane, Al Foster, James Carter, Wallace Roney, the Cecil Bridgewater Big Band, and more.

"What a privilege it is to have Sonny Rollins grace the stage," says Wendy Oxenhorn, Jazz Foundation of America's Executive Director. "[Musical director] Steve Jordan has gone above and beyond to make this a fitting tribute worthy of Sonny's genius in return for all the decades of the music he has given to the world. For us and the Great Legends who are coming out for Sonny, this is our humble attempt to say 'thank you.'"

For 26 years, the Jazz Foundation of America has been keeping jazz and blues alive by helping musicians who played with everyone from Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday to Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones. The organization now assists in more than 5000 cases a year nationwide -- preventing homelessness and eviction by paying rents and mortgages; providing free medical care and operations; maintaining a Musicians' Emergency Fund to address a wide range of crises.

"What a necessary, wonderful organization!" says Rollins. "I've been aware of the Jazz Foundation's work for many years now, including the assistance they've given to so many of my colleagues. I'm honored to receive this award from them and to lend them whatever support I can now and in the future."

Rollins is presently completing work on a new album in his *Road Shows* series of live performances for release by his label, Doxy Records. "Holding the Stage: Road Shows, vol. 4" will be released on April 8, 2016 under a distribution agreement with Sony Music Masterworks and its jazz imprint Okeh Records.

Blue Note Entertainment Group & Rivet Media Launch Virtual Reality Music Content Initiative

New York's Blue Note Jazz Club Outfitted to Capture Concerts via State of the Art Virtual Reality & 360-Degree Video and 3D Audio Technology

13 YouTube 360-Degree Concert Videos Available Now - Featuring The Soul Rebels with Special Guests at Blue Note

Virtual Reality/360 Mobile & Desktop Apps to Follow

New York, NY – Blue Note Entertainment Group - the organization that owns, operates, and licenses 13 music venues worldwide, including the iconic Blue Note Jazz Club brand - today announced a joint venture with Rivet Media to launch Rivet Music, a virtual reality content initiative dedicated to revolutionizing the way music events are consumed by fans.

Based out of New York's legendary Blue Note Jazz Club, Rivet Music's focus is virtual reality and 360-degree video, and 3D audio content capture, production and distribution, providing new immersive music and entertainment experiences for fans through various platforms. For its first wave of content capturing, Blue Note Entertainment Group and Rivet have outfitted Blue Note Jazz Club with multiple 360-degree camera rigs, immersive 3D and binaural audio capturing equipment, and a state of the art production suite specifically designed to accommodate live and post-production for both video and audio technologies. Blue Note is the first venue in the world to be outfitted for this purpose.

In March 2015, YouTube began supporting 360-degree video uploads. Today, Rivet launches its overall content initiative by publishing 13 unique YouTube 360-degree concert videos, adding a substantial volume of content to the limited number of existing 360-degree music-centric videos currently available on the platform.

For its YouTube 360 launch, Rivet documented a special late night performance at Blue Note Jazz Club on Friday, June 26 featuring The Soul Rebels (the celebrated eight piece brass ensemble from New Orleans that blend elements of funk, soul, rock, pop, jazz and hip hop music all within a brass framework). Uploaded videos include The Soul Rebels in unique collaborations with hip-hop legends Rakim and Slick Rick, guitarist Eric Krasno, pianist Robert Glasper, and rappers Sadat X (from Brand Nubian) and NIKO IS, respectively.

"As a nationally and internationally touring band, our mission has always been to push the boundaries creatively and artistically with respect to how our music is experienced," says Lumar LeBlanc, co-founder of The Soul Rebels. "Working with the Rivet team on creating cutting edge 360-degree virtual content reaffirms our commitment to presenting innovative and exciting ways for current and new fans to enjoy our music around the world."

These videos are available for free via **YouTube.com** as well as through YouTube's iOS and Android mobile apps, under the Rivet YouTube channel. Rivet will publish a variety of pre-recorded 360-degree concert videos over the coming weeks.

In addition to YouTube 360, Rivet will release its first iOS mobile application in Q4 2015 (with an Android version set for 2016 release). While the app will give users the ability to watch recorded and live concerts in 360 degrees on a mobile device, it will also afford users the ability to simultaneously experience this content in virtual reality with a Blue Note-branded Google Cardboard headset (a low-cost virtual reality platform developed by Google for use with a fold-out cardboard mount for a mobile phone). Initial content will feature Blue Note Jazz Club shows only, with an expansion of recurring well-curated content offerings in 2016. The app will be made available as a free download. Content pricing details will be announced in the coming months.

Rivet will also launch a desktop version of its app in 2016, built for use with the Oculus Rift headset (set for Q1 2016 release) and other VR headsets. App content will be promoted via YouTube and Facebook, where short show previews will be viewable in 360 for users.

"Digital content and streaming services - for both audio and video, recorded and live music - have transformed the music industry over the last decade," says Cory Haber, CEO of Rivet Media. "The next frontier is immersion: 360 degree and virtual reality video, along with 3D audio."

"These technologies will fundamentally alter the music consuming experience," says Tsion Bensusan, COO and co-owner of Blue Note Entertainment Group. "We see tremendous opportunity in immersive video and audio to connect the audience and artist in an entirely new and powerful way."

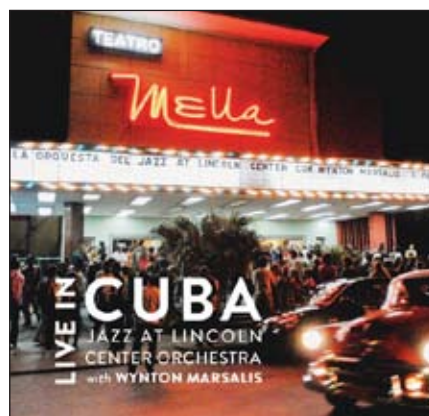
While Blue Note Jazz Club is the first venue to expand into this area, Blue Note Entertainment Group venues such as BB King Blues Club and Highline Ballroom will follow in the coming months. Additionally, the company plans to offer this expertise as a service to broader, third-party industry colleagues, such as live music festivals, as it looks for new ways to create premium content for its users.

For more information on Rivet Media, please visit: www.rivetvr.com

Blue Note Entertainment Group, founded in 1981 by Danny Bensusan, is a multi-faceted entertainment company that owns and operates New York's Blue Note Jazz Club, B.B. King Blues Club & Grill, Highline Ballroom, Subrosa, and Lucille's Grill; The Howard Theatre (Washington D.C.); and Blue Note Jazz Clubs Worldwide (Tokyo and Nagoya, Japan; Milan, Italy; and forthcoming locations in China and Hawaii). The company also programs the Regattabar Jazz Club (Cambridge, MA). Blue Note Entertainment Group presents shows outside of its club network. The annual Blue Note Jazz Festival was established in 2011 and has since grown

to become the largest jazz festival in New York City each June. Subsidiaries of Blue Note Entertainment Group include the GRAMMY®-nominated record label Half Note Records, whose catalogue includes over fifty titles recorded live at New York's Blue Note Jazz Club, as well as Blue Note Travel, Management Group and Media Group. The organization has presented many of the music industry's greatest artists over the past 35 years, including jazz legends such as Dizzy Gillespie, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Wynton Marsalis, Dave Brubeck, Ray Charles, Oscar Peterson, Sarah Vaughn, Chris Botti, and many more.

Rivet Media records, produces and distributes VR and 360 degree content. The company has the capacity to create both video and rendered content. While its first initiative is in music, as the company grows it will expand to a number of other verticals including real estate and tourism.



Jazz at Lincoln Center Launches Blue Engine Records

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis' Live In Cuba is First Release

New York, NY – Jazz at Lincoln Center, dedicated to entertaining, enriching and expanding a global community for jazz through performance, education and advocacy, recently announced the formation of Blue Engine Records, a new platform to make its vast archive of recorded concerts available to jazz audiences everywhere. The label will release new studio and live recordings as well as archival recordings from Jazz at Lincoln Center's performance history, which date back to 1987 and are part of the R. Theodore Ammon Archives and Music Library. From the institution's founding in 1987, each year's programming was conceived and developed by Managing and Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis with a vision to build a comprehensive library of iconic and wide-ranging compositions that taken together, make up a canon of music. By including each new set of songs as part of that year's concert season, the organization was able to create accurate, complete charts for each composition and often commission new arrangements. Coupled with consistently well-executed and recorded music performed by Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln

Center Orchestra, this archive has grown to include thousands of songs from hundreds of concert dates.

The launch of Blue Engine is aligned with Jazz at Lincoln Center's efforts to cultivate existing jazz fans worldwide and turn new audiences onto jazz. Blue Engine will be operated as a part of JALC's Brand and Audience Development department, which is managed by Gabrielle Armand. Blue Engine releases will offer JALC's growing global audience, now at over one million jazz fans, opportunities to engage with the institution's music where they are and how they want.

Jazz at Lincoln Center has entered into an exclusive distribution agreement with RED Distribution for physical distribution in the U.S. and global digital distribution of all Blue Engine releases. RED's 'stache media, a full-service marketing company, will provide additional support.

"Bringing our growing archive of music to people all over the world has been one of our most important institutional objectives. With Blue Engine, we're excited to make this archive available and also provide opportunities for some of the fantastic jazz musicians that continue to emerge," said Marsalis. "We will make decades of incredible performances from great musicians in the studio and in our halls available in a variety of formats. For years, audience members and fans online have asked, 'where can we get this?' Now, people who love this type of music will have something exciting, fresh and new to look forward to and to support. The recordings manifest one of our most progressive principles: whether it's Kid Ory or Sherman Irby, 'all jazz is modern.'"

"RED Distribution is thrilled to be in business with Jazz at Lincoln Center and Blue Engine Records," said RED Distribution President Bob Morelli. "The combination of these amazing recordings with RED's unique 'stache media services will lead to exciting commercial breakthroughs for both of us."

The first release from Blue Engine, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis' "Live in Cuba," was released on August 21. "Live in Cuba" captures the world-renowned big band's dazzling first and only performances in Cuba. Recorded in front of clamorous, sold-out crowds over three nights at Havana's Mella Theatre in October 2010, "Live in Cuba" finds the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra exploring the profound connections between American jazz and Afro-Cuban music, from bebop to bolero and beyond. "Live in Cuba" is a document of two nations' indelible cultural connections, of a journey into uncharted musical territory, and of some of the world's most virtuosic musicians sharing a stage.

In addition to being made commercially available, Blue Engine's releases and ancillary music (such as alternate takes), photos, video and more will also be used in JALC's efforts to continue to build and engage its global audience. JALC recently achieved a significant milestone when the audience who regularly connects to the organization via social media (or directly through

JALC's online platform at jazz.org) surpassed one million people.

Blue Engine is the latest in a series of initiatives launched in recent years that build on JALC's commitment to entertaining, enriching and expanding a global community for jazz by bringing its performances, educational programs and content beyond its physical venues. Other initiatives include its well-received webcasts, whereby hundreds of free HD audio and multi-camera live webcasts on Livestream and jazz.org; a new radio product, "Jazz Night In America" (co-produced with NPR Music and WBGO); an expanding slate of video web series published on JALC's YouTube channel, Facebook page and jazz.org; a growing library of over 600 performance videos available globally and for free through JALC's education portal, academy.jazz.org; among other offerings that provide tools, content and connections for fans, artists, music teachers, jazz scholars, and jazz advocates around the world. Additional initiatives remain under development.

For more information on Blue Engine Records, visit blueenginerecords.org.



Deluxe, Limited Edition Box Set, 'Celebrate Ornette' Pays Tribute To Visionary Giant Of American Music

(New York, NY) Sound X Records has announced the pre-sale of *Celebrate Ornette* on Pledge Music <http://www.pledgemusic.com/projects/ornettecoleman>. A deluxe, limited edition box set paying tribute to the legendary Ornette Coleman. The set includes two dozen performances from some of modern music's most iconic artists, all centered on the visionary saxophonist/composer/bandleader/thinker's incomparable legacy of music, ideas, and revolutionary spirit. *Celebrate Ornette* will be released on Sound X Records January 29, 2016.

Celebrate Ornette is curated by Coleman's son and lifelong collaborator, drummer/bandleader Denardo Coleman. Priced at \$250 plus shipping, the set will comprise four LPs, three CDs, two DVDs, extensive liner notes, exclusive photographs and the Ornette Coleman Poster from renowned Italian photographer Elena Carminati, and an actual program from the June 2015 memorial service honoring Coleman's passing earlier this year signed by Denardo Coleman. An audiophile's delight, the *Celebrate Ornette* LPs were mixed by S. Husky Hoskuld, mastered by Ted Jensen, and pressed on 180 gram vinyl at United Record Pressing in Nashville.

Celebrate Ornette: The Music of Ornette Coleman was held June 12, 2014 at Brooklyn, NY's historic Prospect Park Bandshell, with Coleman himself taking

part in a stunning exploration of his own astonishing body of work. Convened by Denardo Coleman (whose own Denardo Coleman Vibe served as the evening's core backing group), the event "wasn't connected to a milestone birthday or a record or seemingly anything else," noted the *New York Times*' Ben Ratliff, "but to the premise that it is right to fuss over people like Mr. Coleman, in his presence, while the opportunity remains." Indeed, *Celebrate Ornette* saw a remarkably deep line-up of musicians on hand to pay homage, including Bill Laswell, Branford Marsalis, Bruce Hornsby, Flea, David Murray, Geri Allen, Henry Threadgill, James Blood Ulmer, Joe Lovano, John Zorn, Laurie Anderson, Nels Cline, Patti Smith, Ravi Coltrane, Savion Glover, Sonny Rollins, Thurston Moore, and the Master Musicians of Jajouka.

Sadly, Ornette Coleman passed away on June 11, 2015, just as a live recording of *Celebrate Ornette* was being prepared for release. The memorial service, held two weeks later at Manhattan's Riverside Church, saw inspired tributes and performances by many of Coleman's greatest fans, friends, and followers, among them Pharaoh Sanders, Cecil Taylor, Henry Threadgill and Jason Moran, Jack DeJohnette and Savion Glover, David Murray, Joe Lovano, Al Macdowell, Charnett Moffett, and members of Ornette's renowned Prime Time band, including Jamaaladeen Tacuma, Charles Ellerbe, Bern Nix, Ken Wessel, Chris Rosenberg, and Dave Bryant. *The New Yorker*'s David Remnick lauded the service for "being full of (Coleman's) sense of artistic limitlessness and spacey experiment... With every album, Coleman pushed his music further beyond most of his jazz contemporaries and masters. He wrote and played in a way that seemed intuitive, but which was grounded in his deep knowledge of all the rules of classical harmony and the blues (and his roadhouse days in Texas)... There is no end to the artists who have been influenced by Ornette Coleman." The memorial proved, in Denardo Coleman's words, to be "one for the ages," prompting him to include an exclusive recording of the service on the upcoming *Celebrate Ornette* box set.

"No musician has ever roiled the jazz establishment quite as much as (Ornette) Coleman," once wrote critic Gary Giddins and while he is now cherished, as Ben Ratliff wrote in his *New York Times* obituary, as "a native avant-gardist, personifying the American independent will as much as any artist of the last century," Coleman was in fact seen as an implacable radical at the time of his emergence in the late 1950s. In eulogizing Coleman, the Riverside Church's Dr. James A. Forbes Jr. placed Ornette's mission in a social context. "It's as if there's some sinister force in the universe that keeps people from singing the songs inside of them," he said. "But, Ornette, you kept on telling us, 'Hey, don't be intimidated by the song patrol. Don't get stuck in the rut of conventionality and routine. Release the song that's inside of you.' Oh, Ornette -- you were doing God's bidding in that."

Perhaps it is Denardo Coleman who may have best elucidated his father's groundbreaking legacy. "It's not that Ornette thought out of the box," he said, speaking at the memorial. "He just didn't accept that there were any boxes."

For more information, please visit <http://www.pledgemusic.com/projects/ornettecoleman>. www.ornettecoleman.com and www.facebook.com/officialornettecoleman.

Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival Promises Presidential Weekend Jazz Fireworks

By Ron Weinstock

The Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival returns for a full weekend of jazz, February 12–15, for what the Festival calls "Real Jazz Directly From the Source." The Festival returns to the Hilton Washington DC/Rockville Hotel & Executive Meeting Center in Rockville, Maryland for three evenings and two days of concerts, workshops and interviews.

This year's festival includes such award-winning performers as Terence Blanchard; Kurt Elling; Dave Stryker, Cyrille Aimee, Terrell Stafford, Allan Harris, Jamie Davis, Pancho Sanchez, Paul Carr & Sharon Clark; and Louis Hayes and the Cannonball Legacy Band. Additionally there will be a Jazz Vocals Competition as well as a dramatic presentation "Sistas Can Sang" with Lavenia Nesmith, Janine Gilbert-Carter, Bonnie Harris, Kristine Key, and Dottie Williams. The winner of the 2014 Mid-Atlantic Vocal Competition, Vuyolwethu Sotashe, is among the semi-finalists at this year's Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals competition in Los Angeles. The 2015 competition winner Shacara Rogers will be performing at the Festival. These performers will be on the Ronnie Wells Main Stage.

There will also be nightly jam sessions with the Wes Biles Trio, blues nightly in the MAJF Juke Joint and High School Combo and Band Competitions, jazz workshops taught by some of the performers and interviews with several of the artists. Also there will be performances in the MAJF Club Stage by a number of performers.

The Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival represents a continuation of the East Coast Jazz Festival that ceased with the death of Ronnie Wells, a beloved person on the Washington DC jazz scene. It is produced by the Jazz Academy of Music (JAM), an IRS section 501(c)(3) organization led by saxophonist and educator Paul Carr. JAM engages in many jazz educational activities including summer classes, workshops and more.

For more information on the 2016 Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival, including the schedule and performers, as well as ticket and accommodations information, please visit <http://www.midatlanticjazzfestival.org>.

jazz-blues.com

2016 NYC Winter JazzFest Is A Jazz Marathon

By Ron Weinstock

The 2016 Winter Jazz Festival, what has become one of the major jazz events returns to New York City January 13 through 17, 2016. Featuring several showcase concerts and two evenings of Marathon Jazz Events at a number Greenwich Village area clubs and theatres, this Festival has become a must see jazz event in the Big Apple. It is an event that actually has jazz critics and enthusiasts mapping strategies on acts to see or venues to hunker down at and catch the performers there.

The line-up of over 100 groups this year includes drummer Dave King who is the Artist in Residence. Some of the other performers include Alicia Hall Moran w. Brandon Ross, Amir ElSaffar's Two Rivers, Ben Williams & Sound Effect, Bill Laswell, Burnt Sugar Quartet plays Ornette, Sunny and Wayne, Charenee Wade Group performs Gil Scott Heron, Christian McBride; Cyrus Chestnut's African Reflections, Dr. Lonnie Smith's Evolution, Evan Christopher's Clarinet Road w. Hilary Gardner, James Brandon Lewis, Jose James, Julian Lage Trio, Kris Bowers, Marc Cary's Indigenous People, Mark Guiliana Jazz Quartet, Matana Roberts, OBJB Quartet w. Oliver Lake, Graham Haynes, Joe Fonda, Barry Altschul, Omer Avital, Reid Anderson w. Andrew D'Angelo & Bill McHenry, Sexmob@20, and Shai Maestro Trio. I have not listed all the performers, and others will be added to this incredible roster of talent.

Additionally there will be "ECM at WJF: A Celebration of ECM Records," featuring...Avishai Cohen, Ches Smith / Craig Taborn / Mat Maneri, Chris Potter Quartet, Craig Taborn, David Torn, David Virelles' Mboko, Ethan Iverson / Mark Turner Duo, Mark Turner Quartet, Michael Formanek Large Ensemble, Ralph Alessi Quartet, Theo Bleckmann Group, Tim Berne Group and the Vijay Iyer Trio.

The Festival Kickoff Concert takes place, 8 PM, Wednesday, January 13 at (le) poisson rouge with an adventurous, innovative Dutch Band, The Ex; bassist-producer Bill Laswell; the intensely original solo composer and saxophone performer Colin Stetson, and the Minneapolis trio with drummer Dave King, Happy Apple. This will be a general admission, standing room event.

2016 NYC Winter Jazzfest & Webster Hall Present Kamasi Washington & Guests, Thursday, Jan 14, 2016 7:00 PM EST (6:00 PM Doors). Washington has been one of the most impressive talents to emerge recently. This year Kamasi released his groundbreaking solo album "The Epic" on the trend-setting record label Brainfeeder. "The Epic" is a 172-minute, triple-disc masterpiece, featuring Kamasi's ten-piece band "The Next Step" along with a full string orchestra and full choir. "The Epic" debuted #1 on several iTunes Jazz charts, including the US, Canada, Australia, Russia and UK.

Friday and Saturday January 15 and 16, the Winter JazzFest Marathon takes place with over 100 Groups at multiple venues and on Sunday, January 17, the Festival closes with Channeling Coltrane: Rova's Electric Ascension w/ Nels Cline. The Rova Saxophone Quartet will be joined by an all-star cast of New York improvisers to celebrate the DVD/BluRay release of "Channeling Coltrane," Rova will present a NY premiere performance of their "Electric Ascension" – a 21st century reimagining of John Coltrane's late master work "Ascension."

For more information on the line-up and purchasing tickets for individual shows or a Festival pass, visit <http://www.winterjazzfest.com/>.

BLUES WATCH

BY MARK SMITH

October 2015 - New Release Blues.... Well, we are heading into the last quarter of the year for new releases. So what's on tap? **Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes-** *Soultime*; **Joe Bonamassa-** *Live At Radio City Music Hall*; **Kim Simmonds & Savoy Brown-** *The Devil To Pay*; **John Mayall-** *Find a Way to Care*; **Danielle Nicole-** *Wolf Den*; **Shemekia Copeland-** *Outskirts of Love*; **Duke Robillard-** *The Acoustic Blues & Roots of Duke Robillard*; **Arlen Roth-** *Slide Guitar Summit*; **Dave Alvin & Phil Alvin-** *Lost Time*; **Canned Heat-** *Songs From the Road*; **Zac Harmon-** *Right Man Right Now*; **Guy Davis-** *Kokomo Kidd*; **Andy T/Nick Nixon Band-** *Numbers Man*; **Todd Wolfe Band-** *Long Road Back*; **Joe Louis Walker-** *Everybody Wants a Piece*; **Ron Thompson-** *Son of Boogie Woogie*; **Mitch Woods and guests-** *Jammin' On the High Cs*; **Jay Gordon and Blues Venom-** *Woodchoppers Ball*; **Heather Crosse-** *Grooving at the Crosse Roads*; **Chris O'Leary-** *Gonna Die Tryin'*; **Andy Santana & The West Coast Playboys-** *Watch Your Step*; **The Betty Fox Band-** *Slow Burn*; **Jay Jesse Johnson-** *Set the Blues On Fire*; **Mighty Mike Schermer-** *Blues in Good Hands*; **Andy Poxon-** *Must Be Crazy!*; **Taj Mahal and the Hula Blues Band-** *Live from Maui*; **James Blood Ulmer-** *Odyssey*; **Al Basile-** *B's Expression*; **MonkeyJunk-** *Moon Turn Red*; **Colin Linden-** *Rich In Love*; **Smoky Greenwell's New Orleans Blues Jam-** *Live at the Old US Mint*; **Billy the Kid and the Regulators-** *I Can't Change*; **Mick Kolassa-** *Ghosts of the Riverside Hotel*; **Bob Malone-** *Mojo Deluxe*; **Webb Wilder-** *Mississippi Moderne....Enjoy!!*

Issues, Special Issues, Back Issues and
Thousands of CD & DVD Reviews From Our Archives

jazz-blues.com

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

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

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



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

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

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.



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

His music spread across the world with songs like "Sophisticated Lady," "In a



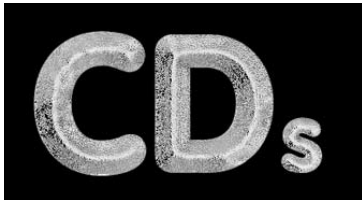
Give your kids a chance to succeed. Up their daily dose of art.

Art. Ask for More.

AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG



NAMM
Foundation



We only bring you
the Cream of the Crop!



DEB CALLAHAN
Sweet Soul
BLUE PEARL RECORDS

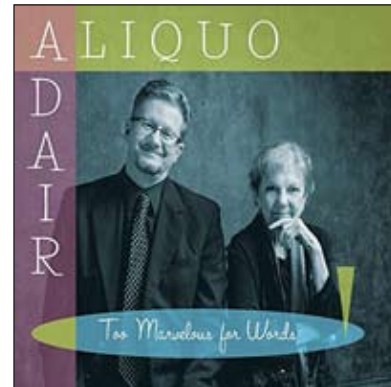
This writer had the pleasure to see the Philadelphia based singer Deb Callahan several years back and it's been way too long since I have seen her perform. In any event, this very talented vocalist has a new recording "Sweet Soul" on Blue Pearl Records. Produced by drummer Tony Braunagel, Callahan and her guitarist Allen James are joined by Braunagel, bassist Reggie McBride, keyboard wizard Mike Finnigan, and harmonica player Jimmy Powers. Johnny Lee Schell engineered this as well as added slide guitar to one selection. Callahan with either Chris Arms or Allen James wrote 8 of the 13 tunes on this with covers from Candi Staton and Clarence Carter, Tom Waits, David Egan & Buddy Flett, Rice Miller and Dr. John.

While I have seen her compared to Bonnie Raitt, only one selection "Shackin' Up," with Schell's slide guitar and a funky-rock groove suggests Ms. Raitt. Her natural and soulful delivery is inline with say Tracy Nelson, able to fill a room, yet never sounding harsh or mannered. The Staton-Carter "Sweet Feeling" is a terrific southern soul vocal that sounds like it could have been recorded in Muscle Shoals, and "Born to Love You," an original by Deb and Arms, is a similar strong deep soul performance. "Seven States Away" is a rocking shuffle by Deb and James as she sings about having to drive home to Philadelphia for sweet baby and being so many states away. James' lead jazzy guitar and Finnigan's greasy organ supports her honey-drenched heart-felt vocals.

Certainly having this terrific band helps make her cover of Waits' "Way Down in the Hole," with Powers on harmonica. The band's dynamics in backing her, Braunagel's touch and groove and Callahan's nuanced

singing contributes to the delivery of the gospel lyric. Then there is her handling the Egan-Flett "You Don't Know Your Mind," with James contributing nifty guitar (and he is such a refreshing change from so many guitar bangers out there). "Crazy About You Baby," credited to Sonny Boy Williamson, is probably best known from Little Walter's recording. Ike and Tina did a marvelous rendition on the "Outta Season" album, and that is the source for her treatment here and her rendition (along with James' spicy guitar) is first-rate.

"Sweet Soul" is a marvelous recording with some excellent material (both new and covers of lesser known numbers), terrific production and playing, and Deb Callahan's superb singing. Let folks compare her to Bonnie and Tracy. After listening to her, folks will be comparing other singers to her. **Ron Weinstock**



ALIQUO/ADAIR
Too Marvelous For Words
ADAIR MUSIC GROUP

I recently had the pleasure to write about saxophonist Don Aliquo with respect to his fine work with a quintet co-led with trumpeter Clay Jenkins. The Nashville based saxophonist has a new release with Nashville pianist Beegie Adair and her trio (bassist Roger Spencer and drummer Chris Brown) titled "Too Marvelous For Words" (Adair Music Group). On this collection of standards they were trying to generate "a vintage, mid-fifties, Bebop feel ...," to quote Ms. Adair, and the result is splendid.

There is some exceptional music here as this quartet delves into several classics from the American Songbook, along with three compositions from Billy Strayhorn as well as a Thelonious Monk standard. Opening with Strayhorn's "Johnny Come Lately," Aliquo displays a dry tone and cool sound on his tenor that might be likened to the dry martini alto of the late Paul Desmond, and is very much in the manner of the likes of Zoot Sims and Stan Getz. He spins his marvelous solo as the trio provides a swinging foundation (with Brown being nifty with the brushes) before Adair takes a solo displaying her touch and crisp playing, and then the two trade fours with Brown to ride this performance out.

Then the pace picks up on a spirited "This Can't Be

Love,” on which the interplay between Aliquo and Adair suggest to me some of those swinging Pablo recordings that paired Zoot Sims with Jimmy Rowles.

A lovely rendition of another Strayhorn classic “Daydream” is a showcase for Aliquo’s ballad playing, while a brief Brown solo sets the mood for a bouncy rendition of Monk’s “Bye-Ya.” “Ishafan” is the last of the Strayhorn interpretations and the restraint of the rhythm section helps contribute to its dreamy feel. It is followed by the bubbly, Latin-accented “All or Nothing At All,” and the late in the evening mood of the rendition of the Tadd Dameron-Carl Sigman ballad, “If You Could See Me Now.” Aliquo and the trio are quite vibrant on the Johnny Mercer and Richard A. Whiting penned title number.

Don Aliquo again shows himself to be a saxophonist of nuance and imagination while Beegee Adair was a revelation to these ears. Her trio is terrific and I envy the folks in Nashville who get to see these artists on a regular basis. Mike Longo in the liner notes writes about “Too Marvelous For Words,” “What a delightful album!” It is easy to agree with that assessment of this excellent recording.

Ron Weinstock



OMAR COLEMAN
Born and Raised
DELMARK RECORDS

On his initial Delmark release “Born and Raised,” singer Omar Coleman impresses with soul-infused vocals, and harp playing that perhaps evokes both the folk-funk of Bobby Rush and the soul-blues fusion of the late Junior Wells (both of whom he admits are influences). He is backed by a solid band of Pete Galanis on guitar, Neal O’Hara on keyboards, Ari Seder on bass and Marty Binder on drums and percussion with guitarists Toronzo Cannon, Mike Wheeler and David Herrero each guesting on two selections. Coleman wrote (or co-wrote) 12 of the 14 songs here.

There is a varied mix of material from the opening rocker “Tryin’ to Do Right,” where he sings about trying to do right by his lady even though he wants to do wrong, through the closing “Raspberry Wine” with its jazzy accents. His songs and performances convey a man who is both sensitive and strong as he sings that you don’t need a man like him; you need a

“Man Like Me,” (with Cannon adding some guitar fire). Coleman is a forceful, yet nuanced singer and is convincing whether delivering the soulful “Man Like Me”; the funky “Sit Down Baby” and topical title track; the wistful ballad, “I Was a Fool”; the driving “Slow Down Baby”; the shuffle “You Got a Hold On Me,” and the afore-mentioned “Raspberry Wine.” In fact, “Raspberry Wine” suggests that Coleman would be terrific as a standup blues shouter.

Besides Coleman’s persuasive vocals, his straightforward harp playing appeals with its fluidity and voice-like character. Coleman has written fresh new blues songs that are crisply played resulting in these marvelous performances. “Born and Raised” is one of the most striking recent blues recordings of 2015.

Ron Weinstock



ANNE METTE IVERSEN'S DOUBLE LIFE
So Many Roads
BJU RECORDS

Danish born bassist, composer and leader Anne Mette Iversen leads Double Life which is comprised of her own Quintet comprised of John Ellis on saxophone, Peter Dahlgren on trombone, Danny Grissett on piano and Otis Brown III on drums; and 4Corners, a string quartet comprised of Tine Rudloff on violin, Sarah McClelland on violin, Anne Soren on viola and Mats Larsson on cello.

In her brief notes, she states she wants to have the music speak for itself: “Its conception and realisation has been a long journey. Along the road I had many ideas about how to present it to you: which story to tell you, which words to describe it with and which pictures to paint in your head. In the end, I rejected them all to let the music speak for itself, and, hopefully, to leave space for it to become your own personal journey.” In line with the above, she has eschewed titles for the parts of her recording and simply refers to them as Chapters. For this recording, we have a solo bass prologue followed for four chapters and then a brief epilogue.

Iversen’s bass solo enables her to provide an underlying motif that the strings, her and Ellis first state with the strings spotlighted with Ellis’ soprano sax providing a counterpoint to them, which has the full ensemble restating the theme before Dahlgren takes lead on the remainder of the first chapter backed by the quintet with

the strings providing additional musical shading on a performance with a pastoral feel. It is illustrative of Iversen's adeptness at integrating strings into a swinging jazz performance and not simply being a sweet background.

The strings help set the transition to the second chapter that opens with very invigorating playing by Grissett accompanied by Iversen's firm bass and Brown's driving drumming before the horns enter. Ellis takes a fiery solo, which is followed by the gruffer sound of Dahlgren on trombone. If the first chapter is a pastoral stroll down a rural roadway, Chapter two takes us to a busy interstate with the strings accenting the hard bop including Brown's drum solo. After Brown's solo, the music segues into an interlude from the string quartet before the entire ensemble rides this piece out with the voicing of Dahlgren and the strings prominent.

Chapter 3 opens in a languid vein with the strings and Dahlgren up front while Brown's light touch enhances the mood. Ellis takes a lovely solo exhibiting his marvelous tone, followed by Iversen taking a solo with the strings, especially cellist Larsson, providing counterpoint, leading to a lovely solo trombone segment. The tempo rackets up with the strings adding to the heat with spirited interaction among themselves and the quintet.

This is a fascinating recording that illustrates Iversen's adroit blending of the string quintet with a jazz ensemble for varied, and captivating, recording. **Ron Weinstock**



GUY DAVIS
Kokomo Kidd
MC RECORDS

MC records has just issued Guy Davis' latest release "Kokomo Kidd," with nine originals and four covers. Davis is joined by professor Louie on piano, John Platania on slide and electric guitar, Mark Murphy on bass and cello, Gary Burke on drums and Chris James on mandolin and rhythm electric guitar. Charlie Musselwhite and Fabrizio Poggi each guest on harmonica for one track while Ben Jaffe adds tuba to the opening title track.

Davis is an appealing folk and blues performer and the songs here provide a varied palette of blues that can be seen from the jaunty opening title track, where he was the grease in the corrupt prohibition and beyond machine and the next song, "Wish I Hadn't Stayed

Away So Long," with its wistful sense about regretting his hobo's life. He adds some marvelous harmonica and banjo that adds to the flavor of the performance. "Taking Just A Little Bit of Time" has some nimble fingerpicking and a restrained, gruff, vocal.

Davis suggests Bob Dylan at times with several of his vocals including the cover of "Lay Lady Lay," but also "She Just Wants To Be Loved," about a lady who keeps going back for pain when all she wants to be loved with Professor Louie's organ and Chris James' mandolin helping the performance build in intensity. Charlie Musselwhite adds some nice harmonica to a pretty straight rendition of "Little Red Rooster," with Professor Louie adding strong piano with Davis singing capably, but Platania's slide guitar comes off as a bit over the top. Much better is the gem, "Maybe I'll Go," with an accompaniment and a vocal that evokes Mississippi John Hurt. The jaunty "Have You Ever Loved A Women" has Poggi adding his country blues styled harmonica for a lively acoustic performance. Tommy Johnson's "Cool Drink of Water" is a hauntingly beautiful recording and unfortunately Davis' gruff vocal nor the somewhat stilted rhythm suffer compared to the original. The reggae groove adds to the appeal of the closing "Wear You Love Like Heaven."

"Kokomo Kidd" features a number of gems as well as some less successful songs, but as a whole displays his maturity as a performer and his open ears and imaginative approach to his music. **Ron Weinstock**

The image shows the album cover for 'Outskirts of Love' by Shemekia Copeland. It features a black and white photograph of Shemekia Copeland singing passionately into a microphone. She is wearing a dark jacket. The text 'SHEMEKIA COPELAND' is at the top in a large, white, serif font, and 'Outskirts of Love' is below it in a similar font. To the right of the photo, there is a quote: '"Shemekia's a ball-of-fire vocalist with a voice that's part Memphis, part Chicago and all woman... devastatingly powerful. She's a great singer, period." -Chicago Sun-Times'. At the bottom left is the Alligator Records logo. At the bottom right, there is a smaller inset image of the album cover and text: 'THE NEW RELEASE ON ALLIGATOR RECORDS AVAILABLE NOW AT ALLIGATOR.COM AND OTHER FINE RETAILERS GENUINE HOUSE ROCKIN' MUSIC SINCE 1971'.



CHICK COREA & BELA FLECK

Two
CONCORD

What at first sight might seem like an unlikely pairing of talents, Chick Corea and Bela Fleck, developed into one of the most musical collaborations. Both are major talents on their instrument; Corea on piano and keyboards and Fleck on the banjo. It was Corea who recruited Fleck for an album "The Enchantment" and now Concord has just issued a double CD, "Two," taken from a variety of performances from their eight years of touring together which includes songs from that album and others.

The two perform a variety of songs from both performers' pens on the over two hours of music to be heard. There is plenty of Corea's romanticism and the strong Spanish flavor of his music mixed with Fleck's remarkable banjo playing that goes far beyond his early days in the New Grass Revival. Listening to the exuberance and exhilaration of their musical conversations starting with Corea's flamenco-infused "Senorita," one is struck by the sheer joy and fun they are having without losing the focus of what they are playing.

Listening to Fleck here, I might suggest it is not far removed from those Brazilian mandolin players who played such a significant role in 'choro' music, and certainly notable is his mix of banjo runs which slapped notes while Corea dances on the keyboard. In contrast "Waltz For Abby" is a lovely ballad Fleck wrote for his wife during which Corea's restraint and use of silence during much of this merits attention.

The pair's take on the standard Latin classic "Brazil" opens with an almost dreamy prelude hinting at the musical theme before the two pick up the tempo before Corea plays the theme with Fleck coloring it and then taking an improvisation with his banjo while Corea imaginatively comps before taking his lead for a spirited rendition. Another ballad, "The Enchantment," contrasts with its measured and sober playing. There is a lovely performance of French composer Andre Dutilleux's "Prelude En Berceuse (From Au Gré Des Ondes)" followed by the unusual twist and turns in their handling of Corea's "Children's Song No. 6," the longest performance here. While it is over 14 minutes, the inventiveness of the two sustains the listener's attention throughout becoming more spirited through

the performance.

The closing rendition of Corea's iconic "Armando's Rhumba" may be relatively brief, but ends "this recording on a strong, euphoric manner that was deservedly received with great enthusiasm. "Two" is one of several extraordinary recent recordings by Corea in a very short time and one has no doubt there will be more superb outings featuring him in the near future. Certainly this will also enhance Bela Fleck's well-deserved reputation as well.

Ron Weinstock



ANDY COHEN

Road Be Kind
EARWIG MUSIC

Andy Cohen is a remarkable performer who I am most familiar with from his blues playing, but as Earwig's Michael Frank observes, "he never ceases to impress me with encyclopedic knowledge and ability to play at a high level, Traditional blues, folk and true Americana music ..."

On two days in August and September 2014 he recorded 25 songs from which Michael Frank chose 16 for Cohen's new Earwig album, "Road Be Kind." As Cohen notes in the booklet, roughly half of the music is contemporary which was out of character from the blues and related traditional material he performs. Part of this was in tribute to some of the folks he knew like Luke Baldwin, Utah Phillips, Pegleg Sam and Bill Hinkley who have passed on.

The opening "Five and Ten Cent Blues," one of his originals, certainly evokes sixties recordings from Dylan, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Steve Goodman and others with his nimble accompaniment and natural, slightly raspy singing. The mood is carried forward in an original by the forgotten Luke Baldwin, "Seldom Seen Slim." Then there is the delightful fingerpicking rendition of Sonny Terry's "Spread the News Around," along with the delightful "Talkin' Hard Luck," taken from Chris Bouchillion's 1925 recording as well as Pegleg Jackson's version with plenty of delightful guitar as well as his mix of a rap and talking singing. One can only conjure up in one's mind an old medicine show performer, as Chief Wahoo would try to sell some elixir.

The title song was written by Scott Alarik and receives a lovely, lilting performance, while John Loudermilk's "Windy and Warm," provides a chance for

Cohen to showcase his marvelous playing, handling its complexity adroitly (Cohen notes its a level or two more complex than “Freight Train”). “Mysterious Mose,” which Cohen admits he stole from R. Crumb and His Cheap Suit Serenaders, is a delightful hoot that contrasts with his very loving treatment of Utah Phillips’ cowboy song “The Goodnight - Loving Trail.” Another outstanding blues performance is “Seaboard Train,” taken from Larry Johnson’s rendition of a song old timey artist Sam McGhee recorded as “Railroad Blues.” Cohen plays with a deft touch and invention that might have even made Johnson’s mentor, Reverend Gary Davis smile.

“Ten and Nine” is a labor song about women working in the mills, some very young. Its author is Mary Brooksbank, who spent time in prison for her labor agitation. It is followed by a lovely medley of Irish songs, “Blarney Pilgrim / Jig McCoy.” A lovely instrumental rendition of the Lennon-McCartney penned “Blackbird” provides the coda to this recording. “Road Be Kind” is a fabulous recording of a truly special talent.

Ron Weinstock



**CHARLIE HADEN/
GONZALO RUBALCABA**

**Tokyo Adagio
IMPULSE!**

When Charlie Haden had become confined to home when too ill to travel from the effects of post-polio syndrome, he started listening to tapes of his previous concerts and discovered the performances he had made with the Cuban pianist, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, at the Blue Note in Tokyo in 2005. The music was such that he wanted it released, and along with Jean-Phillippe Allard his producer from Impulse! and Universal Music France, they made the selections that appear on “Tokyo Adagio” (Impulse!) ready for release.

Haden and Rubalcaba had met in Havana in 1986 where his group played on a Havana Jazz Plaza Festival on the same night as Haden’s Liberation Music Orchestra, and Haden quickly became a major supporter of the pianist, urging Bruce Lundvall of Blue Note Records to sign him. He joined Haden, along with drummer Paul Motian at the 1989 Montreal Jazz Festival, and the music was issued as part of Haden’s “The Montreal

Tapes” series. They would collaborate in concert and on recordings a number of more times, including the six songs (sequenced by Haden) the pair performed over four nights in Tokyo that are presented here.

Rubalcaba is a marvelously gifted pianist with stunning technique and touch that goes with the keen musical intelligence he manifests throughout these duets, which display the empathy he and Haden had in these intimate and lyrical performances, opening with Martin Rojas’ lovely ballad “En La Orilla Del Mundo (The Edge of the World).” Haden’s love of movie music is displayed in the romanticism that permeates their rendition of the Johnny Mercer-David Raskin composed “My Love and I,” with Haden more prominent in the performance with the first solo (accented by the pianist’s chords) followed by more remarkable, and beautiful playing from Rubalcaba.

Ornette Coleman’s “When Will the Blues Leave” (first recorded in 1958), is taken at a bit more spirited tempo, and after Haden’s strong solo, Rubalcaba’s wonderful playing brings out the melodic delight of Coleman’s composition as he does on Haden’s own “Sandino,” whose title commemorates the Nicaraguan revolutionary leader where he is able to mix lines played at high velocity with several bars played in a more stately manner while providing a feeling of calmness, even through the most rhythmically stirring

LET'S GO

*Legendary
Rhythm & Blues
Cruise*

BLUESIN'®

The World's Only Fully Chartered Blues Cruise!
BluesCruise.com • 888-BLUESIN

passages.

After a lovely rendition of “Solamente Una Vez (You Belong To My Heart),” Agustin Lara’s bolero, “Tokyo Adagio” concludes with Rubalcaba’s lovely ballad, “Transparence,” on which Haden provides the last musical utterance with a musical figure after the pianist’s ending. Ned Sublette, in his appreciation in the liner booklet, observes the sense of calm about the music heard here and the enchanting performances here certainly are in accord with this. The booklet also proves Rubalcaba’s memories of Haden and these performances, and the recollections of Haden’s widow, Ruth Cameron-Haden who notes Haden’s love of the slow movements in classical pieces (leading to the album title), his going to Tokyo to perform despite starting to experience the effects of post-polio syndrome, and the production of this recording. Listeners should be grateful that he was insistent about having the music on “Tokyo Adagio” released after he had passed on. It is a recording full of beauty, spirit and heart that marked Charlie Haden’s remarkable career. **Ron Weinstock**



DUKE ROBILLARD **The Acoustic Blues & Roots Of** **STONY PLAIN**

Duke Robillard has been fairly prolific on recordings recently and Stony Plain has issued his latest, “The Acoustic Blues & Roots Of.” One might be tempted to call this “Duke Unplugged,” but the 18 selections cover a wide range of genres, not simply types of blues. Along with some of his regular partners in music, bassist Marty Ballou, pianist Matt McCabe and drummer Mark Teixeira, there are guest appearances including vocalists Sunny Crownover and Maria Muldaur, guitarist and vocalist Mary Flower, pianist Jay McShann, harmonica wizard Jerry Portnoy and clarinetist Billy Novick. Along with Robillard originals there are songs from Stephen Foster, Jimmie Rodgers, Big Bill Broonzy, the Delmore Brothers, Tampa Red, John Estes, Hank Williams, Robert Lockwood Jr. and others.

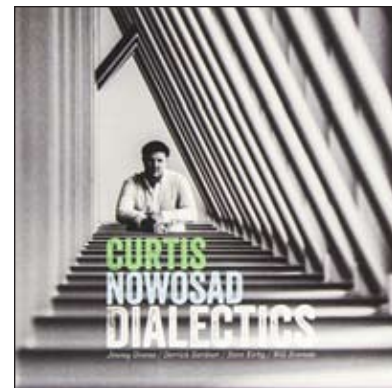
Overdubbing allows him to showcase his mandolin on the brief “Old Kentucky Home,” followed by his capturing a pre-war Chicago blues groove on Broonzy’s “Big Bill Blues.” “Left Handed,” with Portnoy contributing the Sonny Boy Williamson I harp, comes across as another Big Bill styled performance. Portnoy is also

on the cover of Sleepy John Estes’ “Someday Baby.” There is a pretty straight rendition of “I’d Rather Drink Muddy Water,” while Novick’s clarinet and Robillard’s mandolin are heard on a nice “St. Louis Blues.”

There are affable renditions of country tunes including Jimmie Rogers’ “Jimmie’s Texas Blues,” with a credible yodel”; a lovely duet with Mary Flower on the Delmore Brothers’ “Nashville Blues”; and a cover of Hank Williams’ waltz, “Let’s Turn Back The Years.” Sunny Crownover sings “Evangeline,” covering a song associated with Emmylou Harris and The Band. With Novick on clarinet, Robillard sings some Tampa Red hokum on “What Is It That Tastes Like Gravy?” Most performances are short (Under 4 minutes), with the longest being a take on Robert Lockwood’s “Take A Little Walk With Me,” that has outstanding piano from McCabe. A nice treat is a duet with Jay McShann on the moody Meade Lux Lewis composed instrumental “Profoundly Blue.”

Robillard acquits himself as a vocalist and the playing is wonderful throughout resulting in an enjoyable change of pace from Duke’s other recordings.

Ron Weinstock



CURTIS NOWOSAD **Dialectics** **CELLAR LIVE**

Winnipeg-raised drummer Curtis Nowosad (now based in New York) scores with a solid recording “Dialectics” (Cellar Door). Bandmates include tenor saxophonist Jimmy Greene (who taught at University of Manitoba for awhile), Canadian pianist Will Bonness, and Canadian-based, New York expatriates bassist Steve Kirby and trumpeter Derrick Gardner (both currently on the faculty at the University of Manitoba).

Featuring mostly Nowosad’s original compositions, the album is described as neo-Hard Bop. According to Kevin Sun in the liner notes “Neo-hard bop” retains the driving, synchronized horn line as its focal point as well as the tightly arranged format and extended soloing that we associate with stacks of 50s and 60s Blue Note records, but takes these elements even further: more hits, more vamps and interludes with bass and piano ostinato, more pyrotechnical blowing.”

Sun says many of these albums have little to offer other than a nostalgic sound. In contrast, Nowosad’s

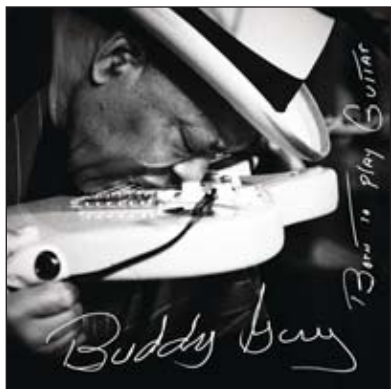
group “has the sound of a working band that’s been steadily pursuing its own mode of collective communication.”

Nowosad’s arrangement adds a fresh rhythmic take on the theme of Wayne Shorter’s “Speak No Evil,” before Gardner explodes on trumpet, followed by Greene who quickly builds the intensity of his tenor and then the leader takes a crisp solo. “Empirically Speaking,” based on the changes of a Duke Pearson composition, has pianist Bonness taking a solid solo transitioning into Greene coming off like a Clifford Jordan or Booker Ervin, followed by a couple of choruses from Kirby and then one by Gardner before trading choruses with the leader. This is a wonderfully paced performance followed by the title track with a touch of funk in the groove.

The briskly paced “159 & St. Nick” alludes to the changes of “Sweet Georgia Brown,” while “A Casual Test” is a strong blues performance with strong playing from Gardner, Greene and Bonness before the horns trade fours with Nowosad. “Reconciliation,” is a lovely ballad, while Nowosad provides an Afro-Cuban setting for the vibrant rendition of Thelonious Monk’s “Bye-Ya,” Greene plays soprano sax on “Gleaning & Dreaming,” a fascinating waltz with shifting tempos. A fast rendition of “I Remember You,” concludes “Dialectics,” with some spirited and very original, playing from all.

“Dialectics” has wonderful original compositions and fresh arrangements of some well-known songs, strong ensemble interplay along with plenty of musical invention by the quintet. Certainly those wanting straight-ahead jazz in a hard bop vein will find so much to enjoy here.

Ron Weinstock



BUDDY GUY

Born To Play Guitar

SILVERTONE/RCA RECORDS

With B.B. King’s recent passing, Buddy Guy probably has assumed the role of elder statesman of the Blues. Regardless of this, Guy has a new recording to entertain folks with “Born To Play Guitar” (Silvertone/RCA Records) that has something for everybody in terms of material and performance style.

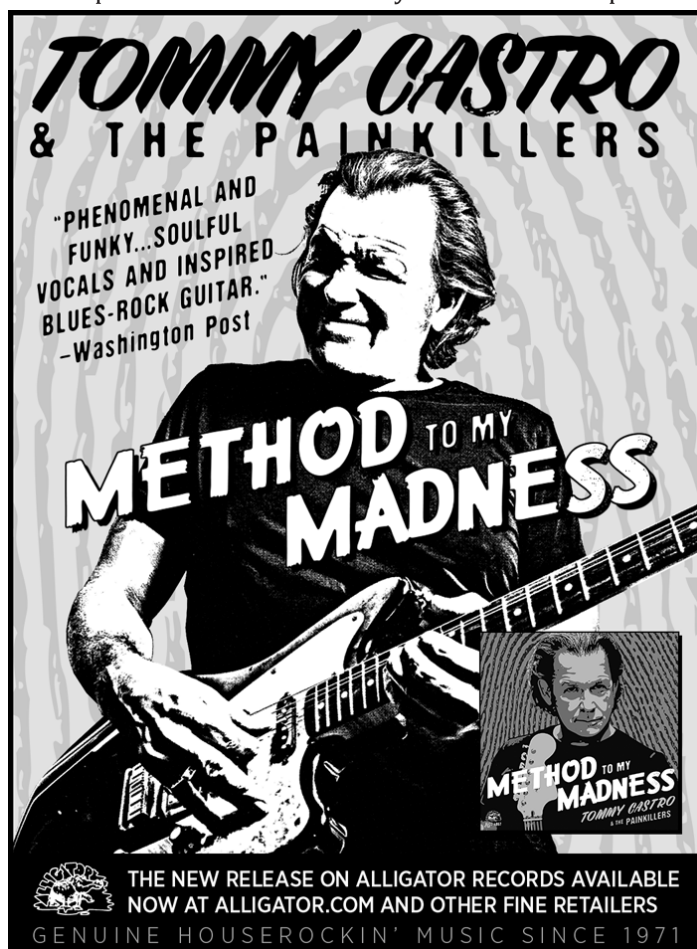
In addition to Guy and his band, he also has guest appearances from Kim Wilson, Billy Gibbons, Van Morrison and Joss Stone and like his recent recordings it

is produced by Tom Hambridge.

The opening title track is a semi-autobiographical number as he sings that he was born to play guitar and that he has a reputation that everybody knows his name, and has blues running through his veins... that opens with spare backing and which is generally played with restraint (compared to some of Guy’s efforts). “Wear You Out,” with Billy Gibbons adding his raspy singing, is more in a blues-rock vein and less satisfying to these ears. A rendition of the Little Walter recording “Too Late” has a nice vocal, rollicking shuffle piano and tough harmonica from Wilson, although I find the next track, “Whiskey Bear & Wine” less enjoyable because of the hard rock flavor of the rhythm (especially the bass).

Joss Stone joins for a duet on the Dinah Washington-Brook Benton hit, “(Baby) You Got What It Takes,” and with Buddy throwing in some chords and single note runs, the two trade the verses in an energetic manner. The interesting topical blues “Crazy World” makes use of vocal and instrumental effects as he sings about the selling water and someday they will sell the air we breathe, while “Back Up Mama” is a variation on the back door man theme as he has a backup mama if mama number one is not around.

Van Morrison joins guy for “Flesh & Bone,” a song occasioned by the passing of B.B. King as Morrison sings it ain’t over when one dies, and when one goes, one’s spirit lives on while Buddy remembers his parents



and still with him even though long gone and this life is more than flesh and bones. "Come Back Muddy" finds Buddy unplugged and singing that he wishes Muddy would come back, that Buddy would love to hear his voice and let us make us some of that old nasty noise on a marvelous heartfelt performance to close this recording.

There is something for a whole spectrum of blues fans on this. Those whose tastes lean to rock certainly will enjoy this like Buddy's other recent recordings, while even to those with more traditional blues tastes should enjoy a good portion of "Born To Play Guitar." In any event, Buddy Guy continues to follow his own m use.

Ron Weinstock



JOHN SCOFIELD

Past Present
IMPULSE

Mr. Scofield's long-established partnership with tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano resumes here in a most tuneful manner, accompanied by their drummer from previous days, Bill Stewart, and bassist Larry Grenadier. The guitarist's tasty and varied "heads" provide the motivation for inventive, swinging work by both front men; Mr. Lovano's fleet, angular bias always remains in touch and the leader's bluesy groundings inevitably show up.

That latter tendency appears in full force on the 5/4 leadoff track, "Slinky" and later on the sassy funk piece "Get Proud". Standing out amongst the ballad work here is "Season Creep". Great stuff. *Duane Verh*

COLIN LINDEN

Rich In Love
STONY PLAIN

Blues has always been a foundation for the music of Colin Linden, although his music has evolved to encompass rock, country and other roots music. Now based in Nashville (and he is even the musical director for the TV show Nashville), he had spun together a new roots recording full of original songs and given some marvelous performances. Linden wrote all 12 songs, although five songs were written with the collaboration with, amongst others, Janice Powers, Tom Hambridge and Gary Nicholson.

Linden and his various guitars, mandolins and

ukuleles are joined by his fellow members of The Rotting Matadors, bassist John Dymond and drummer Gary Craig. Charlie Musselwhite adds harp to several selections, Reese Wynans adds piano/organ to a number of songs and Amy Helm contributes harmonies to several songs as well.

This is a terrific country-roots group that play some really strong songs such as the opening "Knob & Tube," with his clever use of electrical terms to describe a relationship ("the current runs from me to you like knob & tube"). Mix in his grainy, genuine singing and adept musicianship and one has a fine performance. He also understands the value of restraint as on the next track "I Need Water," with Tim Lauer adding atmosphere on the organ as Linden sings he needs water to fill these tears as he deals with his heartbreak.

"Delia Come For Me" is a fine ballad which opens with just acoustic guitar as he sings of being framed because he was the first man they found and put someone away and bury in the ground, and he adds some electric guitar fills as Dymond and Craig provide sympathetic support. Musselwhite and Wynans are present on "The Hurt," a bluesy number with Musselwhite playing some very strong accompaniment followed by a lovely and gentle "Everybody Ought to Be Loved."

The title track opens in a somber, austere manner as Linden sings about how his baby used to cry while he was sleeping, " with Musselwhite's embellishments adding to the mood generated by the vocal and guitar. His way with words and the music might be likened to The Band in his blending of various musical threads and his adroit way with words like on the plaintive "And Then You Begin," or the honky tonk flavor of "Luck of Fool," with some nice use of tremolo.

Linden's songs are sung with wit, warmth and thoughtfulness, superbly played although he and his band eschew empty flash and mirrors, resulting is one terrific recording that will appeal to a very wide audience.

Ron Weinstock



Issues, Special Issues,
Back Issues and
Thousands of
CD & DVD Reviews
& More Cool Stuff In The Works!

jazz-blues.com



COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas! CONCORD JAZZ

A new album under the name of the Count Basie Orchestra, "A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas!" (Concord Jazz) will certainly enliven jazz listening this holiday season. The current Count Basie Orchestra is led by trumpeter Scotty Barnhart who first joined the Orchestra in 1993, some nine years after Basie's death, and became its director in 2013.

It was Barnhart who conceived the idea of focusing on Christmas music. When asked how he and the orchestra (which is celebrating its 80th year) were able to channel the essence of Basie into the repertoire, Barnhart explains, "We have 80 years of history on our side." In addition to his musical direction to play the music in the Basie style (in the vein of Basie's latter years), he was able to get arrangements from former Basie arrangers Sam Nestico and Frank Foster along with arrangements from Gordon Goodwin, trumpeter Kris Johnson and Barnhart. Additionally there are guest appearances from Johnny Mathis, Ledisi, Ellis Marsalis and Plas Johnson. The album was produced by former Basie drummer Gregg Field.

Barnhart takes pride in his study of Basie's music and as a member of the Orchestra is able to convey the signature New Testament Basie sound (to distinguish it from the original Basie band that came out of Kansas City, whose sound was quite looser (and not to mention the Count still displayed his stride and blues chops much more than later) and arguably had the greatest rhythm section of Big Band History. Those familiar with "The Atomic Basie" or the two Franks Band (Foster and Wess) or the bands of the 70s until his death will feel completely at home with Barnhart's realization of that style. Much of the credit goes to the rhythm section of pianist Llew Matthews, drummer Clayton Cameron, bassist Marcus McClaurine, and guitarist Will Matthews. Ellis Marsalis spells Llew Matthews on a couple selections.

Sam Nestico's arrangement of "Jingle Bells," gets the CD rolling and is a solid modern swinging performance with some trumpet fireworks from Bruce Harris. Ellis Marsalis and the rhythm section give a Basie feel while opening "Let It Snow." Marsalis evokes Basie rather than imitates him before the horns join in on Kris

Johnson's arrangement (Johnson takes flight on trumpet here with his glides and slurs). Barnhart arranged the jaunty "It's the Holiday Season," which features Johnny Mathis' honeyed voice vocals, showing his vocals have lost little in terms of warmth or his ability to deliver a lyric. Another Nestico arrangement, "Good "Swing" Wenceslas," has the rhythm section engendering a strong Basie feel before the horns join in.

Goodwin provides a wonderful arrangement supporting Ledisi's vocal on the Mel Torme classic "The Christmas Song," followed by a swinging Barnhart arrangement on "Little Drummer Boy," with a nice muted trumpet solo (from Endre Rice ?) and Llew Matthews with a crisp piano brake. Carmen Bradford, another Basie alumni, sings "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," employing Frank Foster's arrangement. "I'll Be Home For Christmas" is a feature for Ellis Marsalis and tenor saxophonist Plas Johnson, on which Marsalis closes the performance and the album with Basie's signature "plink-plink-plink" piano ending to the aptly titled "A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas!"

Ron Weinstock



LAZER LLOYD

Lazer Lloyd
LOTS OF LOVE RECORDS

To quote an old Monty Python riff "and now for something completely different." If music is universal, then it shouldn't be a surprise that there is blues-rock in Israel. And that's where guitarist Lazer Lloyd comes in.

The American guitarist moved to Israel twenty years ago, found his niche and is raising a family, being a big Gefilte fish in a small pond.

His self-titled disc is his third release and has a good mix of rock and blues. All tunes are originals with the exception of Otis Redding's (Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay. Sad to say, it is very pedestrian compared to the original and I wish Lloyd had picked something else to cover. The originals come out must better with "Rockin' In The Holy Land" being the pick of the litter. A strong rocker, drummer Elimelech Grundman drives it for all the song is worth. While "Never Give Up" is smooth blues, "Moroccan Woman" is pining over a woman, which like music, translates into any language.

"Time To Love" slows the pace and goes over a

silky six minutes. Moshe Davidson throws a nice little bass riff into “Suffering” as “Love Yourself is another solid rocker in the project. Good stuff. I’ll go as far as adding that

Lazer Lloyd is as substantial as anything coming out of Chicago or Memphis this week. Shalom. *Peanuts*



EAST WEST QUINTET **Anthem** **SELF-RELEASED**

Harmonically bold horn charts, multiple sonic layers and a feel frequently more akin to symphonic prog-rock than jazz are the key features of this distinctive unit. The eight tracks present read like a suite, connected by a melodic narrative of austere, predominantly minor-keyed themes. Lead-ins come primarily from principal composer, keyboardist Mike Cassedy and guitarist Simon Kafka. The horn section, saxophonist Dylan Heaney and trumpeter Phil Rodriguez are the key soloists.

The most lingering aspect of this compelling set remains the elegant character of the charts, which evoke the work of longtime Gary Burton collaborator, Michael Gibbs. *Anthem* is a decidedly fresh and unexpected offering. *Duane Verh*



SMOKY GREENWELL BAND **Live at the Old U.S. Mint** **GREENWELL RECORDS**

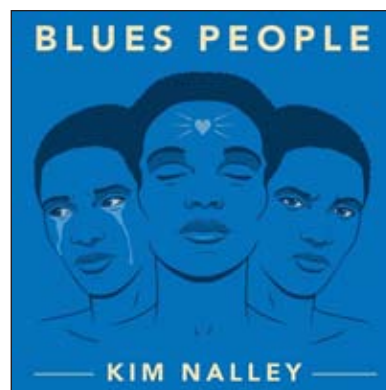
Subtitled on its cover, “Smoky Greenwell’s New Orleans Blues Jam,” the Smoky Greenwell Band (led by the New Orleans harmonica player, saxophonist and vocalist) has issued a CD on Greenwell Records, “Live at the Old U.S. Mint.”

Greenwell is heard with his band of Pete Bradish on drums and vocals, David Hyde on bass guitar and

Jack Kolb on drums with guest appearances by Mark Pentone on guitar and Bruce ‘Sunpie’ Barnes on accordion and vocals.

There is nothing fancy about this recording of blues with an occasional zydeco touch. The Smoky Greenwell Band is a tight band that plays Louisiana Swamp Blues and Chicago blues, except for the tracks with Sunpie Barnes that have a zydeco tenor. Greenwell impresses as a harmonica player throughout (the opening “Smoke Alarm” is an instrumental shuffle showcasing his tone and driving attack) and a capable saxophonist (as on “Peter Gunn”). Some songs have intriguing lyrics like “My Own Blues Club,” where he sings about owning a club on Frenchman Street and the difficulties, especially after Katrina that made him sell it. Set to a slow Excello type swamp blues groove, it has an earnest, if bland vocal.

While the back cover does not credit Mark Pentone as a vocalist, he capably sings on “Jodie,” a new contribution to the “Jody” group of songs. “Love’s Gone” has Greenwell on sax behind Sunpie Barnes on a nice rocking zydeco number while he plays both sax and harmonica on the boogie woogie-laced “Leroy’s Shuffle.” Barnes is perhaps the most appealing singer on this. The album closes with a John Lee Hooker inspired instrumental “Back to the Boogie.” It is a solid performance that is representative of an enjoyable recording worth checking out. *Ron Weinstock*



KIM NALLEY **Blues People**

KIM NALLEY JAZZ SINGER PRODUCTIONS

Back in 2011 Aidin Vaziri wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle, “Kim Nalley is a critically lauded San Francisco jazz and blues singer who has performed Gershwin with the San Francisco Symphony and produced sensational musical tributes to Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday.” Called a San Francisco Institution, she has produced and just released an auspicious recording “Blues People” (Kim Nalley Jazz Singer Productions).

The liner notes by Waldo E. Martin, Jr., describe the recording as “a deep musical mediation on an insightful interpretation of African American history and culture advanced over fifty years ago by Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) in his seminal “Blues People: Negro Music in White America.” In that influential book, Baraka argued

that African Americans, as best revealed in their various highly original and widely influential musical forms, were fundamentally a Blues People. By that, Baraka meant the blues were in fact a fully realized culture, or way of life, that encompasses the totality of their historical and day-to-day experiences."

In this recording, Kim Nalley explores a variety of African-American songs from blues, ballads and sacred, to jazz and even a Bob Dylan cover. Her vocals are backed by the keyboards of Tammy Hall, the guitar of Greg Skaff, the bass of Michael Zisman and the drums of Kent Bryson with Bryan Dyer adding backing vocals. Nalley impresses as a singer, projecting a lot of personality as well. She certainly can belt out a vocal, but also deliver a lyric as a whisper, all of which is displayed on the opening rendition of "Summertime," with Hall's simple backing of her singing here.

Her rumination on the killing of Trayvon Martin" is delivered in her powerful original "Big Hooded Black Man," with its stark backing from Skaff and Bryson. There is another topical blues, "Ferguson Blues," another moving song about injustice and the anger about a raw deal. There are two renditions of the Mahalia Jackson gospel classic "Trouble in This World," one with just piano accompaniment, and the other with Hall on organ with the ensemble. Vocally she employs her lower register on the piano rendition while her upper register is more in evidence on the second version.

A medley of songs associated with Eddie Harris and Les McCann, "Listen Here/ Cold Duck/ Compared To What?" has a terrific vocal with some nice scatting with the band cooking behind her. Guitarist Skaff takes a jazzy solo before she scats and then Hall takes a funky solo that suggests McCann's driving, blues-inflected improvisations. This medley is followed by a gospel-tinged, soulful rendition of the theme from "The Jeffersons" television show "Movin' On Up," and in turn this is followed by a lively take on the Stix Hooper- Will Jennings blues, made famous by B.B. King, "Make Your Move Too Soon," with her horn like phrasing standing out.

Nalley's rendition of Bessie Smith's "Sugar in My Bowl," has considerable appeal with the restraint she displays as she sings the lyrics. Her rendition of "Big Long Sliding Thing," associated with Dinah Washington, is not completely successful as she is perhaps a bit too dramatic in delivering the clever double-entendre of the lyrics, although the backing is terrific. Her theatrical approach works better on "If I Can't Sell It," then she certainly won't give it away. She introduces the song telling a bit about herself before a delightful vocal full of wit and whimsy with a dash of playful naughtiness. Ruth

Brown would be delighted with her interpretation.

Nalley honors the memory of Etta James with her personal rendition of "Sunday Kind of Love" that brings freshness to the lyrics. She takes us to church on "Amazing Grace" backed solely by organ, before closing with a moving rendition of Dylan's "I Shall Be Released," with Hall's gospel-inflected piano with bass and drums.

Kim Nalley invests in the songs on "Blue People" with vitality and conviction on the overall impressive performances heard here.

Ron Weinstock



THE KNICKERBOCKER ALL-STARS

Go Back Home To The Blues

JP CADILLAC RECORDS

A most pleasant surprise is a new release by The Knickerbocker All-Stars, "Go Back Home To The Blues" (JP Cadillac Records). The release is a follow-up to last year's "Open Mic At The Knick," and like the earlier album celebrates the Westerly, Rhode Island venue, the Knickerbocker Cafe. This is where, in the 1960s, musicians like Greg Piccolo, Johnny Nicholas, Fran Christina and others played in various groups which led to the emergence of Roomful of Blues by Duke Robillard and Al Basile and other bands.

Producer Jack Gauthier and Musical Director Copley have put together a superb band of Mark Teixeira, drums; Brad Hallen, standup/electric bass; Al Copley, piano; Monster Mike Welch, guitar; Doug James, baritone/tenor sax; Sax Gordon Beadle, tenor sax; Rich Lataille, alto/tenor sax; Doc Chanonhouse, trumpet and Carl Querfurth, trombone. Vocals are shared by Sugar Ray Norcia, Brian Templeton and Willie J Laws with Al Basile playing cornet and singing on one selection.

The musical focus is on the urban blues of the fifties and sixties with renditions of songs associated with Bobby Bland, Roy Brown, Guitar Slim, Chuck Willis and Larry Davis with Basile contributing several idiomatic originals as well. What can one say as the All-Stars are terrific, with Welch again showing that he has become one of today's top string benders. He channels Freddie King in backing Laws' soaring vocal on "You Know That You Love Me." Norcia opens the album with Bobby Bland's classic "36-22-36," with his terrific vocal perhaps more akin to Junior Parker than Bland. There is superb playing, including a booting tenor sax solo

PAGE TWENTY ONE

**LOOK FOR THE 2015 UPDATE TO OUR
GIANT GIFT GUIDE TO BE POSTED ON
OUR WEBSITE APPROX. DECEMBER 1**

www.jazz-blues.com

backing Templeton on a jumping cover of Roy Brown's "Cadillac Boogie." Copley pounds on the piano on the Basile original "Brand New Fool" behind a fervent Norcia vocal, while Welch channels Guitar Slim as Laws' fervently sings Slim's "Something to Remember You By." Norcia again evokes Junior Parker on a ripping cover of Chuck Willis' "Take It Like A Man."

The rest of this album is of an equally high level. There is a late night instrumental feature for the horns "Hokin'," while Basile plays cornet and delivers an appealing vocal of his witty original, "Don't You Ever Get Tired Of Being Right?" Templeton sounds vigorous on the Basile-penned title track that has strong tenor sax and guitar solos. Copley lays down some serious boogie woogie piano and Doug James gets down in the alley on baritone sax on "Blockbuster Boogie." Then Laws preaches the blues on a driving rendition of Larry Davis' "I Tried," with more of Welch's blistering guitar. This entire recording is a joy for fans of jump and urban blues to listen to. It is another upper deck home run from the Knickerbocker All-Stars.

Ron Weinstock



LIZZ WRIGHT
Freedom & Surrender
 CONCORD RECORDS

Vocalist Lizz Wright has moved from Verve to Concord and has recently released her first album for the label titled Freedom & Surrender. Anyone not familiar with her should rectify that situation. Wright's rich, smooth alto voice is a joy all unto itself. Add in her choice of material, the arrangements, her majestic delivery and the variety of genres she travels in and out of and the result is an album that transcends all musical barriers and stereotypes. She cannot be pigeonholed. If those last three sentences sound familiar (which I doubt), it could be because I plagiarized them...from myself – from my review of her album "Dreaming Wide Awake" in 2005. Why? Well, why not – as that pretty much describes this new album as well.

Lizz is known as a jazz singer, but she covers a lot of musical territory. On this album you'll hear jazz, yes – but also R&B, blues, gospel, folk and country as well. To give an example, the album opens with the funky "Freedom," continues with a sultry ballad, "The Game," and then there's a the country flavored, bluesy

"The New Game." The program bounces from here, to there, to over here and on until coming to a close with the gospel drenched "Blessed The Brave" and the closing slow waltz ballad "Surrender." But, let's not forget about the duet she does with Gregory Porter, "Right Where You Are." Lizz co-wrote ten of the 13 songs heard here and it's obvious that her songwriting abilities are still very much on track. Although Wright is a master at re-inventing well known covers, she actually only does two covers here. The Bee Gees classic "To Love Somebody" is played at a super slow tempo for a fresh new twist, and Nick Drake's folk nugget "River Man" is hauntingly beautiful between Wright, her guest, German trumpeter Till Bronner, Pete Kuzma's organistics and the others heard on this rendition, and also at a slow tempo.

A number of different musicians are heard in different groupings throughout the set, but heard on most all the songs are Kenny Banks and Pete Kuzma, piano and Hammond B-3 organ, Dean Parks, guitar, Dan Lutz, bass and Vinnie Colaiuta, drums. Their work together is superb, and very much free from clutter. The B-3 adds some very nice touches throughout. Several others play here and there, including Larry Klein, who produced the album, co-wrote some of the songs and adds a few different instruments to some of the tracks.

While I may have given you a bit of a glimpse into Lizz Wright's new offering, there is a lot more in store than what I described. In my review of "Dreaming Wide Awake" mentioned above, I said that it played continuously in my car for three days. I can't say if that will happen with this one as my CD player in the car bit the big one, but I can say that, like that one, this one keeps getting better each time I play it. Kudos! Another excellent album from Lizz Wright.

Bill Wahl



DEB RYDER
Let It Rain
 BEJEB MUSIC/CITY HALL RECORDS

The fact that singer/songwriter Deb Ryder is joined on this, her second disc, by the likes of Tony Braunagel, Mike Finnigan, Kirk Fletcher, Albert Lee and Kim Wilson, speaks volumes to the esteem in which her talent is held by those in the know.

With horns, keys, harmonica and accordion adding spice to the guitars and drums that back her up, Ryder

works her way through 11 original tunes. While most of the tunes deal with cheating lovers, “You Won’t Be True,” “Ma Misere” and “Guilty as Sin” and dealing with a broken heart, “Can’t Go Back Again,” she also counsels perseverance in the face of adversity, “Hold Your Lamp High,” embracing religion with the hope of quick answers to her prayers, “Money Monsoon,” and the passion she will bring to a forced afternoon together, “Let It Rain.”

Many of the tracks feature a rollicking little big band sound akin to Roomful of Blues but there are a few changes ups such as the slinky, mysterious groove laid down on “Guilty As Sin,” the pulsating stomp of “Hold Your Lamp High,” the late night piano bar torch ballad, “Kiss and Dream,” and the gospel fueled call and response of “Cry Another Tear” which features both ends of her vocal range with her full throated roars on the bottom end and her piercing cries on the other. Throughout this disc, Ryder displays seasoned poise and command of her vocals whether she is singing soft and low on the ballads or brassy and loud on the higher energy numbers.

She’s three quarters Etta James, one quarter Mariah Carey and 100% solid. Get hip to the tip: pick up this disc.

Mark Smith



PITTSBURGH JAZZ ORCHESTRA

**Joyful Jazz
MCG JAZZ**

The Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra is a large ensemble (20 musicians plus two vocalists appear on this CD) which was formed in the Steel City about five years ago and is co-led by trumpet master Sean Jones and reedman Mike Tomaro. Apparently the Orchestra has been doing holiday concerts for the Pittsburgh folks for several years now, at the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG)’s 350 seat concert venue. Now they have recorded the music for the Guild’s label, MCG Jazz for a CD titled “Joyful Jazz.” It is mostly instrumental, but Freddy Cole (Nat King Cole’s brother) lends his vocals to three tracks here, while the late Maureen Budway sings on one.

The menu here consists mostly of well-known Christmas fare such as “Jingle Bells,” “Carol of the Bells,” “White Christmas,” “Do You Hear What I Hear?,” “Sleigh Ride,” “Joy To The World” and more. Then there

are some lesser-known songs, such as Freddy Cole’s vocal treatment of “Jingles, The Christmas Cat,” which he first recorded back in 1994. Then there’s “Merry Christmas John Coltrane,” penned by Mike Tomaro, which as the notes point out very well is based on the changes to “Giant Steps” with a reference to “Deck The Halls.” The arrangements on this set are all quite interesting, such as the Middle Eastern flare heard on “White Christmas (In The Sahara),” arranged by Jay Ashby. The album opens with a burning version of “Jingle Bells, featuring Sean Jones setting up the holiday mood right off the bat and the cheer of the season keeps going straight through to the closing fine version of “Joy To The World,” a second feature for Sean Jones.

This is a very well performed and arranged set of Christmas fare that should easily please those who are into big bands as well as many who are not so much. Check it out for yourself by sampling the songs Amazon.com, where you can also buy a copy, or you can visit the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild site at www.mcgjazz.org and find out more about what the organization is all about and view and/or purchase this or the other recordings in their catalogue. But as I write, the songs MCG has on its website to sample for this album are Christmas songs, but are different songs from a different recording – so unless they fixed that, use Amazon for sampling.

Bill Wahl

jazz-blues.com



ZORA YOUNG & LITTLE MIKE AND THE TORNADOES

Friday Night
ELROB RECORDS

"Friday Night," (Elrob Records), a new release by Zora Young & Little Mike and the Tornadoes, brings back memories of seeing the likes of Pinetop Perkins and Hubert Sumlin backed by Little Mike and Tornadoes at Twist & Shout in Bethesda, Maryland as well as recordings the Tornadoes made backing them. In this role, they back Zora Young, a solid Chicago blues chanteuse whose husky, smokey vocals go down like scotch on the rocks. This is blues with a kick.

Heard on this date is Little Mike Markowitz along with his long-time partners, guitarist Tony O. Melio, bassist Brad Vickers and drummer Robert Piazza along with Kim McKaba on keyboards. Several originals from Markowitz and Tony O are mixed with covers of recordings by Howlin' Wolf, Big Joe Turner, Otis Spann and Lucille Spann and Bonnie Lee.

Originals like the title track from Little Mike, as well the opening "I've Been a Fool Too Long," have added horns to add punch behind Zora's moaning vocal style. Certainly she places her stamp on Tony O's "I Love Chicago," where she belts out about singing the blues and Chicago being her home and the home of the blues backed by the Tornadoes driving accompaniment (and standout piano from McKaba). Wolf's "44 Blues" is nicely covered, but better is her soul-drenched rendition of "Chains of Blues."

On this very enjoyable recording a highpoint might be the wonderful rendition of Otis Spann-Lucille Spann's "Country Girl," with strong playing from McKaba, Little Mike and Tony O (evoking Sam Lawhorn). Riffing horns add punch along with Mike's harmonica behind a fervent cover of Bonnie Lee's "I'm Good,"

Young, Mike and Tony O sit out the closing "Spann's Boogie," which is a driving feature for pianist McKaba who is ably supported by Vickers and Piazza on a driving piano instrumental. It is a solid performance although odd for an album showcasing Zora Young's blues vocals and the fine, idiomatic playing from Little Mike and the Tornadoes. Zora Young has not exactly been recorded extensively, so a new recording by her is welcome, especially since she sounds so fine here.

Ron Weinstock



LAURIE ANTONIOLI & RICHIE BEIRACH

Varuna
ORIGIN RECORDS

I first became aware of Richie Beirach back in the seventies through his work on ECM Records, especially his solo piano album "Hubris," which is just as captivating today as it was almost 40 years ago. He's had quite an impressive catalog of recordings since that time, as is evidenced with this new collaboration with Laurie Antonioli. Although I've heard of Laurie, and no doubt heard some of her music over the years, I've never had one of her several albums to listen too. That is too bad, because she is a fantastic vocalist with a rich alto voice. She got a good break just out of college from the recently deceased singer Mark Murphy in San Francisco when he invited her to sit in with him and gave her plenty of room to perform. Then she went on to an 8-month stint with Pony Poindexter.

On this album of mostly duets with Beirach, the two display an empathy that comes from knowing each other musically for many years. In fact, six of the 13 songs were recorded in 2006 in Germany, and the remaining seven were recorded in 2012 in Berkeley, CA. Then some additional recording was done in 2015. The opening title track, the first of six originals from Laurie & Richie, sets the mood for what you will hear throughout most of the program here – Laurie's beautiful vocals backed by Beirach's sparse yet majestic acoustic piano. Beirach & Antonioli certainly know the beauty of space in music, where what is not played is as important as what is. You'll hear it often on this disc.

The mood continues into a ballad for a lost dear one, so sweetly titled "You're An Angel Now," written by Laurie and John Patitucci. "Summer Night" is the first of six nicely done fresh takes on standards, with the others including "Gentle Rain," "Haunted Heart," "Over The Rainbow," and "My Funny Valentine," which is the second part of a medley with Russian Composer Alexander Scriabin's "Prelude in E-Flat Minor" – for which the two play the melody in unison, Laurie with wordless vocalizing, then she sings the words as it segues into "Valentine."

The pair wrote three improvised songs totaling about 6-1/2 minutes for the middle of the album titled "Resolution Suite," on which she vocalizes sans words

In closing, let me just say that this is a wonderful album by two brilliant musicians. While I did not think I would enjoy a vocal/piano duet, these two certainly proved me wrong. Amazon lets you sample all 13 songs, so if your interest is piqued by all means check it out.

Bill Wahl

Bill Wahl



**CLASSIC BLUES ARTWORK
FROM THE 1920s - VOL. 13**
Blues Images

Some of you may be aware that not too long ago a collector purchased a Paramount 78 of legendary Mississippi blues performer Tommy Johnson for \$37,000. That collector, John Teftuller, already had a copy of that 78, but the one he purchased was in better condition (he did sell the other 78). While Mr. Teftuller is a collector, he is not one who purchases such rare records as trophies. Rather, he gets them mastered using careful techniques for issuance on CDs that he produces that accompany a calendar of blues advertisements and photos of blues legends that he offers on a yearly basis. Now available is "Classic Blues Artwork From the 1920s - Vol. 13," (Blues Images), which is subtitled "Special American Epic Edition."

American Epic is the name of an upcoming PBS television series and for it, a number of rare recordings of blues, country, Cajun, Hawaiian, Native American and other music were remastered employing a most remarkable and costly technology to restore the rare recordings used. This technology is employed for the twenty performances on the accompanying CD. The actual Calendar is handsomely produced with a reproduction of an advertisement or a portrait for each month of the year and the first twelve recordings correspond to a graphic for one of the months. The

remaining eight selections include some selections that are the other side of a 78 and two rare sides each by Hattie Hyde and J.D. Short. Each month also includes selected holidays and birth and death dates of important blues artists.

For example, for January there is a reproduction of Jim Jackson's "My Monday Blues," and one can read that Jackson "is the meanest moaner of the blues you've ever heard," while listening to the performance with a lyric that is a mix of "One Thin Dime Blues" and other traditional themes sung rather strongly against a somewhat rudimentary backing. A brief bio of Jackson is given at the bottom of the calendar page. There is some truly spectacular music including the great Blind Willie Johnson, "When the War Was On," with his driving accompaniment and gravelly shouting with his wife providing backing vocals. Not much is known of Charlie Kyle whose "Walking Blues" and "No Baby" was played on a twelve-string and sung in a clear and expressive manner. Included is a clear picture of Kyle and his guitar, probably taken at his sole recording session. Barbecue Bob's wonderful "Atlanta Moan" is the April recording with his picture accompanying a Columbia Records ad and his driving twelve-string playing (using a slide) and singing are top-flight.

For May, there is a portrait of the great Papa Charlie McCoy, shown holding a mandolin, who is heard on a stunning mandolin rendition of (Pinetop's) "Boogie Woogie," vocal asides and all. Also on the CD is the other side, a marvelous "Country Guy Blues," again with stunning blues mandolin playing by this remarkable musician. June's music is the sublime vocal duet by Ruth Willis and another terrific Atlanta twelve-string player, Curley Weaver on the lovely "Some Cold Rainy Day," whose melody is similar to "Sitting on Top of the World." July brings us the guitar wizardry of Blind Blake on "Wabash Rag," with his superb finger-style playing and a vocal celebrating the famed Chicago avenue. August includes the ad for one of Blind Lemon Jefferson's most celebrated recordings "Lectric Chair Blues/See That My Grave Is Kept Clean," and this writer does believe he has ever heard Jefferson's high pitched singing or deft playing captured with such clarity.

September's ad is for Jed Davenport and His Beale Street Jug Band and "Beale Street Breakdown," a spectacular, uninhibited instrumental romp with fiddle, harmonicas and driving rhythm. Not much is known about Spark Plug Smith, who it is suggested is named after cartoon character Barney Google's horse, Spark Plug. His performance, "Vampire Woman," is actually in reference to a street walking woman (vamp being 1920s slang for one who takes a man from his wife). Ma Rainey is featured for November where "Georgia Cake Walk" which was the B-side to "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," and features a talking duet set against an early jazz accompaniment. The Calendar closes with a fiery sermon "The High Cost of Sin!" by Black Billy Sunday (Rev. Dr. J. Gordon).

Also heard on the CD is another fiery sermon "Will

You Spend Eternity In Hell,” two vocals from a Memphis singer, Hattie Hyde, accompanied by the Memphis Jug Band, the afore-mentioned extra selections from Charlie Kyle, Charlie McCoy, and Blind Lemon Jefferson. The CD concludes with two phenomenal performances by J.D. Short, although they are the worst sounding recordings reproduced here as the original 78 was in terrible condition and it is the only copy of this 80 year old recording. Despite the rough, distorted sound, one can still appreciate Short’s brilliance as a guitarist and his singing. There are other reissues of his early recordings available and he was recorded as part of the blues rediscoveries in the 1960s. Placed at the end, it might be skipped by those who don’t find a bit of surface noise acceptable, but those who have listened to some reissues of Skip James and Charlie Patton with a scrambled eggs sound in the background should have little problem enjoying this terrific music.

Kudos to John Teftuller and those who were involved in the production of “Classic Blues Artwork From the 1920s - Vol. 13.” This will make a wonderful gift for the real blues lover this holiday season. This is available directly from Blue Images, which also has previous years Calendars and CDs from previous Calendars, along with posters and t-shirts for sale. You can go their website, www.bluesimages.com, to order directly. This terrific Calendar and CD is also being sold through Amazon, Alligator Records and other vendors.

Ron Weinstock



THE GARY MCFARLAND LEGACY ENSEMBLE

Circulation: The Music of Gary McFarland PLANET ARTS

As Kristian St. Clare observes, in her liner notes to “Circulation: The Music of Gary McFarland” (Planet Arts) by The Gary McFarland Legacy Ensemble, Gary McFarland died in November 1971 when only 38, and his prodigious output in his short career suggested he would have had much more to share. McFarland came to music late, going to Berklee after winning a Down-Beat scholarship in 1959. While at Berklee he wrote compositions that have been recorded by Steve Kuhn, Johnny Hodges, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Cal Tjader and the Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band.

He was a composer, arranger and vibraphonist who participated in numerous recordings as well as produced film and stage scores. Also a prolific producer, he was part owner of the SKYE record label along with Cal Tjader and Gabor Szabo. He was among the first jazz musicians to include pop and rock material in his recordings and performances, and his recording “America the Beautiful,” which combined elements of jazz, rock and orchestral writing is considered by some to be one of the seminal works of the 1960s.

Drummer Michael Benedict married McFarland’s widow Gail in 1981 (she passed away in 2007) and studied, performed and promoted McFarland’s music since meeting him. He continues, with his stepdaughter Kerry McFarland, to promote McFarland’s rich legacy, which includes leading The Gary McFarland Legacy Ensemble. Others in the Ensemble include pianist Bruce Barth, who provided the arrangements, vibes master Joe Locke, saxophonist Sharel Cassity, and bassist Mike Lawrence. Benedict, Barth and Lawrence have played together for some time providing a strong base for this music.

Barth has provided handsome small group arrangements for players here, which covers a varied musical palette. The opening “Dragonhead” is a bright, lively composition featuring Locke and Cassity (on soprano sax) at the front with intriguing twists in its structure. “Why Are You Blue” was written for Johnny Hodges and the terrific blues performance here opens with Locke stating the theme with Lawrence’s bass anchoring, then taking a brief solo as Benedict employs brushes. Cassity is on alto sax and her solo here is a marvelous example of blues playing.

Other high-points include “Sandpiper” with its modal mid-60s feel; the lovely ballad “One I Could Have Loved,” with Cassity on tenor sax; and the bouncy “Bridgehampton Strut,” with its lively tempo matched by Cassity’s snake charming soprano sax and Locke’s brisk vibes. “Blue Hodge” is another excellent blues performance, and I am sure Hodges would have been pleased by her playing here. “Notions” is an uptempo romp that Lawrence kicks off with accents from Benedict before Locke and Barth trade briskly paced choruses before Cassity takes a lengthy tenor solo followed by bass and drum solos.

A thoughtful, and solo, performance by Locke on “Last Rites For the Promised Land” ends “Circulation” on a reflective vein. It provides a lovely coda to a marvelous tribute to a neglected figure in jazz history. Hopefully this will lead to McFarland’s own recordings getting some attention but this terrific small ensemble recording stands on its own merits as well.

Ron Weinstock

Issues, Special Issues, Back Issues and
Thousands of CD & DVD Reviews

jazz-blues.com



MONKEY JUNK

Moon Turn Red
STONY PLAIN

On this, their 4th disc since forming in 2008, the three-piece Monkey Junk (Tony D on lead guitar and backing vocals, Steve Marriner on lead and backing vocals, baritone guitar, harmonica and keys and Matt Sobb on drums and backing vocals) is revealed to be more than the sum of its parts.

While the typical three piece blues line of guitar, bass and drums often results in guitar fueled variations on boogies and shuffles, the 10 cuts collected sound more like the product of a much bigger band with a broader musical palette.

With harmony vocals found on most of the tracks and a twin guitar attack the band has a complexity and depth to its sound that recalls everyone from roots

rockers Little Feat on “Show Me Yours” and “Light It Up” to any number of classic blues rockers like Foghat, Savoy Brown or Canned Heat on “Live Another Day” and “You.” Mixing things up further, the band also dips into reggae on “Love Attack”, funk on “Show Me Yours” and even power ballads on the soulful “Learn How To Love” and “Meet Me at Midnight.”

As a bonus the band wrote all the material here with the exception of David Wilcox’s “Hot Hot Papa” which features none other than Wilcox himself on both guitar and vocals.

A solid release that will add some sonic diversity to your blues diet.

Mark Smith



DUCHESS

Duchess
ANZIC RECORDS

Duchess is a New York based, all-women jazz vocal group featuring Amy Cervini, Hilary Gardner and Melissa Stylianou singing in the “close harmony” style associated with groups such as the Boswell Sisters. They have released an eponymously titled recording on Anzic Records.

The recording was produced by Oded Lev-Ari, who helmed previous Anzic releases by Cervini and Stylianou. The trio is supported by a rhythm section, led by drummer Matt Wilson with pianist Michael Cabe, and bassist Paul Sikivie. Also making their presence felt are saxophonist Jeff Lederer and guitarist Jesse Lewis.

The songs included range from a Peggy Lee number “I Love Being Here With You”, Johnny Mercer’s “P.S. I Love You,” a playful Gershwin rarity with “Blah, Blah, Blah” and a direct Boswell Sisters homage with their arrangement of “Heebie Jeebies.” The trio provides new twists on “Que Sera, Sera” and the standard “I’ll Be Seeing You.” Each gets a solo spot with “My Brooklyn Love Song” (Hilary), “A Doodlin’ Song” (Amy) and “Humming to Myself” (Melissa). While occasionally they focus on the ballad side of the material, often the performances are flirty and playful with the backing band providing solid swing and saxophonist Lederer and guitarist Lewis adding marvelous solos.

Peggy Lee’s “Love Being Here With You” opens with its bouncy perkiness and marvelous harmonies as they

LIKE JAZZ & BLUES PHOTOS?

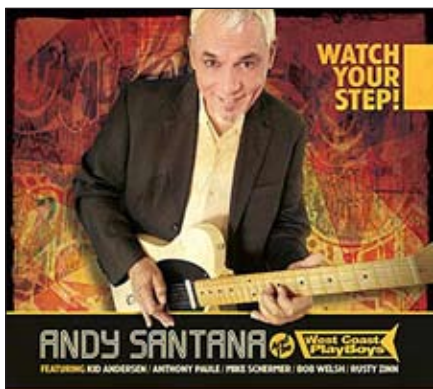


This photo of Gary Bartz captured by Ron Weinstock at the 2008 Duke Ellington Jazz Festival is just one of hundreds of Ron’s photos you can view online at www.flickr.com/photos/novaron

personalize the lyrics as they promise to swing this joint tonight before Lederer rips off a solo. They trade lead vocals and mix harmonies on “There Ain’t No Sweet Man That’s Worth the Salt of My Tears,” which sounds like an updating of a classic blues with sharp solos from Lewis and pianist Michael Cabe. Doris Day would approve of the lovely rendition of “Que Sera, Sera,” while Amy Cervini is perky with her colleagues adding to the perkiness of “A Doodlin’ Song,” with harmony backing and spoken asides with some tough tenor sax complimenting the light-hearted singing.

Wilson’s second line groove provides the primary backing for the lively reworking of the Chordettes hit “Lollipop,” with a lively tenor sax-drum duo break in the middle. “It’s a Man” with its lyrics warning women of a two-legged animal, sports some honking sax. The perky, lively harmonies of “Heebie Jeebies” closes a delightful and enchanting recording that may not be the deepest side of blues, but sure is full of serious fun.

Ron Weinstock



ANDY SANTANA AND THE WEST COAST PLAYBOYS

Watch Your Step!
DELTA GROOVE

Andy Santana is a triple threat as a singer, guitarist and harmonica player (and he is also a songwriter) whose name will be most familiar to those of the West Coast, but some may have seen his name as a side-man on some albums or perhaps have his independently produced recordings. Anyway, his profile will rise greatly with the release of “Watch Your Step!” by Andy Santana And The West Coast Playboys on Delta Groove. The West Coast Playboys include Kid Andersen (who co-produced this with Andy), Anthony Paule, Mike Schermer, Bob Welsh, Rusty Zinn (who penned the liner notes), Lorenzo Farrell and June Core.

While there are a few Santana originals sprinkled in, most of this is covers of songs that have not been cooked and burned to death (no “Sweet Home Chicago” type numbers). Santana is a wonderful singer that sings with a natural, relaxed soulfulness akin to such Gulf Coast legends as Tommy McClain, Warren Storm, Freddy Fender and Doug Sahm, and he brings a distinctive attack to the guitar (Rusty Zinn likens him to the love child of Wild Jimmy Spruill and Johnny

Guitar Watson) and his harp playing is terrific.

What a range of material too, right from the opening swamp rocker by Carol Fran “Knock Knock” and a tasty cover of Bobby Parker’s title tune that is modeled on Parker’s original recording. It showcases Santana’s crisp, biting guitar, and is ably sung (although he is not on Parker’s level). “Playgirl” is one of two Smiley Lewis songs here, and he takes both guitar and harp solos (his harp playing suggests some of Papa Lightfoot’s recordings). The rollicking “You May Not Know” has a smokin’ groove and a performance (with backing vocals) suggestive of Clyde McPhatter and the Drifter’s “What Ya Gonna Do.” Then there’s a song co-written with Rick Estrin, “No Double Talk,” with Kid Andersen adding greasy Farfisa organ and shattering Ike Turner-styled guitar, and a terrific instrumental, “Greaseland” (named after Andersen’s studio) which showcases several of the guitarists.

The rest of the performances on “Watch Your Step!” are similarly impressive making for a likewise impressive recording.

Ron Weinstock



THE RAGPICKER STRING BAND

The Ragpicker String Band
YELLOW DOG RECORDS

I am familiar with the marvelous mandolinist Rich DelGrosso, and Guitarist Mary Flower, but not with multi-instrumentalist Martin Grosswendt. Together they constitute The Ragpicker String Band whose eponymously titled debut disk is on Yellow Dog Records. Mixing in some classic songs from the likes of Mississippi Sheiks, Sleepy John Estes and Blind Willie Johnson with originals from Flower and Delgrosso, they bring considerable instrumental skill and vocals to songs of social satire and simply plain mischievous fun resulting in an album that at times evokes classic string bands and at other times a scaled down and slightly toned down version of R. Crumb’s Cheap Suit Serenaders.

There is the lovely “Honey Babe” that opens this along with a wonderful rendition of The Sheiks’ “Lonely One In This Town,” to go along with the whimsical play on words of Flowers “Minor Blues” and DelGrosso’s hilarious “Google Blues” about a man who thinks he’s getting lucky except for the lady is Googling his shady past. It is extremely difficult to restrain oneself from loud laughter listening to this. There are plenty of in-

strumental joys to be heard as well, including Grosswendt's slide steel guitar of his fiddle on "Lonely One In This Town" and Delgrosso's playing the "44 Blues" motif on the mandolin on his "Black Mattie."

A nice, and unexpected, string trio rendition of "Blue Monk" adds to the musical variety here. The Ragpicker's String Band score with some marvelous music and plenty of fun listening. **Ron Weinstock**



THE TEXAS HORNS Blues Gotta Holda Me VIZZTONE

Mark 'Kaz' Kazanoff may be the best known of The Texas Horns, a trio of horn players who have contributed to numerous fine recordings. Kaz brings his tenor sax and harmonica along with John Mills who plays baritone and tenor saxophones and Adalberto Gomez on trumpet to "Blues Gotta Holda Me" (VizzTone). Recorded in Austin in 2014 the three are joined by guitarist Derek O'Brien, and drummer Barry Frosty Smith along with a variety of guests who include Nick Connolly, Marcia Ball, Ronnie James, Johnny Nicholas, W.C. Clark, and Anson Funderburgh.

There is a mix of instrumentals and vocals (most of which are taken by Kazanoff) on a recording that breaks no new grounds perhaps, but makes for enjoyable listening and likely to be a favorite for dancers. The music is well played and there are plenty of strong horn solos. The standout vocal is a soulful one from W.C. Clark on Kazanoff's original "Cold Blooded Lover," while Marcia Ball does a credible cover of the Smiley Lewis classic recording "Go On Fool," with the horns providing an unusual Mariachi tint to the performance. Musically, the rendition of "You're Driving Me Crazy" is better than Kazanoff's bland vocal. The performance sounds like it was based on the Big Joe Turner rendition from classic "The Boss of the Blues" album on Atlantic, and compared to Turner, Kaz is in double A as a singer, not the majors. He does take a terrific tenor sax solo on this. Also, his vocal on the Percy Mayfield classic "Lost Mind" lacks the grit of Mayfield's original as well as the brilliance of the late Johnny Adams' rendition. Finally, as much as he tries, he can't bring the ebullience needed on a rendition of Louis Jordan's "Caledonia," but he is in company with

others like Muddy Waters and Gatemouth Brown who have faltered on this.

The instrumentals are fun, finger-popping tunes with the exception of a terrific rendition of "People Get Ready." The opening "Soul Stroll" kicks this off with a nice shuffle groove while Mills' "Kick Me Again" has a march like feel with some robust playing from Mills on the baritone and O'Brien on guitar. "Rippin' and Trippin'" is a hot number for the jitterbuggers while the funky rendition of Hilton Ruiz's "Home Cookin'" has soulful grease from Connolly on the B-3 along with some tough playing from each of horns.

"Blues Gotta Holda Me" may not be a compelling recording, but it certainly is a fun and entertaining recording that is a welcome change of pace for blues listeners. **Ron Weinstock**

WORLD MUSIC 5 America MOJITO RECORDS

World Music 5 is a terrific new Latin Jazz Ensemble comprised of pianist Jose Negroni, drummer Nomar Negroni, bassist Josh Allen, violinist Federico Britos and woodwinds of Ed Calle, that happened when Negroni and Britos invited Calle to lunch one day and they decided to join together to form a new ensemble. One result is a new double-CD titled "America" (MOJITO RECORDS), an album (to paraphrase the press release) that celebrates folkloric, traditional, and original Latin American and North American music.

"America" features 16 original arrangements, adaptations, and or compositions by Federico Britos, Jose Negroni, and Dr. Ed Calle. The recording includes a vast array of genres including Venezuela's joropo, Mexico's jarabe tapatio, Brazil's choro, Cuba's danzon, Uruguay's candombe, the bolero claimed by Mexico and Cuba, and American Broadway and jazz standards. The album presents works by master composers including Leonard Bernstein, Ernesto Lecuona, Duke Ellington, Pedro Elías Gutiérrez, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Agustin Lara, Cole Porter, Rafael Hernandez, and Brazil's Pixinguinha.

While described as a chamber jazz ensemble, the thrilling music one hears on these recordings blends lyricism with hot rhythms and saucy leads on which the romantic feel of Bernstein's "America" is succeeded by Calle's radical reworking of J. Gonzalez Rubio's "Jarabe Tapatio (Mexican Hat Dance)," with its familiar theme bookending Calle and Britos highly energized solos. Then this in turn is followed by a lovely ballad by Calle, "Thinking of You (Pensando en Ti)," with lovely solos from Calle, Britos and Negroni, whose trio is stellar throughout in supporting everyone involved. Then there is a stunning rendition of "A Um Zero," a choro from Pixinguinha with Calle opening on bass clarinet before switching to clarinet. There is wonderful interplay with Britos along with Negroni's piano on this joyful and lyrical ragtime evoking performance followed by a rendition of "My Favorite Things" with

Calle providing his own personal stamp on the Rodgers and Hammerstein number.

There is so much joyous music on “America,” of which I have only described a portion, although the recording ends with a volcanic eruption of a performance of “Caravan.” Many of the songs will be new to many reading this, but as World Music 5 displays on renditions of familiar songs as “America,” “Mexican Hat Dance,” “My Favorite Things,” and “Caravan,” they bring virtuosity and melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic inventiveness, to provide exhilarating performances on the 16 compositions here and the most familiar songs will sound new. “America” is a recording that appeals to the heart and the head and stunned this writer when he first heard it and repeated listening to this sensational album brings new joys.

Ron Weinstock



ANTHONY GERACI AND THE BOSTON BLUES ALL STARS 50 SHADES OF BLUES DELTA GROOVE

“50 Shades of Blues” is a new Delta Groove recording by keyboard wizard Anthony Geraci and The Boston Blues All Stars. Geraci is best known in anchoring the keyboards for Sugar Ray and the Bluetones, and his band-mates from that band (Sugar Ray Norcia, guitarist Monster Mike Welch, bassist Michael ‘Mudcat’ Ward and drummer Neil, Gouvin) are here, although Marty Richards handles the drum chair for most of this.

Guests include Darrell Nulisch, Michelle ‘Evil Gal’ Wilson, and Toni Lynn Washington who join Norcia in handling the vocals. Geraci produced the recording in addition to playing piano and organ, and writing all 13 songs here, and he gives us some really solid new blues with terrific performances by all involved. Darrell Nulisch handles the vocal on the opening “Everything I Do Is Wrong,” a song that sounds like what Otis Rush should have recorded for Duke with a tough Welch solo as Geraci pounds the groove. The title song follows, a jump blues duet shared by Norcia and Wilson with rollicking piano and Welch in a T-Bone meets B.B. manner.

The next two selections are classic Chicago styled blues with “Sad But True,” being a Tampa Red styled blues with Welch on slide and Norcia on harmonica

followed by the stunning “Heard That Tutweiler Whistle Blow,” with Norcia singing about going to Detroit to build a card for Mr. Ford. On these two selections, Geraci channels Little Johnny Jones and Otis Spann. More Otis Spann influence is present on the closing “Blues For David Maxwell,” a superb instrumental tribute to the late pianist with Geraci perhaps providing his strongest work (and he is exceptional throughout). This performance builds in intensity with Welch adding fiery guitar before Ward’s bass leads them into a surprising concluding portion where they evoke Pharoah Sanders “The Creator Has a Master Plan” with Norcia on a wood flute closing out the recording. It is a marvelous end to a stellar recording.

Anthony Geraci is a first-rate blues songwriter and a terrific keyboard player. With the musicians supporting him, there should be no surprise about the consistently terrific music on “50 Shades of Blue.”

Ron Weinstock



JACO PASTORIUS JACO: Original Soundtrack LEGACY

Leaving the upcoming documentary to chronicle the rise and tragic fall of this remarkable electric bassist- as well as his enduring influence- the accompanying soundtrack album serves as one hell of a teaser with regard to the range of settings Pastorius could place his unique style and skills within.

It could be argued that Jaco was a genuine jazzman cruising in a world of fusion, funk and rock. His undeniable swing made him a natural for Weather Report- the very Jaco-centric “Teen Town” is one of three WR tracks present. Ditto for his own “Liberty City” and the live “The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines” from Joni Mitchell’s *Mingus*.

His facility was well suited for the “lead bass” phenomenon of the 70’s, a scene he ruled alongside Stanley Clarke, and exemplified here on collaborations with soul sensations Sam and Dave, “Come On, Come Over”, and proto-punkster Ian Hunter, “All American Alien Boy”.

A sampler more than an anthology, this collection could easily spur some impulse buying of this bass master’s catalog. A DVD film release is also forthcoming.

Duane Verh



CHRIS JAMES & PATRICK RYNN

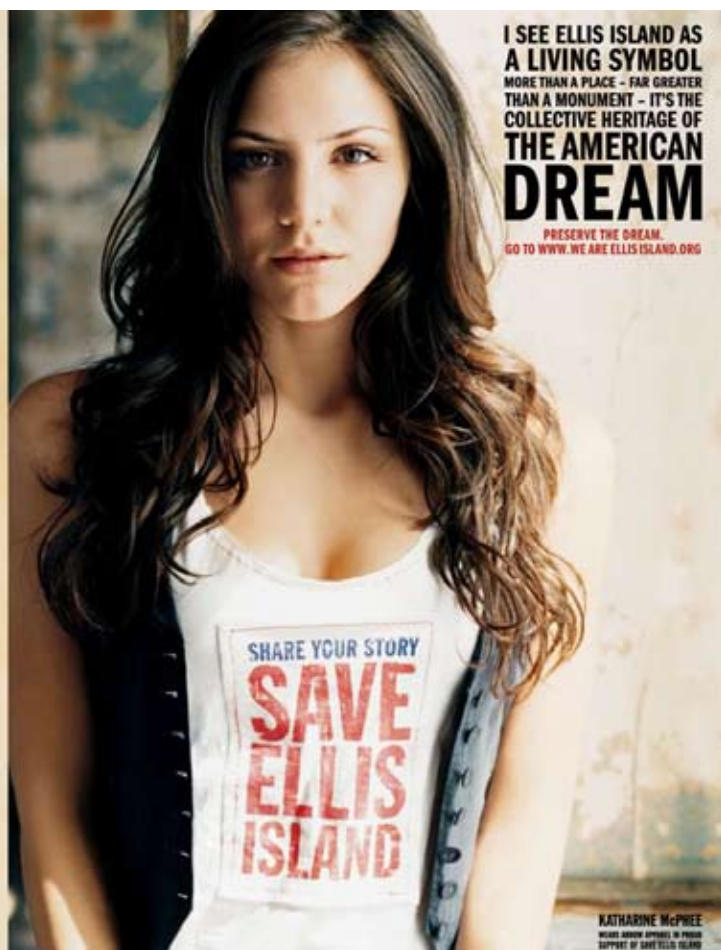
Trouble Don't Last
VIZZTONE RECORDS

As Bill Dahl observes in the liner booklet to “Trouble Don’t Last,” the new Vizztone Records release by Chris James and Patrick Rynn, “the blues tradition has always been central to” their approach to music. Vocalist/guitarist James and bassist Rynn joined forces in Chicago two decades ago and played behind a number of legends as well as established themselves on their own with several choice albums. On “Trouble Don’t Last” they are backed by drummer June Core (Robert Lockwood, Jr, Charlie Musselwhite and others) and harmonica players Aki Kumar and Rob Stone, who are both heard on two of the twelve selections.

Starting with the opening “Shameless,” the duo gives

us a good lesson on how to play traditional Chicago Style blues with Core laying down a crisp shuffle groove, followed by a strong interpretation of Calvin Frazier’s “Lilly Mae” with Kumar’s harp wailing behind James’ warning to her if he finds her misbehaving on Hastings Street. James is a terrific ‘old-school’ guitarist and Rynn and Core lay down a solid backing. There is some nice unison guitar-harp playing here on a selection that evokes the early 50s recordings from Joe Van Battle’s Hastings Street shop. There’s a lively reworking of Freddie King’s “Lonesome Whistle Blues,” with a dual harp horn section followed by a terrific Muddy Waters’ styled “Going Down to the Ocean,” which was inspired by the days Rynn played with the Oswald Brothers in Toledo, and with some deep blues guitar from James. The title track is built around some nimble finger picking fretwork with a simple rhythm and Kumar’s supporting harp, and is followed by a strong down-home flavored treatment of R.C. Smith’s “Down Drive Me Away.” “Good Idea At The Time” is a brooding blues (in a John Lee Hooker vein) with James singing about sitting in jail and no one to blame but himself so he has to do his time.

Sunnyland Slim’s reworking of the “Rollin’ & Tumblin’” theme, “Roll, Tumble and Slip” receives a lively reworking (with harp solos from both Stone and Kumar) that exhibits not only the excellent musicianship, but strong ensemble playing that is characteristic of this entire recording. James is a straight-forward singer who does a solid job delivering his originals, and along with Rynn and the rest of the band he has provided another blues gem. *Ron Weinstock*





**To a visitor, it's barren desert.
To our supporters, it's bustling with life.**

Even the most arid landscapes are home to Earth's amazing species. The Nature Conservancy is dedicated to protecting the variety of plant and animal life on Earth—even when found in the most unlikely places. The Nature Conservancy has protected 117 million acres in 28 countries. With your support, that number will keep growing. Visit nature.org or call 1-888-2 JOIN TNC.

San Rafael Desert, Utah © David Muench

This message is made possible by the generous support of this publication.